

December 2021

the **Bridge**



Snow on East Beach, West Bay, by James Loveridge

THIS ISSUE IS

Cilla & Camilla

GIVING WEARING LIVING COOKING

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A community magazine for Bridport supported by the Anglican Church

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Hall bookings Halls are reopening with certain Covid restrictions. For bookings please contact:

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It's time for the work of Christmas

What comes to mind when you think about the work of Christmas?

For most of us, I suspect, it's things like shopping, wrapping presents, decorating, cleaning the house, buying groceries and cooking Christmas dinner. It's getting ready for Father Christmas and opening presents.

Many people remark that for me and my colleagues in churches this is our busiest time. Certainly there are lots of services – some held in the middle of the night – and we too join in the frantic rush, yet hope to offer moments of stillness, a pause to wonder.

I know for some it's a lot of work just getting through these days. They're hard days of grief, sadness, depression. For some, the work includes thinking about those who will be alone during this season. Here in Bridport that includes those who are organising the Christmas lunch, getting together Christmas hampers, doing extra shifts at Cupboard Love, our food bank, and everyone working in all sorts of ways to gather people and to seek to include everyone.

And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if on Christmas Day, after the child has been born and the dishes have been done, there's a collective sigh of relief that our Christmas work is done. But what if it's really not? What if that's when the work of Christmas begins?

That's what Howard Thurman writes in his poem *The Work of Christmas*:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

Have you ever thought that maybe “the work of Christmas” is what it means and looks like for the Word to become flesh and live among us, words so often read in Christmas services from John's Gospel?

Maybe the Word becoming flesh and living among us is happening in the moments when “the work of Christmas” is being done. Maybe it's a way of being and living with each other. Maybe that happens every time we offer compassion or mercy, in every moment when we do “the work of Christmas.”

Have you ever loved or forgiven another? Have you ever reached out to another with compassion or gentleness? Have you ever responded with nonviolence and peace? Have you ever fed the hungry or cared for the sick? Has someone else ever done those things to or for you?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, you can also say, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.”

*Maybe ‘the
work of
Christmas’
happens every
time we offer
compassion
or mercy*

Christmas can bring us together – whether we think we have a firm faith or none at all. The work of Christmas is surely something to do with finding ways to live together as a community.

So let me offer the words of a Christmas pop song by Ron Sexsmith as a way to enter into the Christmas season, and hopefully allow it to stay with us in how we live together.

*Maybe this Christmas will mean something more
Maybe this year love will appear
Deeper than ever before*

*And maybe forgiveness will ask us to call
Someone we love, someone we've lost
For reasons we can't quite recall
Maybe this Christmas*

*Maybe there'll be an open door
Maybe the star that shone before
Will shine once more,*

*And maybe this Christmas will find us at last
In heavenly peace, grateful at least
For the love we've been shown in the past,
Maybe this Christmas, maybe this Christmas.*

The Revd Deb Smith



The Revd Deb Smith
Team Rector

Charity begins wherever there's a need to be filled

As this festive issue goes to press, I'm very happy to have heard the recent news from the Bridport Refugee Support Campaign that they're expecting their (our) family to arrive in town in January and begin a new life here. I can't think of a better practical expression of the true message of Christmas than welcoming strangers into our midst, making room for them at our table and breaking bread with them – metaphorically and, perhaps, literally too.

I've seen plenty of grumbling on social media that we should “help our own first”. Well, people are free to choose what to do with their money and which charities to support. There are plenty of organisations doing great work for local people, too, so those who want to help “our own” can always throw a little cash (or time) in their direction. We are indeed blessed if we can live in peace in the country of our birth. Merry Christmas!



Olivia Daly
Editor

Blue Light service will go ahead 'live' this year

Organisers are happy to announce that after an online-only event last year, the 2021 Blue Light carol service will take place 'live' on Thursday 16 December at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church, South Street, Bridport.

"The service is a very special occasion for members of the emergency services, their families, friends and supporters," says the Revd Philip Ringer, Divisional Chaplain, Bridport Police. "It will include the traditional singing of The 12 Days of Christmas – Bridport style – and seasonal refreshments if restrictions permit."

There will be a retiring collection for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Four-legged friends join in Bridport Nativity

The traditional Bridport Nativity, organised by Churches Together in Bridport and District (CTiBD), will be held on Saturday 18 December at 11am in St Mary's Bridport. Beforehand, a donkey will make its way (not alone!) from St Swithun's, North Allington, and two alpacas will come from Bridport United Church to join in the event, which will also be livestreamed on the Bridport Team Ministry website and other channels. "Please give everyone taking part your prayers and encouragement on the day," says the Revd Philip Ringer, who is also the chairman of CTiBD.

Carols and beer at the Ropemakers

There's an alternative event on Thursday 16 December when the Revd Deb Smith, Team Rector, invites anyone who's not involved in the Blue Light service to gather at the Ropemakers pub in West Street for carols and beer from about 7.30pm.

Christmas Day lunch will go ahead after all

The Christmas Day lunch for people who would otherwise be alone has become a traditional feature of a Bridport Christmas, and this year's meal will take place – in a slightly modified form – despite challenging circumstances.

"Churches Together decided not to run the Christmas lunch this year because of possible Covid restrictions," says Sue Herman, Administrator, Bridport United Church, "but a group of us felt that, this year particularly, it was very important that it did go ahead.

"A diverse group is running it, including members of many churches and volunteers with various food organisations, and a local chef has agreed to cook. The United Church has generously offered to host it as usual, allowing us to use the kitchen facilities and all the gas and electricity we need."

Sue is working on plans for the event with Peter Wilson of Bridport Local Food Group and all the food will be sourced locally thanks to generous suppliers. She adds that the group has received a "wonderful" donation from the Christian Fellowship, Wakelys have offered to support the lunch, and funding is also being sought from the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit mission fund.

"Numbers will be lower than usual and small tables for six instead of the usual long ones will hopefully help to make everyone feel safe," she says. "We hope to ask people to come to the United Church in East Street at 12 for 12.30pm on 25 December, and we look forward to seeing everyone."



It's important to book in advance, so anyone who would like to come is asked to ring Sue on Bridport 422598 or Peter on 07778 159826.



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The Revd Deb Smith, Team Rector (pictured above) was among about 60 people who got on their bikes one Saturday in early November to raise awareness of COP26, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which was taking place in Glasgow at the time. The group also aimed to encourage Bridport residents to think about using carbon-free transport for at least some journeys. Bridport Mayor Cllr Ian Bark has written about the event on his blog on the town council's website: www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/news (follow link).

Christmas services and events at the Bridport Team Ministry churches

Christmas Eve – Friday 24 December

4pm	St Mary's Bridport Crib service Holy Trinity Bradpole Crib service St Mary's Walditch Carols on The Green with hot choc & mince pies
6pm	St Swithun's Allington Eucharist
8pm	Holy Trinity Bothenhampton Holy Communion
10pm	Holy Trinity Bradpole Holy Communion
11.30pm	St Mary's Bridport Holy Communion

Christmas Day – Saturday 25 December

10am	St Mary's Bridport Holy Communion Holy Trinity Bradpole Christmas Praise St Mary's Walditch Holy Communion St John's West Bay Holy
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Communion

Boxing Day – Sunday 26 December

8am	St Mary's Bridport Holy Communion
10am	Team service at St Mary's Bridport
12.30pm	St John's West Bay Community carols (led by Churches Together in Bridport & District)

Please see the Parish Pages (12–19) for details of other services during December and January. There is a team service at St Swithun's Allington on Sunday 30 January at 10am.



Cupboard Love food bank becomes an independent charity

The Bridport food bank, Cupboard Love, has been relaunched as an independent charity to allow it to serve the community even better.



Cupboard Love was established in 2013 by the Bridport Team Ministry at St Mary's Church to address food poverty locally. Demand for its services has steadily increased since then and spiked recently following changes to the benefits system and during the Covid pandemic.

One of the new trustees, Cllr Ian Bark, Mayor of Bridport, says: "Cupboard Love is now a registered charity with its own bank account. In many ways nothing has changed – it will still deliver much-needed food and other support to those in need, and it will still operate from St Mary's Church.

"The big difference is that the operation will now be governed under the exacting rules of the Charity Commission with a board of trustees having oversight, making it more accountable and more open to scrutiny. This also means that all future financial donations will qualify for Gift Aid, so every £100 donated will be worth £125."

The move will also give Cupboard Love access to a wider range of funding support and scope to explore how it might extend the services it offers.

From the outset, Cupboard Love has operated out of St Mary's every Wednesday, and it has grown into a community project through the support of the town. The church has not only provided space to deliver the service, but also storage for non-perishable items. Although the food bank is becoming an independent charity, the support of the church remains.

Cupboard Love has always relied on a skilled and dedicated band of volunteers from church and community, led by part-time employed coordinator Carrie Gamble.

She says: "Cupboard Love provides more than food. We work in partnership with a whole range of support agencies. We run every Wednesday between 11am and 1pm. There is a referral system, but if you need help just turn up. We offer food, support, advice or just a cup of tea and a chat."

Cupboard Love continues to rely on donations of food from individuals and local businesses, as well as financial donations from many generous local people.

Ian Bark adds: "Something that was conceived as a short-term solution to an immediate need has, nine years later, sadly become an ever-expanding and ongoing lifeline.

"This is why the operation and management of Cupboard Love has been reviewed to reflect the increased demands and complexity of continuing to deliver the service. It looks like the need for a food bank will stay with us for the foreseeable future, so it's important that it works well for those who need its service. The changes we have put in place mean that we can go forward secure in the knowledge that the Bridport food bank can continue to help alleviate food poverty for as long as it's needed."

Parkinson's support group needs a volunteer coordinator

The Bridport & District Parkinson's Support Group is looking for a new coordinator.

The volunteer would help to arrange meetings, trips, speakers, meals out, therapeutic activities and skittle games. This happy, friendly group meets once a month in Bridport to support each other in various ways. Members are looking forward to having a new leader, who should be organised, have basic IT skills and enjoy communicating with people. See below for contact details.

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
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JOIN US.

Volunteer vacancy
Bridport & District
Parkinson's Support Group

We are looking for a volunteer coordinator. Times vary but would be about six hours a week. For more details or to volunteer, phone Sue Pritchett 01297 560833.

Bridport Museum will open into December

Now the weather is colder, there's no better place to get cosy with culture than Bridport Museum. The museum is now open Monday to Saturday, 11am to 3pm until 18 December.

The 'Museum Inspector' trail is a perfect way for young people to explore what they love most about the museum, and there are lots more trails and activities to download from the website for using on a visit or at home: www.bridportmuseum.co.uk/learning

You can also 'snap a selfie' (pictured) with your favourite object and play the museum's 'Mystery Object' game, now live on Instagram @bridport_museum.

The museum's shop is also full of unique and quirky gifts that are perfect for Christmas stocking fillers, including loads that are handmade by the museum's volunteers.

The shop is open whenever the museum is, as well as until 8pm for late night shopping on Wednesday 8 December.



A blooming success: The West Dorset Flower Club reached its 70th anniversary recently and members celebrated at their monthly meeting with a special cake and a glass of fizz. Pictured above are Sue Baker, Chairman, and Anne Vincent, President, cutting the cake.

Late Night Shopping AND Meet the Makers

ARTYFACTS STUDIOS

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Thursday 2nd December

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JAN WILLIAMS- SEAWEED ART / PAINTER TERRY COX / RONNIE CRESWELL

Thursday 9th December

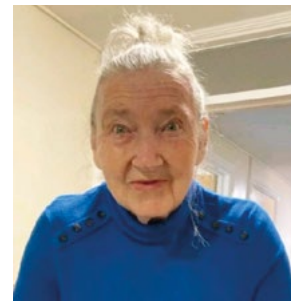
ABBAY FARM FLOWERS - FLORAL ART AND DESIGN / LIZ HOLLINGSWORTH
- MOSAIC MIRRORS / BARBARA GREEN PAINTER / KATY GUY PRINTS /
NAYA DOWNES / JELLY TOTS HANDMADE CLOTHES / NAOMI SAMUELSON
SILVERSIDE GLASS / CHESIL CRAFTS / WOOLLY DAYS / AJ ATTIC /
FIRED EARTH JEWELLERY DESIGN

Thursday 16th December

NAOMI SAMUELSON - FLUID ART / AUNT JANE'S ATTIC /
DOUG CHALK FLUID ART - PHOTOGRAPHY AND COLMER'S HILL CALENDARS
NAYA DOWNES / SILVERSIDE GLASS / CHESIL CRAFTS / ALIT TEBBS

With mince pies and wine

We're very happy to bring readers news of former Bridge editor Valerie Payne. Following a stroke earlier this year, Valerie spent several months in hospital and some time at Fairfield House nursing home (where this photo was taken), but she and her family hope she will be able to return to live in her own home soon, with help from a full-time carer. Valerie's daughter Rachel is now co-owner of the Pack Horse Cafe at Broomhill Farm (next to the recycling centre) – one of the best cafes around!



Bridport Charities Almshouses Vacancy, West Allington, Bridport

Spacious one-bedroom ground-floor flat for a couple. Recently refurbished, comfortable accommodation with lobby access, a large kitchen/diner, sitting room, shower unit/bathroom. Outside communal courtyard. £340.76 per four weeks, including off-peak heating, water, TV licence and careline if applicable. Applications welcome from those of retirement years who are in need of suitable accommodation and/or in financial need. Must have lived in Bridport for at least two years or have family in Bridport. For an application form please write to the Clerk to the Trustees, Bridport Charities, Delta, Allington Park, Bridport DT6 5DD.

When the Bridport Refugee Support Campaign got in touch to tell us about their 2021 Christmas card (see overleaf), we couldn't resist taking the chance to find out more about the local artist behind its creation...

I meet Claudio Muñoz at his home in the Dorset countryside, a mile or two off the coast road to the east of Bridport. As he welcomes me inside, the tranquillity of the warm kitchen – where the cat lazes in a rare patch of November sunshine and huge greyhound Alfie stretches his long legs in the corner – suggests that this is a creative house, and it is. This is the home of not one but two artists.

Claudio lives in this traditional longhouse with his wife, painter Jill Newsome, who is at work in her studio at the bottom of the garden. Born in Chile, Claudio left to escape the violent coup of 1973 and settled in London in 1978 after meeting Jill. She is, he says, his “favourite thing about England.”

It sounds like the couple are the perfect foil for each other. “Our friends say that she's the Latin American one, and I'm actually from Kent,” he says. “I'm shy, reserved – although Jill says I'm not. I'm always reluctant to go out, but then I'm always reluctant to leave a party at the end of the evening because I'm so deep in conversation.”

They met when Jill was teaching and they were both involved with the Siloists, a group of young humanists who were disillusioned with both mainstream politics and the “hippy, gassy” alternative. They were in the Canary Islands for a Siloist gathering when one day Claudio heard Jill struggling to communicate in Spanish and went over to translate for her. Their relationship began, although initially Claudio was travelling around Europe, trying to work out where he should live.

“I knew my prospects in Chile were nil – the artists there were exiled, jailed or dead – so I'd looked at France, Spain, Italy, and then went to London to visit Jill. On the last day that my ticket was valid I knew I'd have to decide. We said goodbye that morning – she went to work and I stayed at her house – and I found a copy of the I Ching, the book of divination, which is supposed to help you make difficult decisions. I did the



From Chile to Dorset: a long artistic journey

thing with the three coins, and looked up the answer: time to cross the oceans. I took that to mean that I should stay in London, to leave my birthplace an ocean away.”

Claudio and Jill have been together ever since. They had two daughters (he has a son from his previous marriage) and eventually moved to West Dorset.

Art becomes political

Claudio trained in architecture but left college to concentrate on art, working first in graphic design and creating drawings for an educational publisher. For many years he has produced editorial illustrations for the national

press, most notably the Economist. Much of his work is fiercely political and he is not afraid to call out corruption or caricature world leaders.

He cites illustrators Gustav Doré and Mario Silva Ossa (‘Coré’) as early influences, but what about more recent work? “Ai Weiwei is so inspiring,” he says. “I went to his exhibition at the Royal Academy some years ago and was very impressed. He filmed so courageously after the 2008 earthquake [in Sichuan], proving that the buildings had been put up shoddily and that many people died because of it. It's a repeated story: money comes first, whatever the cost, and that cost is people's lives. It was →

From Chile to Dorset: a long artistic journey continued

the same in Istanbul after the 1999 earthquake – the main cause of death was shoddy building.

“There’s a conjunction between politics and art – art becomes political by the making of it, when it moves beyond entertainment, when we artists display ourselves as witnesses.”

Alongside this work, Claudio is also an illustrator of children’s books, often collaborating with authors such as Henrietta Branford and Gill Capper as well as with Jill. In 1997 he won the French Prix du Livre de la Mer for *Le Petit Capitaine* (The Little Captain). He’s currently hoping to work with a Chilean publisher on his next book, about a father taking his little boy back to Chile from exile, and says it will touch on some of the things the people of his homeland suffered in the years after the coup.

“I’m proud that I’ve been able to make a nice living in this way – particularly

collaborating with Jill – and that my work has been recognised in the Americas. My last book for a US publisher is still paying royalties, while so many books sink without a trace.”

Drawn to the water

Before leaving I ask Claudio what he misses about his homeland, that skinny country to the west of Argentina. Chile has a long coastline and is dominated by the ocean, so it’s no surprise that Claudio has chosen to make his home here in Dorset. He stresses that he wanted to live near the sea, rather than beside it, although he says in stormy weather they can hear the turbulent water from their house. Isn’t the English Channel rather different from the Pacific, though?

“I miss the ocean,” he says, “but the sea here does have a bit of the same wildness. Sometimes it looks calm but it’s actually heaving, almost like the water is breathing, and it’s very frightening. In Chile it can be absolutely deadly – it sweeps the beach and claws back, taking everything with it. I once had to grab my daughter to save her from the sea on a visit back there. I miss the mountains



The Bridport Refugee Support Campaign’s 2021 Christmas card – with Claudio’s illustration (pictured) on the front – is now available from Bridport Tourist Information Centre, Fruits of the Earth, Waste Not Want Not and Leakers bakery, price £4 for a pack of five.

and rivers of Chile, too, but the country has changed; there’s such bad pollution now. Chile exports a lot of paper, and the centre is covered with pine and eucalyptus plantations. The soil is so acidic, and whole villages have gone.

“Of course the mountains are still there: they seem eternal, but even they are not, there’s some kind of cycle always turning in the universe. Nationality is a thin, dangerous construction that we attach ourselves to in detriment to other concepts. I believe at some point we’ll have to throw this concept away and weave a new pattern of understanding if we’re to continue living on this planet.”

www.claudiomunoz.com

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Saturday 11th December at 7.30pm
Bridport United Church

Tickets £10 (under-16s free) from Bridport Music Centre, Smith & Smith or on the door



Working to future-proof Bridport against climate change threats

If there's anything the Covid pandemic has revealed about Bridport, it's that our town can react positively to a crisis.

Within days of the lockdown announcement, teams of volunteers had sprung into action to help people who were struggling to fend for themselves: it brought out the very best in us. Now, Seeding our Future (SoF) founder Alan Heeks is confident that Bridport residents will respond in the same way to the environmental challenges that lie ahead.

Alan started SoF in 2017 as a vehicle for a variety of initiatives around climate change and food security. "I was interested in exploring what a few people with limited resources can do in the face of big problems," he says. "Even at the start I was worried about the need to improve our resilience, to create a safety net of community resources to support the everyday person. We're in a time of fragility and it's not going to go away."

SoF's approach to building resilience starts from the understanding that local communities will become more crucial as the effects of climate change increase. So what's the best way to start addressing something that Alan himself admits can seem overwhelming? "We know that the food supply will bear one of the most significant impacts of climate change, and it was clear we'd have to make this one of SoF's priorities," he



Pictured clockwise from above: visitors at a Bridport Food Matters allotments open day; local mushroom grower Nick Phillips takes questions at a BFM event during this year's Bridport Food Festival; Alan Heeks ensures he'll catch visitors' eyes on the BFM festival stall



says. "Food security means empowering people to source more locally produced food, whether by growing it themselves or buying from local producers."

A valuable local food resource

An open SoF meeting in late 2019 led to the formation of Bridport Food Matters (BFM), an online resource for everyone interested in maximising local food security. There's info about where to buy local produce; food sharing and waste reduction programmes like the Garden Glut and Community Fridge; links to other groups including healthy eating initiatives; and tips on adapting allotment and garden crops and methods to cope with new growing conditions. The 'Simple

Steps' page lists practical suggestions for local responses to climate change.

BFM also produces a regular email newsletter and had a stall at this year's Bridport Food Festival to promote its work, while other events have included an open veg and fruit afternoon in May at Symene allotments. There's also a team of six 'Allotment Ambassadors' who are experimenting with climate-adaptive growing so they can advise and inspire other gardeners.

The other side of SoF's activities addresses more general climate change-related issues: not only what people →



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Working to future-proof Bridport continued

can do to reduce their individual impact, but also how they can deal with changing conditions and resulting emergencies such as more frequent flooding and power cuts. “It’s about ensuring access to basic services,” says Alan. “We want to encourage the creation of a network of volunteers to help others during short emergencies, and we know that’s something our community does well. Bridport Town Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019; their climate emergency sub-group is really on board with our work and I am very encouraged by the council’s recently updated emergency resilience plan.”

Input from the whole community

SoF is involving local people at every stage of its plans. In partnership with another group, Transition Town Bridport, it held two climate forums

in late November, having invited representatives from a variety of organisations and networks across the town to take part and discuss what their combined forces could achieve.

“Climate change will affect our food supplies, health, public services and our whole livelihood, but there are plenty of practical steps we can all take to reduce its impact,” wrote Mayor Ian Bark in his invitation to the forums. “We should be able to use our resilience to reduce the risk of climate change, and to be ready for the effects as they come.

“Recent weather events and reports show that the climate crisis is accelerating. The purpose of these forum meetings is to seek [participants’] advice and active help in widening local residents’ involvement in climate responses, both reducing waste and emissions and improving our

preparedness for emergency events. Widespread citizen engagement will be required to achieve the transformations demanded by the climate emergency.”

SoF is planning a programme of events for next year, which will be published on their website. Alan hopes that they will include more ‘climate cafes’ (see The Bridge, November 2021) as well as more open days and climate forums. He is determined to protect the town he cherishes – and particularly its people – from the changing climate. “I love this community,” he says. “I expect to stay here for the rest of my life, and I really want to help raise Bridport’s resilience because I see that it’s under threat.”

www.seedingourfuture.org.uk
www.bridportfoodmatters.net
 Both initiatives also have active Facebook groups

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Will it be stronger together for a new-look town council?

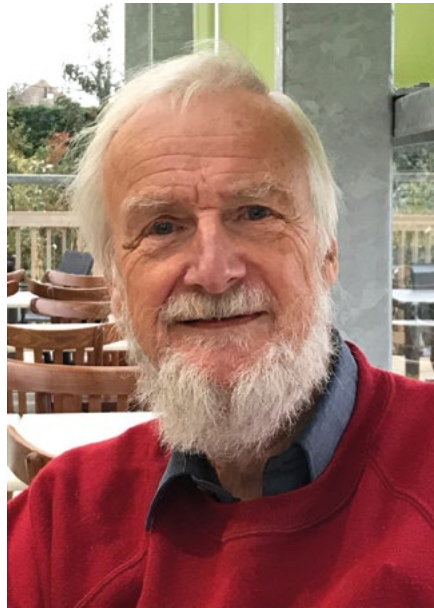
This month in the pod we meet Dave Rickard, the leader of Bridport Town Council (BTC). Amid the ongoing community governance review, which explores how best to organise local government in communities across Dorset, we ask Dave what BTC's resulting proposal for changes to its own structure would mean for Bridport residents.

The Bridge: The community governance review is on many residents' minds at the moment and there is strong feeling both for and against BTC's proposal to amalgamate the current four parishes into one. Can you give us some background to the review?

Dave Rickard: The electoral authority – now Dorset Council – is supposed to review local government structure every 10 to 15 years to ensure the electoral system delivers good governance and fairly serves its residents well. Our last one, in 1986, just involved the boundaries of Bridport and Bothenhampton, so this is well overdue.

Our town has changed dramatically since the war. Just about all the residential building work has been in the outlying parishes [Allington, Bradpole and Bothenhampton & Walditch] while central Bridport has changed far less. Each of those parishes now includes modern housing developments, and the space that once existed between them has been filled in. Anyone moving to Bridport from elsewhere is almost certainly going to end up living in one of these areas, rather than in the town centre, and these people see themselves as living in Bridport. Most have no contact with their local parish council, and nearly all the services they use around the town are actually provided by BTC.

Our proposal would see these three parishes, plus the forthcoming Foundry



Lea [Vearse Farm] development, joining Bridport in one parish governed by BTC, which would increase in size by two seats to 20. Each of the existing parishes would be represented by its own 'ward councillors' and benefit from a dedicated ward committee and budget.

TB: The TC proposal would mean an increase in the precept [the parish council's share of council tax] for many residents. Why should they support this?

DR: The current arrangements just aren't fair and this has to change. The precept is lower in the three outlying parishes than in Bridport parish, as residents in these areas pay only for the services their parish council provides. However, they also benefit from services that they're not paying for. These include open spaces and playing fields across the town, the markets, the Tourist Information Centre, Bridport Cemetery, West Bay Visitor Centre and car-boot sale, all the town events, and many buildings and spaces that enable about 250 groups (with membership across the whole area) to meet and hold events in the town.

TB: In what other ways do you think things would be fairer under the proposed new structure?

DR: None of the surrounding parish councils had a contested election in May 2019; all required the co-option of members to fill the available seats and still are not up to quota. This doesn't ensure a council that's fit for purpose and able to deliver – particularly as Dorset Council is handing down more and more responsibility for services to local councils.

We have inherited some frankly bizarre boundaries between parishes. There are a few places where people on one side of a road are in Bridport parish and those opposite are in another. The changes would allow us to iron out these anomalies.

Put simply, I believe a single, vibrant council – with closely fought elections to give residents real choice – would serve everyone in Bridport better and more fairly than the current system. It would also give us a more effective, unified voice with which to influence Dorset Council and even national government.

Interestingly, I note that when the Bridport Team Ministry was formed 35 years ago, six neighbouring parishes joined together in one efficient team but none of the churches lost its individual identity or character. I'm confident that the same will happen as a result of our community governance proposal.

Full details of the community governance review and Bridport Town Council's proposal are online at www.bridport-tc.gov.uk. Dorset Council is currently considering submitted proposals ahead of its full meeting on 14 December. A 10-week consultation period will follow, during which residents can submit comments at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/community-governance-review.

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 plans for the future

The beauty of the Great East Window at St Mary's is evident, but is made even more so on a dark winter's evening when interior illumination makes it clear for all who pass by. Celebrating the revelation of God through the Bible, this window dates from 1859 when the Great Restoration project in St Mary's took place. The lower section of the window shows the prophets of the Old Testament, the upper section shows the gospel writers of the New Testament, and the central figure is Jesus Christ dressed in kingly robes and heralded by angels above.

Pictorial stained glass dates from the ninth century AD and became common practice in the new cathedrals of the 1100s. The pictures in the windows were used to teach and tell stories about the faith to those who couldn't read.

Today I'm making use of the modern-day equivalent to tell the story of some of the recent events at St Mary's. A 'photo collage' app has enabled me to record the happenings of our Big Clean day and then, later in the month, our cheese and wine evening.

The purpose of the Big Clean was clear to all and the removal of some spectacular cobwebs made us feel our efforts had not been in vain. Look carefully in the picture and you will see the story of Peter cleaning the windows and June shining the brasses, helped by her little dog with a purple duster.

Our cheese and wine evening was part of our 'Historic Venue For Hire' project, and the fundraising group at St Mary's had invited many people from across the town to visit the church and spend a little time reflecting on its beauty and grandeur. We wanted to reinforce the fact that this 800-year-old building belongs to the people of the town. It's a place of worship at its heart, but we're offering it for hire to the wider community, encouraging more people to use it as well as helping to generate an income to maintain it for future generations.

As you can see from the collage of images, the evening was very well attended and the cheese and wine most gratefully received. The team rector, the Revd Deb Smith, introduced the evening with a reflection on the history of the building and its changing use throughout the centuries. She asked everyone to look again and think about the ways in which the community of Bridport could make better use of this special place. The building's wonderful acoustics were demonstrated by musical interludes and the evening concluded with a question and answer session led by the team vicar, the Revd Pete Stone. After the event, many people – including the mayor and the town clerk – gave very positive feedback and we hope this evening will provide the beginning of a new story in the history of St Mary's.

And as we move through Christmas into the new year, I encourage you to visit the church and spend a little time looking at the stained glass windows for yourself. In them



you will find many familiar stories, as well as some that may need a little more interpretation. Perhaps this simple act of reflection will become part of your own story in the days to come – the method you choose to record it is up to you!

Lesley Hill

Christmas hampers and stockings

We are looking for help with food storage, packing (9am on 23 December in Church House, South Street) and delivery of 75 hampers (9am on 24 December from Church House). Please call Mish Bartlett 07977 939515 for more details.

We have received donations from Bridport Round Table and local shops. but if you would like to make a donation please contact Mish.

Carols from around the world

The New Elizabethan Singers – plus a brass quintet – will perform an international selection of Christmas music at St Mary's on Sunday 5 December at 3.30pm. There is no admission price but there will be a retiring collection.



ST MARY'S Bridport continued...

December services at St Mary's Bridport:

Wednesday 1	2.30pm	Holy Communion
Sunday 5	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 12	11am	Holy Communion
Thursday 16	7.30pm	Blue Light service
Saturday 18	11am	Bridport Nativity
Sunday 19	11am	Morning Praise
	6pm	Carol service
Friday 24	4pm	Crib service
	11.30pm	Holy Communion

Saturday 25	8am	Holy Communion
	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 26	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Team service of Holy Communion
January services:		
Sunday 2	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 5	2.30pm	Holy Communion
Sunday 9	10.30am	Covenant service at BUC
Sunday 16	11am	Morning Praise
Sunday 23	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton

Parish 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 parish editor

December is a time for preparation for Christmas. Sending cards and messages, buying gifts for family and friends, making mince pies and perhaps decorating our homes all add to the festive feel. Music makes a big contribution too, and most people enjoy singing or hearing Christmas carols. There's an opportunity for you to join in at an informal evening of carols and readings, all helped along with mulled wine and mince pies, on Saturday 18 December at 6.30pm in Holy Trinity. Donations will be accepted for the Children's Society.

Our next coffee morning is on Saturday 4 December in the church at the usual time of 10am–12 noon. There is no coffee morning in January; they will resume on 5 February.

There will also be a lunch of homemade soup and sandwiches on 15 January in Holy Trinity. These occasions are always popular and will be a chance to meet up with friends we perhaps don't see so much during the wintertime. A similar lunch will take place on 19 February.

Christmas services at Holy Trinity start with the Nine Lessons and Carols, telling the Christmas story through



**Traditional service of
Nine Lessons and Carols**

**Sunday 19 December
at 6pm
Holy Trinity
Bothenhampton**

All welcome

**An evening of carols
and readings**

**Saturday 18 December at 6.30pm
at Holy Trinity Bothenhampton**

*Mince pies and mulled wine
Donations in aid of the Children's Society*



words and music. The date of this service has changed from that published in the November issue of The Bridge and will now be on Sunday 19 December at 6pm, so it will be nearer to Christmas. The service on Christmas Eve has traditionally been a midnight communion, but it has now been brought forward to 8pm to help those who find the later time difficult. There is no service at Bothenhampton on Christmas Day, but there will be a team service on Sunday 26 December at St Mary's Bridport at 10am.

Barbara Ffooks

From the churchwarden

I want to thank all those who volunteered to help tidy up the Old Churchyard in October. Fifteen people came from the village and as far away as Gloucestershire to give a helping hand to remove saplings growing where they're not needed, edge graves and remove dead wood. In the last three years these bi-yearly working parties have made a great improvement to the area – so much so that when the Old Church was inspected by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) they sent the warden a verbal commendation saying it was the best kept graveyard they had visited. The CCT has recently received a donation for the Old Church and would very much like to thank the generous donor, but have no information to do so. If anyone can help to solve this mystery, Graham Purse would be extremely grateful.

Thank you to all who have supported and taken part in church events over the past year; it is very much appreciated. Good wishes to everyone in Bothenhampton for a happy Christmas and a healthy and happy new year.

Heather Purse



Soooper Saturday

Hosted by the Holy Trinity Social Committee

Saturday 15 January 2022
Holy Trinity Bothenhampton

Soup & sandwiches
12 noon–2pm

Minimum suggested
 donation £4. No need
 to book in advance



HOLY TRINITY Bradpole

Parish editor – Douglas Baldwin 424232
 douglas.baldwin@seaside20.plus.com

Distribution – Janet Robinson
 jrb-jrb@outlook.com

Bell tower contact – Wendy Carnell 420716

If you have any pastoral or personal issues,
 please contact the Revd Janis Moore 425644
 (Wednesday is her day off)

Church news

As part of the Bridport Team Ministry's Advent series, on the five Mondays from 22 November to 20 December there will be a study discussion in the church about 'Waiting on God at Advent', led by Martin Whiting. The meetings will be at 10am, repeated at 7.30pm, with tea and coffee available 30 minutes before the start.

There are some changes this year to the usual pattern of Christmas services:

- Advent started on 28 November, and we will be thinking about the Christmas star with a string of stars on the flagpole. Anyone can add a star and might like to remember someone or add a prayer to the star.
- Our Christingle service will be at 9.30am on Sunday 5 December. There will be a large jigsaw Christingle and you will be able to make a Christingle (as pictured) to take home.
- Services of Holy Communion will be held on Tuesday 7 December at 2.30pm and Sunday 12 December at 9.30am.
- We will have a carol service at 3pm on Sunday 19 December but there will be no morning service on that day.
- On Christmas Eve there will be a crib service (bring your own costume) at 4pm and then Christmas Holy Communion at 10pm.
- On Christmas Day, there will be a Christmas Praise service at 10am.



Rachel Ford

Bradpole Parish Council

At the October meeting councillors formed a working party to respond to Dorset Council's community governance

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton continued...

December services at Holy Trinity Bothenhampton:

Sunday 5	11am	Sung Communion
Wednesday 8	2.30pm	Prayer
Sunday 12	11am	Morning Praise
Sunday 19	11am	Sung Communion, followed by coffee
	6pm	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
Friday 24	8pm	Christmas Holy Communion
Saturday 25	No service	at Holy Trinity
Sunday 26	10am	Team service at St Mary's Bridport

January services at Holy Trinity Bothenhampton:

Sunday 2	11am	Sung Communion
Sunday 9	11am	Morning Praise
Sunday 16	11am	Sung Communion, followed by coffee
Sunday 23	11am	Matins
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's Allington

review and agreed that their submission principles would encompass the following:

- Any such submission will be published on the parish website and elsewhere in the public domain.
- Any proposals should preserve and respect the character and identity of the civil parish in line with the 2020 Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan as voted for by electors.
- Consideration should be given to comments received from parishioners and to the financial implications for any affected households.
- Consider the effect of any proposals on the finance of the parish council and future levels of council tax.
- Consider whether the number of councillors should be amended in accordance with guidelines.
- The working group, together with the parish clerk, may correspond with adjoining councils where there is a clear common interest.

Bradpole Forster village hall

The main hall is available for hire by local community groups and private hire, and is fully accessible with facilities for the disabled. All enquiries for hall bookings should be made to the bookings secretary, Jane Bryant (01308 427493 / oxeyedaisy101@gmail.com). There is more information on the village website: www.bradpole.org.uk/the-forster-memorial-institute-bradpole-village-hall

In addition to the services listed left, there will be a team service on Sunday 26 December at 10am at St Mary's Bridport. January services are as follows:

Sunday 2	9.30am	Informal Morning Praise
Tuesday 4	2.30pm	Holy Communion
Sunday 9	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 16	9.30am	Informal Morning Praise
Sunday 23	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's Allington

ST MARY'S Walditch

Parish editor – James Craddock 458725

craddockjames@hotmail.co.uk

Churchwarden – vacant

Verger – Pat Stapleton 456421

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

Christmas cheer

Today most people in West Dorset can look forward to a relaxing and comfortable Christmas with family and friends, albeit with Covid hovering in the background.

However, earlier times were harsher and yet more people were content with their humble lot in life.

Charles Dickens portrayed in his writings a wonderful middle-class Victorian Christmas following the royal example of Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert.

On St Thomas's Day (21 December) the poor of Dorset parishes would visit their wealthier neighbours. In return for their Christmas greetings, these folk would receive a selection of bread, cheese, meat and little purses of money. This 'dole' was only refused to non-residents of the parish.

On Christmas Eve many Dorset farmers would invite their labourers into their farmhouse to sit around a blazing yule log in the kitchen hearth to drink beer or cider accompanied by food. This was known as a 'Christmas Brown'.

Another Christmas custom in Dorset was the 'mummers' or 'maskers', a group of local youths who would visit the homes of the well-off in each parish. They would perform a short play on the exploits of St George, the patron saint of England. One of the characters among these amateur actors was 'Old Father Christmas'. In return for their efforts, the spectators would supply them with food and drink.

Within living memory are Christmases when children would receive exotic fruit like oranges, lemons and bananas and simple wooden toys. How times have changed!

During this festive season, when placing a Christmas order, perhaps add a few items that you could give to the Bridport food bank in advance of Christmas Day towards their distribution of Christmas parcels.

James Craddock

Walditch Garden Group

We take a break in December, so our next meeting will be on Thursday 27 January at 10am in Walditch village hall. All are welcome. Meanwhile, there is still plenty to do in the garden – see right for some suggestions. Our very good wishes to everyone for a peaceful Christmas and new year.

Jane Mowatt



Thelma's hymn notes

Silent Night (Stille Nacht in German)

This is my favourite carol. The tune has a lovely lilting effect and it was always one of the carols sung when I was out carol singing around my Dorset home village in the 60s and 70s, often under starry skies.

The lyrics were written in German by a young Roman Catholic priest, Father Josef Mohr, in December 1818 in Oberndorf, Austria. Fr Mohr was inspired to write the carol by the carnage of the Napoleonic Wars during which so many from various European nations perished.

The English translation is by W G Rotnery, while the music is by Basil Ramsey, a church organist and director of publications with music publisher Novello. The carol has been translated into 140 languages and was declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2011.

During WWI, warring German and British troops temporarily suspended hostilities on Christmas Day 1914 to sing the carol together on the Western Front. The Germans began the singing.

The popular 1935 version by Bing Crosby has sold over 10 million copies and remains one of the best selling records of all time.

In 1997 three more verses of Father Josef's carol were discovered. This is one of these missing verses whose message the priest had hoped we would all understand:

Silent night, holy night
God pours down full of might
Father's love on the whole human race
Yet as brother is glad to embrace
Jesus born for all,
Jesus born for all.

Thelma Pulman, organist at St Mary's Walditch

Garden tips for December:

Feed the birds, keeping feeders well stocked; prevent bird baths, ponds and water features from freezing over; prune woody ornamental plants, fruit trees and bushes, ornamental and grape vines; prune tall bush roses to guard against wind rock; if winter-digging, incorporate organic matter into the soil; protect plants and pots from frost damage; and insulate garden taps and exposed pipes to prevent freezing.

December services & events at St Mary's Walditch:

Thursday 2	10am	Morning Praise
Thursday 9	10am	Morning Praise
Thursday 16	10am	Morning Praise
Sunday 19	3pm	Carol service
Monday 20	6pm	Carols around the village
Thursday 23	10am	Morning Praise
Friday 24	4pm	Carols on The Green
Saturday 25	10am	Holy Communion
Sunday 26	10am	Team service at St Mary's Bridport

January services at St Mary's Walditch:

Sunday 9	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 23	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's Allington
Also Thursdays at 10am		Morning Prayer

ST JOHN'S West Bay

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

News from St John's

Our Morning Praise Sundays are going well, taken by members of the congregation. Many thanks to John Cooke, who has set up a speaker so that hymn music can be played via an iPad. We have a playlist of well-known hymns so there is no excuse not to sing.

How lovely it was to hold the team service at St John's at the end of October! There were 64 in the congregation, and we were delighted to have the organ being played once again – a real treat.

Round and about the Bay

Bonfire by the Beach was very well supported and I'm glad to say it stayed dry after the storm the night before. There was plenty to see and do: rides, food stalls and of course fireworks. The loss of the East Beach car park meant parking was again an issue; I never cease to be amazed at how inconsiderate people are, and Meadowland residents can testify to this.

The Discovery Centre organised a fascinating event at the Salt House in October, when Roy Beal came to talk about his kayak trip (see photo) from John O'Groats to Land's End. The 948-mile journey took 56 days, involving canals, inland waterways and the sea. He endured some horrendous conditions but saw so much wildlife while raising money for Keep Britain Tidy. The thing that stayed in my mind was his description of leaving Whithorn on day 26 and meeting Brendon Price, who was paddleboarding round the UK – an amazing coincidence! They managed a chat before going on their way. Brendon's 2,500-mile trip took 141 days.

The Discovery Centre closed at the end of October after a very busy half term week that included a visit by a mermaid. Apparently she was a very good-natured mermaid with lots of stamina, which she needed as the centre saw 244 visitors during her visit. She did face painting, story telling and then had a beach clean. The centre is now closed until February half term, although will probably open on Boxing Day and New Year's Eve (check the website for confirmation).

Having had a mermaid beach cleaning, I now learn that for the next three months we will have a friendly gorilla litter picking on the beach every Wednesday and Saturday at 8.30am. He is doing this for charity to raise money so he can go with Raleigh International in February to help rebuild sanitation facilities in Nepal after the devastating 2015 earthquake. So if you see him don't be scared, or think you are seeing things, and help him make his trip possible.
Sue Pollock



Above: Roy Beal's kayak, in which he travelled from John O'Groats to Land's End on a fundraising trip

West Bay WI

There is the usual Knit & Natter on Wednesday 1 December, 10am–12 noon. Then on 8 December at 2.30pm there are Christmas celebrations including a cream tea and music from by two ladies on ukuleles and one on percussion plus a sale of knitted Christmas toys and a Secret Santa. Knit & Natter on 5 January is 10am–12noon and on 12 January at 2.30pm there is a talk on photography by Charlie Wheeler.

Upcoming events

The lighting of the Christmas tree takes place on Sunday 28 November at 4pm, so let's hope the weather is kind to us.

Santa Stand Up Paddles return to the harbour on Sunday 12 December at 1pm. The participants dress up in Santa outfits and paddle round the harbour. There is a competition for the best-dressed Santa and the best-dressed board (not sure how you dress up a board though!) They are again raising funds for Action for Children's Talk Service.

December services at St John's:

Sunday 5	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 12	11am	Coffee & Morning Praise
Sunday 19	11am	Holy Communion
Saturday 25	10am	Christmas Day service with Holy Communion
Sunday 26	10am	Team service at St Mary's Bridport
	12.30pm	Carols at St John's (Churches Together)
Monday 27	10am	Patronal festival (feast of St John the Evangelist) with ministry of healing

January services at St John's:

Sunday 2	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 9	11am	Coffee & Morning Praise
Sunday 16	11am	Holy Communion
Saturday 22	6pm	Service of Wholeness and Healing
Sunday 23	11am	Coffee & Morning Praise
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's Allington

Morning Prayer is also held every Monday at 10am.

ST SWITHUN'S Allington

Parish editor – Anna Sullock
aejsullock@gmail.com
Churchwarden – vacancy
Distribution – Kevin Payne 07976 534517

From the parish editor

There is something in The Good Book about loving your neighbour, and sometimes it helps to get to know the people who live in your street. On the corner of mine live Martin Hazell and his wife Michelle, who came here after living in the Marshwood Vale. He has a workshop at New House Farm, Broadoak, which his brother Jon found for him.

I visit Martin at his home, where his kitchen-diner triples up as a maker's bench. There are towers of willow trivets

Carol service

A joint event with the Roman Catholic church of St Mary & St Catherine

**Sunday 12 December from 4.30pm
St Swithun's Church, Allington**

At 4.30pm musicians and singers from St Mary & St Catherine will perform music and carols

At 5pm the candlelit Service of Nine Lessons and Carols will begin

Refreshments in the hall afterwards



Above: Martin Hazell at his home workbench

(he is making two every day at the moment), carved gift tags with heart motifs, and spoons made of found wood, horn, bone and antler.

Martin has always been a maker. First he made willow baskets with teachers in Shropshire and for many years taught basketry to adults with learning disabilities. He has also been making spoons for 25 years after some friends involved him in a Tudor re-enactment event and wanted some cutlery. Martin sawed a branch off one of their fallen apple trees and whittled it there and then with a knife.

Martin receives many gifts of timber from local foresters and hedge trimmings from other friends, and stores some fruit wood, such as apple, in the freezer to keep the sap moist and stable. He brings out a bag from under the table to show me; it contains an apple branch he's preparing to make into a serving spoon, the shape of which is drawn out on the raw wood. The form is inspired by a Persian sherbert spoon, used for serving a mixture of fruit syrup, water and ice. The town of Abadeh, in the Fars province of Iran, is famously a centre for spoon carving. It is socially gracious in that hot dry region to welcome someone to your home by offering refreshment in this way.

Martin has been looking at illuminated manuscripts that show spoons being used for cooking and serving as well as feeding the young and people who cannot hold a bowl or spoon themselves. Cutlery as we know it is a relatively recent introduction and forks appear much later in history than spoons. Martin is in the process of collating articles of interest around the history and culture of spoons, and is considering putting them into a book.

Martin has also been researching the 11th-century saint Peter Damian and reads a missal each morning from the Society of Paul. Carving is part of the core of Martin's spiritual practice and, for him, is a form of

meditation. In fact, he has taught carving as a meditation at the Quaker meeting house and the Catholic church.

Martin also makes colourful necklaces of carved beads dyed with plants and threaded on cord that he twists himself from garden fibres. These can be used as prayer beads, although sometimes they are adorned with a miniature spoonlet or scooplet where a pendant would usually hang.

These items are for sale at the Ink and Page shop on West Street, Bridport (www.inkandpage.co.uk) and will also be available at the makers' fair at New House Farm, near Broadoak, on the first weekend of December.

For those who enjoy the Celtic calendar, Samhain celebrates nature's cycle and summer's end. Time to safely light a candle in memory of loved ones. The Hindu festival of Diwali, too, celebrates the lighting of candles amid the dark hours of winter's promise.

Anna Sullock



December services and events at St Swithun's:

Thursday 2	10am	Eucharist
Saturday 4	6pm	Contemplative Church
Sunday 5	9.30am	Eucharist
Thursday 9	10am	Eucharist
Sunday 12	9.30am	Eucharist
	4.30pm	Carol service with St Mary & St Catherine RC church
Thursday 16	10am	Eucharist
Sunday 19	9.30am	Eucharist
	7pm	Carol concert with the Ridgeway Singers
Thursday 23	10am	Eucharist
Friday 24	6pm	Eucharist
Sunday 26	10am	Team service at St Mary's Bridport

January services at St Swithun's

Saturday 1	6pm	Contemplative Church
Sundays	9.30am	Eucharist
Thursdays	10am	Eucharist
Sunday 30	10am	Team service at St Swithun's

Community coffee morning on the first Thursday every month 10.45–11.45am (after 10am Mass)

Bridport UNITED CHURCH

Minister – The Revd John Yarrien
01305 262421
Church secretary – Sue Herman
422598 / bridportsec@gmail.com

incorporating
UPLODERS CHAPEL

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

“Come, long expected Jesus, shine your light of love”

As we come into another busy festive season, I thank God for all that we have been able to do in 2021, and pray with all my heart that as 2022 unfolds, by God’s grace and provision, we will continue to find a way through as we seek to build the kingdom in our wonderful community at Bridport United Church.

I am looking forward this year to seeing some of those key Bridport Christmas events and outreaches that simply weren’t possible last year. I’m interested to see the sparkle of the Christmas tree festival, and the joy of the Christmas Eve carol service (24 December at 3pm) and a new event this year, ‘Folk Carols’ (10 December at 7pm – see below). I am also looking forward to ‘big breakfast’ at our Christmas coffee morning on 11 December.

Carols and Christmas music make my heart sing, so I’m looking forward to sharing with you some familiar tunes and words as we journey together towards Christmas Day and the arrival of our prince of peace, Jesus, light of the world.

This Advent season is a chance for us to pause, to reflect on the year, and indeed to look forward to the opportunities that God is placing before us in 2022. I recognise that it has been a challenging year, in many ways, for all people. As the tinsel goes up and the lights sparkle on our Christmas trees, I want to thank all those who continue to work hard so that we can safely offer some of our regular activities.

From a young couple journeying to Bethlehem, to visits from angels, not forgetting dumbstruck shepherds on the hillside and the traversing kings from afar who are yet to visit, the Advent and Christmas story is one of light, awe and wonder. I pray that in this season of hope, God may continue to open your hearts and minds to the majesty and wonder of Jesus, Immanuel (God with us).



FOLK CAROLS
7PM FRIDAY 10TH DECEMBER
BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH, EAST STREET

Join us among the trees and twinkling lights
to enjoy folky carols, poems and a hearty sing.

Suitable for all ages, craft table for children.
Bring a mug for us to fill with something
warm and delicious.

In the words of the wonderful hymn:
*Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.*



In the busyness of this season, may you find space to see Christ at the centre of our celebrations. Cora and I would like to wish you a very blessed Christmas and a happy new year 2022. May you be filled with the hope, peace and grace of Christ as we continue our journey together here at Bridport United Church.

The Revd John Yarrien

December services at Bridport United Church:

Sunday 5	10.30am	Peter Kershaw (Communion)
	4pm	Soul Space with tea and cake
Tuesday 7	7pm	Opening service for our Christmas tree festival
Sunday 12	10.30am	Revd John Yarrien (toy service)
Sunday 19	10.30am	Jennie McGinlay
Friday 24	3pm	Carol service – all welcome
Saturday 25	10.30am	Peter Kershaw (family worship)
Sunday 26	No service at Bridport United Church	

January services:

Sunday 2	10.30am	Peter Kershaw
	4pm	Soul Space with tea and cake
Sunday 9	10.30am	Revd John Yarrien (Covenant service with Holy Communion)
Sunday 16	10.30am	Gill Bumphrey
Sunday 23	10.30am	Jennie McGinlay
Sunday 30	10.30am	leader to be confirmed

Other dates for your diary in December

Thursday 2	7pm	A Christmas Carol in the church
Saturday 4	10am	Craft fair in the hall
Wednesday 8–Sunday 19		Christmas tree festival – open 11am–4pm most days, 2–4pm on Sundays
Friday 10	7pm	Folk carols in the church (see left)
Saturday 11	9am	Christmas Big Breakfast with stalls, until 11.30am
Saturday 11	7.30pm	Bridport Choral Society Christmas concert
Saturday 18	10am	Coffee morning until 12 noon
Tuesday 21	2pm	u3a Christmas meeting
Saturday 25	12 noon	Christmas lunch BOOKING for 12.30 ESSENTIAL (call 422598)

January dates for your diary

Saturday 1	3pm	Tea at the Ritz Please book by calling 422598
Saturday 8	9am	Big Breakfast until 11.30am
Saturday 15	10am	Coffee morning until 12 noon
Saturday 22	10am	Coffee morning until 12 noon
Saturday 29	10am	Coffee morning until 12 noon

From Uploders Chapel

Even after all this time of writing the chapel’s contribution, I still struggle to get my head in gear for writing the next month’s article when we are hardly into the previous month! However, I can say that the Revd John Yarrien did a lovely

UPLODERS CHAPEL continued...

service for us on the Sunday just gone (7 November) and we are looking forward to Peter Kershaw taking the next one.

We have also been able to enjoy some normality in the chapel, with a lovely meeting of our CAKE group on 2 November. Of course it did involve cake (of the eating variety) and lots of chat. We then contributed to the theme of ‘recipes and instructions’, which conjured up a lot of memories. Also Liz provided us with a recipe for Bible cake, which was fascinating, so I will check with her to see if I can let you have it in my next write-up. The chapel has also hosted two craft afternoons, which were very much enjoyed.

We are looking forward to the joint service at Loders Church but unfortunately, because of Covid, we won’t be able to host a meal at the chapel. However, I know Viv has some suggestions to discuss with Gillian Palmer.

While thinking of books I enjoyed as a child, one of my favourites was Anna Sewell’s Black Beauty, which I haven’t read for a very long time. I was reminded of it recently when a book I was reading started a chapter with a quote from

chapter 13 of Black Beauty: “There is no religion without love, and people may talk about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast, it is all a sham.” Well worth a thought!

So November has started being more than just Nice and we will pray that December will be Delightful. Of course January has to be Jolly as we head towards spring!

Love and best wishes for Christmas and the new year, from Uploders Chapel.

Carol Hall

December services at Uploders Chapel:

Sunday 5	11am	Joint service at Loders Church (Revd Chris Grasske and Revd John Yarrien)
Sunday 19	10.30am	Gill Bumphrey

January services at Uploders Chapel:

Sunday 2	10.30am	leader to be confirmed
Sunday 16	10.30am	Chris Smith

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Distant or close?

Won’t it be lovely to be able to be at school nativity plays, carol concerts and Christmas shows again this year? There is something magical about them. But not all my memories are undiluted pleasure! I was chaplain in our two Catholic secondary schools in Plymouth for many years and every year at Christmas the girls’ choir would sing Bette Midler’s song ‘From a Distance’. What a load of twaddle! There were some terrible lyrics that proclaimed: “From a distance, God is watching you.” I fought against it, but in vain. There was a very powerful choir mistress!

It was the very opposite of what Christmas is about. God is not watching us from a distance, trying to catch us out like some great ogre. He comes and enters our lives in the baby in the stable. Christmas is about Emmanuel, God with us.

He is not “at a distance”; he is closer than the air we breathe, he is with us as he is in Jesus. He knows what it is to be human, he shares everything with us – good times and bad times alike. He makes himself vulnerable like us – yes, even as vulnerable as a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. The homeliness of a child’s nativity, with 10 wise women, 12 angels who look more like fairies, and an innkeeper with a twinkle in his eye, bring that home to us in a way like nothing else. There is nothing “distant” about it at all.

May each of us know God’s closeness this Christmas and into the new year.

Monsignor Keith Mitchell

Sunday Mass is at 10am and is streamed online through Bridport Catholic Parish Facebook page and at www.bridportcatholics.org.uk. For updates about Sunday and weekday Mass in the parish, see our weekly newsletter on the website.

Christmas services at St Mary & St Catherine:

Friday 24 December	6pm	Mass of Christmas Night and blessing of the crib (carols from 5.30pm)
Saturday 25 December	8am	Mass
Sunday 26 December	10am	Mass



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Get involved: local clubs, groups and societies

We list groups' usual arrangements but not all have resumed activities after Covid so do check with organisers before making plans to attend a meeting or event. Please get in touch if you'd like your group to appear here. Unless otherwise stated, all phone numbers are Bridport (01308).

West Dorset Flower Club (Bridport) meets at the WI Hall, North Street, at 2.30pm on the second Monday of each month with speakers and demos. On Monday 13 December there will be a demonstration by Elizabeth Witcomb called 'The Magic of Christmas'. Phone 456339.

Bridport Blind Club is a social club for the visually impaired. It meets twice a month for tea, entertainment and chat. Part of Dorset Blind Association, which provides personal and technical help. Contact Ian Ibbotson 898484.

Bridport Stroke Club meets weekly Sept–Christmas and Feb–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.

Bridport Scottish Dancers meet every Wednesday evening at 7.15pm (7.30pm start) in Church House, South St, except first Wed each month which is at Salwayash village hall. First visit free, then £2 per session. Please bring the right money & your own refreshments. Contact Caroline 538141 / Malcolm 07790 323343 / www.bridportscottishdancers.org.uk

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

Bridport Choral Society rehearses on Monday evenings at 7.30pm at the United Church Hall. Contact Margaret Foster margefoster1956@gmail.com

Bridport & District Gardening Club is sad to report the death of its evening lecture coordinator, Peter Gough, in late September. As a tribute, the series of online lectures that he had arranged will go ahead, starting on Tues 8 March 2022 with David Ward speaking about the Beth Chatto Gardens. The club usually meets at the WI Hall, North St, on the third Thursday each month. www.bridportgardeningclub.co.uk

Bridport History Society will gather on Tuesday 14 December at 2 for 2.30pm in the United Church Hall for its Christmas meeting, 'Migration: a Journey in Song'. Members only. Membership is £10 individual / £15 for a couple (not due until Jan 2022). Contact the membership secretary on 425015 / celiamartin@hotmail.co.uk

Bridport Shakespeare Company theatre group meets every Monday at 7pm at Bridport Community Shed (near Mountfield). All ages welcome; no experience needed. Contact Valerie tasterella@hotmail.co.uk (also see p9).

West Dorset Music Community Orchestra meets on Wednesdays in term time 6.30–7.45pm at the Christian Fellowship Hall in East St car park. Contact 456297. www.westdorsetmusic.org.uk

Bridport & District Allotment Society (BADAS) is open to all. Membership is £5/year and gives discount at several gardening suppliers. Contact 250260 / email bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com. More details online at www.bridportallotmentsociety.co.uk

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

Bridport & District Model Railway Club meets each Tuesday at Askerswell village hall 7–9pm. Members can run their railway stock on the club's 'test track', or operate a club layout. Refreshments available. Contact Geoff Trenholme, the club's chairman, on 281379.

Bridport & District RNLI holds five or six events (incl. Seatown BBQ) each year to raise money. Volunteers always needed. Contact Sadie 07811 470127 or Annie 07790 713156.

Colmer WI meets on the second Thursday each month at 7.30pm in the WI Hall, North Street. Visitors welcome to come for a no-obligation evening. Contact Gill Smith 301201.

Golden Cap Association (West Dorset), in support of the National Trust, organises illustrated talks on the last Monday of the month (except summer) in the United Church Hall, East Street, at 2.30pm. Contact Mike Nicks 459855.

Bridport Bridge Club meets Wednesday evenings (duplicate bridge, good standard) and Friday afternoons (relaxed bridge, not 3rd Friday in the month) at St Swithun's hall, plus Thursday evenings online. Beginners' lessons starting in January. See www.bridgewebs.com/bridport for updates or phone Roy Tarsnane 425298.

The Arts Society (West Dorset) meets at Bridport Town Hall on the third Thursday each month at 2.30pm. On 16 December they have 'Here We Are Again: The Great British Pantomime' and on 20 January 'Ambitious Architecture: Rethinking the Meanings of Blenheim Palace'. Membership £50 a year; visitors welcome at £7.50 per event. Contact Sandy Lovelock 01305 848390 / sandylovelockat81@btinternet.com / www.taswestdorset.org.uk

Bridport & District u3a is for people in their 'third age'. No minimum age, but you must be no longer in full-time employment. Monthly meetings in Bridport United Church Hall with a guest speaker followed by socialising over refreshments. Also more than 50 u3a groups meet regularly, covering arts and crafts, science, history, walking, music, languages and more. Contact Vincent Sheppard 485763 / chair@bridportu3a.org.uk / www.bridportu3a.org.uk
The **u3a Singers Group** meets on alternate Thursdays at 10am at Bridport Town Hall. Contact Heather 425219 / www.bridportu3a.org.uk

Bridport Child Contact Centre facilitates contact in a safe environment for non-resident parents following family breakdown. Volunteers always welcome. Phone 07792 075972. www.bridportchildcontactcentre.org

Disabled Carers & Friends meet Thursdays 9am–noon at Vernon's Court Community Room, South Street. Contact pete.bowditch@hotmail.com / 423620 / 421213 / 427819.

Bridport ASCape for young people 7–11 & 11–18, parents and carers affected by autism spectrum conditions (ASC) or social anxiety. Contact Karen Wright wrightmail2@aol.com or visit www.bridportasd.wordpress.com

Bridport Community Fridge redistributes surplus food free or for a donation. Usually open Tuesdays and Saturdays 10am–noon at The Chapel in the Garden, East St. Also at

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St Swithun's Church with **Bridport Food Surplus Stall** on Thursdays 9.30am–11.30pm. Updates on their Facebook page or email events@bridportunitarians.co.uk

Bridport Community Front Room offers face-to-face support for people reaching a mental health crisis point or needing wellbeing support. Assembly Rooms, Gundry Lane. Thurs–Sun, 3.45–10.45pm. Appointments 07385 290804.

Harmony Drop-in provides a safe, social space and peer support to aid the recovery journey of adults in the Bridport area who are living with mental health difficulties. Our group (Mondays 10am–1pm and 2–4pm, Wednesdays and Fridays 10am–1pm) offers activities and support, fostering wellbeing and increased self-esteem. Contact 07597 379290.

Bridport Health Walks are free and take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Meet at 10.30am in Borough Gardens, Gundry Lane. Guided walks last 30–40 minutes on level ground. No need to book, just turn up.

Bridport Folk Dance Club meets every Monday evening 7.30–9.30pm in the WI Hall, North Street. Everyone welcome, including beginners. Phone 458165 or 459001 for more details.

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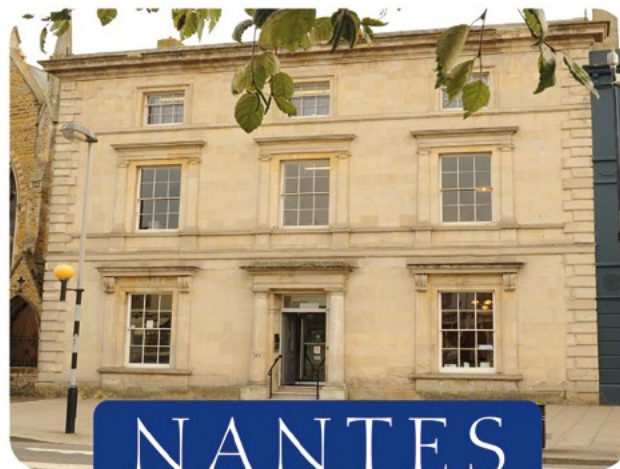
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