

December 2023 / January 2024

the **Bridge**

A community magazine for Bridport supported by the Anglican Church



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Opinions expressed in The Bridge are not necessarily those of either the editorial team or the clergy. 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.

The advertising and copy deadline for the February 2024 issue is 5pm on Monday 8 January

What gift will Christmas bring us this year?

Perhaps we yearn more than ever for lasting gifts. To see light shattering the gloom; to hear stories of hope despite the odds in these dark and difficult days; to know more of generosity and love in the world. It feels like these are the gifts the world could do with this Christmas.

So I share a story of love and hope written more than 120 years ago by the American writer O Henry. Why not give it a read this Christmas? O Henry's beautiful story is called *The Gift of the Magi*, and in it he compares the gifts that the three wise men (or Magi) brought for the baby Jesus with the gifts that his characters, Jim and Della, give and receive one Christmas.

Della and Jim are a young couple who are poor but very much in love. Life is hard, but as Christmas approaches they want above all to give each other a heartfelt gift. Jim adores Della's beautiful hair and knows how much it means to her, and he longs to buy her lovely hair combs to wear in her glorious locks. Della knows Jim's gold watch is his most treasured possession and wants to buy a gold fob chain for it, so he can wear it in his waistcoat. But neither has much money to spend.

When Christmas Eve comes, Jim is so excited to give Della the sparkling hair combs that will make her crowning glory lovelier than ever. As he gives them to her, she starts to weep, and takes her hat off to reveal that she has cut her hair short. Della presses her parcel into Jim's hands, and

he sees she has given him a beautiful fob chain, so he can wear his magnificent watch in his waistcoat pocket. He looks sad, and says he no longer has the watch.

It turns out Della sold her precious hair to buy a gift for

Jim, and Jim sold his watch to do the same for his wife.

The young couple gave everything they had to give a gift of love to each other. The story ends with these words:

"The Magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts

to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the Magi."

The Revd Canon Deb Smith, Team Rector



Canon Deb Smith

'Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi'

It's a very merry Christmas in our eventful town!

December rolls around again, and with it another bumper two-month issue of *The Bridge*.

Bridport does Christmas really, really well, both in its churches and in more secular style in its businesses, shops and the wonderful market. We bring you details of all the services and other happenings that make the run-up to the big day so special, including this year's

Christmas Cheer evening in the town centre (page 5) and events organised by Churches Together (page 9).

For this issue I had the great pleasure of meeting both inspirational artist Grace Crabtree and the Revd Neil Robinson, the Salisbury Diocese's Chaplain to the Deaf Community. I hope you find their stories as compelling as I did.

We'll be back in February with a brand new magazine – which I hope will please our delivery volunteers – so watch this space! Meanwhile, the Bridge team and I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and above all peaceful new year. Despite the hardships that many in our community face, we are truly blessed to be able to live in peace in this country.



Olivia Daly
Editor

Come for beer and carols!

Raise a glass and sing your hearts out – that's the invitation from St Mary's Bridport's 'local' during the run-up to Christmas.

"Thanks to the generous invitation from landlord Darren Moore, all are welcome to join in an evening of beer and carols at The Woodman, opposite St Mary's," says Canon Deb Smith. "Everyone loves to sing carols and many of us love beer, too – so what's not to like?"

"The tradition of carols in pubs is an old one, and though we obviously give a warm welcome to everyone joining us in church for our wonderful carol services around the parish, we are delighted to pop across the road to the pub, too, to sing more carols and toast the coming of Christmas!"

Come along on Wednesday 20 December at 7pm. There will be brass musicians to accompany the happy throng, plus much festive cheer and the potential to raise the rafters.



This issue's cover image is 'Rising Ground (unfurling)' by artist Grace Crabtree, who created the painting from photos and memories of a misty walk above Lake Windermere. You can read about Grace and her forthcoming exhibition at Bridport Arts Centre on pages 8 and 9.

The Mothers' Union will pray for peace

Lighting a candle is a sign of hope and a way to gather others in prayer – and Mothers' Union members in the parish are inviting others to pray with them. All are welcome to gather for an hour in St Mary's Bridport on Monday 11 December to take part in a vigil of silent and spoken prayer for peace in our world. Prayer will be offered around the votive candles, which many people light through the week as a sign of their prayers. Michele Craddock, an MU member, will be leading the prayer vigil from 12 noon to 1pm. And even if you cannot get to church in person, why not join in wherever you are – even at home from your sofa – keeping the vigil of silence and spoken prayer with others across the town.

Read Easy reaches new ground

Bridport Read Easy, the volunteer-led reading programme for adults, is building on its success here by reaching north to cover rural areas towards Yeovil and a little further west so it has a presence in Ilminster, which is not served by the Taunton Read Easy group. "We have made a start and have two readers in Martock and one in Crewkerne, and have made links with libraries in both towns and in Yeovil," says Team Leader Alli Baldwin. "This has involved recruiting local coaches who have also joined our management team so they can carry out tasks such as venue checks."

Royal honour for Bridport mental health charity

The Burrough Harmony Centre has been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an individual receiving an MBE.

Join in the fun at a very special Christmas Day lunch for the community

If you're going to be alone on Christmas Day, and you'd rather not be – or if you know someone who's in that position – then you'll want to know about Bridport's special community Christmas lunch.

The event is taking place on Monday 25 December at Bridport United Church Hall on East Street. Doors will open at 12 noon and lunch will be served at 12.30pm. The meal will be a traditional turkey roast with all the trimmings.

To book please contact Sue Herman on 01308 422598 / bridportsec@gmail.com. Please let her know about any dietary requirements and whether you need transport.

Helping out on the day is also huge fun, so if you'd like to volunteer and get involved, please email Peter Wilson: peterjwilson8@btinternet.com.



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Enjoy some family Christmas Cheer in Bridport this month

Bridport town and its retailers are kicking off the festive season with Christmas Cheer, an evening of family fun on Wednesday 6 December.

All the town's Christmas decorations and tree will be up across and along the streets and the Town Hall – including its eye-catching clock – and shopkeepers will have decorated their windows and stocked up with gifts and goodies to sell. There will even be a chance for shoppers to vote for their favourite Christmas window. All the hospitality businesses, too, will be ready to serve delicious treats.

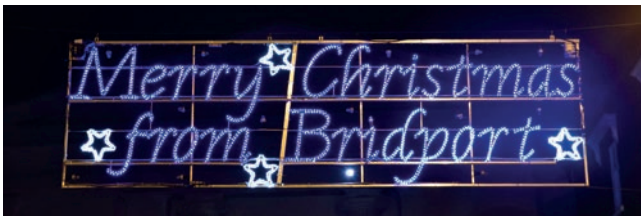
There will be a Christmas market along East, West and South Streets with many of the regular traders, plus a great selection of arts and crafts and charity stalls in the Town Hall and Arts Centre, and charity Christmas cards on sale in the Tourist Information Centre for Cards for Good Causes.

The Christmas entertainment will also include carol singing by local schools; a lantern parade organised by Mickey Bonome, who has been holding community workshops and working with local schools to make the lanterns; and a Christmas showcase by local dance school Perfect Pirouettes in the WI Hall in North Street (time tba).

Bridport Christian Fellowship will be singing carols and serving coffee and mince pies in East Street from 4.30 to 8pm, and the Christmas tree festival at Bridport United Church will be open (it runs until 17 December).

There will be a funfair in South Street and balloon making with Strawberry Jam, and of course Father Christmas will be there, too, in front of the Arts Centre.

Christmas Cheer will start at 3.40pm with carols by local



Santa in his sleigh at last year's Christmas Cheer evening

primary schools in Bucky Doo Square. Bridport Mayor Dave Bolwell will switch on the Round Table's Christmas tree lights in Bucky

Doo Square at 6pm, and the lantern parade will leave from the Lyric Theatre, Barrack Street, at 6.45pm.

"Once again we have a wonderful Christmas Cheer evening being organised by our committee of volunteers," says Daryl Chambers, Christmas Cheer Chairman and Town Surveyor. "It really is an opportunity for the whole community to get together to celebrate Christmas in our wonderful eventful town. There will be a host of attractions to enjoy, a chance to browse and do some Christmas shopping and sample some tasty Christmas festival treats. You're going to be spoilt for choice!"

Car parking in all the town car parks will be free.

Decorate your front door and win a prize!

Bridport Christmas Cheer is also running a competition to find the town's most festive front door. It's open to residents in and around Bridport and is free to enter.

Last year's winning door (pictured) was the work of Andy Violet and Tracey Dunford-Violet, who received a hamper of food from Mercato Italiano.

To enter, take a photo of your decorated front door and email it with your name, address and contact details to billy.shearer@bridport-tc.gov.uk by Thursday 14 December. Results will be announced on 18 December.



Come and wish Valerie a happy 90th birthday

Former Bridge editor Valerie Payne (pictured) turns 90 this month and anyone who knows her is invited to come and celebrate her big day at a special lunch.



The birthday bash is at St Mary's Church, South Street, Bridport, on Saturday 16 December from 12.30 to 2.30pm.

If you'd like to come along, please let Valerie's daughter Rachel know: rachelfray@hotmail.co.uk / 07789 676967. Happy birthday, Valerie!

Sharing faith and food at Wild & Messy Church

Wild & Messy Church is for children of all ages plus their parents and carers.

Everyone is welcome, so come along and enjoy themed activities, share a meal and explore our faith together.

The themes for the next two sessions are:

Tuesday 19 December – Christmas around the fire

Thursday 11 January – Journeys

We meet at St Swithun's Church Hall from 3.30 to 5.30pm. For more details please phone 07704 959426.



CHURCH SERVICES – DECEMBER

December 2023	St Mary's Bridport	St Swithun's Allington	Holy Trinity Bothenhampton	Holy Trinity Bradpole	St Mary's Walditch	St John's West Bay
<i>Friday 1</i>						
<i>Saturday 2</i>			6pm Service of Light			
Sunday 3 <i>Advent 1</i>	10am PARISH HC with Bishop of Salisbury					4pm Churches Together carols
<i>Monday 4</i>						10am Morning Prayer
<i>Tuesday 5</i>				2.30pm HC		
<i>Wednesday 6</i>	2.30pm HC					
<i>Thursday 7</i>		10am Eucharist			10am Morning Praise	
<i>Friday 8</i>						
<i>Saturday 9</i>						
Sunday 10 <i>Advent 2</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC	9.30am Eucharist 4pm CC (hall)	11am Morning Praise	9.30am Morning Praise / Christingle		11am HC
<i>Monday 11</i>						10am Morning Prayer
<i>Tuesday 12</i>						
<i>Wednesday 13</i>						
<i>Thursday 14</i>		10am Eucharist			10am Morning Praise	
<i>Friday 15</i>						
<i>Saturday 16</i>			6pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols			
Sunday 17 <i>Advent 3</i>	8am BCP HC 11am Morning Praise with carols	9.30am Eucharist 4pm Carol service	11am HC	3pm Carol service	3pm Carol service	11am Morning Praise
<i>Monday 18</i>						10am Morning Prayer
<i>Tuesday 19</i>						
<i>Wednesday 20</i>						
<i>Thursday 21</i>	7.30pm Blue Light carol service	10am Eucharist				
<i>Friday 22</i>						
<i>Saturday 23</i>	11am Bridport Nativity					
Sunday 24 <i>Advent 4</i> <i>Christmas Eve</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC 4pm Crib service 11.30pm HC	6pm HC	11am Matins 8pm HC	4pm Crib service 10pm HC		
<i>Monday 25</i> <i>Christmas Day</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC			10am Christmas Praise	11am HC	11am HC
<i>Tuesday 26</i>						Carols after the Boxing Day swim, early afternoon
<i>Wednesday 27</i>						
<i>Thursday 28</i>		10am Eucharist				
<i>Friday 29</i>						
<i>Saturday 30</i>						6pm Service of Wholeness and Healing
Sunday 31		9.30am HC		9.30am HC		

HC = Holy Communion / BCP = Book of Common Prayer / CC = Contemplative Church

January 2024	St Mary's Bridport	St Swithun's Allington	Holy Trinity Bothenhampton	Holy Trinity Bradpole	St Mary's Walditch	St John's West Bay
Monday 1						10am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 2				2.30pm HC		
Wednesday 3	2.30pm HC					
Thursday 4		10am Eucharist			10am Morning Praise	
Friday 5						
Saturday 6						
Sunday 7 <i>1st after Epiphany</i>	8am BCP HC 4pm Epiphany carol service	4pm CC (hall)		10am PARISH HC SERVICE		
Monday 8						10am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 9						
Wednesday 10						
Thursday 11		10am Eucharist			10am Morning Praise	
Friday 12						
Saturday 13						
Sunday 14 <i>2nd after Epiphany</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC	9.30am Eucharist	11am Morning Praise	9.30am Morning Praise		11am HC
Monday 15						10am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 16						
Wednesday 17						
Thursday 18		10am Eucharist			10am Morning Praise	
Friday 19						
Saturday 20						
Sunday 21 <i>3rd after Epiphany</i>	8am BCP HC 11am Morning Praise	9.30am Eucharist	11am HC	9.30am HC 11.30am Bradpole Brunch (village hall)	11am HC	11am Morning Praise
Monday 22						10am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 23						
Wednesday 24						
Thursday 25		10am Eucharist				
Friday 26						
Saturday 27						6pm Service of Wholeness and Healing
Sunday 28 <i>4th after Epiphany</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC	9.30am Eucharist	11am Matins	9.30am Morning Praise		11am Morning Praise
Monday 29						10am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 30						
Wednesday 31						

HC = Holy Communion / BCP = Book of Common Prayer / CC = Contemplative Church



Churches Together in Bridport & District Epiphany carol service

Sunday 7 January at 4pm • St Mary's Church, South Street
Followed by tea, coffee and biscuits • All welcome!



Elemental Drift: Grace's art is re

Artist Grace Crabtree – who painted this issue's beautiful cover image – is looking forward to her first solo exhibition, which opens at Bridport Arts Centre (BAC) in January. We caught up with her to learn about her creative process and find out what inspires her...

The Covid pandemic changed all of us, at least a little, and for Grace Crabtree that change revealed itself in her work.

Grace was born in Bridport and went to school at Colfox before taking an art foundation course at Falmouth University and then a degree in fine art at the Ruskin School of Art, part of Oxford University. She now has a studio at her partner's house, deep in the Dorset countryside near Netherbury, and divides her time between there and her family home in town.

"During the lockdowns, I spent time wandering the countryside around my studio," she says, "and I found myself drawn to painting the landscape more, rather than the figures and abstract pieces I'd concentrated on before.

"That time of lockdown isolation, spent in nature, also cemented my interest



Above: 'The Book of Hours', buon fresco and casein secco on terracotta tile, 2023

in traditional techniques, in working with local materials and using what the earth provides. At the Ruskin, one of my tutors introduced me to the process of making my own paints – particularly egg tempera, made from hand-ground pigments and an egg-yolk binder – and that engagement in materials has become very important to me. And then it was on a trip to the Roussillon ochre mines in 2017, where first I gathered pigments and experimented with making my own paints."

Grace graduated in 2019, then undertook two residencies, one in the south of France, then a second in Lisbon, where she spent a month before the pandemic hit.

"The residencies gave me two very different experiences," she says. "First I was in a small village in the French countryside, exploring the landscape of hills, caves and castles.

"In Lisbon, the bustling Portuguese capital, I joined a residency programme called Zaratan, and worked on a series of figurative charcoal drawings inspired by a 15th-century polyptych [series of panels] by Nuno Gonçalves." Grace showed two of these drawings in a 2021 multi-disciplinary event at Bridport Arts Centre called Return of the Natives 2.

Inspiration from medieval frescoes

Last year Grace spent five weeks in Cyprus, where her exploration of the coastline and experiences of the island's culture and mythology also came to inform her work. She also took a course in Sardinia, as part of an Arts Council grant to learn the techniques of fresco painting. She cites mural and fresco painting as one of her greatest influences – she wrote her degree dissertation on the subject – and much of her recent work uses fresco techniques.

"I've been visiting medieval wall paintings in Sussex and Essex churches," she says. "Some of the churches are tiny, but they have the most extraordinary frescoes. The Lewes Group of wall paintings, for instance, are very simple because the priory didn't have much money, but they are made with local materials – red and yellow ochre, lime white and carbon black. The effects are amazing, and the colours are warm and glowing."

Grace has been experimenting with these techniques in her own work, using 'buon' (true) fresco, where pigment is applied to fresh plaster that's still damp.



Words by Olivia Daly • Images courtesy of Grace Crabtree

Left: 'The River's Bend', egg tempera on primed paper, 2022



ooted in traditional techniques

She has produced a number of small pieces on terracotta, plus some larger ones on marine plywood covered with hessian and then plastered with lime mortar. Together with some sketches, large-scale charcoal drawings and egg tempera paintings, these will be on display at her first solo exhibition, *Elemental Drift*, which is at Bridport Arts Centre's Allsop Gallery in January.

A host of other skills and interests

Grace is an accomplished writer and is interested in film, too. She is involved with Chasing Cow, a group of artists and filmmakers – mostly recent graduates – who make narrative films and produce a quarterly magazine called *Matter Out of Place (MOOP)*. Last year she directed an adaptation of 'The Wind Blows', based on a short story by Katherine Mansfield and shot here in West Dorset. Chasing Cow launched the film last year and Grace has recently shown it at an "intense academic conference" in France, where she spoke about the adaptation process as a form of translation.

She also writes for *MOOP* and is subeditor for *STIR* magazine, produced by the national economic development co-operative *Stir to Action*.



Above: Grace Crabtree working during a fresco course in Sardinia

Elemental Drift is at Bridport Arts Centre's Allsop Gallery from 13 January to 3 February 2024, with a private view on 12 January.

There's a video tour of the 2021 *Return of the Natives 2* exhibition on BAC's YouTube channel here: www.tinyurl.com/57ef7b5v

www.gracecrabtree.co.uk • www.chasingcow.co.uk

Churches Together in Bridport & District: December events

December is a busy month for CTiBD as we begin on Advent Sunday (3 December) with the lighting of the West Bay Christmas tree. In conjunction with West Bay Days, we gather in St John's at 3pm for the presentation of their annual awards, so come along and hear about their events and achievements over the last year. A short carol service follows, and then the lighting of the tree as the sun sets.

Blue Light Carol Service

Thursday 21 December at 7.30pm

St Mary's Church, South Street, Bridport

For many years we have invited members of our Emergency Services and their families, friends and supporters to join us for a celebration of seasonal carols and readings. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Many of those people will be working or on call on Christmas Day when the rest of us are enjoying ourselves,

and this service acknowledges their dedication and hard work.

The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset – one of the patrons of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance – will attend.

Bridport Nativity is on Saturday 23 December at 11am in St Mary's Bridport. If you'd like to take part, please contact me at philipringer@aol.com – shepherds, angels, wise men all required. Buster the donkey will be there too!

Community carols on Boxing Day

After the swim (or at 12.30pm anyway) we will gather around the Christmas tree at West Bay (or in St John's Church, if wet) for half an hour of favourite carols before lunch. Do please come along as you are, and bring your family, friends and visitors.

The Revd Philip Ringer, Chairman of CTiBD and Divisional Chaplain to Bridport Police

Bridport Choral Society *presents*

Ring Christmas Bells



An evening of festive music across the centuries, with traditional and modern songs and carols including Madrigal for Christmas and the Hallelujah Chorus

Musical Director: James Crawshaw

Accompanist: Peter Parshall • Soloist: Anna-Maria Geare

Refreshments available during the interval

Saturday 9th December at 7.30pm, Bridport United Church

Tickets £12 from Smith & Smith, Bridport Music Centre or on the door



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MET Opera 2024 Season Dates

Jan 13 - Nabucco (Encore) | Verdi | 5:55pm

Ancient Babylon comes to life in a classic Met staging of biblical proportions.

Feb 3 - Carmen (Encore) | Bizet | 5:55pm

A vital new production of one of opera's most enduringly powerful works.

Mar 9 - La Forza del Destino (Live) | Verdi | 5:00pm

The first new production in 30 years, setting the scene in a contemporary world.

Apr 6 - Romeo et Juliette (Encore) | Gounod | 4:55pm

One of Met Repertoire's most romantic scores.

May 18 - Madama Butterfly (Live) | Puccini | 5:55pm

A vivid production of Puccini's devastating tragedy.

Tickets: Adult £17.50, Concs £14.50, Children £10

Available at bridport-arts.com | 01308 424 901 | Bridport TIC



La Forza del Destino

The Parish of Bridport

Web assistant required

The Parish of Bridport is looking for a web assistant to update its new website regularly. This is a voluntary role and would involve about three and a half hours' work each week. Training will be provided.

For more information, please contact Sue Pollock: 07903 558568 or rognsuewbay@btinternet.com. Applications will close on Friday 12 January.



Bridport Area Development Trust

Volunteer treasurer & trustee

A charity aimed at improving life and resources for the community in Bridport needs a treasurer.

The Bridport Area Development Trust (BADT) has been responsible for many excellent initiatives in the town – not least the Literary and Scientific Institute and the West Bay Discovery Centre.

BADT is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee established in 2009, run mainly by eight volunteer trustees. The trust works in partnership to identify, plan and deliver projects that meet local need and provide long-term economic and community benefit to the town and beyond.

The trust needs a volunteer to oversee its financial accounting and reporting, ensure that controls on income and expenditure are in place and duly executed, oversee BADT's income, expenditure and cash flow, and liaise with, and where appropriate give direction to, BADT's self-employed bookkeeper.

The treasurer will liaise with the chair on financial matters and with external auditors/examiners as required.

The post will also entail the annual draft budget, monthly management accounts and VAT returns.

Some relevant experience in accountancy and/or finance is essential and experience of the voluntary or charity sector would be useful.

BADT Chair Phyllida Culpin says: "We are a tight-knit, focused, hands-on team and would be delighted to welcome a new member who is equally enthusiastic about actively giving something back to their community.

"The trust will consider any project in and around Bridport that has a regenerative benefit, especially if it is of an economic and/or educational nature, and a top priority for BADT support is sustainability."

For a role description and a recruitment pack, email mail@bridportadt.org.uk or call 07810 708591 for an informal discussion.



Helping Deaf people feel welcome in the church community: Neil Robinson

The Revd Neil Robinson is the Salisbury Diocese's Chaplain to the Deaf Community. He was ordained deacon in 2016 and priest the following year. His job is to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of Deaf* and Deafblind people, and this includes conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals in British Sign Language (BSL) with an interpreter providing a spoken translation.

Neil also offers an awareness course to anyone who wants to learn the basics of BSL and other ways to communicate. He visits Deaf clubs across the diocese and runs a monthly coffee gathering in Warminster with the help of a hearing friend to encourage Deaf people to socialise and develop friendships.

We met Neil recently after the parish harvest service, which he attended, to find out more about his life and his valuable work in the diocese...

The Bridge: Neil, you were born profoundly deaf into a hearing family and you've said that your parents took your deafness hard. When did you first realise that other members of your family experienced the world differently?

Neil Robinson: Culture can be a bit complex but I will do my best to explain. When I was a little boy, I heard nothing at all, but I struggled to follow what my family were saying. Mum could fingerspell [signing individual letters to spell words, rather than signing the words themselves] to communicate with me then. Dad couldn't sign well because of his war wound, which had damaged his left arm – it had only limited movement. They could hear everything but I couldn't. I recall Mum chatting away on a telephone in front of me. She said, "Say hello to your aunt." When I spoke on the phone, I realised



The Revd
Neil Robinson

that I couldn't hear anyone's voice at all. So yeah, I realised that I was totally different from my family because I lived in a silent world.

TB: When and how did you learn BSL?

NR: I was seven years old when I started to learn sign language at the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate. Before this, I never knew sign language as I was brought up in a hearing family.

TB: How much demand is there for your valuable services in the diocese? We can imagine you're very busy!

NR: It depends on what I am doing each week. Some weeks can be hectic with different things, and some other weeks can be quiet depending on whether I am needed.

TB: What feedback do you get from Deaf people about your work?

NR: Some Deaf people feel that my role as Chaplain does not benefit them in some ways, but I imagine it would take me a long time to gain their trust in order to build a good relationship. I have received some good comments from them in terms of leading the funeral services and I got some lovely feedback from a wedding service that I presided over during the Covid lockdown. They said that it was important for them to have a Deaf priest around them.

TB: What can hearing people do to make Deaf people feel less isolated, both within church congregations and in the wider community?

NR: That is a good question. It is important that they should learn basic sign language or basic communication tactics so they can communicate directly with Deaf people. Relationships between hearing and Deaf people can sometimes be straining, but I would advise hearing not to give up on trying to make Deaf people feel welcome.

TB: BSL is a fascinating resource and clearly a life-changing tool for Deaf people. How nuanced would you say it is? Do users add layers of meaning through facial expressions, etc? Does the syntactical pattern follow written and spoken English closely, or is it more general, expressing ideas?

NR: BSL is very much part of a culturally Deaf person's life. It is a natural language for them to develop freely. It depends on whether they are born to hearing parents or Deaf parents. I grew up in a hearing family so I experienced a slight delay in language development because I didn't understand what they were verbally saying. Lipreading is hard work for me, but I didn't mind that.

BSL has its own grammatical structure and syntax and it is a very visual language rather than a spoken language.

TB: You and your wife, Helen, had cochlear implants fitted in 2017 when you were both in your 50s. How would you describe the experience of hearing for the first time? Do you think it has changed your relationship with Helen?

NR: Yes, that is correct. Prior to having a cochlear implant (CI) fitted on me, I had this disliking attitude to CIs for a long time. I had never worn my hearing aids since I left school because I could identify myself as a Deaf person. ➔



Welcoming Deaf people: Neil Robinson continued

Helen told me a long time ago that she was thinking of having a CI fitted on herself and I was shocked at this. But I knew that I had to support her as my wife. A few years before my ordination in 2016, in a strange way I sensed that God wanted me to have a CI fitted, too. I thought about it for a long time because I was a bit uncomfortable at the time, but gradually I said to God, "Okay, I will do that."

We were probably the first couple to have our CI surgery done and have our CI activated on the same day. Wow! We were on BBC news being interviewed about our experience. I think that having

CI has changed me a lot as a person, especially as Helen's husband.

If you would like to arrange a baptism, wedding or funeral service in BSL, you can email Neil at deafpriest@icloud.com or send him a text on 07717 055219.

Salisbury's Deaf Chaplaincy Service holds fortnightly bible study sessions in BSL, alternate Wednesdays at 2.30pm on Zoom. To log in, use meeting ID 255 100 1505 and password DeafPray.

The Visual Word Ministry is a place to hang out with each other and with God and is conducted in pure BSL with an English voiceover translation for

hearing non-signers. Hearing BSL users are also welcome. Every Sunday afternoon at 2.30pm on Zoom: contact Neil for joining instructions.

** You might wonder why we've used a capital letter for 'Deaf' in some places and not in others. The 'uppercase D' Deaf indicates a cultural identity: it's used to describe people who identify as culturally Deaf and are actively engaged with the Deaf community. These people share a common culture and usually have a shared sign language. The 'lowercase d' deaf simply refers to the physical condition of having hearing loss.*

Sacred trees are all around us



The hullabaloo earlier this year over the felling of a sycamore along Hadrian's Wall is a stark reminder of our relationship with trees.

The Hadrian's sycamore may not have been old enough to be remembered by a lonely second-century Roman guard, but it had stood for many generations and created its own place in people's hearts.

One theory is that sycamores were actually introduced by the Romans, another that it was in the 15th century, so it is not a native tree. As such, its value for wildlife is limited, but it does serve a useful role in our (now much depleted) native forest.

As far as the Hadrian individual is concerned, however, these debates are

irrelevant. The reason its demise has caused such concern is that it was an icon – of place, stability, tradition and familiarity. How often do we abuse these great giants that populate our towns, villages and countryside? We tarmac them, trample their roots, fell them indiscriminately with little thought for their importance in the world and our heritage. These, after all, were the great oxygen builders of our planet's early years, and we are painfully aware of their vital role in stabilising the climate today.

In ancient culture, the sycamore holds many memories. For the Egyptians, it was a sycamore that connected the living and the dead, and in the Christian bible Luke tells us it was a sycamore-fig that

traditions Adam and Eve lived in the garden with the 'Tree of Life', from which they ate the dreaded apple. In ancient Celtic culture, the 'crann bethadh' was the tree that was always left when creating a new living space in the woods, symbolising the essence of trees as central both to sustaining life and as a spiritual symbol. In India the Bodhi is the sacred fig under which the Buddha sat.

In our modern culture, too, the sycamore can have great cultural value. If you visit the Martyrs' memorial in Tolpuddle, you will find one of the country's oldest, at 350 years.

More prosaically, a 2016 report found that London's trees remove over 2,200 tons of pollution from the air each year, and city trees substantially increase residents' wellbeing, reducing fatigue and irritability and so contributing to a reduction in crime.

Do you have a sacred tree? Have a look around and you're sure to find one in your garden, along the roadside or in the woods. Stop and wonder awhile – ancient or modern, trees populate our lives with colour and scent, majesty and memory. Let's treat them a little more kindly.

RAMBLER

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ST MARY'S Bridport

Parish editor – Peter Wright 456967

Director of music – Tim Linsley

07830 308701

Tower captain – Bob Hardwick 420632

A busy autumn at St Mary's

In October at St Mary's we hosted a range of services and events as we extended a welcome to many different people and organisations across the town.

In early October we welcomed members of the Broadside Sea Shanty Crew to provide entertainment after the monthly midweek communion service. This service meets the needs of the elderly or disabled who find the challenge of getting ready in time for a Sunday morning service too great. By arranging transport and having an afternoon tea, too, we allow people to re-engage with church and meet with others.

At the same time, the results of the harvest craft workshop filled the church and gave creative impetus to our thanksgiving for the harvest of the land, the sea, the orchard and the hedgerow.

At the end of the month, The Ridgeway Singers & Band filled the church with Dorset song and stories.

Every Wednesday morning we welcome the Bridport Food Bank (formerly Cupboard Love) which provides essential food and toiletries to 40–50 people each week who are experiencing hardship. Further support comes from the Bridport Clothes Bank, Citizens Advice and The You Trust.

On Thursday mornings in Church House Hall, 'Tots Time' welcomes 20–30 parents and carers with their pre-school children for a morning of play and song.

Two special services brought fresh insights to our walk of faith. The first was on Hospital Sunday, when we welcomed the Revd Jean Saddington, a member of the chaplaincy team at Dorchester County Hospital, as our preacher.

The second was Morning Prayer on Bible Sunday. People were invited to bring to church a Bible that had a special meaning for them and to share it with the congregation. We heard of a Bible given to a 9-year-old girl 60 years ago, of a Bible given for regular attendance at Sunday School, and of a Bible signed by a bishop and given to someone who came to faith later in life. Each one a precious memory.

We heard how the Bible – a collection of history, story, song and letters – came to be put together as one book and how it came to us today. How St Jerome in the fourth



Pictured: some of the exhibits in our Bible Sunday display

century AD spent 30 years in an underground cell in Bethlehem bringing together all the different bits of the Bible into one book and translating it into Latin, as this language was held in common across Europe.

We heard how William Tyndale in the 1500s was determined that everyone should have access to the Bible in their own language, but how the church was so fiercely opposed to this that they had him put to death.

The invention of the printing press enabled mass production and replaced the painstaking work of the monks faithfully and beautifully copying out the Bible by hand.

We waited 1,600 years to have the Bible in English, but many of us were surprised to learn that today one in five people in the world still do not have the Bible in their own language. Modern technology – smart phones, apps and now AI – has speeded up the process of translation, and it's predicted that in the next 15 years, 95% of the world's population will have the Bible in their own language.

Some of the Bibles that formed the exhibition on Bible Sunday are pictured above.

Peter Wright

Covid-19 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 Bothenhampton

Parish editor – Barbara Ffooks 423122

Children & youth worker –

Jean Mitchell 422127

Director of music – vacancy

From the parish editor

It is the beginning of the festive season, when people are planning to get together with family and friends, share meals and give cards and gifts. However, before we celebrate

Christmas there is the preparation period of Advent, and to mark its beginning Holy Trinity Bothenhampton is hosting a candlelit parish Service of Light with Advent hymns and readings. This is at 6pm on Saturday 2 December, followed by refreshments.

The December coffee morning will have a Christmas theme with carols from the handbell ringers, seasonal eats, cards, etc. Saturday 2 December at Holy Trinity, 10am till 12 noon. The first coffee morning of 2024 will be on 6 January.

The Luncheon Club will meet on Thursday 14 December for a two-course Christmas meal in a warm, friendly environment in the village hall. Please book with Heather if you would like to go to the lunch. The following one will →

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton continued...

be on Thursday 11 January, with a menu of beef or vegetable casserole followed by sticky toffee pudding.

The service of Nine Lessons and Carols will be on Saturday 16 December at 6pm in Holy Trinity. Donations will be in aid of The Children's Society. After the service you can join the Christmas social evening in the village hall, starting at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

Services in December start with the parish service at St Mary's Bridport on Advent Sunday (3 December) at 10am, welcoming the Bishop of Salisbury, who will lead the service. On Christmas Eve at Bothenhampton there will be a said Matins at 11am and a Christmas Holy Communion at 8pm. There will be no service at Holy Trinity on Christmas Day.

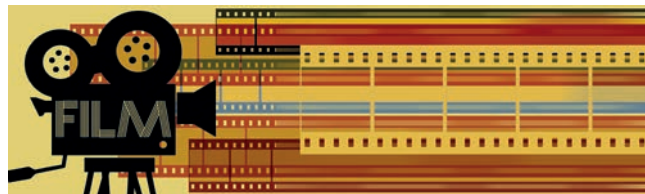
A memory tree in the Old Church (pictured below) was much appreciated last year, and this will be in place again for the whole of December for anyone who wishes to add a label in memory of a loved one.

Profits from the harvest ploughman's lunch and sale of excess ingredients amounted to £70, which will go towards the Christmas hampers.

The weed suppressant matting has now been laid on the path to the Old Church and covered with gravel, as shown in the photos below.

Good wishes, everyone, for a peaceful Christmas and happy new year.
Barbara Ffooks

Pictured: the path at the Old Church has been relaid with weed-suppressant matting and new gravel



**FILM NIGHTS in Bothenhampton Village Hall
Saturday 23 December and Saturday 27 January**

Films to be announced

Doors open 7pm, film starts at 7.30pm

Refreshments available

Please book by emailing lcnc2413@outlook.com

Luncheon Club

at Bothenhampton Village Hall

Thursday 14 December

From 12 noon; lunch served at 12.30pm

Come & enjoy a two-course hot lunch with others

- Roast turkey or nut roast

- Christmas pudding

Price £5.50 per head

Please book so we

have numbers for catering:

Heather Purse 423220 /

heatherpurse@yahoo.co.uk

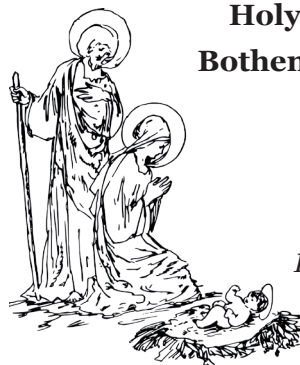


**Traditional service of
Nine Lessons and Carols**

Saturday 16 December at 6pm

Holy Trinity

Bothenhampton



All welcome

*Donations in aid of
The Children's Society*

*Followed by a social with
refreshments in the
village hall at 7.30pm*



**Bothenhampton Village
Hall Committee
invites you to a**

Christmas Social Evening

Saturday 16 December at 7.30pm

Refreshments provided

*This event will follow the service of
Nine Lessons & Carols*

HOLY TRINITY Bradpole

Parish editor – Douglas Baldwin 424232

douglas.baldwin@seaside20.plus.com

Distribution – Janet Robinson

07913 549946 / jrb-jrb@outlook.com

Tower captain – Janet Robinson

For pastoral or personal issues, please contact the Revd Janis Moore 425644 (day off Wed)

Bradpole Brunch

December's Bradpole Brunch will depart from the usual Sunday and venue – instead, Brunchers are invited to the church on Sunday 10 December for a children's Christingle service at 9.30am. The children (and adults) will be able to make Christingles, which are oranges wrapped in red tape, decorated with dried fruit or sweets, with a candle on top.



The following Bradpole Brunch will be in the village hall at 11.30am on Sunday 21 January.

Tots@Ten

The last meeting for this term will be on 13 December. We will recommence next year on 10 January.

We would like the children to bring their adults to the Christingle service in the church on 10 December (see above).

Village lunch club

The club will meet on Tuesdays 12 December and 9 and 23 January at 12 noon in The Kings Head. Please let Daphne King (01308 427552) know if you'd like to come so she has numbers for catering.

The Friends of Holy Trinity

The next Bradpole coffee morning will be on Thursday 7 December in the church from 10am until 12 noon. Please put this in your diary.

Holy trinity hosts a full peal on the bells

On the afternoon of Wednesday 29 November, a band of bellringers from Devon, Somerset and Dorset rang a full peal at Holy Trinity Bradpole, a feat that took just under three hours. This is a historic event as a peal hasn't been rung at our church for many years.

You wouldn't have been able to recognise a 'tune', however, since it is impossible to ring tunes on church bells without some sort of chiming mechanism. Instead they rang a 'method', a mathematically composed pattern of changes that the ringers must commit to memory. One of the band conducts the peal by making a series of 'calls' to ensure that no change is repeated and that it comes back into 'rounds' (i.e. the bells ringing in musical order from the highest note to the lowest) shortly after 5,000 changes have been completed. It's also the conductor's job to sort things out if a ringer makes a mistake. The ringer who conducted the peal has rung more than 5,600 peals and conducted more than 3,500 of them.



The Friends of Holy Trinity



Coffee morning in the church

Thursday 7 December, 10am to 12 noon

Stalls to include books, puzzles, bring-and-buy and jewellery, plus a large Christmas-themed raffle

To count as a true peal, the ringers must ring over 5,000 different changes. In addition to the physical challenge of ringing a bell for several hours – a particular feat for the ringer of the tenor bell, which is the heaviest bell weighing just over 762 kilos (that's 762 bags of sugar!) – there is the mental challenge of remembering the method and, for the conductor, remembering the composition.

Peals are rung for a number of reasons, maybe to celebrate or commemorate a significant local or international event, or simply for the ringers' satisfaction as they rise to the challenge presented by a particular ring of bells or by the complexity of the method attempted. This peal was dedicated to the start of the Advent season and the visit of the Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Stephen Lake, for our parish service on Advent Sunday at 10am in St Mary's Bridport.

Bradpole Parish Council

The council met on Thursday 5 October. The deputy clerk confirmed that the new gate at the old railway crossing had been installed. A request for budget requirements from volunteer groups had been received from Bridport Town Council (BTC) for their budget preparations.



The clerk said the Bradpole Buzz group would be meeting with BTC to discuss their requirements. She also confirmed that the new fruit tree planting was being progressed. A working group would meet to discuss and progress the archives project based on a timeline idea, providing a history of the parish council with Cllr Morgan as the project lead.

On the subject of Japanese knotweed on parish council-owned land, Cllr Chilcott said he had met with the member of the public who had raised the question, and explained the council's regime in place to deal with it. The clerk also confirmed that the area had once again been treated and was being well managed and controlled. She said she had met with Carl Stoodley of Forest & Tree Care Ltd, who confirmed that all the trees were in good order but the hedge at The Gore needed to be relaid, the tree branches on the left-hand side lifted, the hedge on the right-hand side cut down to fence height, and tree canopies raised.

If you have any issues you would like to raise with the parish council, please email the parish clerk: bradpole@dorset-aptc.gov.uk.

Bradpole Buzz Group

The group will meet on Saturdays 2 and 23 December, and 3 and 13 January, plus Wednesdays 13 December and 3 and 24 January at 2pm at Gore Cross recreation ground. Please bring your own gardening gloves to join in light maintenance around the village.

ST MARY'S Walditch

Parish editor – James Craddock 458725
walditchbridgejsc@outlook.com

Verger – Pat Stapleton 456421

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

Let's make connections this Christmas

'Connection not consumption' was the suggestion of a listener who phoned in to the Call You and Yours programme on BBC Radio 4, when the topic was Christmas and how to prepare for it.

That is a phrase to reflect on this December. The caller had decided to spend less time buying expensive presents, which might be quickly discarded – or re-presented as raffle prizes at a later date – and more time being connected to other people.

We do tend to meet up with our families at Christmas anyway, but there are other connections we could make, too: volunteer to pack or distribute food hampers to families; help to serve – or wash up! – a Christmas meal organised by a local group; join the carol singers in Walditch to visit the Hyde Care Home and entertain local households.

The joy of 'connection not consumption' may create new, and wider, friendships and will certainly last well into the New Year.

The Revd Ann Ayling

Thelma's hymn notes

O Holy Night

This carol originated in France, and its French title is *Cantique de Noël*.

In 1843, Placide Clappeau – an amateur poet and the mayor of Roquemaure, a town near Avignon – wrote the poem *Minuit, Chrétiens* (Midnight, Christians) to celebrate the renovation of the organ in the town's church. During a trip to Paris he persuaded composer Adolphe Adam to write a tune for the carol, and it was sung for the first time by opera singer Emily Laurie at midnight mass at Roquemaure on Christmas Eve 1847. It was an instant success.

John Sullivan Dwight, an American Unitarian minister, translated the carol into English in 1855. It was published in London and over time has been translated into many languages.

At Christmas 2004 the hymn was voted by Classic FM listeners as the most popular Christmas carol. Many solo artists have sung it, including Aled Jones, Perry Como, Nat King Cole and Katherine Jenkins.

The carol's last verse tells of how "His gospel is peace, all oppression shall cease." If only the world was like that today...

Thelma Pulman

Organist at St Mary's Walditch



Light the spire

The spire is lit during December
 in memory of baby
 Alexander John Scott



Walditch Garden Group

Walditch Garden Group is local and open to all, from near and far including beyond Bridport. You don't need to have your own garden to be a member, so do come and give us a try on the last Thursday of each month (except December). Our next meeting is on Thursday 25 January at 10am in Walditch Village Hall. Call me (424581) for more information or just come along.

Meetings are informal: we start with refreshments and a member of the group introduces a topic. There is always plenty of discussion covering a range of garden topics, plant suggestions, questions and our 'plant of the month' spot.
Jane Mowatt

Garden tips for December and January:

Bring in Christmas bulbs for flowering; give attention to winter flowering houseplants; avoid overwatering dormant pot houseplants; feed birds and provide fresh water regularly; prevent ponds and bird baths from freezing over; insulate garden taps and exposed pipes; prune tall bush roses to protect from wind; prune woody ornamental plants, fruit bushes and vines; chit early potatoes in January and start sowing early vegetable crops under cover.



A selection of Walditch Gardening Group members' photos



ST MARY'S Walditch continued...

The Catmus Carol by Thelma Pulman

To be sung to the tune of Away in a Manger

Awake in a cat bed
She can't go to sleep
She's thinking of cat toys
That she'd like to keep.
She's seen them in catalogues
And on TV,
And she's left her Christmas list
Pinned to the tree.

A catnip-filled heart and
A long piece of string,
A large kitty condo
with everything,
Cat videotapes and
A brush for her fur,
She's hoping that Santa
will bring these for her.



ST JOHN'S West Bay

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

News from St John's

As well as all our regular services, there will be the annual community carols after the Boxing Day swim (let's hope the weather is good for the swimmers). The West Dorset Singers (formerly the New Elizabethan Singers) have their carol concert at St John's on Sunday 10 December at 3pm. Everyone is welcome.

West Bay WI

This month's first meeting on Wednesday 6 December (10am to 12 noon) will be the regular Knit & Natter followed on Wednesday 13 December (2.30–4.30pm) by a visiting ukulele band and Christmas treats – something to look forward to! The first Knit & Natter of 2024 will be on Wednesday 3 January from 10am, then on Wednesday 10 January at 2.30pm John Davies will come along to talk about butterflies and the work of the Dorset Wildlife Trust.

The WI is always keen to see new members. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Alison Ridge on 01308 897293 or Maggie Hopper on 07720 056310.

Round and about the Bay

November came in with a roar with the arrival of Storm Ciarán and the devastation that it caused. The sea was magnificent, yet frightening. I was down in the Bay on the Thursday morning when the sea had breached the main flood mound and it came racing down between the Discovery Centre and the Bridport Arms into the harbour. I think I am right in saying it was the first time the temporary flood barriers have been put up in the Bridport Arms car park, but what a relief that they did their job and the



Flood barriers by West Pier and in the car park protected West Bay from Storm Ciarán

water was channeled into the harbour. A different type of temporary barrier was in place by the West Pier and it did its job (both pictured below). After the storm had passed, it was obvious that the sand and pebbles covering the East Pier and all along the Esplanade would take a while to clear. Let's hope we don't have another storm like that.

The Discovery Centre is now only open at weekends throughout November and then on 26, 29, 30 and 31 December. The new exhibition is up and running, with some fascinating items from World War 2 – one of the residents from Pier Terrace had even managed to lend the centre her ration book. How many of you remember those? With different half-term holidays across the country, visitor numbers at the centre were really good over a three-week period until the end of the first week of November, although it closed when the storm arrived. Sandbags were in place and no water got in. The centre hopes to have some more talks over the winter period so be sure to check for updates on its website or Facebook.

The West Bay Community Forum (WBCF) committee met in November and it was good that Will Austin, the town clerk, attended the meeting. He gave us updates on various things happening around the harbour and said the forum had been invited to send a delegate to attend a meeting of seven different organisations to get some ideas on handling the problem of litter in West Bay. The subject of car parking charges came up at the meeting and we wait to see if Dorset Council will reduce these charges next year.

The WBCF has just over 50 members, a very small percentage of the population of West Bay, which we were told will be approximately 1,200 when the new wards come into effect next year. Membership is £5 a year and members get updates on committee meetings. Twice a year we have an open meeting, which all members can attend. If you're interested in joining, you can email me for membership details: rognsuewbay@btinternet.com.

Sue Pollock

Forthcoming events

The lighting of the Christmas tree outside St John's is on Sunday 3 December at 3pm. See page 9 for more details.



ST SWITHUN'S Allington

Acting parish editor – James Craddock

allingtonbridgeswc@outlook.com

Distribution – Kevin Payne 07976 534517

payne.kevin6@gmail.com

Verger – Graham Williams 07969 826430

graham_williams11@sky.com

Lots of activity at St Swithun's

St Swithun's Church Hall was very busy on Thursday 2 November when we held the first of our two Christmas community coffee mornings.

We had stalls selling Christmas decorations, gifts and knitted items. Free hot refreshments were given out, including lots of delicious cakes, and there was a raffle with great prizes. As the weather was so bad after Storm Ciarán the night before, the Food Glut stall was also in the hall with us, and there were lots of takers for refreshments.

The next Christmas community coffee morning is on Thursday 7 December with the same refreshments and stalls selling Christmas gifts and decorations. We hope many people will come along and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

Wild & Messy Church is held in St Swithun's Church Hall each month to entertain children with activities, songs and prayers followed by a lovely tea. See page 5 for more details.

The organisers would be grateful for gifts that the children can wrap at their Christmas meeting, which is planned for Tuesday 19 December. The children will take these gifts home and give to family members at Christmas.

If you can give suitable items for the children to wrap (not too large, please) you can give them to anyone connected with St Swithun's or leave them in the church at the back on one of the pews labelled for Messy Church. Many thanks in advance!

Rose Harvey

Forthcoming events this Advent

Thursday 7 December: Christmas community coffee morning (see above)

Thursdays 14 and 21 December: Handing out of children's gifts, 9.30–10am. The gifts are kindly donated to the United Church by the people of Bridport. Tea and biscuits in the hall

Sunday 17 December: Joint carol service with the Roman Catholic church at 4pm, followed by tea in the hall

Tuesday 19 December: Wild & Messy Church

Sunday 24 December: First Eucharist of Christmas

For other services please see the table on page 6

Advent Group

The Advent group will meet in St Swithun's Church Hall at 11.30am on Thursdays 7, 14 and 21 December. We will be looking at and discussing Arun Arora's book *Stick With Love*. Bridget has copies to buy (phone 459875).

Christmas Cheer

The image of a 19th-century Christmas that Charles Dickens depicted in *Pickwick Papers* (1836) and *A Christmas Carol* (1843) has become an idealised template for the festive season. These two books include two of the most enduring characters in fiction: Mr Pickwick and Ebenezer Scrooge.



Pictured: This year's first Christmas community coffee morning at St Swithun's was a busy affair

A Christmas Carol has various themes that emphasise the message of Christmas. The poor humble clerk, Bob Cratchit, for instance, personifies generosity, whereas his rich master, Mr Scrooge, does not. Bob has a loving family around him despite living barely above subsistence level; the rich Scrooge lives a miserable, lonely life. However, as the story progresses, Scrooge's realisation of his past obsession with steady material progress leads him to regret his former life. At the end of the story he redeems himself through kindness to Bob, Bob's son Tiny Tim, and others. Dickens also emphasises other Christian values of charity, compassion and forgiveness. Christmas is portrayed as a time of generosity and good cheer, of being with loved ones, forgiving past wrongs, giving money to the poor and celebrating the festive season.

Food features in *A Christmas Carol*, too, with descriptions of various savoury and sweet treats. The items listed make

ST SWITHUN'S Allington continued...

up a feast, with turkey, goose, game, poultry, brawn, ham, sausages, plum pudding, oysters, chestnuts, fruit and punch. As a changed man, Scrooge gives Bob an enormous turkey for his family's Christmas dinner.

Pickwick Papers became a bestseller in then-standard instalment format. The novel chronicles the humorous adventures of the wealthy and kind old gentleman Mr Pickwick, and of assorted characters of the Pickwick Club, which he founded. The mince pie is featured, not in its modern form but as a much more substantial fare comprising suet, meat, fruit, brandy and spices.

As entertainment for the Pickwickians, Pickwick's friend Mr Wardle sings a Christmas song:

*But my song I troll out, for Christmas stout,
The hearty, the true, and the bold;
Give three cheers for this Christmas old!
We'll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart,
And we'll keep him up, while there's bite or sup.
And in fellowship good, we'll part.
To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,
As the King of the seasons all!*

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year,
James Craddock

Bridport UNITED CHURCH

Minister – The Revd Jane Wilson
01308 341159
Church secretary – Sue Herman
422598 / bridportsec@gmail.com

incorporating
UPLODERS CHAPEL

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

**Bridport United Church
Christmas Tree
Festival**

**6th - 17th
Dec**

**Mon to Sat 11am - 4pm
Sunday 2pm - 4pm**

Tues 5th : Opening Service 7pm

Fri 8th : Folk Carols 7pm

Sun 10th : Toy Service 10.30am

Sun 17th : Carol Service 4pm

Finding time for Jesus

“Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.” (Phillips Brooks 1835–93)

At this time of year, as temperatures fall, the demands on our time and resources usually go up as we spend more time looking for the right card, present, outfit or ingredients or the best carols and readings for this year's Christmas celebrations. Phrases like “There aren't enough hours in the day!”, “I don't know how I'm going to fit it all in!” and “I'm not ready for Christmas!” are commonly heard in homes, shops and sometimes even churches.

Sometimes it can feel as if Christmas has been overtaken by consumerism, especially in our Western society, so it's a good time to remember that the most important gift we can offer those we love and care about at Christmas is the gift of our time. Spending time with people we love and care about shows how much they matter to us.

Pastor Rick Warren writes: “Time is your most precious gift because you only have a set amount of it. You can make more money, but you can't make more time. When you give someone your time, you're giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back... the best way to spell love is “T-I-M-E.”

At Christmas we remember the stories of the people who gave their time to be part of God's plan to come and be with us, to share our humanity in the flesh, in Jesus. They made a choice, amid all the demands of their lives, to give their time to be actively present and join in with what God was doing.

Mary said yes to God's scandalous plan for her life. Joseph realigned his plans to fit in with God's. The shepherds gave their time to run to Bethlehem to see what the angels in the night sky had told them about, and the wise men gave their

time to follow a mesmerising star to its journey's end.

In each case their answer to God's question – “Have you got time for Jesus?” – was YES! And that meant they witnessed firsthand the world-changing arrival of the promised Messiah in the helpless baby Jesus in an animal feeding trough. When he grew up, Jesus made clear by the way he used his time what and who mattered to him.

It's the same with us, too, isn't it? The amount of time we give, not just to being with our loved ones, but to being with God and listening to whatever Jesus wants to say to us, is a sign of how important our relationship with him is to us.

Each New Year, many Christians choose to renew their relationship with God in the Methodist Covenant service, designed by John Wesley. The service is a way of recommitting ourselves to allowing God to decide how we spend our time. If you'd like to join in and make your own covenant promise to God, you'd be very welcome on 7 January at 10.30am at Bridport United Church and on 21 January at 10.30am at Uploders Methodist Chapel. →

Bridport UNITED CHURCH continued...

So as we celebrate again the wonder of God's love at Christmas, and as we step out into a brand new year, perhaps the question for us is: "Have we got time?"

Have we got time to offer, as a gift, to those who are precious to us, our friends and families, to others who need our care, and to Jesus? Can we offer our time, as a gift of worship, to the God who humbled himself and offered up his life on the cross to give us the precious gifts of freedom and new, everlasting life in him – a gift that no one else can give?

May you find time this Christmas to give to those you love, to come and worship Jesus, to receive with joy the gift of new life he came to offer us all that first Christmas.

And may God bless you richly with his love, peace and joy, this Christmas, and in the year to come.

The Revd Jane Wilson

December services at Bridport United Church:

Sunday 3	10.30am	Chris Warren (HC)
	4pm	Christmas Soul Space
Tuesday 5	7pm	Christmas tree festival opening service
Friday 8	7pm	Folk carols
Sunday 10	10.30am	Toy service
		Jane Wilson
Sunday 17	10.30am	Local arrangement
	4pm	Carol service with Jane Wilson. All ages welcome
Thursday 21	4pm	Messy Church (Nativity)
Sunday 24	10.30am	All-age Christmas service with Jane Wilson
	11.15pm	Midnight communion with Jane Wilson
Monday 25	10.30am	Family celebration
Sunday 31		No service

January services:

Sunday 7	10.30am	Annual Covenant Renewal service with Jane Wilson
	4pm	Soul Space
Sunday 14	10.30am	Chris Smith
Sunday 21	10.30am	Peter Jenner
	4pm	Jane Wilson
Sunday 28	10.30am	Jane Wilson



Regular events at BUC

Coffee morning every Wednesday and Saturday 10am to 12 noon. Light bites Wednesdays 11.30am to 1pm. Lunch Club usually fourth Wednesday but third in December.

Please note there will be changes to most groups' arrangements over Christmas and New Year.

Mondays	10am–noon	Art group (inner hall)
	1.30pm	Archaeology (inner hall)
	2pm	Art history (finishes 11 Dec)
	2.30pm	National Trust (last only)
	7.30pm	Bridport Choral Society
Tuesdays	2pm	Bridport Blind Club (first & third)
	2pm	Bridport u3a (fourth only)
	4.30pm	Rainbows
	5.30pm	Brownies
	7.30pm	West Dorset Singers
Wednesdays	7.30pm	Bridport Big Band (in church)
	12.30pm	Lunch Club (third in Dec, fourth in Jan). All welcome. Two-course, home-cooked meal. Please book: 422598
	5.30pm	Kickboxing (inner hall)
	6pm	Fitsteps
	7.30pm	Kickboxing (main hall)
Thursdays	2pm	Thursday Club (second in Dec, third in Jan). Tea, chat, games and crafts. All welcome
	2.30pm	Bridport History Society (second only)
	3.30pm	Messy Church (fourth only)
Fridays	6pm	Kickboxing (main hall)

Special events

Sat 2 December	10am	Christmas fayre with coffee morning
Sat 9 December	9–11.30am	Big Breakfast
	7.30pm	Bridport Choral Society Christmas concert
Christmas Day	12 for 12.30	Christmas lunch – see page 4. Please book: 422598
Mon 1 January		New Year 'Tea at The Ritz'. Please book: 422598
Sat 13 January	9–11.30am	Big Breakfast

From Uploders Chapel

Our first service in November was a lovely one taken by Tony Boyden. We also enjoyed having cuppas afterwards, enjoying our usual good ol' chat and each other's company. Later in November was the joint service with Loders Church – another lovely way of getting together – followed by a joint soup lunch at Loders Village Hall.

We also continue to be blessed with the friendship that Bridport United Church offers. We now regularly go to the Big Breakfast in the hall there and now go to the monthly Lunch Club, too. We very much appreciate the support the chapel gets – thank you so much. Also thank you to the anonymous donor of a bag of quince fruit, which we found outside the chapel last month. I am sure it is being made good use of.

It is now confirmed that the Pop Up Post Office will be every Wednesday but at 1–2.30pm. We hope this won't cause any problems and the wonderful support we get from our local community and further afield will continue.

UPLODERS CHAPEL continued...

Cuppas and cake are always on offer, whether you want to do Post Office stuff or just come along for the company and a chat. It's a great community event.

At our Cuppas & Cake event on Saturday 25 November we had some super items that we thought would make good Christmas presents, for which people were asked to give a donation that they were happy with. We will be donating the funds raised to the Disasters Emergency Committee, which helps folk across the world who are caught up in disasters and humanitarian crises. A win-win for everyone.

So let's make December as Donation-ful as possible and think of lots of Jolly



January gestures to help each other through the winter.

With love and best wishes for Christmas and the new year from Uploders Chapel,
Carol Hall

December services at Uploders Chapel:

Sunday 3 10.30am Steph Jenner
Sunday 17 10.30am Carol service with Peter Clark

January services:

Sunday 7 10.30am John Walker
Sunday 21 10.30am Covenant service and Holy Communion with Jane Wilson

**St MARY & St CATHERINE
Roman Catholic Church**

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

Messengers of hope

Santa and reindeers... turkey and sprouts... trees and tinsel... and Christmas and angels all come together at this time of year. What is it that these angels, these messengers of God, have to say to us? To Mary, to Joseph, to the shepherds and to us, they say: "Do not be afraid."

Fear is crippling, it is destructive and it disables us. At Christmas, Jesus entered a world of fear in an occupied country full of violence. As I write, this is yet again mirrored in the terrible scenes we are seeing in Our Lord's own land. The situation is full of fear for the people who live there and for the whole of the Middle East and beyond. Fear brings destruction and an inability to grow and create. How we need to hear those words: "Do not be afraid."

Surely, the answer to the fear that divides is coming together, trying to listen to one another and trying to understand one another. That is why God came into our world in the person of Jesus. He enters into our situation, our fears, and stands alongside us in all the mess that we make of his beautiful world. He is not remote from us, he does not watch us from a distance, he becomes one of us and experiences the mess with us.

We have to learn to trust one another. This is the only

way to real peace, and it comes by trying to understand our differences, to understand each other as people and begin to trust each other. Is this possible? The helpless baby born in the stable shows us that yes, it is. If God himself can enter into our world, surely we can seek to enter into the world of those we fear.

"Do not be afraid," say the angels. Jesus himself often speaks these words, too. When we fear each other there is division and mistrust, but when we seek to be alongside one another, then those other words of the Christmas angels can be heard: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth."

May the Peace of the Christ Child be with all of us this Christmas.

Monsignor Keith Mitchell



**Our Parish
Christmas Masses:**

Christmas Eve
(Sunday 24 December)
6pm St Catherine's, Bridport (with carols from 5.30pm)
9pm St John's, Beaminster
Christmas Day (Monday 25 December)
8am St Catherine's, Bridport
10am Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs, Chideock

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

**CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
King's Lane (in East St car park)**

Office 424437 • David Collins 458227
info@bridportchristianfellowship.org
www.bridportchristianfellowship.org

We are a member church of the UK Evangelical Alliance and an Ichthus Link Church. We meet for worship every Sunday at 10.30am and at various times during the week.

We seek to bless the community of Bridport with the Good News of Jesus, and everyone is assured of a warm welcome at our Sunday services or if they come to join in any of our activities.

Christmas is a special time of the year as we look →

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP continued...

forward to the coming of Jesus into the world. We will be celebrating with the following special Sunday services:

Sunday 17 December: At 11am we have our service in Bucky Doo Square followed by mince pies and coffee back at the church. At 4pm will we be having a Christingle service, which is a celebration for all the family, followed by mince pies and coffee.

Sunday 24 December: This year we will not have a morning service but instead will have carols by candlelight at 4pm followed by mince pies and coffee.

Our usual activities change during the festive period – see our website www.bridportchristianfellowship.org for more information. The usual pattern of events is as follows:

Mondays: Meals Outreach Project for those who find themselves in difficult times.

Tuesdays: Three House groups meet at 2–3pm, 2.30–4pm and 7.30–9.30pm.

**BRIDPORT
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

Wednesdays: One House group meets at 7–9pm. Precious Ones, our group for young mums, meets in the church at 9.30–11.30am.

Fridays: One House group meets at 12.30–2pm. You can also come along and join in our Art Group, 10am–12 noon. You don't have to be brilliant at art!

Saturdays: Pray Chat coffee bar with free tea, coffee and cake, 10am–12.30pm.

Sundays: 10.30am–12noon is our weekly service. On the first Sunday in the month, we also join together for a meal or BBQ after the service.

We wish the community of Bridport a blessed Christmas and a peaceful new year.

**BEACON CHURCH
Priory Lane, Bridport**

Church office 456031
office@beaconchurchbridport.co.uk
www.beaconchurchbridport.co.uk

At Beacon Church we focus on communicating with God through prayer, being family to all who come through the doors, and reaching out to the community of Bridport.

During the week we meet on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday lunchtimes as a place of peace and to be family for the hungry and lonely at the community kitchen (see right).

On Thursdays we also open the door at 5pm to provide a place for anyone to come and sit and rest from the busyness of life as we pray for the community of Bridport. Our Sunday mornings are very relaxed and Spirit-led as we follow a pattern of prayer and worship, teaching and fellowship.

We would like to welcome you to join us over the Christmas period. We have our family service at 10.30am on Sunday 17 December, for which we invite the children to dress as any character they like from the nativity!

On Christmas Eve we have a carol service from 4 to 5pm with mulled wine and mince pies afterwards. We'd love to see you but if not we pray you have a really blessed Christmas!

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Contact: Simon 07598 683456

Get involved: local clubs, groups and societies

Please contact the editor (details on page 2) if you'd like your group to appear here. Entries are free but are limited to a few lines and are for non-profit community groups and clubs and their events (not ticketed events such as concerts). Unless otherwise stated, all phone numbers are Bridport (01308).

West Dorset Flower Club meets at the WI Hall, North Street, at 2.30pm on the second Monday each month with demonstrations and speakers. On 11 December Irene Hickson will present 'A Twiggy Christmas'. Phone 456339.
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

Get involved: local clubs, groups and societies

Bridport & District Model Railway Club meets each Tuesday at Askerswell village hall 7–9pm. Members can run their stock on the club ‘test track’ or operate a club layout. Chairman Geoff Purse 423220.

Bridport Stage Company (formerly Bridport Shakespeare Company) theatre group meets on Mondays 7–9pm at the British Legion. They are preparing to perform *The Importance of Being Earnest* around Easter 2024. All ages are welcome; no experience needed. For more details email Valerie: tasterella@hotmail.co.uk

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

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 & District Gardening Club will meet on Thursday 18 January at 7.30pm at the WI Hall, North St. Simon Goldsack will talk about Holme Garden, Wareham, where he has converted a 24-acre fruit farm into a new public garden. There is no meeting in December. Open to non-members at £2. More information at www.bridportgardeningclub.co.uk

Bridport Bridge Club meets Wednesday evenings and Friday afternoons for duplicate bridge at St Swithun’s Hall, plus online on Thursday evenings. Friday sessions (not third Fri) are more relaxed. See www.bridgewebs.com/bridport or phone Roy Tarsnane 425298.

Friday Dance Group, just for women, meets every Friday 11.30am–12.30pm at St Mary’s Church House Hall, South St. Come along and enjoy dancing as you like to a range of music. First session free. More details from Sue 425037.

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

Free play singing, improvisation and earth/peace movement chants. Spontaneous compositions of sound; few words. Tuesdays 2pm at Bridport Youth & Community Centre, Gundry Lane, for about an hour. All welcome, £1 per person. Phone Pen 07713 008290.

Bridport Folk Dance Club meets every Monday evening 7.15–9.30pm in the WI Hall, North Street. All welcome, including beginners. Phone 458165 or 459001.

West Dorset Singers (formerly the New Elizabethan Singers) meet for choral rehearsals in the United Church Hall on Tuesdays at 7.30pm from September to May. For more information please contact the secretary, Sarah Stamford sastamford@outlook.com / 425312

Voices of Hope Singing Group is open to all ages and abilities. Easy, uplifting, joyful songs from around the world, some rounds and some in parts. Borough Gardens (off South Street) or The Chapel in the Garden if it’s raining, Fridays at 11am. Suggested donation £5. janesilvercorren@gmail.com / 07887 675161 for more details or to join the mailing list.

Dementia Friendly Bridport has spaces in its gentle exercise group for people with dementia and their carers. It’s run by a qualified instructor and volunteers. Tuesdays 1.45–3.15pm at Bridport Leisure Centre. Contact Debra: 07890 649561 / dementiafriendlybridport@gmail.com



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

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

Bridport Scottish Dancers meet Wednesday evenings at 7.15pm (7.30pm start) in Church House, South St. All welcome, no partner required. First visit free, then £2 per session (incl. refreshments). Basic tuition given in the first hour. Pls wear soft shoes if poss. Caroline 538141 / Malcolm 07790 323343 / www.bridportscottishdancers.org.uk

Bridport Youth Dance offers classes in contemporary, tap, street, urban and musical theatre plus specific boys’ classes. To enrol and for more details, contact Nikki Northover 07765 971357 / bridportyouthdance01@gmail.com / www.bridportyouthdance.org.uk

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 Sarah Fletcher sarah.fletcher33@hotmail.co.uk

Bridport Community Shed, between Mountfield and Bedford Place, opens Mon, Wed & Thurs 10am–12 noon. On the first Tues of the month there is also an evening stitching session (please book in advance). Contact 07593 880428.

Bridport Health Walks are free gentle walks around Bridport. We have a 30-minute walk every Wednesday and a walk of about 60 minutes on the first and third Thursday of each month. Meet at the front of the United Church on East Street at 9.45am and return for hot refreshments. No need to book, just turn up. For more information contact 01305 252222 / sarah.davies@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Bridport Tree Planting Group plants & gives away 1,000 trees a year in public and private spaces around Bridport. Three free saplings available per household. Help needed to water and weed young trees. Contact joe@thehacketts.uk for details and to receive newsletter. www.westdorsetfriendsoftheearth.org.uk/index.php/more-trees-please

Bridport History Society meets on the second Thursday of each month (except July and August) at the United Church Hall, 2.15 for 2.30pm. Visitors welcome, £4pp. Membership is £10 individual / £15 couple. For more information visit www.bridporthistorysociety.org.uk

Citizens Advice is here to help

Need advice on benefits, debt, employment or other issues? Pick up the phone and talk to us on Freephone 0800 144 8848. You can also email us via the contact form at www.bridportca.org.uk or drop in to 45 South St, Bridport (now open Mon, Tues & Thurs 10am–3pm, Wed & Fri 10am–1pm).



Get involved: local clubs, groups and societies



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.

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, Wednesdays and Fridays 10am–1pm) offers activities and support, fostering wellbeing and increased self-esteem. Contact 07597 379290.

Bridport Inner Wheel meets monthly at Haddon House, West Bay, to enjoy friendship and listen to speakers as well as helping the community. Contact Sue Pollock 07903 558568 / rognsuewbay@btinternet.com

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, 3.15–10.45pm. Appointments 07385 290804.

The Somerset & Dorset Family History Society (West Dorset Group) meets at Lodgers Village Hall. Members £1, visitors £3. Contact Jane: jferentzi@aol.com

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.

ASCape offers social opportunities and support for autistic young people and those with social anxiety aged 4–25 and their families. Contact info@ascapegroup.org or visit www.ascapegroup.org

Bridport St Mary's Parkrun is a weekly free timed run or walk organised by volunteers. Saturdays 9am at St Mary's Field. Great fun for all ages and abilities. Register online first then bring your barcode on your phone or printed out. Find us on Facebook or at www.parkrun.org.uk/stmarys

Bridport & District u3a is for people no longer in full-time employment. Monthly meetings are at 2pm on the fourth Tuesday each month in the United Church Hall, East Street. The talk lasts about an hour, followed by Q&A and refreshments. On 19 December (an exception to the fourth Tuesday pattern) at 2pm there will be a festive quiz with refreshments. This event is for members only. On 23 January retired author and playwright Brian Freeland will give a talk titled Women of the Raj. Members free, visitors £3. More than 60 u3a groups meet regularly, covering a huge range of interests. Contact Alastair Forbes 424166 / chair@bridportu3a.org.uk / www.bridportu3a.org.uk

The **u3a Singers Group** meets on alternate Thursdays for 10.30am start at the WI Hall in North Street. Contact Heather 425219 / www.bridportu3a.org.uk

Bridport & W D I Bowls Club invites you to a free taster session at St Andrew's Trading Estate DT6 3EX every Saturday 10am–12 noon and every Monday 6–8pm. All equipment provided. For details contact Brian 425247.

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

Bridport Community Carnival Committee enables both carnival processions to happen on the third weekend of August each year. Want to get involved with planning this sociable event for 2024? Contact joycedunford@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.bridportcarnival.co.uk

Bellringers in the Parish of Bridport: We always welcome new ringers and are happy to train you on our bells. At St Mary's Bridport we meet at 7.30pm on Thursdays. Contact Bob Hardwick 420632. At Holy Trinity Bradpole we practise at 7.30pm on Tuesdays. We have a ground-floor ringing chamber and training simulator. Contact Janet Robinson jrb-jrb@outlook.com

Bridport Community Fridge redistributes surplus food free or for a donation. Usually Tues and Sat 10–11.30am at The Chapel in the Garden, East St. Also at St Swithun's Church with **Bridport Food Surplus Stall** on Thursdays 9.30–11.30am. See their Facebook page or email events@bridportunitarians.co.uk

The Cowshed Wellbeing Gardens group meets Tuesdays 2–4pm and Thursdays 10am–12 noon. Gardening, talking, art and workshops for people with health vulnerabilities or wishing to enhance wellbeing. Access is to the left of Bridport Medical Centre. For more info please text 07769 720773.

MMMM! Monday Movie, Meal & Mingling is a weekly event from United Diversity Bridport (UDB) & Sustainable Bridport. Mondays 6–10pm in the White Room at the Chapel in the Garden, East St (entry via Rax Lane). Inspiring documentaries and short films by local filmmakers.

Admission £3 to cover room hire (UDB members free). Food and drink available. Info and tickets: www.ud.coop/mmmm

Bridport Branch Royal Naval Association meets on the third Thursday of every month at 7pm for a 7.30pm start in the Bridport & District Social Club, North St. Ex-matelots and all other ex-military are always welcome. Refreshments available. Contact Bob Bickers thebickerage@aol.com.

Stepping Out Bridport is an exercise and wellbeing programme, led by trained rehabilitation instructors, for people living with or beyond cancer. Monday and Thursday mornings at the Pavilion, Bridport Leisure Centre. All ages welcome. Contact j.perfect@bridportleisure.com. More info at www.steppingoutbridport.co.uk

Bridport Royal British Legion meets on the third Saturday each month at 10am for a coffee morning. Come along to our hall in Victoria Grove for a chat and to find out about membership and activities. The newly refurbished hall now has disabled access and is available for hire. Contact Linda 425664 (hall bookings) or Mike Thompson 07974 534945 / mickey_thompson56@hotmail.com (membership)

Life+line Bereavement Support is a Parish of Bridport initiative for people of all faiths or none, meeting in a supportive, confidential environment to listen to and encourage one another in our experience of grief. Fourth Monday of every month 2.30–4pm at Greenfields, Bridport Community Hospital. Contact Diana Wright 456967.

Bridport Dog Training Society has been active for over 60 years and meets on Monday evenings at St Mary's Church House Hall, South St. Contact club secretary Sue Palfrey 07787 289425. A trained dog is a happy dog!

Salway Ash Acoustic Sessions take place on the first Tuesday of every month at 8pm at the Anchor Inn. Sing, play, join in, listen, enjoy. Contact Harry Britton 421225.

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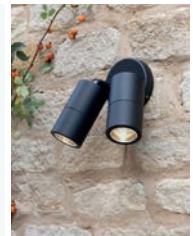
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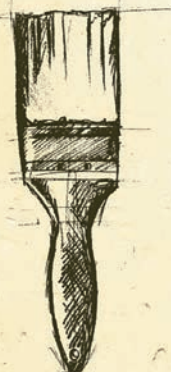
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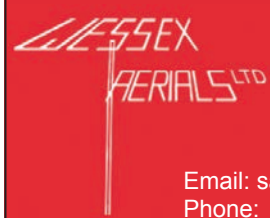
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