



MERE MATTERS

AND SO DOES WEST KNOYLE

YOUR COMMUNITY MAGAZINE
INCLUDING A GUIDE TO LOCAL EVENTS



**DECEMBER 2015/
JANUARY 2016**



MERE TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council meets every month. Whilst it is not a public meeting, members of the public are welcome to come and listen. The Council members are working on YOUR behalf to sustain and improve the quality of life and the environment that we enjoy in the parish - come and hear what they are doing for you! You will be permitted to raise questions in a public session before the meeting starts. The next two meetings will be held in the Andy Young Pavilion **at 7.30pm on Monday, 7th December 2015 and Monday, 11th January 2016.**

The Chairman writes:

On 8th November, I attended the annual Service of Remembrance and laid a wreath on behalf of the Town Council. The service held in the Square and at St. Michael's Church was very well attended. I would like to thank the Town Council's grounds staff Josh and James Suter for implementing the temporary road closure during the service in the Town Square.

With the removal of our Police beat officer in Mere, the Town Council invited representatives of Wiltshire Police to the November Council meeting to explain the changes. Police Sergeant Sparrow, PC Chilton and PC Tomkinson attended the meeting. Sgt Sparrow outlined the Community Policing Team pilot scheme which is now in place; he explained the changing police coverage in the Mere area. PC Chilton and PC Tomkinson answered questions asked by councillors. More details of this can be found in the minutes of the November meeting.

The Town Council also agreed to submit a response to Wiltshire Council's Consultation on the future of Children's Centres – urging them to keep the dedicated Children's Centre in Mere open. A full copy of our response can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

Members of the public complained at the November meeting about dog fouling - a problem that a few inconsiderate anti-social dog owners/walkers inflict on the many. For people who bag dog excrement up and throw it in the hedge and think that's a job well done, you are wrong! The Town Council has spent a considerable amount of money providing litter bins & dog waste bins. Please pick up after the dog and use the bins provided, or take it home.

Classes at Mere Lecture Hall

Create • Linocut Cards: 14th & 21st December £25 for 2 sessions

Watercolour Techniques: 4/1/16 Mondays £65.00 for 6 sessions

Creative Metal: 8/1/16 Fridays 10.00-12.00 £75.00

For details and booking go to: **www.laura-jolliffe.co.uk**

We shall be holding our annual budget meeting in early December. Throughout the year, the leader of Wiltshire Council, Cllr Baroness Jane Scott along with other Wiltshire Councillors, have been urging Parish and Town Councillors to significantly increase their precepts. Despite this, we will do our best to deliver a fair and balanced budget.

On a brighter note, the fire tender stationed in Mere was the first to have the new Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue livery and badge.

The Victorian Christmas Street Fayre in aid of Cancer Research will be held on Friday, 4th December. This event was a huge success last year and well worth attending. The Town Christmas lights will be switched on. As there will not be a Mere Matters now until the New Year, I would like to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

For information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas, contact numbers etc. please refer to the Mere website: www.merewilts.org, e-mail the parish clerk at: lindseywood@merewilts.org or ☎ 01747 860701

Brett Norris, Chairman, Mere Town Council

GEORGE JEANS, WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR, MERE DIVISION, WRITES:

As I write Remembrance Sunday has not long passed and I have also learned of the terrible events in Paris on the evening of the 13th November. Some local people in the Mere area spoke to me wishing to show that their thoughts were with the people of Paris. The French tricolor was displayed on two central properties of Mere, and many people I noted who use Facebook added the tricolor picture over their profile picture to support the people of Paris. Some residents from this area I know were in Paris during the weekend of the mass shootings. I cannot imagine how relieved their families were when they heard they were safe.

I very much respect Remembrance Sunday. Each year, as this year, I laid a wreath for Wiltshire Council. In Mere I am pleased to report, after the recent repairs to the Town Clock, it struck in unison with the Church Clock, as The Reveille was sounded. When I was younger, locally sometimes Remembrance Sunday was known as "Armistice". I noted the year the term Armistice was used in the media. The Armistice of the 11th November 1918 ceased hostilities between the Allies and Germany and brought the First World War to a close.

The South West Wiltshire Area Board (SWWAB) now has a total of three Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) The distribution of the three will be as follows, one for the Tisbury Community Area, one for Wilton Community Area and one for the Mere Community Area (Mere, Zeals, Stourton, Kilmington and West Knoyle). Stourton and

Mere can, if required, make more use of the device compared to recently when the Board had only one for use from Mere to Wilton. Two Councillors, I being one, as volunteers, move and fit the SID. Now that the Area Board has three SIDs in total, it requires a few more volunteers to simply take the SID from an existing location to a new location in their area. Please contact me if you think you could help.

The final completion of the newer part of the Downside Close roads, I have chased yet again this month. I have been informed, and have every reason to believe it to be correct, that a notice has now been served on the developer informing the company that the NHBC "are minded" to call in the assurance of money held "to complete the roads and lighting of Old Hollow Rise" as it was referred to in the original paperwork. This would be part of the "slow" due process towards the end objective of completion of the roads and street lighting.

I have taken the local youth mini-bus out for a second time, after attending a Mini-bus training course. On Sunday, 15th November, with a nearly full bus, we went to Otter Nurseries near Wincanton. Some older residents of Lynch Close, Bishops Close and Castle Hill Crescent in Mere had Sunday Lunch out and a pleasant walk around the nurseries and shop. A good time was had by all.

A reminder again the the South West Wiltshire Area Board still has moneys to help fund community projects; do you have one?

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, has confirmed that the Government will introduce a new Universal Service Obligation (USO) that should give everybody the legal right to request a broadband connection capable of delivering a minimum speed of 10Mbps (Megabits per second) by 2020. The Government would introduce a legal obligation, unlike now for Wiltshire Council's own scheme, in which we are committed to all having more than 2 megabits per second. 'Committed' is not 'statutory'. For those of you at present in the last five percent, Satellite Broadband may be an option, if you have had enough of waiting. Instead of using a land line, satellite broadband is very similar to how satellite TV works in that it uses a small dish on the property that receives information and transfers it via a cable to a modem. Satellite technology has improved over recent years and whilst it has restrictions, it is perfectly adequate for general internet use such as browsing web pages and sending emails. Examples of suppliers are Avonline, Europasat and Tooway Satellite Broadband.

In the new year, for those with less than 2 Mbs, they may be able to receive £350 from Wiltshire Council towards installation and equipment. They will still have to pay a monthly subscription. The list of approved suppliers may not be those shown above as I have only named these firms, should you wish to proceed now without any grant, or indeed if you find next year you cannot obtain the proposed £350 grant.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and new year.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION CHANGES

This information is specifically for Mere and District only. There will be no collections on 25th December, 26th December and 1st January 2016, hence the need for some changes.

Garden waste collections will be suspended after the collection on Monday 21st and restart on Monday 18th January.

You can check your revised waste and recycling collection dates, print off your waste calendar and check on Household Recycling Centre opening times at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/waste

If you have paid to have your garden waste collected at home, you can leave your real Christmas tree alongside your garden waste bin for collection on 18th January only. Alternatively, they can be recycled at any of Wiltshire's 11 household recycling centres.

Christmas and New Year waste and recycling collection dates applicable to the 'Mere Matters' circulation area		
Normal Collection day	Household waste; black box, and plastic bottles & cardboard revised collection day	Garden waste revised collection day
Monday, 28th December	Tuesday, 29th December Household waste	No collection
Monday, 4th January	Tuesday, 5th January Black box & blue topped bin	No collection
Monday, 11th January	Monday, 11th January Household waste	No collection
Monday, 18th January	Monday, 18th January Black box & blue topped bin	Monday 18th January

Household recycling centre opening hours

All household recycling centres will be closed from 1.00pm on 24 December, and also all day on 25 December, 26 December and 1 January. At all other times the centres are open during their revised normal opening hours, 10.00am – 4.00pm, five days per week. Please check when your local household recycling centre is open before travelling. You can check the opening times at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/waste or ☎ 0300 456 0102.

Please note that all household recycling centres are likely to be very busy over the Christmas and New Year period. Remember you can put out extra black box recycling by your box in separate plastic bags. Second black boxes and blue lidded bins are available to any resident free of charge.

Don't forget to recycle the following items this Christmas

In your blue lidded recycling bin - Christmas cards, cardboard tubes, wrapping paper (not foil or plastic).

In your black box - Chocolate and biscuit tins, clean foil, including cake cases and washed foil turkey trays, Christmas card envelopes

Donna Mountford, WC Communications officer ☎ 01225 718421

MERE LIBRARY NEWS


Volunteers Needed to Help in Library

We are currently looking for extra volunteers to get involved at Mere Library. Our Community Library Volunteers help to extend the library's opening hours with two volunteer-operated sessions on Mondays from 10.00am – 2.00pm and Wednesdays from 9.30 am – 1.00pm. This is a great role, if you enjoy meeting people of all ages, and have a love of books and reading.

Our volunteers provide a friendly welcome to all visitors and assist them with using the library services. This includes dealing with straightforward enquiries; assisting with the self-service machines; shelving the stock and helping customers to log onto the public access computers.

We are looking for volunteers who can be flexible about their availability and are able to do a minimum of two sessions per month. Volunteer sessions normally last between 2 - 3 hours and are either on a Monday or Wednesday. Please see below for the library's full opening hours:

Monday	10.00am – 2.00pm (volunteer led) and 2.00 – 7.00pm
Tuesday	9.30am – 5.00pm
Wednesday	9.30am – 1.00pm (volunteer led)
Thursday	9.30am – 5.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 5.00pm
Saturday	9.30am – 5.00pm

If you are interested in volunteering at Mere Library and would like further details about the Community Library Volunteer role please contact me by  jane.hunt@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phone. *Jane Hunt ☎ 01225 713792*

Mere Library Changes

On a personal note, this will be the last time you will hear from me, as I will be leaving Mere Library at the beginning of December. Thank you to all who have made my work so enjoyable during my time here. Simon and I, and our family, would also like to say goodbye to all our friends and acquaintances in Mere, as we will be moving over the border to Dorset in the New Year. We will miss you.

Laura Ford, Library Assistant ☎ 01747 860546

Mere Dental Practice



*The practice has three Dentists: Stephen Sherrard,
Christopher Davies and Mishari Al-Dhafeeri.*

It also has Dental Therapists Wendy Hester & Jay Lonsdale.

*Contact Details: - Mere Dental Practice, Duchy Manor, Springfield Road,
Wiltshire, BA12 6EW, ☎ 01747 860365,*

E-mail: meredental@btconnect.com, Website: meredentistry.co.uk,

*Opening hours: - Monday - Thursday 8.45am - 5.30pm,
Tuesday 8.45am - 7pm & Friday 8.45am - 5pm*



*The practice is sited in the grounds of Mere Primary School, first building
on your left when you go through the school*



POLICE NEWS

Sudden Death

Sad to report the death of a lorry driver in Mere this month who collapsed outside the Co-op in The Square, despite several passers-by assisting with trying to resuscitate him as well as paramedics. It is good to know that locals were on hand doing their best. A timely reminder that we have two defibrillators in

Mere, one opposite The Butt of Sherry and one by the dentists by the school.

Merrell's Mobile Foot Health Clinic.

For the professional treatment of: Corns • Callus/Hard Skin • Nail Trimming • Fungal & Thickened Nails • Athletes Foot • In growing toenails • Qualified to treat diabetics and those taking Warfarin and steroids • Massage given to make your feet feel fitter in the comfort of your own home. **Contact Mary on 07809 738237**

Road Accidents

The roads around our area seem to have more than their fair share of incidents; a couple of rear end shunts reported on the A303 and B3092, Mere to Gillingham Road. This particular road has had quite a few incidents, drivers should always leave enough room to stop in an emergency when following another vehicle, and do you know what is around the next bend? A broken down vehicle maybe. Don't chance it, one day it may be you!

Scams

Telephone and e-mail scams seem to come in on an almost daily basis. Last month we reported the 0207 number scam, and advised anyone who is targeted to report it to Action Fraud. It is good to see people reporting it on our Facebook Page and on 'Mere Mutters' Facebook page. The more people let others know about scams, the better. If you know a person who does not have access to a computer and you think would benefit from these newsletters, please pick up one from Mere Library and give it to them. The golden rule as usual to determine whether it is a scam or not is, 'IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, THEN IT USUALLY IS'.

Winter nights are upon us and we have been into schools in our area delivering Road Safety talks to the children. There are measures that you can take to be safe, child or adult. Wearing something light, perhaps a high visibility top with reflective strips, carrying a torch, making sure that the lights on your bicycle work. All these things could save your life! The roads are a dangerous place, we know only too well from the reports we receive.

NPT Priorities

Anti social behaviour - Toilets, and surgery area, Salisbury Street car park and in Hillside Close and Long Hill.

Call '101' for non-emergencies and 999 in an emergency.

PCSO Peter Tscherniawsky ☎ 101 (24hrs)
 ***peter.tscherniawsky@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk***

CHRISTMAS FOODBANK COLLECTION

The Warminster & District Foodbank serves the people of Mere, offering emergency relief to those who are in a financial or other crisis. Their need is particularly great at Christmas time.

With the kind permission of the Southern Co-operative Society of Mere, we will be standing outside the shop on Saturday, 12th December from 9.00am to 12.00noon, asking you to buy one extra item and pop it in our trolley. Your generosity is hugely appreciated, thank you.

Jane Hurd ☎ 01747 860218

MERE CARNIVAL NEWS

Join us for our

FUNDRAISING FASHION SHOW

in aid of Carnival at

M & Co, 35 High Street, Shaftesbury, SP7 8JE
on Thursday, 3rd December at 7.00pm

Tickets priced at £5.00 each (to include a glass of wine)
Available from M & Co, Jeans Electrical, the Walnut Tree Inn,
Carol ☎ 01747 861639 or ✉ Nick@Lavenderlane.Co.Uk

**Discounts available on the night, so come and choose your party outfit
and Christmas presents for all the family**

Date for your 2016 Diary:

Carnival Quiz, in the Grove building on Wednesday, 17th February at 7.30pm.
£2.00 per person.

Carol Payne ☎ 01747 861639

LET THE BUS TAKE THE STRAIN

Public transport through Mere can seem confusing:-

No car, means no costly parking and no costly running expenses! There is a wide variety of public transport available. People who qualify for a state pension can apply to Wiltshire Council for a "bus pass". This can be used on most journeys to enable free travel. Wiltshire Council Passenger Unit ☎ 01225713004.

Travel to Salisbury and Salisbury Hospital is not difficult. Monday to Friday, number 25 buses to Salisbury pick up outside Mere Charity shop at 7.18am and 9.22am.

To continue to Salisbury Hospital, a direct bus leaves Salisbury close to where the bus from Mere arrives, every 10 to 15 minutes. Buses return to Mere from Salisbury in the afternoon and early evening. Times available from "Salisbury Reds" ☎ 01202 338420. On

Tuesdays and Saturdays market buses "Tourist Coaches" ☎ 01722 338359 travel to Salisbury from outside Mere Charity shop.

From the bus stop near Mere Post Office, number 158 travels to Wincanton in one direction and Gillingham, Gillingham Railway Station, Motcombe and Shaftesbury in the other, 5 times daily excluding Sunday. Timetables are available at the Library and are displayed at the bus stop. In addition to South West Coaches, a Damory bus leaves Mere at 9.10am for Gillingham and Shaftesbury Mondays to Fridays.

From Minibuses ☎ 01373 471474 run a number of "shopping buses" on various days to Zeals, Stourton (for Stourhead), Kilmington, Maiden Bradley, Horningsham, Frome, and Bath. The pick-up point is the bus stop near to the Post Office and a timetable is displayed nearby, on a post on the island.

The "Connect2Wiltshire Mere Taxibuzz" ☎ 0845 6525255 offers door-to-door service or pick up near Mere Post Office Monday to Friday. People with a bus pass are charged 50p within Mere and £1 for travel outside Mere (single journeys). Seats are limited and telephone bookings in advance are required. This service is available to all ages with varying costs. Wiltshire Council grants enable this service to run provided passenger numbers show there is a real need and that the service is well used. Drivers are experienced, helpful and understand that less agile passengers appreciate help. To keep our Connect service we need to use it, "use or lose it". There is no public transport on Sundays.

To retain our present services it is necessary for there to be sufficient passengers. Car owners of today may find they are relying on buses in the future. If we do not use our buses we may wake up one day and be shocked to find services further reduced or even withdrawn, (details should be correct at time of writing).

Barbara Thomas & Rachel Hyde ☎ 01747 860369

A DIGI-PRESENT ISN'T JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

If you find a new digi-present – smartphone, tablet, laptop etc. – under your Christmas tree this year, remember that Wiltshire Council's volunteer digital champions are ready to help you get the most out of your new digital device. Even experienced users can sometimes find a new version of a product a bit baffling at first!

The volunteer digital champions will be at the Mere Online Drop-in sessions at Mere Library on Tuesdays, 1st December, 5th January and 2nd February from 2.00 to 4.00pm and at the Angel Tea Rooms on Wednesdays, 16th December and 20th January from 3.00 to 4.30pm.

If you can't make any of these dates, you can ☎ 0300 456 0100 to arrange a home visit. This is a free service aimed at helping local residents to get online.

Steve Hoffman, ☎ 01747 860514

MERE AND DISTRICT LINKSCHEME

☎: 01747860096

Mere and District Linkscheme will be closed for two weeks over Christmas and the New Year. The dates are from Monday, 21st December 2015 to Friday, 1st January 2016.

During this time the telephone line will be monitored ready to respond on Monday, 4th January, 2016.

If you have hospital appointments during that time please give as much notice as possible and we will try to provide transport. Please remember our drivers will be planning Christmas holidays and may not be readily available.

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Barbara Thomas, Secretary

MERE LITERARY FESTIVAL

The 19th Mere Literary Festival, which raises funds for the local Link Scheme, was judged a success by the organisers. It had good weather, good audiences, community involvement and praise from visiting speakers. Marion Molteno, the Commonwealth Prize-Winning author, said that Mere was her favourite festival and biographer Sonia Purnell told organisers that her publishing friends referred to Mere as 'a darling festival'.

At the Award Ceremony for the 2015 Poetry Competition Melissa Woods adjudicated the Children's Section and John Page the local. Jane Mason read poems by senior judge, Chris McCully, who was indisposed, and his adjudication of the Open Section. The results were as follows-

Open Section

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st <i>Dawn Chorus</i> | Sue Kauth, Ashill, Somerset. |
| 2nd <i>On R.S.Thomas</i> | Sue Chadd, Malmesbury, Wilts. |
| 3rd <i>Last Train</i> | Richard Hughes, Llanmaes, S.Glam. |

Local Section

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1st <i>The Genesis of Isis</i> | David Childs, Chicks Grove. |
| 2nd <i>Did We really open the
Windows in the Summertime?</i> | Mona Tyler, Kilminster. |
| 3rd <i>I wish I'd told My Father</i> | Rachel Whorton, Mere. |

Junior Section 12 yrs.& under

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1st <i>Tears of the Land</i> | Holly Pepper, South Brewham, Somerset. |
|------------------------------|--|

2nd *The Peacock*

Peggy Wiseman, Whitesheet Academy, Zeals.

3rd *Swimming*

Alexander Cox, Whitesheet Academy

Poetry in the Grove (as voted by audience at Festival reading of Open Shortlist)

1st *February*

Patience Light, Devizes, Wilts.

= 2nd *A Stone found on a Beach*

during a Storm

Anita Campbell, Hungerford, Berks

= 2nd *Pauper's Lament*

Jacqueline Longley, Tisbury.

Brett Norris, Chair of Mere Town Council, thanked the organisers, sponsors and participants for a successful week.

The LinkScheme again thank all those who supported the 2015 festival in any way and helped make it a success.

Adrienne Howell & Lit. Fest. Group ☎ 01747 860475

MERE RIVERS GROUP MEETING

A meeting of the Mere Rivers Group (MRG) was held on 21st October at the Andy Young Pavilion. Updates were given on meetings with Wessex Water and on the Ashfield clearance.

Concern was expressed at the present level and flow of Mere's rivers and how the proposed large scale expansion of Gillingham might effect this further.

It was agreed that:

- Local concern on the state of the rivers to be reiterated to Wessex Water and the Environment Agency.
- The problem should be raised at an upcoming meeting with Andrew Murrison, the local MP, and advice sought on protecting Mere's rivers and ensuring water saving devices were standard in new developments.
- The loss of a filter drain built alongside the A303 to be investigated as this may be contributing to the sludge in the upper Shreen.
- MRG should investigate being included in the Wessex Chalk Stream Association.
- A map of riparian owners is to be drawn up.
- Contact should be made with other environmental groups in Mere.
- The AGM is to be held in the New Year when representatives of WW and the Environment Agency will be present.

Brett Norris reported that Seeds for Success had begun work on the first phase of clearing Ashfield Water. Volunteers will be needed to continue this work at a

later stage. If you are interested in helping protect Mere's rivers and have not already given your contact details to MRG, please contact Ian Sheppard
✉: ianjsheppard@outlook.com

Adrienne Howell, MRG ☎ 01747 860475

MERE & DISTRICT RAILWAY MODELLERS

Open Day and Christmas Sale

Saturday, 12th December

In the M&DRM Clubhouse

at Castle Street Car Park

Mere, BA12 6JA

Free Entrance from 10.00am to 4.00pm

Come along and have a cup of tea and a piece of cake.

Sales of track and rolling stock in O, OO & N Gauges.

**View the progress on our 'Blackmore Vale' &
'Mere' layouts.**

Tom Snook ☎ 01747 861977



MERE AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF TRADE

Mere Chamber would like to wish you Season's Greetings and good wishes for 2016 and to thank all Chamber members and local businesses for your continued support. We thank all of those who attended our networking events and training courses this year which we hope proved interesting and useful. We are planning more for next year and look forward to seeing you at a future event or meeting.



We have joined VisitWiltshire as a Town Partner for the second year running with the aim of encouraging visitors into Mere and promoting local businesses and services.

If you would like to know more about the Chamber and its activities please contact Julie Cousins on telephone number below.

Forthcoming Mere Chamber Committee Meetings

at Mere Social Club for 7.30pm:

Wednesday, 16th December 2015

Wednesday, 20th January 2016

Julie Cousins, Chamber Secretary, ☎ 07856 700576

CANCER RESEARCH

The Victorian Christmas Street Fayre is on Friday, 4th December from 6.00 - 8.00pm in the town square. We have 25 stalls selling a huge variety of present ideas and some fantastic food! Father Christmas will be there handing out gift wrapped presents to all the good boys and girls!

The lights are being turned on to start the festive season in Mere, along with some carol singers who will be singing all the traditional carols! We look forward to seeing you there.

At this point, I do not have the final total raised so far this year. This total will be in the next edition, but a huge 'thank you' to everyone who came, bought, donated or supported us in some way over the last 12 months.

As a committee we are always looking for more helpers, donations of good quality Bric-a-Brac, tombola and raffle prizes, man shed contents, garden items and baked goodies to sell, and also any new fund raising ideas.

If you can help with any of these please contact us in one of the following ways: ✉ – **merecancerresearch@mail.com** or ring me, Penny Fennon, on the number below. We also have a Facebook page – Mere Cancer Research - where you will find all our up-to- date news and forthcoming events.

Penny Fennon ☎ 07833 131712

THE COMMUNITY LUNCH

There will not be a Community Lunch in December because we will be out partying!

Why not have a belated New Year Lunch at the George Inn, The Square, Mere (☎ 01747 860427) on Tuesday, 5th January 2016. We meeting at 12.00noon for 12.30pm. With the success of our previous lunches, it is advisable to book in advance.

REMEMBER! COPYDATE FOR THE FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

MONDAY, 18th JANUARY 2016

If you are new to Mere, are alone, or wish to know more about the events, activities and people of Mere, do come and join us. We are a very friendly bunch and would enjoy your company. For further details, please call me. *Lindy Elliott ☎ 01747 861646*

MERE THEATRE CLUB

A very happy Christmas and a culturally exciting New Year!

Thank you to all our members who have made our outings so enjoyable, and a big thank you to our committee who work so hard over a glass of wine to organise the programmes!

And not forgetting a thank you from us all to Graham Avory for tirelessly producing Mere Matters, without which Mere would be far less interesting and sociable.

Madelaine Morris ☎ 01747 861833 Wendy Horne ☎ 01747 861712

MERE FILM SHOWS

Whilst we have, as usual, no film for December, we begin the New Year with a terrific British film on Thursday, 14th January - **'45 Years' (15)**, starring **Tom Courtenay and Charlotte Rampling** who play a couple, Geoff and Kate, whose celebration of 45 years of marriage is spoiled by the discovery of the body of Geoff's previous lover in an Alpine glacier fifty years after her accidental death.

The film has won all sorts of accolades at the various film festivals this year, including a Best Actor award for Tom Courtenay and it has been described as a 'superb, intelligent and haunting film, a masterclass in understated acting'. Certainly the two leads are perfect and Charlotte Rampling especially gives a quietly devastating performance. British film making at its best. Full details on page 31.

Dates for your diary: Friday, 19th February; **'Suffragette'**, Thursday, 31st March **'Lady In The Van'**.
Mary White ☎ 01747 861257

DECEMBER SHORT WALK

December's Short Walk, with a Seasonal Twist will take place on Wednesday, 9th December. Meet at 2.00pm in the Surgery Car Park. We will keep to paths and lanes so hopefully it will not be too muddy or wet!

There will be no short walk in January.

Janet Way ☎ 01747 860884

MERE WALKING GROUP

Our New Year walk will be on Saturday, 2nd January 2016 and this year will be based on the Bath Arms at Crockerton, near Warminster. We will meet at Salisbury Car Park at 10.00am and share transport to the pub, go for a five mile walk (only one stile), followed by the lunch.

Please let me know if you would like to join us. Non members will be very welcome.

The annual planning meeting for the group, to which all are invited, will be held at the "George Inn" on Thursday, 14th January 2016 at 7.30pm.

Roger Laidler ☎ 01747 863447 ✉: roger46laidler@talktalk.net

WALKING IN MERE

If you're short of a stocking filler, don't forget the new Walking in Mere cards to aid us all after the excesses of Christmas! Available at the Library, Angel Cafe, Sprout & Flower and This & That for only £3.

Happy walking!

Madelaine Morris ☎ 01747 861833

FESTIVE CHARITY CONCERT

Mere Melodies, Wincantata and friends are giving a concert in memory of Teresa Read on Wednesday, 16th December at 7.30pm in the Grove Building. There will be a retiring collection for Parkinson's UK and Cancer Research UK. We do hope you will you will come to support these two worthy causes.

Kathy Herbert ☎ 01747 861591

SHREEN HARMONY

Choir practice is well under way every Thursday night rehearsing now for our two Christmas concerts. We would love to have your support at either (or both!) of these evenings.

Our first date is on the Thursday, 17th December at All Saints Church in Maiden Bradley at 7.30pm.

On Saturday, 19th December we will be singing in Mere in the Grove Buildings at 7.30pm. There will be a supper and mulled wine and Christmas Carols for everyone. Please do come along and give us your support - it will be appreciated by us all.

Sandra Fisher ☎ 01747 861980

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GREAT START TO THE FESTIVE SEASON?

The Shaftesbury Town Silver Band Christmas Concert on Sunday, 6th December, could be just the thing for you! The venue is the Shaftesbury Arts Centre in Bell Street, Shaftesbury and the show starts at 3.00pm. The price is £5, and for anyone below 16 years of age admission is free. Tickets will be available at the door or in advance from the Arts Centre ☎ 01747 854321). For on-line booking please go to: www.shaftesburyartscentre.org.uk/how-to-book.

If you need any further information please contact me at 4, Underhill, Mere or by telephone.
Tony McDonald ☎ 01747 861602

MERE GARDENING CLUB

Potato Day

Pennard Plants

Wednesday, 13th January from 5.30-8.30pm in the Grove Building

Potato day is back by popular demand: over 80 varieties of potatoes sold by the tuber, onion sets, shallots, heritage seeds, and fruit bushes. Put the date in your diaries now and buy your seed potatoes early!

Garden Club members will be joining with Bourton Garden Club on **Wednesday, 20th January for a Fun Quiz at 7.30p.m.** Anyone requiring transport should contact me at the number below.

Note: There will be no December meeting.

Janet Way ☎ 01747 860884

DRESSMAKING IN MERE

Following a busy year of dressmaking, we are now planning a trip to the Cinema to see "The Dressmaker" with Kate Winslet, well we had to didn't we! We are also inviting all those who have taken part in our courses to come and have a Christmas Drink and Nibbles on Friday, 11th December, so a nice way to end our year.

Our further courses commence again in February, with a waiting list for the morning class and possibly one or two spaces in the evening. We hope our ladies will be wearing the Dresses, Capes, Skirts and Jackets they have been making at their Christmas festivities. Our new Facebook Page with some lovely photos can be found simply entitled "Dressmaking in Mere". We wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and look forward to another year of sewing in 2016.

For details about our courses next year and after Easter, please 'phone the numbers below. Carol Lord ☎ 01747 861923 Susanne "The Sewing Lady" 📠 07788 595434



MOTHERS' UNION AND OPEN MEMBERS' GROUP

For our December meeting:



Mere Mothers Union would love you

to join us for our

MU Carol Service

**on Tuesday, 8th December 2015
at 12.00 in St Michael's Church Mere**

Followed by soup & mince pies in the Grove Building

The earlier-than-usual time for the Carol Service is to make it possible for younger Mums to join us and still be able to collect children from school.

In January, instead of our usual meeting we'll be enjoying a New Year lunch together at the Walnut Tree on Tuesday 5th January. All past and present MU members and partners/spouses are very welcome to come, as well as friends and anyone who might join in future. If you haven't already booked, please phone asap!

Judith Thompson, MU Branch Leader, 01747-860553



MERE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Have you ever thought why there is a hospital in Shaftesbury called the Westminster Memorial Community Hospital? At our last meeting Jenny Wood (a past chairman of the League of Friends) explained that the Dowager Marchioness of Westminster gave the land for the hospital in 1870 and the hospital was opened in 1874 in memory of her husband, who owned many estates around Shaftesbury. The first League of Friends was thought to have been formed in 1928, before the NHS, whilst the present one was established in 1950 to support and represent the community that it now serves.

We learnt that the hospital provides 23 out-patient clinics run by Salisbury Foundation Hospital, which include minor injury, X-ray and physiotherapy departments, saving us

the hassle of going all the way to Salisbury for appointments. The League of Friends is a registered charity and every member is a volunteer. Funds are raised in many ways; coffee mornings, garden parties, Christmas Fairs, street collections and through legacies and bequests.

The list of improvements that they have enabled the hospital to make, ranges from refurbishing the main entrance for easier access, making a dedicated chapel and purchasing two vehicles to enable staff to transport patients. Their most recent improvement is the refurbishment of the X-ray room, enabling new X-ray equipment to be installed. The list of smaller gifts includes special electric beds and chairs, vacuum cleaners, art courses and free digital televisions for in-patients. We are so lucky to have such a charity working on our behalf.

On Thursday, 3rd December at 7.30pm in the Grove Building we will be holding our Christmas party, which will be a social evening with music from Mere Melodies, the local hand bell ringers, and a WI members mini-pantomime. Please come and join us and enjoy an early start to Christmas, you would be very welcome. We do not have a meeting in January but are planning a New Year lunch at the Kings Arms in East Stour on Thursday, 14th January to which you would be very welcome. Please give me a call if you would like to join us so that we know how many seats to book.

Mere WI wish you all peace and joy this Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Janet Fisher ☎ 01747 861323

ROSEMARY GODDARD CENTRE (RGC) for the over 60s

**Mere and District Day Centre, Lynch Close, Mere
Mondays and Fridays 10.30am to 3.00pm**

What a year it has been for us at the Rosemary Goddard Centre (RGC)! We have all been busy enjoying ourselves with a huge variety of activities, visitors and outings. We have become so popular that we had to put in place waiting lists for both Monday and Friday sessions.

We have just had another Desert Island Disc afternoon and we would like to thank Dr Bill Price for being very entertaining! We are busy preparing for our Christmas celebrations and of course our Annual trip to the pantomime, which we all look forward to. It is Cinderella this Year.

What will be your New Year's resolution? If it happens to be anything along these lines: *'I would like to help out in our local community'*, or *'I need to fill some time by doing something worthwhile'* or *'I would like to meet new people and not feel so isolated'* then

we would love to hear from you, as we are looking for a new session volunteer and another 'washer upper' to help out once a month. *(continued on page 24)*

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN MERE &

Carols in the Square, Mere

Christmas Eve 11.00am Everyone welcome

St Michael the Archangel, Mere

Tuesday, 22nd December 6.00pm Lessons and Carols

Please bring a torch

Christmas Eve 5.00pm Crib Service (Children invited to dress as angels, shepherds, animals or wise men)

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am Family Communion with Carols

United Reformed and Methodist Churches, Mere

Sunday, 20th December 6.00pm United Carol Service with the Methodist Church at the United Reformed Church

Christmas Day 10.00am United Christmas Morning Service with the Methodist Church at the United Reformed Church

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Mere

Christmas Eve 9.00pm Mass

Christmas Day 10.30am Mass at St Lukes, Wincanton

St Mary the Virgin, West Knoyle

Sunday 20th December **6.00pm** Candlelit Carol service

Christmas Day **10.00am** Holy Communion (BCP)

DISTRICT - CHRISTMAS 2015

Parish of Upper Stour

Friday, 18th December **6.00pm** Carol singing,
starting on the Green in **Zeals**

Sunday, 20th December **6.00pm** Carols at the Christmas Tree
Bourton Village Green

Monday 21st December **6.00pm** Carol Service at
St Mary's Church, Kilmington

Christmas Eve **4.00pm** Crib Service, *all ages welcome*
St Martin's Church, Zeals

6.30pm Traditional Carol Service at
St Peters Church, Stourton

11.30pm Midnight Mass at
St Mary's Church, Kilmington

Christmas Day **10.00am** All Age Christmas Communion
St George's Church, Bourton

For further details of Upper Stour Church services, please see the "Upper Stour Parish Magazine", or contact Rev'd Graham Perryman, Upper Stour parish Office, ☎ 01747 840221

Visitors are most welcome at all services

**All the Churches wish everyone a
happy, holy and peaceful Christmas.**

At this point I would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for their efforts over the last Year. We could not provide this much needed service without all of you, so a huge well done and a massive 'Thank you!'

On behalf of everyone at the RGC, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Website: www.MereDayCentre.org.uk

Sandie Hawkins, RGC Organiser ☎ 07835 272406

FRIENDS OF FIVES COURT

The Friends would like to give everyone advance notice that their next fund-raising event will be a **Bingo** evening, on **Friday, 22nd January** at 7.30 p.m. in the Grove Building. Please put the date into your brand new diaries; we look forward to seeing lots of people there.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 01747 860908



Mere Historical Society The Brigade of Gurkhas 1815-2015

200 years of service to the Crown

Johnny Fenn

Tuesday 1st December from 7.00pm in the Grove Building

The talk starts at 7.30pm and will be preceded by mulled wine and mince pies, so please come along early to enjoy!

£3 entry for non-members who will be very welcome

Morning Talk

Our morning talk for Tuesday, 12th January 2016, to be held in the Grove Building at 10.15am for 10.30am, is: "Ancient Jordan and Petra; a personal view", by Tony Grinyer.

Non-members are very welcome.

Ruth Van Sloten, in memoriam:

The Committee of Mere Historical Society was saddened to hear of the death of Ruth Van Sloten in late October. Ruth contributed much to the Society, serving with efficiency and charm on the Committee from May 1999, (de facto Secretary from March 2000 to 2007), adding publicity to her responsibilities in 2005. In March 2007 she took the Chair, carrying on until 2012 when she became President until 2014. Ruth is remembered with great affection by all, and for the delicious teas she served to Committee members after their meetings held at her house.

Don't forget to check out our web site:

www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Caroline Cook ☎ 01747 861797

MERE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Archives Now On-Line

A seven-year effort to make Mere's local history available to everyone ended successfully in November with the launch of the Mere Historical Society's on-line digital catalogue of its archives. Starting in 2008, MHS Archivist Jenny Wilding has guided the project to find a home for the collection, then to store, order, and catalogue the more than 3,600 objects and documents about Mere and its surrounding villages and settlements.

At her talk to Society members on 17th November entitled "The Society's Archive: Open for Business", she told the story of the archives and demonstrated how visitors to the Society's website can now search the online catalogue to find items that they are interested in. Mere Museum – of which Jenny is also curator – has opened a new exhibition "Introducing Mere Historical Society's Archive".

MHS Chairman Peter Lewis has paid a warm tribute to Jenny for her efforts to secure the archives for everyone to use: "Jenny has been the driving force behind this; her hard work and tenacious efforts to get funding for the on-line catalogue, and to oversee its construction, is typical of why she has achieved so much in the project. Mere owes her many thanks."

Jenny in turn has thanked Mere's Lecture Hall Trust, the Mere Filmshow Committee, the former South West Wiltshire Area Board Chairman and Daphne Tighe, all of whom

enabled the archive to be catalogued, and Steve Hoffman for inventing a way of making the specialised computer catalogue available on the Society's website. The archive is housed in a conservation-standard building within the gallery of the United Reformed Church in Mere.

In earlier stages of the project, members of the Society transported the archive, then in various files, folders and envelopes, from the study of Michael Tighe, the previous archivist, just along the road to the URC. There every document was removed from its previous storage, put into archival-quality storage pockets, and into archival storage boxes. Many of the boxes had been made by History Society members from archival box board. The website address is: **www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk**.

Steve Hoffman ☎ 01747 860514

MERE AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

So now everyone, including members of the cast, knows who **The Unexpected Guest** was, and who finally dunnit, and calm has descended once again on the Lecture Hall - for now. But fear not! Wierd and wonderful plots are being hatched for the New Year - watch out for posters! But, have a wonderful Christmas while you're all waiting!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 01747 860908

MERE MUSEUM

The new exhibition, called '**Introducing Mere Historical Society's Archive**' is now open and will run until the middle of March next year. The exhibition marks the completion of the computerised catalogue of the archive (over 3,600 items), which will allow the archive to be used by anyone who is interested in the history of Mere.

The final, but absolutely essential step in making the archive publicly accessible, via the Society's website (**merehistoricalsociety.org.uk**), has been accomplished by Steve Hoffman, the Society's webmaster, who has cleverly overcome very many technical obstacles to convert the specialised catalogue programme of the original catalogue into an easily readable and usable form. The Society owes Steve a huge vote of thanks.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 01747 860908

GROVE BUILDINGS "100 CLUB"

The result of the '100' Club Draw for November 2015, drawn on Tuesday, 3rd November by Sally-Ann Hooper, Librarian was:

1st Prize	(£20)	-	No. 121	Jenny Wilding
2nd Prize	(£15)	-	No. 78	Mr R Coward
3rd Prize	(£10)	-	No. 45	Isabel Howell
4th Prize	(£5)	-	No. 64	Jennifer Croxton-Smith

Lindy Elliott ☎ 01747 861646

MERE BOWLS CLUB

I must start this month by retracting a couple of the results I announced in the last issue and get them printed correctly.

TRIPLES:

Winners: Isobel Naughton, Colin Rankin & John FitzGerald.

Runners-up: Alan Inwood, Mike Oram & Karen Guy - I had them reversed last time.

MIXED PAIRS:

Winners: Peter Dethick & Karen Guy

Runners-up: Ann Hurt & John FitzGerald

I had Peter Lord shown as the winner last time, with Karen, when it should have been Peter Dethick – my apologies to all concerned.

Members are reminded that they requested that the Club Socials continued throughout the winter months, there were only fourteen attendees at the last Social to celebrate Halloween – hardly worth the effort by your committee to make the arrangements. Enough said!

For any other details about the Club please contact either Alan Inwood ☎ 01985 844215, Alan Spencer ☎ 01747 860803, or Don Butchers by telephone, number below, or by ✉: Don.butchers@btinternet.com.

Don Butchers, Club Secretary, ☎ 01747-860775

MERE CROQUET AND BOULE CLUB

The end of the year fast approaches and sadly putting everything to bed until the Spring is now top of the agenda.

Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, most especially Michael Horne, we can look forward to enjoying a vastly improved Croquet lawn in 2016.

We can now announce, well in advance, that our Annual General Meeting will be held in The Andy Young Pavilion on Tuesday, 22nd March 2016 commencing at 2.30pm.

The usual Between Seasons Get Together, as previously, will be held at The Home Guard Club in Kilmington on Friday, 19th February and will include the friendly skittles match. More detailed information on both these events will be provided in the February edition of Mere Matters.

It only remains for us to wish all our members, friends and supporters a very happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing everyone next year.

Rex Roberts ☎ (01747) 860873

WILTSHIRE MOVIOLA
in association with
MERE PARISH COUNCIL
proudly presents

'45 Years'

(15)

Tom Courtenay Charlotte Rampling

In the week leading up to the celebration of their 45th wedding anniversary, a couple (Geoff and Kate) receive an unexpected letter which contains potentially life changing news.

In The Lecture Hall
Thursday, 14th January, at 7.30pm
(Doors open 7.00pm)

TICKETS £6.00
Available from The Library

For more information call Mary White ☎ 01747 861257
Visit our website at **www.moviola.org**



Mere School Reports

Maths Day

On Wednesday 11th November the children took part in a Maths Day. They spent the morning in their own classes solving different maths problems.

In the afternoon the older children went to the younger children's classes and played maths games. The day was a huge success. Thank you Mrs Loxton!

Children in Need

On Friday, 13th November the children came to school dressed in their pyjamas carrying their favourite teddy. During the day they took part in buddy reading with a different class where they shared picture books with each other.

The school managed to raise a huge £205! Thank you to the school council and Miss Beckwith for all their hard work.

Music Week

During this half term the whole *school took part in music week*. They watched a performance of different percussion instruments in assembly and throughout the week designed and made musical instruments out of junk materials.

Some children also showed their class what they have been learning in their private music lessons. Thank you Mrs Smith for a great week!

Remembrance Day

Poppies were sold throughout the week and the children took part in the traditional 2 minutes silence during a special assembly.

STOP PRESS!

Do look at our website for more details and pictures of what we have been up to: www.mereschool.co.uk

1st MERE BROWNIES

Recycling Project

Thank you for your continued support. We are still collecting Jewellery – Gold, Silver, Costume and watches (including broken). Foreign and UK coins and notes - any currency and of any age. Mobile phones (they do not have to be working, but it is advisable to remove the SIM card).

In addition, we are now collecting stamps – loose/single stamps. Albums. First Day covers/presentation packs. Collections. Single Postcards and collections.

Please note: This is about you giving unwanted items. Please be careful not to give anything of sentimental value that you may later regret donating!

We can recycle them for you – with proceeds to our unit funds.

Collection points for all your contributions are still at Waltons Newsagent, The Post Office, Jeans Electrical Shop and Jeans Chapel Showroom as well as the Library.

With many thanks Sue Luffman and Sue Jeans, Brownie Guiders. For more information, please contact me. *Sue Jeans ☎ 01747 860215*

FUND RAISING FOR MERE SCHOOL

The parents and friends of Mere School are busy fundraising for an outdoor classroom, and would be very grateful for some help from the people of Mere. Here are both 'no cost' and easy ways you can help:

The Giving Machine

If you shop online, you can raise donations for the school at no cost to yourself. Just log in to The Giving Machine website before you shop, and the rest is done automatically. So far we have raised more than £500 with just a handful of contributors - it really is easy and the contributions soon add up. See **www.thegivingmachine.co.uk** for more details.

Auction of Promises

This is already looking 'promising', thanks to incredibly generous donations from businesses both locally and further afield. We have been overwhelmed by everyone's generosity, and already have more than 70 lots pledged. Please join us on Friday, 4th March 2016 at The Walnut Tree Inn for a meal and a chance to bid on some lovely treats and tickets for local attractions. Not only are you guaranteed a great evening out, you will be helping to raise funds to support local school children.

We will be offering the chance to bid before the event if you can't make it on the night, so watch out for more information around town and in the local Facebook groups. Alternatively call Kate Jenkins ☎ 01747 861201 for more details. Many thanks.

Rachael Handford ☎ 07989 470278

MERE TIDDLERS AND TODDLERS

Toddlers Party

This Christmas the Toddlers party will be on Monday, 14th December, from 9.30am-12.00noon in the Lecture Hall as usual. All those wishing to join in the fun and games need to pop in to Toddlers and see Anne, confirm numbers and pay, before Monday 7th December. The cost per child and parent combined will be £3 for the morning and

includes party food lunch. Santa will hopefully appear as usual and parents are asked to bring a small wrapped and named gift for their child, not exceeding £5 in cost, as a guideline, which Santa will hand out.

January 2016

After fundraising, partly through putting on the Wyllye Valley children's art trail week of daily workshops, Mere School is hosting the Treehouse Theatre company visit again this year on Wednesday, 6th January, with 'Puss In Boots,' which will be open to those children present on the day at Mere pre-school/Nursery, those who attend Mere Tiddlers and Toddlers, and the whole school to join in.

It would be useful to have numbers please - to Anne at Toddlers beforehand or by e-mail at the addresses below. The Deadline is Monday, 14th December 2015.

Happy Christmas everyone!!

Anne and the students from Ivers House

✉: arich4@icloud.com or iversclassroom@icloud.com .

THE FRIENDS OF ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

King James II Coat of Arms (Part 8)

Readers of these paragraphs about the King James II Coat of Arms may well be wondering whether all the fuss we are making - and all the trouble we are taking - about this old painting is really worth it. Many of you will have seen similar coats of arms relating to various monarchs hanging in other churches. What's so special about ours?

The answer to that question is that it is very rare. James II was a monarch with strong Catholic leanings, and catholicism was a faith that, after Henry VIII's Reformation in the 16th century and the establishment of the Church of England, was more than a little mistrusted. James lasted just three years on the throne before influential nobles invited James's Protestant son-in-law, William of Orange (of the Netherlands) who was married to James's eldest daughter Mary, to invade this country and depose James. This he did in 1688, and James fled to France; it was called 'The Glorious Revolution'.

For a number of reasons - the shortness of his reign, or perhaps the shadow under which he left these shores, other James II arms may have been destroyed as a mark of disrespect, or they may have been painted over with the arms of the next monarch; all Stuart arms were very similar and required only minor changes (names, dates) to become up-to-date.

Whatever the reasons, the most recent study of royal arms in churches (published in 1934, reprinted unrevised in 1979) identified only six surviving James II arms: three in Suffolk, one in Cornwall, and two in Kent. The author didn't find ours, although it was certainly hanging in the church at that date. So to the best of our knowledge, there are only seven survivors in the country, making each of them of more than local importance. Ours is certainly worth preserving!

Jenny Wilding, Conservation Project Manager ☎ 01747 860908

A Mere Cookbook

Don't forget the highly successful '**MERE COOKBOOK**' would make the ideal Christmas present - sold in aid of the **Friends of St Michael's Church** at £8.00 each. They are so easy to post and are available either from the Library or from me.

Pat Isom ☎ 01747 861776



CHURCHES TOGETHER

As Mere Matters goes to press, we're busy delivering leaflets to every house in Mere (we hope!) for our '**Shop Locally for Christmas**' campaign (please support this), and also **Christmas Lunch** leaflets. We want to be sure that families who would find it difficult to celebrate this Christmas, and all those who would be alone, know that they are very welcome to join us in the Grove Building on Christmas Day. A traditional lunch with all the trimmings, in a festive atmosphere, will be followed by tea and Christmas cake. (No charge, but donations are welcome). You should have booked by now, but if you haven't, and would like to come, please ☎ 01747-861212 asap.

For full details of **Christmas Services** at all our churches please see the **Centre Pages**. Everyone is welcome at any of our services – and also to join us singing carols on Christmas Eve in the Square at Mere at 11am.

January is also busy! As usual, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs from 18th – 25th January, and a very short service will be held each weekday, to which everyone is welcome, as shown below:

Monday, 18th January	10.30am at West Knoyle Church
Tuesday, 19th January	10.30am at Maiden Bradley Church
Wednesday, 20th January	10.30am at Mere Methodist Church
Thursday, 21st January	10.30am at Zeals Church
Friday, 22nd January	10.30am at St Mary's RC Church, Mere
Saturday, 23rd January	10.30am at Mere United Reformed Church

On Sunday, 24th January a joint service will be held at 10.30am at St Michael's Church – all are welcome!

Churches Together in Mere and District AGM will be held at Mere Methodist Church on Wednesday, 20th January at 11.00am (immediately following the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service).

Judith Thompson ☎ 01747 860553 & Janet Way ☎ 01747 860884
Joint Secretaries, Churches Together in Mere & District

THE MEANING OF HEALING IN A CHRISTIAN SENSE.

Tuesday, 1st December

At 7.00pm including refreshments in the Grove Building. No charge. Have you ever wondered about healing? Why are people ill? This evening is a taster and will include

Bible and personal stories and an opportunity for you to ask questions to see if you would like to attend a full course starting in the New Year, you can book your place. Led by Rev'd Andrew Staley member of Diocesan Healing Group and Rev'd Carol Wilson-Barker.

Tuesday 26th January

From 7.30pm in the Grove Building, the Healing Course will begin looking in more detail at healing questions. What is "healing", are secular and Christian meanings the same? Why does God not answer our prayers when we ask for things in faith? There will be a small charge for the course booklet.

Rev'd Carol Wilson-Barker ☎ 01747 861859

REV'D ELIZABETH KEMP, UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTER, WRITES:

Communities Blooming

With dark winter days more evident, you may enjoy sharing your home with some colourful plants. In addition to the holly with red berries, you might think of poinsettia flowers in red and white. As a child I spent some time in Asia where exotic plants flourish outdoors all year round, rather like weeds.

I used particularly to enjoy the deep pink and red hibiscus flowers growing everywhere. Hibiscus are part of the same plant family as Mallow, or lavatera, which grew so prolifically on bomb sites after the second world war. With their blousy audacious blooms they defy anyone looking for order in the flowerbeds.

As I have particularly fond memories of hibiscus flowers, I was intrigued to hear about some people whose lives have been turned around by hibiscus. Modesta Baldotano is a member of the hibiscus cooperative in Nicaragua, she also belongs to the local "vigilancia", which is a sort of credit union/health care co-operative. Her first marriage was abusive and she had no understanding of partnership or mutual respect. Then she came into contact with Nochari which ran workshops where she learned about growing and selling hibiscus flowers.

The hibiscus flower is not only used as an adornment, it can be infused to make a tea, offering many health advantages: it's a diuretic, helps as an anti-inflammatory, lowers blood pressure, reduces hypertension, is high in vitamin C and can be made into a hair shampoo and conditioner! The hibiscus flower can be crystallised and eaten as a delicacy and the whole plant used as a vegetable, particularly in chicken soup.

Previously, farmers in Nicaragua relied on one crop and when the soil could no longer support it, people migrated to Costa Rica seeking work. Through Nochari, people like Modesta have learned about the benefits of the rotation of crops and the use of organic compost rather than pesticides, which caused health problems.

There is a cooperative which buys all her produce at a fixed price, and women and men work together on the farms. Modesta has remarried and her second husband treats her as an equal; for 20 years she has worked as a birth attendant and is now a community leader who plays an active role in her church.

Nochari operates in Nicaragua supported in part by Christian Aid. She says: "God is with us in difficult times, in good times, in times of pain. Faith is about conviction, not emotion. Faith is inside ourselves and has helped me a lot."

So through the gift of education and training, Modesta and hundreds of women like her, have an income, security and self-respect. Thanks in part, to a bright and breezy weed.

May we treasure the simple things in life, appreciate the opportunities we enjoy, and never be dismissive of others.



The Mere Suchana Support Group has had a good year! We have achieved our aim of providing funds for the books for the expansion of the mobile library. It sounds grander than it really is, but means a huge amount to the children and families who benefit from our activities.

As well as the cycle rickshaw library, which pays weekly visits to 300 children in 11 villages not too far away, there is now a van reaching 13 additional scattered villages enabling 800 more children to have access to simple books in their own language based on their own culture, as well as basic healthcare.

We have also made a substantial contribution to help maintain the project's regular education support work for the 350 children who regularly attend classes, art & craft and sports activities – and more! - at Suchana's main centre at Khanjanpur village in West Bengal.

To keep up the good work, we need your support! So, a date for your diary: our ever-popular Suchana Shrove Tuesday Quiz and Pancake Evening will be held in the Grove Building at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 9th February. Details in February Mere Matters.

Judith Thompson ☎ 01747 860553

CHRISTMAS IS COMING-----

Come and join the fun at our:

CHRISTMAS CRAFT MORNING for Children

**Monday, 21st December from. 9.30am-12.00pm
in The Grove Building**

Upper Age Limit for Children is 10/11 ie. up to and including Year 6.

Parents or Childminders are asked to remain with children they bring who are under 6 years of age.

For further details contact Christine ☎ 01747 861212

CHRISTMAS EVE: CHRISTINGLE AND CRIB SERVICE

**Thursday, 24th December at 5.00pm
in St Michael the Archangel Church**

All who wish to do so are welcome to come dressed as Angels, Shepherds, Sheep, Kings or Donkeys.

METHODIST CHURCH NOTES

Café Worship

There will be no Café Worship in December but coffee morning will be as usual at 10.30am on Wednesday, 30th with Pause for Thought. Café Worship will continue on Wednesday, 27th January from 10.30 to 11.00am in the School Room at the Methodist Church.

Foot Clinic

Commencing in the New Year on Tuesday, 12th January. For appointments, contact Jenny Franks SRN ☎ 01747 853162. Mary Siderfin ☎ 01747 861370

CHURCH SERVICES IN MERE AND WEST KNOYLE

DECEMBER 2015

The Parish Church, St Michael the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Wilson-Barker ☎ 01747 861859,

✉: vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Elizabeth Howden ☎ 01747 863424

Mr Michael Marsh ☎ 01747 861212

Church Administrator: Mr Ian Treece ☎ 07754 524802

✉: administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Each Sunday		8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Each Wednesday		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Each Friday		8.00am	Holy Communion (CW1)
		The Rev'd Carol Wilson Barker has a rest day	
Tuesday	1st	6.00pm	Start the Month Holy Communion (BCP)
Sunday	6th	10.30am	Family Communion (CW1)
		5.00pm	Advent Worship
Sunday	13th	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)
		5.00pm	Advent Worship
Sunday	*20th	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)

Christmas Services - see centre pages

Sunday	27th	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)
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*Traidcraft Stall after 10.30am service

The United Reformed Church

Mere Contact: Mrs E Burfitt ☎ 01747 860685

Sunday	6th	11.00am	Peter Kershaw, Holy Communion
	13th	11.00am	Rev'd Elizabeth Kemp Holy Communion

Christmas Services - see centre pages

Sunday	27th	11.00am	Rev'd Margaret Laurie
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The Methodist Church (☎ Gillingham 01747 823777)

Mere Contact: Mrs M Siderfin ☎ 01747 861370

Sunday	6th	6.00pm	Rev'd Mike John
	13th	6.00pm	Rev'd Paul Arnold Holy Communion

Christmas Services - see centre pages

Sunday	27th	10.30am	United service at Gillingham Methodist Church
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The Roman Catholic Church, St Mary's

Mere Contacts: Margaret Thompson ☎ 01747 860291

or John FitzGerald ☎ 01747 860867

Every Saturday 5.30pm Mass

Christmas Services - see centre pages

Tea and Cakes will be served after the last Mass of the month.

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Wilson-Barker ☎ 01747 861859,

✉: vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall ☎ 01747 830534

Mr Colin Seaford ☎ 01747 830263

Sunday	6th	9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	13th	9.30am	Matins
	20th	6.00pm	Lessons & Carols

Christmas Services - see centre pages

Sunday	27th	NO service at St Marys
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Note: BCP indicates Book of Common Prayer 1662

CW1 indicates Common Worship Order 1 (trad. Indicates traditional language)

JANUARY 2016

The Parish Church, St Michael the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Wilson-Barker ☎ 01747 861859,

✉: vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Elizabeth Howden ☎ 01747 863424

Mr Michael Marsh ☎ 01747 861212

Church Administrator: Ian Treece ☎ 07754 524802

✉: administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Each Sunday		8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Each Wednesday		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Each Friday		8.00am	Holy Communion (CW1)
			The Rev'd Carol Wilson Barker has a rest day
Sunday	3rd	10.30am	Family Communion
Tuesday	5th	6.00pm	"Start the Month"
			Holy Communion (BCP)
Sunday	10th	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)
	*17th	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)
	24th	10.30am	Ecumenical Worship for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
	31st	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW1)

**Traidcraft stall after 10.30am service*

The United Reformed Church

Mere Contact: Mrs E Burfitt, ☎ 01747 860685

Sunday	3rd	11.00am	Rev'd Margaret Laurie
	10th	10.45am	Rev'd Elizabeth Kemp
	17th	11.00am	Rev'd Hazel Barkham
Friday	22nd	10.30am	Rev'd Hazel Barkham United Service
Sunday	24th	11.00am	United service at Parish Church Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
	31st	11.00am	Rev'd Hazel Barkham

The Methodist Church (☎ 01747 823777)

Mere Contact: Mrs M Siderfin: ☎ 01747 861370

Sunday	3rd	3.00pm	Rev'd Denise Binks
	10th	3.00pm	Mr Brian Collis
	17th	3.00pm	Rev'd Paul Arnold Covenant service
	24th	10.30am	United service at Parish Church Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
	31st	6.00pm	Mrs Margaret Whitford

Please note that during January and February services in the Methodist Church will be at 3.00pm.

The Roman Catholic Church, St Mary's

**Mere Contacts: Margaret Thompson ☎ 01747 860291
or John FitzGerald ☎ 01747 860867**

Every Saturday 5.30pm Mass
Tea and Cakes will be served after the last Mass of the month.

WEST KNOYLE

The Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: Revd. Carol Wilson-Barker ☎ 01747 861859

✉: vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs. Jill Randall ☎ 01747 830534

Mr. Colin Seaford ☎ 01747 830263

Sunday	3rd	9.30am	Holy Communion
	10th	10.30am	Matins
	17th	12.15pm	Plough Sunday Service
	24th	9.30am	Ecumenical Worship for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Mere

NO service at St Marys
Holy Communion

Note: BCP indicates Book of Common Prayer 1662
CW1 indicates Common Worship Order 1 (trad. Indicates traditional language)

DIARY DATES

December 2015

AYP-Andy Young Pavilion; CC-United Reformed Church Centre; CP-Main Car Park; DMS-Duchy Manor School; GB-Grove Building; L-Lecture Hall; Lib-Library; Lynch-Lynch Community Centre; MH-Methodist Church Hall; MSC-Mere Social Club. RMC-Railway Modellers Clubhouse

1	Tue	9.30am	Card making (Small Hall)	L
		2.00pm - 4.00pm	"Get-Online" Drop-in session	Lib
		6.00pm	Pilates (every Tuesday)	GB
		6.20pm	Zumba (also 8th &15th)	L
		7.00pm	Meaning of Healing (Precursor to a full course)	GB
		7.30am	Mere Historical Society	GB
		2	Wed	9.30am
10.30am	Tai Chi			GB
11.00am	Pilates (every Wednesday)			GB
6.00pm	Karate (also 9th & 16th)			L
7.00pm	Mere Railway Modellers (every Wednesday)			RMC
7.00pm	Dressmaking (also 9th)			GB
3	Thur			10.00am - 11.30am
		10.00am - 12.00pm	Mere Art Group (also10th, 17th & 31st)	GB
		2.00pm	Bridge Club (also 10th &17th)	L
		2.00pm	Castle Hill Quilters (also 10th)	GB
		3	Thur	7.30pm
4	Fri	11.00am	Merely Women	GB
		2.00pm	Duplicate Bridge (also 11th & 18th)	GB
		6.00pm - 8.00pm	Victorian Christmas Fayre	The Square
		6.00pm	Zumba (also 11th & 17th)	L
		5	Sat	10.30am
		7.30pm	Mere Town Youth FC Bingo	L
7	Mon	9.30am	Tiddlers & Toddlers (also 14th)	L
		10.00am	Chair based Zumba (also 14th)	L
		10.30am	Dressmaking	GB

		11.00am	Zumba Gold (also 14th)	L
		2.15pm	Pilates (every Monday)	GB
		6.00pm	Beaver Scouts	GB
		6.45pm	Cubs	GB
		7.00pm	Scouts	GB
		7.00pm	Slimming World (every Monday)	L
		7.30pm	Town Council Meeting	AYP
8	Tue	12.00pm	Mothers Union Carol Service	St Michaels & GB
9	Wed	10.00am	Mere Charity Grant Distribution pay out	L
		1.45pm	Friends Together Whist Drive	GB
		2.00pm	December Short Walk	CP
		7.30pm	Gardening Club	GB
10	Thur	5.00pm	Girl Guiding (also 17th & 31st)	GB
11	Fri	10.30am	Open the Book	GB
12	Sat	10.00am	4.00pm M & D Railway Modellers Open day	RMC
		7.00pm	Oasis Carnival Club Bingo	L
		7.30pm	MADS Meeting (Green Room)	L
14	Mon	9.30am	- 12.30pm Toddlers Christmas Party	L
16	Wed	3.00pm	- 4.30pm "Get-Online" Drop-in session	Angel Café
		7.30pm	M & D Chamber of Trade Committee Meeting	MSC
		7.30pm	Festive Charity Concert in memory of Teresa Read	GB
19	Sat	10.30am	'Drop In' Coffee Morning + Traidcraft stall	CC
		7.30pm	Shreen Harmony Christmas Concert	GB
21	Mon	9.30am	- 12.00pm Childrens Christmas Craft Morning	GB
23	Wed	1.45pm	Friends Together	GB
25	Fri	12.00pm	CT in M&D Christmas Day Lunch	GB
30	Wed	10.30am	Coffee Morning with a Pause for Thought	MH

January 2016

AYP-Andy Young Pavilion; CC-United Reformed Church Centre; CP-Main Car Park; DMS-Duchy Manor School; GB-Grove Building; L-Lecture Hall; Lib-Library; Lynch-Lynch Community Centre; MH-Methodist Church Hall; MSC-Mere Social Club. RMC-Railway Modellers Clubhouse

1	Fri	10.00am	Open the Book	GB
		2.00pm	Mere Duplicate Bridge Club (every Friday)	GB
2	Sat	10.00am	Mere Walking Group's 'New Year' walk	CP
		10.30am	Drop in Coffee Morning (every Saturday)	CC
4	Mon	9.00am	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Monday)	L
		10.00am	Chair Based Zumba (every Monday)	L

		11.00am	Zumba Gold (every Monday)	L
		2.00pm	Pilates (every Monday)	GB
		7.00pm	Slimming World (every Monday)	L
5	Tue	12.00pm	Community Lunch	The George
		2.00pm - 4.00pm	"Get-Online" Drop-in session	Lib
		6.00pm	Pilates (every Tuesday)	GB
		6.20pm	Zumba (every Tuesday)	L
6	Wed	9.30am	Tai-Chi (every Wednesday)	GB
		10.30am	Tai-Chi - small hall (every Wednesday)	GB
		11.00am	Pilates (every Wednesday)	GB
		6.00pm	Karate (every Wednesday)	L
		7.00pm	Railway Modellers meeting (every Wednesday)	RMC
7	Thur	10.00am - 11.30am	Hearing Aid Clinic	Mere Surgery
		10.00am - 12.00noon	Mere Art Group (every Thursday)	GB
		2.00pm	Castle Hill Quilters (every Thursday)	GB
		2.00pm	Bridge Club (every Thursday)	L
8	Fri	10.00am	Merely Women (also 22nd)	GB
		6.00pm	Zumba Gold (every Friday)	L
11	Mon	6.00pm	Beaver Scouts (also 18th & 25th)	GB
		6.45pm	Cubs (also 18th & 25th)	GB
		7.00pm	Scouts (also 18th & 25th)	GB
		7.30pm	Parish Council meeting	AYP
12	Tue	9.00am	Foot Care Clinic	MH
		10.15am	Mere Historical Society morning talk	GB
13	Wed	1.45pm	Friends Together Whist	GB
		5.30pm - 8.30pm	Gardening Club 'Potato Day'	GB
14	Thur	5.00pm	Girlguiding (also 21st & 28th)	GB
		7.30pm	Moviola/Mere Filmshows "45 Years"	L
		7.30pm	Mere Walking Group Planning Meeting	The George
16	Sat	10.30am	'Drop In' Coffee Morning + Traidcraft stall	CC
20	Wed	11.00am	Churches Together in Mere & District AGM	MH
		3.00pm - 4.30pm	"Get-Online" Drop-in session	Angel Café
		7.30pm	M & D Chamber of Trade Committee Meeting	MSC
22	Fri	7.30pm	Friends of Fives Court 'Bingo' evening	GB
26	Tue	7.30pm	Healing Course, first session	GB
27	Wed	10.30 am	Café Worship	MH
		1.45pm	Friends Together	GB

RAISE FUNDS FOR 'COMMUNITY FIRST'

AT NO COST TO YOU

Community First is Wiltshire's Rural Community Council, a charity that works at the forefront of community development to help improve the quality of life and economic well being of people and local communities throughout Wiltshire. It has been a dependable source of support to communities in Wiltshire since 1965. Its extensive networks involve parish and town councils, village and community hall committees, youth clubs, community transport and community leaders across the county. It works in close partnership with local communities, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies and funders to help develop and deliver wide ranging community programmes that bring social, economic and environmental benefits to people throughout Wiltshire.

For example, in its youth work Community First supports 66 affiliated youth clubs and has trained over 80 youth leaders, and 50 young leaders, to help ensure the future of volunteer youth leadership in Wiltshire.

Christmas is fast approaching, and if your thoughts are starting to turn to your Christmas shopping: whether it's presents, food or a new outfit for a Christmas party, it's a great opportunity to raise FREE donations for **Community First** - just by shopping on-line. Simply do your Christmas shopping on-line via 'Give as you Live', at a choice of over 4,000 top retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, ASOS, EBay, Marks & Spencer, Next, Debenhams and 'notonthehighstreet', and 'Give as you Live' will turn a percentage of your spend into a donation for Community First.

All you need to do is sign-up for FREE to 'Give as you Live' and choose to support 'Community First' (website: <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/>) then start doing your shopping via the 'Give as you Live' website, their downloadable toolbar or mobile app. A percentage of the money you spend will be donated to Community First – at no extra cost to you! It's an easy way to raise money for Community First – and not just at Christmas!

Kate Morris, Community First ☎ 01380 722475

BOOKING MEETING HALLS

Grove Building:

Ian Treece

☎ 07754 524802

Lecture Hall:

Sally Johnson

☎ 01747 861063

Methodist Church Schoolroom

Mary Siderfin

☎ 01747 861370

MERE INFORMATION

For full information on the businesses, organisations, societies, attractions and activities in Mere, together with current and back numbers of "Mere Matters", please visit Mere's own website; **www.merewilts.org**

MERE INFORMATION POINT, THE LIBRARY

The following Clinics/Advice Centres are held on a regular basis

HEALTH MATTERS

ADVICE

Fridays: 1.30 to 4.30pm

MEMORY LOSS

READING GROUP

Wednesdays: 2.30 to 4.00pm

ALZHEIMERS SUPPORT

1st Friday: 2.00 to 4.00pm

**REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS
& DEATHS:**

By appointment only (☎ 0300 0034569)

Thursdays: 9.30 to 11.30am

'GET ONLINE'

DROP-IN SESSION

1st Tuesday 2.00 – 4.00pm

COPYDATE FOR FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

Editorial contributions for the February 2016 issue should be sent to Graham Avory, Little Tawny, Pettridge Lane, Mere, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 6DG (☎: 01747 860439) or alternatively handed in at the Information Office, The Library, Mere (in an envelope marked 'MERE MATTERS') by **4.00 pm on MONDAY, 18th January 2016**.

E-mailed contributions will be most welcome. Please send from Monday, 11th January 2016 to: **editor@merematters.co.uk**

Would ALL contributors, however they provide copy, please **add their name and a contact telephone number to ensure inclusion.**

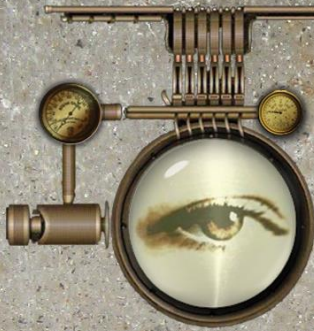
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