

Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle



Your community
magazine including a guide
to local events



MERRY
Christmas

December 2020/January 2021

The Editor Writes

Most people will be glad to see the back of 2020 I am sure but there have been some good things to celebrate.

It is awesome to have been part of Mere's coming together to keep Mere Matters going and as Editor I have to once again thank 'the team' for all their endeavors. Jane Kennedy who continues to manage all our advertisers, Alan Gristwood who has managed the purse strings for many years and is moving with Gilly to be nearer family – best wishes to you both, and of course to Viv Sheppard who, with our trusty band of some 25 volunteers have delivered copies to your door for most of the year. Thank you one and all.

The next edition of Mere Matters will be the FEBRUARY 2021 edition. Would everyone please note that WE WILL NOT be hand delivering to each house. Circulation will revert to copies being made available via delivery by Walton's with newspapers, personal collection from the Post Office, Co-op etc. I would encourage some self-help arrangements where one person collects and distributes to small clusters of neighbours.

We have been exceptionally fortunate in finding a replacement to take over the purse strings and thanks go to Alison Beall for becoming our treasurer. Would everyone who pays money to Mere Matters please note that whilst our banking details remain the same, all financial correspondence should now go to Alison using treasurer@merematters.co.uk her postal address is Holly Cottage, North Road.



A Merry Christmas &
Wishing you all a
Happy and Healthy New Year.

Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 📠 07950 797273
editor@merematters.co.uk

Mere Town Council

Covid-19: Whilst I write this report we are in lockdown again. The feeling is that this is quite different from the previous one as the schools are still open and most people are at work. The Mere Community Support Group or Mere Local Resilience Forum is working well, thanks to the efficient co-ordination by Richard and the Foodbank is providing a much-valued service and resource thanks to Anne Rich. For details of the aforementioned services please see the Town Council's website www.merewilts.org. Reflecting over the last year which has been extraordinary and unforeseen, I want to mention how proud we have been

at the way the community of Mere has pulled together and joined forces to help one another.

Remembrance Day Service: It would have been against the government guidelines for us to hold our normal Remembrance Day Service in The Square on Sunday, 8th November. But, with the help of Rev. Carol Green and with new guidance coming out from the Government only 3 days before the event, the Town Council did manage to arrange and hold a socially distanced service in the Churchyard on Sunday 8th November with a wreath laying ceremony. The service was filmed and streamed live – I am sure some of you will have seen it and will agree with me that it was a very fitting way to pay our respects and remember the fallen. The wreaths were moved from the Churchyard to the War Memorial after the ceremony.

Castle & Long Hill: 10 years ago, the Town Council entered into a Higher-Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme with Natural England for Castle Hill and Long Hill. The Scheme lasted 10 years and involved a management plan part of which was grazing of the land. Following receipt of an email from the Town Council's adviser from Natural England last month, who said that she was satisfied that the HLS agreement for Long Hill & Castle Hill was delivering its intended outcomes, the Town Council agreed to request a year's extension to the agreement.

Planning Application: At our November hybrid Town Council meeting we considered our consultation comments for a planning application for the change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 4 gypsy families at Jane Oaks Farm. After some discussion and input from members of the public, the Town Council resolved to recommend refusal on the grounds that not only would it constitute development in the open countryside on agricultural land that has not previously been developed, nor is it a derelict site in need of renewal but that the site fails to meet a significant number of the 9 points of criteria that are laid out in Core Policy 47 of the Adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy document.

Budget: Town Councillors will have their minds focused on budgets at this time of year. A group of us will be attending what is usually the longest meeting of the year as we draft a budget for the next financial year. Each year we try and find a balance between providing what residents want and the amount that it will cost us as ratepayers. This is sometimes a very difficult balance and I am expecting it to be even more difficult this year.

VACANCY FOR TOWN COUNCILLOR

Mere Town Council has a vacancy which will be filled by co-option at a meeting to be held on Monday, 11th January 2021

Those interested in becoming a Town Councillor should submit an expression of interest to the Town Clerk either by letter, email or telephone (contact details above).

Candidates will be given information on eligibility and will be invited to submit an application form & personal statement.

Christmas is NOT cancelled: Although we are all facing restrictions with regards to events and uncertainty about gatherings at the present time, the Town Council is still intending to put up the Xmas Lights on the tree and around the Clock Tower Island. Jeans Electricals are sponsoring the annual Xmas Light competition and judges will be covertly walking around the town carrying out their inspections over the Xmas holidays! On that note, I would like to wish all the residents of Mere a happy & healthy Xmas and New Year and let us hope that next year brings a brighter and more optimistic outlook for us all.

*Clive Hazzard, Chairman, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.*

☎ 860701 lindseywood@merewilts.org 🌐 merewilts.org

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

With an open mind, I did my best to support Stourton and Gasper Parish Council in their desire to obtain 4 houses for local persons and key workers/carers Gasper via planning permission. The Southern Area Planning Committee has approved the application which was controversial because of the proximity to listed buildings.

I recently raised at the South West Area Board the fact Mere Library should be at least open for pre-order and collections, wherein by coincidence or otherwise it was agreed.

The main streets of Mere seem so quiet during the present lockdown - “everyday is a Sunday”. I attended a Remembrance Service in Mere to lay the official Wiltshire wreath. The service was socially spaced at St Michael’s Church with invited wreath layers only. As a result of the second wave of Corvid-19, Wiltshire Council have now written with advice to all vulnerable people.

Many know of local people who are or have helped the vulnerable in many ways during this pandemic. Wiltshire Council have drawn up a comprehensive double A4 list of organisations that can be contacted directly for advice and support. I can furnish a copy to any that might require.

I am pleased to report that Wiltshire Pension fund are making concerted efforts to invest mainly or only in environmentally friendly investments.

Information I receive regarding local road closures I now put on facebook, window displayed etc to give as much advanced warning to everyone as possible.

Please be advised of new parking regulations in regard the “Christmas at Stourhead 2020 function”:-

Wiltshire Council Section 16(A) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
Introduction of a Temporary No Waiting at Any Time Restriction: Church Lawn (Part), Stourton and Gasper (Ref: TTRO6788) Notice is hereby given that the Wiltshire Council has made an Order to introduce a temporary No Waiting at Any Time restriction applying to south side of the following length of road: Church

Lawn (Part), Stourton and Gasper; from its property known as Spread Eagle Public House for a distance of approximately 60 metres in an easterly direction. To enable: Temporary footway along Church Lawn for safety of pedestrians. This Order is made to ensure public safety during the period of the Christmas at Stourhead Public event. This Order will come into operation on 27 November 2020 and will be required until 03 January 2021. The Order will have a maximum duration of 18 months. For further information please contact Laurence Mulchrone (Culture Creative Ltd) on 07771904036. Sustainable Transport Group, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8JN

George Jeans ☎ 07710 441599 george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk

Mere Local Resilience to Covid-19

I just wish to reassure everyone that if you are unfortunate to succumb to the virus and/or have to stay at home then there is plenty of assistance available to help with collecting prescriptions and essential shopping. For contact details see the rear cover. Best wishes and I hope we all remain safe and well.

Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 ☎ 07950 797273 raiefferies@btinternet.com

The image is a purple and white poster for the 2021 Census. At the top left, it says 'census 2021'. The main text in the center reads 'Including everyone in Census 2021'. Below this is the website 'www.census.gov.uk'. At the bottom left is the 'Office for National Statistics' logo. At the bottom right, the code 'AOPCAT' is written vertically. The poster features several decorative circular patterns at the bottom.

The census is taking place in March 2021.

It's a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. It helps plan and fund public services, like transport, education and healthcare.



By taking part and encouraging others to do the same, you'll help make sure you and your community get the services you need. Nearer the time, you'll receive more information. There'll be plenty of help to take part for people who need it.

Find out more at www.census.gov.uk

Follow the census

   @Census2021

From Mere Surgery

Many people may be feeling anxious or low about coronavirus. Everything can feel a little overwhelming. It's natural to feel this way. However, there are things you can do to help look after yourself mentally and there's support available to you.

Is it normal to feel like this?

Over the last few months, everyone has been worried about their physical health and that of those they care about most. But staying at home, feeling lonely or isolated, the anxiety of either catching or spreading the virus and the worry of looking after yourself and those you care about can have an impact on how we feel mentally too. And that's perfectly natural.

You're not alone if you feel this way – 1 in 3 older people are feeling more anxious.

Whether lockdown and the pandemic has made an existing concern worse, or you're experiencing feelings of low mood, anxiety and depression for the first time, there are things you can do and support available to help you.



Get active

Staying active is hugely important – as the saying goes, ‘use it or lose it’, and this is particularly important around physical activity.

Although we are being asked to stay inside again, we're all still able to go out as much as we want for exercise. This can be by yourself, with people that you live with, or one person from another household. Going outside and being with nature can help to lift your spirits as well as keeping you active.

But if you want or need to stay at home, the good news is there is plenty you can do in the house and garden (weather permitting, of course).

Look after yourself

It's quite likely there will be times we all feel anxious or low in the days and weeks ahead. This is completely normal, so we've put together some top tips:

- If you are worried, talking really does help. Take time to chat about how you're feeling with family and friends.
- Focus on the things you can control rather than the things you can't. This might mean focusing on getting into a routine and taking small practical steps each day to do what you need to do.
- If you find the news is making you anxious and depressed, try limiting yourself to set times each day to check in on events. Also, stick to trusted sources of information.
- If things are getting on top of you and you are feeling like you can't cope it's a good idea to talk to your GP about your mental health.

Don't neglect your physical health

It's easy to neglect our physical health when we are worried or distracted, so keep an eye on how you're doing and follow these simple tips:

- Stay physically active around the house and garden.
- Eat a balanced diet and try to get your five fruit and vegetables a day (tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables are just as good as fresh). If you feel like you don't have much of an appetite, eating something is better than eating nothing. The most important thing is to eat, even if the only thing you fancy is a slice of cake, something is always better than nothing.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol or smoking.
- Try to get outside for some fresh air. If you aren't able to go out for a walk, just sitting in the garden, or on the balcony, or opening a window can help.
- Get plenty of rest and try to stick to your normal sleeping patterns.
- Carry on managing any other on-going health conditions. Make sure you keep taking your usual medications and keep doing any recommended exercises, even if it means changing your usual routine.

Your GP is still available to support you if you feel unwell, although this may take place over the phone rather than face-to-face in the first instance.

Remember to eat a good balanced diet

Having nutritious and varied food is important for good health and well-being throughout life. During this difficult time, making sure we are eating and drinking enough is essential for our health and wellbeing. If you're worried that you have recently gone off food or unintentionally lost weight, it may be a good idea to weigh yourself regularly so you can see if you are losing weight. Remember, if you are concerned about your health in any way please contact your GP.

A Flu Vaccination Clinic will be held on Saturday 5th December from 8am – 12pm at the surgery for patients in this age group.

We would appreciate it if you could book an appointment by using the online appointment system wherever possible by following the links on our website www.meresurgery.co.uk

If you don't have access for online services yet you can register by following the link "online requests" on the website.

Flu clinics will be held in the surgery but will be a little different as we must adhere to social distancing guidelines.

- Patients must have a pre booked appointment.
- Please do not attend before your designated appointment time as we will not be able to let you into the building no matter what the weather.

- Patients will be instructed to queue outside the surgery as limited numbers are permitted inside the surgery in order to maintain a safe footfall at all times.
- Please would all patients attending the surgery wear a face mask or covering.
- Please wear short sleeves so that it is easy for you to be ready for your vaccination.
- To enable us to comply with social distancing regulations and to manage our delivery of vaccine, we will only be vaccinating patients in the specified clinic.
- Please avoid driving to the surgery and use alternative methods of transport if at all possible.

The Doctors at Mere Surgery ☎ 860001

Warminster Food Bank

Please don't forget that the collection box at the Co-op is there for all your generous donations - please maybe you could consider adding a festive treat or 2 to your shop for those who really are going to struggle to feed themselves, and the family this Christmas and make the boxes a bit more seasonal for the recipients.

If you are in need of a food box from the food bank please ring **07413 512023** between 9am - 4 pm Monday to Friday to request a box and arrange a time slot for delivery. They are only doing home deliveries at this time.

A massive thank you to everyone who has put items in the Green box - the food bank is very appreciative as they are sending over 2,500kg of food per month right now.

Penny Fennon 📞 07833 131712 (after 6pm please).

Mere Library & Museum

Just a reminder that I do have booklets, book marks and cards/envelopes with scenes of old Mere for sale. Please contact me by phone or email. I am looking forward to and planning our next exhibition and at the same time would welcome any information on the schools in Mere particularly relating to personal anecdotes, dates and names.

Rose Heesom 📞 07791 559674 roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk

Mere Grand Garage Sale Saturday 10th April 2021

Would you like to raise money for **your own preferred charity** at your Garage Front?

The local charity Read Easy Blackmore Vale North group is planning this fundraising event in Mere and we'd love three or four more Garages to take part. This could mean the town hosts 6-8 garages for people to visit in the morning of Sat 10th April.2021

Please contact Judy on events.rebvn@gmail.com or Hermione on 07704 937080 if you'd like more details and would like to join us. REBVN will do the advertising.

Angel Corner Tea Rooms

A warm hello to everyone we hope you are keeping safe and well. Firstly we would like to say a huge thank you to all of you lovely locals for your kindness and support, we have definitely felt the love this year. Although it has been somewhat a challenging year we have come to realise the true spirit of the town we live in and how we have all come together to just be there for each other and to lend a hand when needed.

Once the lockdown ends we will return to our usual business hours and will be there as always serving breakfasts, light lunches, afternoon teas, cream teas and homemade delicious cakes and treats including Paul's very special mince pies with a lovely dollop of clotted cream. We can still provide takeaway and delivery just give us a bell to place your order. We also have a wonderful range of Christmas gift ideas, from locally crafted jewellery, handmade knitted items including jumpers, tea cosies and many other items. If you have something specific in mind we can tailor your order for knitted items just ask. Introducing Radiance Wellness aromatherapy beauty products. A range of beautiful gifts items available from stocking fillers to the perfect gift set for your loved ones. Pop in and have a look we have your Christmas covered, support your local business and shop local.

Finally everyone at Angel Corner Tea Rooms would like to wish you all a very safe and happy Christmas. For many this year it will be a very different Christmas but let's take a moment for all the things we treasure our family and friends and that most importantly we have each other. Merry Christmas everyone here's to a peaceful and less challenging year ahead for all enquiries or just to hear friendly voice give us a call on 01747 860 524 We are here for you.

Paul Farrow paulfarrow1966@hotmail.co.uk

Friends of Mere Museum

The Friends held an impressively successful Zoom AGM in November. It was heartening that the Friends voted to award a grant to the Museum of £1500 - a most generous donation. All systems seem to be working well except, however, the Museum itself, but of course we are keeping fingers crossed that the New Year will (eventually) bring better news. Meanwhile may all Friends - and friends - enjoy the festive season in as Friendly a way as possible!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Link Scheme

The Link Scheme will continue to take clients to medical appointments (and shopping, if resources permit) throughout the Christmas and New Year period and, of course, in 2021.

However, would clients please note that the Link phone (860096) will not be manned from Wednesday 23 December to Monday 4 January 2021 inclusive. If clients need to travel during that time they must make sure they give us as much notice as possible so that we can arrange a driver.

Looking to the future, 2021 is a big year for the Link Scheme as it marks 25 years of our volunteers helping the people of Mere and local villages since the Scheme was established in 1996. We hope we will be able to celebrate with volunteers and clients (old and new) and that

- we can start taking passengers in the front seat again, without wearing a face covering,
- client appointments and our driver numbers increase, and
- we can enjoy another splendid Mere Literary Festival and associated quiz.

2021 could be a really great year!

Wishing all Mere Matters readers a Happy and Healthy Christmas.

Stay positive. Test negative.

John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096

Mere Walking Group

For those of you still braving the muddy paths and wanting some bracing air over Christmas & New Year, don't forget the Walking in Mere cards for inspiration or a stocking filler! Available at Sprout & Flower, Jeans Newsagents, the Angel Cafe and the library when it's open.

Happy Christmas & New Year from the Footpath Group.

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com



Mere Theatre Club

We hope very much that we will soon be able to plan some outings to real live theatre! Great as some of the online events have been it's not the same - and the lunches are not as good either.

Good news - we will not be asking you for any subscriptions for 2021! Have a good Christmas and a much happier new year!

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Mere Rivers Group - Wildlife Sightings – September/October

The second lockdown has just begun at the time of writing this article. As indicated in the title, we are including your sightings for both September and October which were both beautiful months. The autumn colours have been vivid and although there were some very wet periods, we also had glorious sunny days when you obviously got out and about and then kindly sent us your wildlife sightings.

They were:

September

Grey Wagtail seen 3 times
Heron and little egret seen twice
Seen once:
Hover of 9 trout
3 American crayfish
Hummingbird hawk moth
Green woodpecker
Small copper butterfly
Coal tit
Female siskin
Water vole

October

Adult moorhen and juveniles seen most days
Kingfisher, grey wagtail, 8" and 5" trout - all seen 3 times
Seen once:
Pair of little egret
Grey Heron
Hover of 5 trout
Dragonfly
Goldcrest
Great woodpecker

Nature Notes

The sightings you reported to us from round about Mere were red kite, sparrowhawk and slow worm. You found in your gardens that the wasps were busy in your fruit trees and bumble bees were taking advantage of the late blooms.

We are now heading into the winter months and our winter migrants will be arriving. These will include fieldfares and redwings. Already, as recorded above, the little egret has arrived. Let us hope we get some beautiful crisp cold days and you are able to get out and see these migrants. It is easier to spot wildlife during the winter months, with trees and shrubs being bare of leaves, so please watch out for all our wildlife, particularly our river wildlife, and send your sightings to us Thank you!

Lynne Bann ☎ 860174 mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com

Community Lunch

I had hoped that we could start the lunches again, but due to having to be shielded, that has not been possible. Graham and I have decided to move to Devon to be closer to the family, so we want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support of the Community Lunch over the past

years, particularly the continuing supply of a good lunch at the The George Pub and the Walnut Tree Pub. An enormous thank you to you all.

Lindy Elliott ☎ 861646 📧 lindyelliott22@gmail.com

Merely Women

Hello ladies - hope you have all been keeping well and not getting too frustrated with the current restrictions. I just wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

I hope the New Year will bring an improvement in the situation, so that we can start meeting again as before. When we have more news, I will be in touch with you, including via Mere Matters.

Jean Eyles 863450

Pennybank Writers

Deprived of their regular meetings during lockdown, members of Pennybank Writers have, nonetheless, kept busy and can report some success.

In August **Linda Jones** had her short story, *Nosy Neighbours*, published in the *Raise a Laugh* section of *Yours Fiction* magazine. She has also completed her Northern Cyprus stories based on her experience of living on that divided island.

Tony Davies was short-listed in the prestigious Wells Literary Festival short story competition. The adjudicator complimented him on, *The Geese Knew Exactly What To Do*, a locally set murder mystery.

Adrienne Howell and **Mary White** were shortlisted in the Blandford Rotary Club's 2020 Flash Fiction competition and took 1st and 3rd prizes respectively. Both the very, very short stories, *Express Attraction* and *Love Story* were developed from PennyBank exercises. Mary was also shortlisted in the Poetry competition.

Early in lockdown **Ross Thompson** secured a contract with Cascade Books to write a book, *Nine Ways to Weave the World*. It has grown into a complex work of two volumes due for completion in 2022. Ross describes it as the biggest thing he's ever written but has appreciated having such a challenge at this time.

If you have caught the writing bug whilst in lockdown against the pandemic one, do consider joining PennyBank Writers when Mere's normal community life resumes.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and 2021.

Adrienne Howell ☎ 860475



Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – Mere 2020.

Covid 19 regulations demanded a curtailing of Street and house to house collections this year. Accordingly poppies and badges with collecting boxes were placed in Waltons/Mere Post Office. The magnificent sum of £842 12 was collected and banked. The total raised for Mere was £1067 62. The RBL are most grateful to the management and staff and people of Mere for their efforts. Despite a great result there is a 40% shortfall normally expected to allow the RBL to continue their work. If you would still like to donate you may do so by texting or visiting the RBL website. To text:

£2	POPPY2	to:	70545
£5	POPPY5	to:	70545
£10	POPPY10	to:	70545

'When you go home tell them of us and say For your tomorrow, we gave our today'

Stewart Walker Lt Col (Retd), Poppy Appeal Organiser Mere

Mere Gardening Club

So 2020 is nearly behind us - let's hope you all had a successful growing season with plenty of veg, fruit and flowers from your gardens and allotments. It seems as most growers had a bounty of harvest. We hope that 2021 will allow us to once again hold our monthly meetings along with our coach trip to Wisley and our postponed Scarecrow Competition and Open Gardens.

Don't forget those members who paid their membership fees before the lock down will have their membership continued to cover 2021/2022.

The club is looking for a new Secretary as Janet Way has decided to stand down from the role. If you think you may be able to help then please get in touch.

Let's hope things will be better next year and the club will get back to some sort of routine. Details will be updated in Mere Matters.

Les Manwaring Chairman ☎ 861941 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk





Public Health
England

Keep Warm Keep Well

Coping with cold weather and COVID-19

Keep Warm



Heat your home to at least
18°C



Ensure you have adequate food,
medication and warm clothes



Check if you are eligible for
help to keep your home warm

Keep Well



Stay as active as you can,
any exercise can bring
health benefits



Make sure you get your
flu vaccine



Follow COVID-19 guidance

Keep Connected Safely



Get help if you need it.
Speak to your GP, pharmacist,
carer or key worker for advice



Keep in touch with
friends, family and your
community



Look out for others.
Ask how they are keeping
warm during cold weather

Further Information



[Simple Energy Advice](#) provides
free advice on energy efficiency
and National grants to help with
energy bills: 0800 444202



Plan ahead.
Stay up to date
with the weather
forecast



If you're worried about
your health, visit the
[NHS Website](#), call **NHS
111** or in an emergency
call 999

Rosemary Goddard Centre

Annual Quiz

We are unable to run our usual annual fundraising quiz because of the Covid restrictions, but did not want to disappoint those of you who look forward to having a go at them. As a thank you to all those who have supported us over the years, we are re-running the 2012 quiz which is the first Gerry compiled for the day centre after Roger Wilding sadly died earlier in 2012. There will be no charge, no prizes and no need to return your completed quiz. Answers will be available early in 2021 and displayed around the centre of Mere.

If you'd like a copy of the quiz emailed or dropped to you, please ring 01747 861797 or email rgcorganiser@outlook.com

In the run up to Christmas, our telephone support calls will be a mixture of festive jokes, songs and quiz questions. We have a system in place to make sure that all of our guests and volunteers can send each other Christmas cards this year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank those committee members that have volunteered to help make this happen.

From all of us here at the RGC, we wish you a Merry Christmas and hopefully a much happier New Year!

Sandie Hawkins, 📞 07835 272406 rgcorganiser@outlook.com
🌐 meredaycentre.org.uk

Mere Historical Society

None of you will be surprised that, although we still hope to get started on our outings in the spring, we still have no clear idea of what will be possible. Our draft plan includes St Fagan's National Museum of History in Wales, but that will partly depend on Welsh policy on tourism. Forde Abbey has a better chance of going ahead, although that will also depend on regulations for travel by coach.

We have been contacted by the Wiltshire Victoria County History (VCH) Trust. For those of you who are not familiar with the Trust, it was founded in 1899 and originally dedicated to Queen Victoria. The VCH has an encyclopaedic record of England's places and people from earliest times to the present day. The series devoted to Wiltshire is the Wiltshire Victoria County History Trust, <https://www.wiltshirehistory.org/> Work is about to start on the volume which will include Mere and for this reason Mere Historical Society has made a small donation.

We would like to wish you all the best Christmas you can manage and better things in the New Year. A seasonal memory from one of our members is a Christmas Party with a speaker who turned out to be more suitable for a well-lubricated rugby club than a Historical Society!

Caroline Cook 📞 861797 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Traidcraft Christmas Pop-up Shop Wednesday December 2nd 9.30 - 4.00

We are still hoping that restrictions will be eased and Paul will be able to re-open The Angel Café after this Lockdown period. If he can, I will hold my planned pop-up shop but please look out for notices and information nearer the time in case we have to change the date and alter our plans. Hopefully it will be an opportunity to pick up a Fairly Traded gift, card or some goodies and there will still be the opportunity to order things from the catalogue. If you would like to browse this year's Christmas Range beforehand, I am happy to drop one off for you.

Janet Way ☎ 860884

Sponsored Walk along the Pilgrim's Way

It seems ages ago since I completed my challenge for Traidcraft Exchange and I have been collecting together all the monies and have been blown over by the total of £2,365.25! This could not have come at a better time for the Charity as so many of the people they have helped and supported are in a desperate state with no work or income, often having to resort back into borrowing money to pay for essentials and sinking back into years of indented labouring to repay their loans. So a very big thank you to everyone who has supported me and helped to raise this amazing amount.

Janet Way ☎ 860884

Mere & District Railway Modellers

It is apparent that our efforts this year to hold an exposition are ebbing away. We thoroughly apologise to the community for not holding an exhibition or exposition that was planned for 5th December and is now cancelled. Should the Government rules allow it is our intention to provide some Christmas cheer by opening the club on 19th December 10.00am to 2.00pm so that the members and the community can see what improvements and new models have been created this year.

This year a few members have had various articles published in the model railway press so we have been far from idle. We are now working towards our Summer Exhibition planned for 19-20 June 2021 so let's keep our fingers crossed that C-19 is well under control by then!

We wish you all a happy Christmas and New Year and hope to see you next year. The club have decided to sell a few of its layout some of which are suitable to be Christmas presents. Please contact me for further information.

Tom Snook ☎ 861977 tomsnook29@hotmail.co.uk

Wrong Number

When the phone rang for the fourth time, after two cold calls and a wrong number, Emily howled with fury at another interruption to the intricate stitching of her wedding dress. On impulse she adopted a very different voice and answered crisply:

“The Manor Home for the Permanently Weary, Matron Speaking, How may I help you?” and expected the caller to hang up. Instead she heard a heavy intake of breath followed by a gruff male voice with a decided West Country burr.

“Allo? Is that the bettin’ office? I’m after the bettin’ office.”

Oh Lord, thought Emily, I recognize that voice. That’s old Mr. Finch, keen on the horses and equally keen on a pint or three. No wonder he got a wrong number. She couldn’t confess, he would never let her forget it, so she continued:

“We do have a betting office at our Home – for those not too weary to use it,” she said, “but of course it is only open to residents.”

“Residents?” asked Mr. Finch “Can’t I just use the bettin’ office?”

“I am afraid not,” replied Emily, still crisp, “all our facilities are only available to residents.”

“Right,” came the puzzled response, “what else you got I can’t use then?”

“Well now,” Emily decided she was enjoying herself, “we have a bowling green, a gym for the less weary and of course a spa.”

“I dunno what a spa does,” said Mr. Finch “and I don’t think I needs a gym.”

“I expect you are a fit and active gentleman,” commented Emily, knowing Mr. Finch’s dislike of manual labour and struggling not to laugh.

“Well, I think that’s between me and my wife, but she ain’t complained so far.”

Mr. Finch, clearly offended, hung up.

Emily, in better humour, returned to her stitching. Mr. Finch turned to his wife.

“Ere, Daisy, I just had a right nutter on the end of the line, said she was some Home for the Permanently Weary.”

“That’s nice,” sighed Daisy as she polished the floor, “I could do with one of those. Have you got the address?”

Mary White



Suchana, the project for very marginalised children in rural West Bengal that we've been supporting over the past eleven years began cautiously re-opening in October, and, just as we went to print in November was rejoicing at being able to open all its groups and classes as well as its widely-used children's library.



Volunteers and teachers were a little taken aback by how much the children had regressed in 8 months, meaning that much of the work in literacy and numeracy had to go back to the beginning. Then, just as things were beginning to improve, someone in one of the little villages served by Suchana tested positive for Covid, and everything had to close again. The good news, just received, is that because no further cases have been recorded, they are now able to re-open once again. Suchana's work is especially important right now as government schools remain closed, while the need for Suchana's pioneering work in first language teaching and materials is as great as ever.

Here in Mere our attempt to bolster support for Suchana by holding a cake stall in November was also thwarted by Covid and the second lockdown. We have set a new date and are optimistic that it will be able to go ahead on Saturday 5th December from 10.00am at the front of the garage of 1 Boar Street (Jean Young's house), next to the Post Office. There will also be a limited range of other items for sale, including craft from West Bengal.

Please support us if you can. Cakes for the stall would be extremely welcome (but obviously need to be made and wrapped with carefully washed/sanitised hands). Please bring them to the stall between 9.30 and 10am on Saturday 5th December, or to Grove Cottage, Barton Lane, in the afternoon or evening the day before (phone & email below). Thank you very much – in anticipation!

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

Help Yourself and Help Others

Beware of fraud and scams!

Older or less technically minded people living alone in isolation during lockdown are more at risk, we'd like to ask those in our communities who are more IT savvy when it comes to fraud, to look out for your less knowledgeable friends, family or neighbours. It could make a huge difference.

Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Angus Macpherson is quoted in saying: "Many people will be turning to the internet to plan for the festivities, but it's important to remember the basics, don't get caught out by scammers aiming to benefit from the extra time we're spending online".

Chamber of Trade

Firstly, thank you to all the businesses of Mere who have managed to find innovative ways to operate during the various phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. They've shown remarkable resilience. The extension of local delivery services and the efforts of volunteers has been particularly welcome.



With current circumstances likely to continue for an indefinite period, the Committee is looking at how we should operate in the future. The plans we had in February are now irrelevant.

The mission statement of the Chamber is "To Support Business and Encourage Tourism in Mere and District". For the future, we intend to be a forum and mutual support source for businesses in Mere and District, of whatever size or stage of development. We would wish to extend recognition of the area as a place to establish new businesses and to work with and support the Mere Town Council in their aims concerning business activities.

The new normal of working from home, Zoom conferences, and WhatsApp discussions, with the expansion of the delivery network, has brought new opportunities for small businesses. It is this group that we feel will most benefit from mutual support and advice.

We had begun on this path with some successful monthly meetings at Hillbrush Restaurant where small business owners could meet to discuss their problems in a social atmosphere. Those cannot be held at present but we hope to resume them when we can.

Another initiative is our website at MereChamberofTrade.co.uk, host to a Business Directory which lists local businesses; but many more exist which could benefit from greater publicity. If you have a small business then apply now to have your details included.

Over the coming months, and as conditions permit, we shall be looking at what other support we can offer to business in our area. In the meantime, SHOP LOCAL whenever you can, and STAY SAFE.

Hamish Bell, President. 📞 0771 471 8625

Shreen Harmony

We tried, and for a few weeks Stourhead very kindly allowed us to use their Covid safe hall for some very enjoyable singing in the regulation groups of six then just as the rules looked like they were allowing us to double the numbers we went into the second lockdown. We are all missing our singing so will to be back as soon the rules let us.



Caroline Landymore 📞 228819

Mere School

We are now into our second half term and all the children have come back happy and settled after their half term break.

Remembrance Day

St Michael's Church asked us to participate in their Remembrance Day activities this year. Each child made a poppy in their classroom and placed it in their windows at home. I wonder how many you saw as you walked around Mere. The children loved making them and we held 2 minutes' silence on the 11th to show our respects for the fallen. Gold class put their poppies together to create two wreaths that were displayed at the war memorial and the church.

Below is a poem written by Poppy Wood (Gold Class)

For the animals who helped the soldiers

We will remember them.

For the soldiers who went to war and died

We will remember them.

For the doctors and nurses who helped the soldiers get better

We will remember them.

For all the badly injured people

We will remember them.



Inflatable Disco Football

Sadly, due to Covid, school tournaments are not able to happen. Never fear.....Mr Stone from Gillingham School has an answer.....an inflatable football pitch for the children to use for the day!! Year 3 to 6 had great fun playing round robin tournaments in the inflatable court. If you live close to the school, you may have heard the boom box playing dance tunes to inspire the children! We would like to thank Mr Stone for the fun session!



 mereschool.co.uk

Are you up for a little mathematical brain teaser?

“If you look at a clock and the time is 3:15, what is the angle between the hour and the minute hands?”

Answer and explanation towards the rear but don't cheat!

A “MISTERMIND”

(A game you cannot lose, for any number of players)

First contestant please and your name is?

Pass.

Your first question: What is the name of the manoeuvre in the game of rugby, when one player hurls the ball through the air into the hands of another player?

Pass.

Give the correct geographic term for the low defile between mountains through which travellers may progress to get to the next valley?

Pass.

When seeking to enter a secure and protected building or establishment, the guard will require you to show him your?

Pass.

And what will the guard say to you when he lets you in?

Pass.

And your last question. If you have taken an exam and not failed it, what is it that you are said to have achieved? A

Pass.

What an amazing result! You have scored maximum points and achieved 6 passes!

Next contestant please. What is the name of the previous contestant?

Pass.

And what is your name?

Pass-Partout.

..... and so on and etcetera. Mr Pass was declared the winner after weeks of recounting, even though he had obviously won.

This intellectual game can be enjoyed using playing cards, as in the manner of ‘Snap’, except that participants must shout ‘Pass!’ very loudly, when two cards coincide. Don’t forget to use your Trump Card (or Joker) adroitly.

Tony Davies



Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



We would like to wish all the members of Mother's Union and all who read Mere Matters a very Happy Christmas and our prayers for a safe and easier 2021. We do hope many of you will partake in our Carol Service (details below) and hopefully in the New Year we can meet again with all of you.

As we approach the Christmas season and prepare for the coming of the Christ child, we will be celebrating in different ways this year and following Covid guidelines.

Our annual Mother's Union Deanery Carol Service, which was to be held at the parish church of St. Michael the archangel on Wednesday December 9th at 12pm is now going ONLINE! While we would like to be together to sing and hear the Christmas message in God's House, we are very excited to be able to have our first streamed Carol service and to reach a much wider audience.

Please JOIN US--- you can sing along!

Further details will be available on Mere Mutters and on posters in the town.

This Christmas Mother's Union members will be focusing on helping and supporting those in our community who are vulnerable, frail, isolated and fearful.

The Christmas message is one of hope, joy and peace.

John 1 v3-5

In him was life and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

God's blessings this Christmas.

Christabelle Kiriticos ☎ 861065 Christine Marsh ☎ 861212 Carol Lord ☎ 861923

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

Well, Robbie Burns hit the nail on the head:

'The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men/ Gang aft a'gley, /An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain, /For promis'd joy!'

We had learned all our lines for 'the promised joy' of a seasonal performance in December to cheer everyone up, and instead are very fed up that we can't let you have the benefit of all our hard work. But fear not! MADS is very good at bouncing back and you haven't heard the last of these plans. We're hoping for a green light (as well as green shoots) in the spring, and meanwhile we wish all our supporters the best of luck in producing as happy a Christmas Season as possible in the circumstances!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk



Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	Graham Ward administrator@grovebuildingmere.com	☎ 07935 266375
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685

Mere Information Point @ The Library

The following Support/Advice Centers are normally held on a regular basis:

Wiltshire Dementia Adviser Service	1 st Friday	2.00pm – 4.00pm
Registrar of Births & Deaths	By appt. only Thursdays	☎ 0300 003 4569 9.30am – 11.30
Health Trainer	Last Tuesday in month	10.00am – 12.00pm

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 [🌐 merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)

“Glad Tidings of Comfort and Joy.”

At St Michael’s we want to know how we can support you over these dark months of winter- can we bring “glad tidings of comfort and joy” according to that lovely carol “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”? If you are lonely and want some regular company on the phone please ring me and one of our volunteers will respond. (861859)

To me one of the great things about Christianity is its ability to bring hope. We have a God who has lived the human life and identifies closely with our humanity. The current situation isn’t the end of anything it is the beginning of something else. The death of Jesus wasn’t the end but the beginning of the process of the resurrection.

Christmas is the celebration of God doing something different in the world it was only anticipated in some obscure poetry. God sent a baby born of young woman, God born into the world in a rough and cold stable. This baby brings out our gentle and nurturing side – we ask what can I do for you? Jesus’ love prompts us further to ask “how can I serve my neighbour”? Mere is a wonderfully generous place, let’s live up to that this year thinking of “neighbours” far and wide and assisting any in need from the Children’s Society, Shelter, Salvation Army or any of your favourite charities.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Mary and Joseph and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.

Rev Carol

St Michael's News

In the churches this year we are having to do things quite differently but there are threads of the warmly remembered past – Christmas is after all the great time of tradition. The Christmas tree this year is outside in the church yard and there will be a simple crib from recycled materials – both lit in the evening. The cross will remain as a sign of hope. We plan to sing carols round this tree on Christmas Eve as usual at 11am. The crib service will be a walking service around Mere at pm on Christmas Eve with Toby the donkey and Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. Children are encouraged to watch from their houses dressed as nativity characters.

Christmas Day Lunch. Are you expecting to be alone on Christmas Day and in need of a cooked lunch? We are providing a limited number of pre-booked lunches brought to your home on 25th December. Please book in advance by Friday 18th December to Christabelle on 861065.

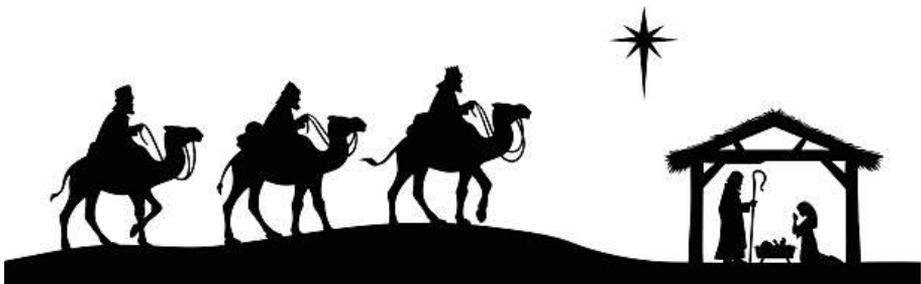
Mothers Union Carol Service on Zoom. The usual Service will be on Wednesday 9th December at noon live on Zoom. There will be readings and carols. Please email me for link vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk. to take part.

Work in the church Work is progressing with the second row of pews being removed from the front making more space for us to hold events. Where the pews came out at the back has been made good with some beautiful joinery. The Coat of Arms will soon be relocated and lit. The internal porch over the main door has been removed. Thank you to all those still giving towards this project, we really appreciate your support.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Monday 18th to Monday 25th January will be by Zoom. Contact me for a link.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

Rev Carol



All phone numbers are STD code: 01747 except where otherwise stated

Church Services for December/January

Mere and Maiden Bradley churches remain open all day for private prayer on Sundays (Wed too for MB). At the time of going to press we were awaiting Gov guidelines. ALL PLANS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please check www.stmichaelsmere.org.uk

The Parish Church, St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859
vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk Saturday is Rest day
 Churchwarden:
 PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk



December

6	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	(BCP) Communion CW Holy Communion
9	Weds	12 noon	Zoom Service from St Michaels
13	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	(BCP) Communion (CW) Communion
20	Sun	8.00am 11.00am	(BCP) Carol Service
24	Thurs	3.00pm 11.00pm	Walking around Mere Crib Service Midnight Mass
25	Fri	8.00am 10.30am	BCP Communion Communion
27	Sun	10.30am	Benefice Service Mere

January

3	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	(BCP) Communion Parish Communion (CW)
10	Sun	10.30am	Parish Communion (CW)
17	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	(BCP) Communion Parish Communion (CW)
24	Sun	10.30am	Joint Service for Christian Unity Week live and Zoom
31	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion (CW)

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859
vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk Saturday is Rest day
 Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall ☎ 830534, Mr Colin Seaford ☎ 830263

December

Services usually at 9.25am

6	Sun		(BCP) Communion
13	Sun	6.00pm	Carol Service
20	Sun		Matins
25	Fri		Holy Communion
27	Sun		Benefice Service in Mere

January

3	Sun	9.25am	Matins
10	Sun	9.25am	Holy Communion (BCP)
17	Sun	9.25am	DIY
24	Sun	10.30am	Unity Service at St Michaels with Zoom link
31	Sun	10.00am	Holy Communion

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk Saturday is Rest day

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

December

6	Sun	10.00am	Advent Service
13	Sun	10.00am	Matins
20	Sun	6.00pm	Candlelit Christmas Celebration
24	Thurs	11.00pm	Midnight Mass
27	Sun		Service in Mere

January

3	Sun	10.00am	Holy Communion
10	Sun	10.00am	Matins
17	Sun	10.00am	DIY
24	Sun	10.30am	Unity Service at St Michaels with Zoom link
31	Sun	10.00am	Holy Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

All phone numbers are STD code: 01747 except where otherwise stated

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk: ☎ 01963 34408

hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

Our Masses are held in Wincanton at present due to COVID distancing instructions making our church in Mere too small. Fr Louis celebrates Mass in Wincanton on Saturday at 5.30 pm, Sunday at 10.30 am and 6.30pm



Do you look after someone?



Our Talk and Support service is here for you.

Call us on Freephone **0800 181 4118** and ask to be included on our **Talk and Support** service for:

- time to talk and be listened to;
- informal friendship, reassurance and support;
- help you to find ways to lessen your feelings of isolation.

Choose from phone Talk and Support, or virtual 'face to face' Talk and Support.

All of our Talk and Support volunteers will have an understanding of the difficulties carers face. Many of them will have experience of caring themselves. Call **FREEPHONE 0800 181 4118** today to get started.

Christmas Cheer.

r	e	h	s	a	d	o	g	a	w	o	n	s	f	l	e	n	s	f	r	q	d	m	y	h
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a	o	o	h	o	t	n	a	p	e	u	a	n	q	l	s	k	y	p	j	x	x	y	l	y

advent	donner	myrrh	snowmen
balthazar	eggnog	nativity	sticky pudding
baubles	elf	ornament	stockings
bethlehem	fairy lights	panto	vixen
blixem	family	partridge	wisemen
cancer	festive	peace	wreaths
caroling	frankincense	prancer	yuletide
caspar	garland	presents	
chestnuts	goodwill	roast turkey	
chimney	holly	rudolph	
christmas tree	jesus	santa	
church	joseph	shepherds	
cold	manger	sledding	
comet	mary	sleigh	
cupid	melchior	snow	
dasher	mistletoe	snowflakes	

Answers are towards the rear



**Teeandee
Productions**

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Promotional Videos
and Computer Services

Email: tim@teeandeeproductions.com
Tel: 07799 325214

Covid-19 Telephone Coordinators

Name	Home Phone	Mobile
Ann Rich	01747 861493	07413 512023
Isobel Page	01747 860297	
Jane Batten	01747 860583	
Joanne King		07740 858923
Mary Wilson	01747 229609	07550 076240
Rachael Hansford	01747 860168	07989 470278
Rose Heesom		07791 559674
Roy Beavis		07878 903178

If you are self-isolating and have absolutely no other family, friends or neighbours who can help you, then please contact one of these volunteers between the hours of 8.00am - 6.00pm.

If you would like to help in any way or wish to make comment then please contact:

Richard Jefferies

☎ 01747 863425

☎ 07950 797273

✉ rajefferies@btinternet.com

Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact Jane Kennedy directly by phone or email.

jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com ☎ 860450

Copy date for February 2021 Issue

Closing deadline is: 4:00pm on **THURSDAY** 21st January. Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 editor@merematters.co.uk or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

Please be sure to state your name and a contact telephone number to ensure inclusion.