

Mere Matters

Groups & Clubs Supplement

& so does

West Knoyle

Your community magazine

June 2021

Please note: Future publications
will **NOT** be hand delivered.

Copies will be available for collection from
Post Office, Co-op and other local shops as
from Monday 5th July.

*Could you collect and deliver to your
neighbours?*

Cover photograph with kind permission from Richard Jefferies.

Have you some good front cover photos? Send them in please.

Mere Town Council

Not only was this month's meeting the first with the newly elected council but also the first face to face meeting for quite sometime. Throughout the lockdowns of the last year, the business and administration of Mere Town Council has kept going in unprecedented and difficult circumstances. I would like to thank the retiring chairman, Clive Hazzard, Town Clerk Lindsey Wood and her assistant Sonya Ward, the groundsmen and all other staff for valiantly carrying on so efficiently. There has also been a tremendous force of volunteers who have helped with so much. Talking of which, as part of the "Great British Spring Clean" project, 22 volunteers turned out on Sunday May 23rd to pick up litter from around the town. Despite some morning rain, they returned, cheerful, with a pile of litter to be collected and taken away. It was good to hear that, in general, our streets and paths were quite tidy already. It has become apparent that Mere has been supported by many groups during the pandemic and we should all be proud of this community spirit, which the council is hopeful to foster in the future.

The following have been elected to the Town Council:

Debbie Beale, Nick Beale, Louise Bennett, Aubrey Colman, Philip Coward, Rodney Coward, George Jeans, Rachel Hansford, Clive Hazzard, Raymond Hill, Glen Ings, John Jordan, Eric Mitchell, Kate Symonds, Lesley Traves.

At our meeting, time was taken up by the official criteria necessary after an election. There was, however, several items of note, including an update of the PPG progress in trying to acquire the site of Fives Court, as a community health centre - this is, very much, supported by the Town Council and the people of Mere. Also, it was brought to our attention that £9778 in business rates has been paid back to Wiltshire Council. Lastly, the Town Council was informed that there will be a temporary road closure along Castle Street, The Square and Salisbury Street (B3095 from junction with Gillingham Road to its junction with Water Street). The road closure will be required weekdays between the hours of 09.30 and 15.30 from 28th June 2021 until 6th July 2021 (7 days effectively). This is, obviously, going to cause disruption. Councillor, George Jeans, I know, has written about this in his report.

*Lesley Traves, Chair, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.
lindseywood@merewilts.org ☎ 860701 merewilts.org*

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

Tuesday May the 18th was a busy day for me - Trowbridge by 8-30 to sign acceptance after being returned Wiltshire Councillor for the Mere Division, for which I feel very humble after receiving 1332 votes. I would like to thank all those that voted for all the candidates. I shall try to continue to support all those in the Mere division, this includes Mere, Stourton with Gasper, West Knoyle, Zeals and Kilminster. I usually support the majority on an issue, which can upset some, this I have to accept. Full Council followed on the 18th which was in The Civic Centre at Trowbridge, this was because the Council Chamber was not large enough to allow sufficient social spacing regarding Covid. In the Evening I attended Zeals and then West Knoyle parish Council. At Wiltshire Council in Trowbridge, the old atmosphere and the "buzz" I knew a year and more ago have not fully returned, however it was nice that all these meetings, Wiltshire Council or local councils were real live events and not conducted via a computer screen.

I have printed the temporary closure notice and map of Gillingham Road to its junction with Water Street, to enable Wiltshire Council to carry out carriageway resurfacing and associated works. This Order will come into operation on 28 June 2021 and the closure will be required weekdays between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30 until 06 July 2021. I have displayed these in Walton PO and by the Salisbury Street Car park, plus I have worked with Mere Town Council and Wiltshire Council and its contractors to put a statement on Mere Mutters. In that statement, please note, ***"Given the concern that was raised by local businesses and residents when a similar temporary road closure was applied back in early 2019, Cllr. Jeans has made contact with Wiltshire Council and the contractors. They have confirmed that they cannot carry out the work at evenings and neither can they do the work one carriageway at a time and neither can they delay the work until the school holidays as their timetable is booked for that period. They have also confirmed that pedestrian access will be unaffected and access for all emergency services will be maintained. For access discuss with the traffic management team that will be in place at the time."*** I know this is difficult, many will want the road maintained, and others will want the work done at another time.

Wiltshire now have 15 to 17 % of waste going to landfill. This is an improvement, however I hope this can be improved as the present cost to the tax payer is significant.

I propose and will keep you informed in future regarding a car club for Mere, allowing use of an electric vehicle at an affordable cost, roads. Improvements for Norton Ferris road junction where I was recently nearly involved in a serious accident, plus making Gillingham Corner Junction safer for walkers returning to Mere.

"Waltons Footpath" after considerable input by many who wanted this route, the inspectors has not supported, I do not wish to take out of context however he has commented, "A number of supporters of the Order pointed out the

Mere Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Each month members of the PPG are interviewing team members at Mere Surgery to highlight key services available to Mere Surgery patients. This month, I interviewed Dr Andrews, Dr Taylor and Practice Nurse, Polly Sealy, about a new service for women:

New Women's Health Clinic at Mere Surgery

The new clinic combines all women's health services so that expertise, time and resources are available at specific times, providing a better patient experience with more time for each appointment.

Dr Andrews is keen to encourage women to book into the service if they have an issue to discuss. She advises that *"The clinic covers a range of women's health issues, including contraception advice coil fitting, gynaecological issues and HRT. It's also useful for anyone who really struggles with smear tests. Issues around sexual health are usually referred on to Wiltshire Sexual Health services, so it's best to contact them directly (wiltshiresexualhealth.co.uk)."*

The clinic runs as a joint 4-hour session with a doctor and nurse available on alternate Tuesday and Thursday mornings; Dr Andrews and Polly Sealy run the Tuesday clinic, whilst Dr Taylor and Francesca King run Thursday sessions.

Practice Nurse, Polly Sealy, explains, *"It's a safe space for women to come and discuss their health issues and no problem is too small. The clinic enables more time for women to ask questions and we have a lot of resources to share, including information and leaflets."* *"Many women suffer in silence, putting up with symptoms for a long time, when there are simple things that can be done to help them"*, adds Dr Taylor.

For straightforward issues like coil replacements, appointments can be booked directly through reception. In other cases, book a routine initial telephone appointment with a nurse (particularly for pill checks or coil questions) or doctor, after which you will be booked into the clinic if it's appropriate.

Feedback has been very positive and Mere Surgery are keen to promote this new service. However, if you can't make these times, then please don't worry, you can still access the same services. For emergency contraception, don't wait for a clinic, just contact the surgery as soon as possible.



Vicky Furmidge-Owen, on behalf of Mere Surgery PPG MerePPG@gmail.com

PPG Survey results in regard saving Fives Court

Analysis of the recent survey showed that 1033 responses were collected. This represents about 27% of the residents of Mere and its environs over the age of 18. They voted overwhelmingly for the Fives Court to remain in community use (1030, 99.71%) and should be converted into a Community Health, Leisure and Wellbeing centre (1018, 98.55%).

Mere Surgery PPG would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this effort: the businesses that supported us, Mere Matters for publishing the Article, Mere Mutters for making us their banner, the volunteers who gave up their time and especially the residents of Mere and its environs who gave their opinion by responding to the survey.

Mere Surgery PPG is hoping to present the case for Fives Court to Wiltshire County Council in late June. If successful the PPG will be given 6 months to prepare a detailed business case which will include the use, funding, costs and ongoing support of the site. To prepare this business case a detailed survey will be held to understand the needs and wishes of the community. The paper being presented to Wiltshire Council will be available on the PPG section of the Mere Surgery website no later than **10th June 2021**.

Stephen Fletcher, on behalf of Mere Surgery PPG. MerePPG@gmail.com

Mere Croquet & Boule Club

Croquet is great fun, a game for all ages.

Please come and join us in Mere at the top of Steep Street, on Saturday's and Sunday's at 2.30pm and we will be pleased to see you and introduce you to the game, either croquet or boules. You will be most welcome to join us. Family, friends, neighbours and visitors are welcome at a cost of £3 each. We hope to hold a raffle with some tea and cake at a later date in the sunshine. We would love to see you, please come and try, you'll be hooked!



Avril Fletcher ☎ 861285 avril.fletcher52@gmail.com

Short Walks Around Mere

I am planning to restart my short walks this month and look forward to seeing old and new friends for a 3-4 mile walk around the footpaths and lanes of Mere on **Thursday 23rd June** with tea and cake for those who wish to indulge afterwards at the Angel Tea Rooms. Meet in the **Surgery car Park at 2.00pm**

Janet Way ☎ 860884

Stars Appeal Walk for Wards Wherever You Are

The Stars Appeal is encouraging people to sign up for their 'Walk for Wards Wherever You Are' event on **Sunday 4th July**.

Participants are asked to walk 3km, 5km, 10km, or as far as they would like, at a location of their choosing and to get sponsored to help raise funds for Stars Appeal projects that support patients and NHS staff across Salisbury District Hospital.



Melissa Davies, Urology Surgeon and Stars Appeal Ambassador said: "Walk for Wards is our charity's flagship event and after the success of last year's Wherever You Are format we are again asking everyone to show their support for our hospital by organising their own sponsored walk. Funds raised by the walk will play a vital role in funding Stars Appeal projects that make such a difference to both our patients and our staff."

All participants will receive a special certificate marking how much they have raised and there are special prizes for those raising over £100. You can sign up to take part at www.starsappeal.org

Participants are asked to follow any Government guidelines that may be in place at the time of their walk. The Walk for Wards normally takes place at Wilton House, home of Stars Appeal President The Earl of Pembroke, and plans are in place for the event to return there on **Sunday 3rd July 2022**.

Mere Fair Trade

Freedom Big Brew: Thursday 3rd June

At last I feel able to hold a Fair Trade event in our garden. There will be the chance to sample lots of Fair Trade goodies, take part in a short, fun quiz, go on a crocodile hunt, and much more.

For all you keen bakers why not bring along a Banana cake made with as many Fairly Traded Goodies as possible (and naturally bananas!) and see which recipe people vote the best! In order to allow as much spacing as possible I will be open from 10.30-12.30 and 1.30-3.30. Any donations made on the day will be sent to Traidcraft Exchange's Regeneration Appeal and will be doubled by UKAid! Their Appeal is helping vulnerable groups to withstand the devastating effects that Climate Change is having on their lives. I look forward to seeing you and am keeping fingers crossed for a fine day.

Janet Way ☎ 860884

The Mere Walking Group

Hooray, our monthly group walks are resuming, and newcomers are very welcome. Our walks are usually 4-6 miles (which takes 2 -3 hours) and different group members take it in turns to lead them. It's a great way to find new routes and meet new people. Dogs on leads are allowed. Details of walks, with length and level of difficulty, will be on the blackboard outside the post office a few days beforehand. While Covid restrictions are in place, we advise against sharing of cars, but hope this changes soon. Please note that this is an informal group, and so you join us at your own risk!

Sunday **6th June**. Meet 2 pm in Salisbury Street Car Park

Monday **21st June**. It is the Summer Solstice – Watch the Sunset from the top of Castle Hill. Meet at 8.30 pm at St. Michael's Churchyard, after the Freedom Picnic.

Thursday **24th June**. Meet 7.30pm Salisbury Street Car Park. (*This is the traditional walk to Stourhead for a drink then back over Whitesheet Hill under the full moon. Weather dependent*).

Sunday **11th July**. Meet 2 pm in Salisbury Street Car Park

Sunday **8th August**. Meet 2 pm in Salisbury Street Car Park

Wednesday **22nd September**. Meet at 10 am at Salisbury St Car Park. Walk will end in optional pub lunch.

A list of these walks plus other walking activities in Mere can be found on the Healthy Mere Walking website, hwm.org.uk

Mary Wilson 229609 wilsonsmere@gmail.com

Special Supplement!

As we emerge from lockdown and to help with your future planning, many of you (especially those new to Mere) may appreciate being able to know the contact details of those people who organise many of our activities and interest groups.

The next few pages of this publication are designed as a pull-out section so you can keep them for future reference – enjoy!



Community Groups & Clubs
June 2021

Community Groups and Clubs

Art Group

Every Thursday 10.00am to 12am £2.50 per week

Grove Building

Helge Brock

helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

☎ 861972

Come and join us and enjoy a couple of hours of art. This is an opportunity to learn some new techniques and to meet with kindred spirits. We have occasional instruction sessions where members may join in if they wish. We have a small selection of material available to get you going and advice on how to get started. Needless to say, refreshments and a chat are on hand as well.

Castle Hill Quilters

🌐 castlehillquilters.org.uk

Thurs 2.00pm – 4.30pm

Grove Building

Coral Pickles (Secretary) coral.pickles@virginmedia.com

☎ 01373 827483

We are a friendly group of like-minded people who enjoy quilting and creative stitching using a variety of fabrics, threads and embellishment. We have visiting speakers, demonstrations and workshops organised by our committee and we offer group projects if you wish to participate in them. We welcome members of all ages and levels of competence as there are plenty of members willing to share their knowledge with less experienced quilters.

Croquet & Boule Club

Sat & Sun 2.30pm £3 per session or £50 per yr.

Top of Steep Street

Avril Fletcher

avril.fletcher52@gmail.com

☎ 861285

A group of people who like having fun playing these games in the fresh air.

Food Bank – Mere & Zeals

Fresh food stalls: Mondays/Saturdays

Families first: 10.30am - 11.00am. Open until 4.30 pm

All welcome through a swap system for long life items.

Donations: Mere Co-operative collection box or contact.

Anne Rich

arich4@icloud.com

Mondays in the Lecture Hall

Saturdays – Open air at Ivy mead
– approach to Mere School

☎ 07413 512023

In affiliation with Warminster and Gillingham Foodbank we organise vouchers, collection or deliveries of food parcels - if you are in need of support, please ring.


Friends of Mere Museum

 meremuseum.org

£10 (adult), £15 (family), £1 (children), £25 (corp) p.a.

Mere Museum

Peter Dethick (Mem Secretary) peterdethick@aol.com

 863498


We exist to raise funds for the Museum which has no other source of income. We hold preview evenings with refreshments exclusively for Friends before all new exhibitions. We also organise fundraising talks from experts on subjects ranging from history to art and archaeology, quizzes along with our famous Plant Sale. Leaflets and membership forms are available in the Library.

Heathy Mere Walking

 hmw.org.uk

No membership or regular meetings.

John Jordan john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk

 861567


We organise events which encourage walking in the Parish and raise funds for projects related to healthy walking. We provide information about walking and local walks.

Literary Festival

 mereliteraryfestival.com

Annual event

Gail Garbutt contact@mereliteraryfestival.com

 07940 381004

The venues vary, from pubs, a variety of churches, and perhaps the Grove Buildings – shown in programme. Annual event in October, ticket prices vary and are shown in the programme and website.

Link Scheme for Mere & District

 merelink.org.uk

John Fitzgerald (Chair) fitzgerald.jns@sky.com

 860096


The Link Scheme is a charity whose volunteer drivers help people in Mere and surrounding villages to get to medical appointments (doctor, hospital, dentist, optician, audiologist etc.) and, where resources permit, shopping or daytime social events. There is no charge but passengers are asked to make a donation to help meet our costs. Drivers give their time for free and are reimbursed 45p/mile to help meet their vehicle costs. To arrange a trip or to volunteer please call.

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society - MADS

2nd Mon of each mth at 7.30pm £10 adult, £1 junior p.a.

Lecture Hall

Mary White t.white615@btinternet.com

 861257

We've been going strong since 1947, with two productions a year. We have a wide membership, both young and old with diverse skills and talents. Tuesday and Thursday evenings when we're rehearsing. We welcome everyone, whether keen to tread the boards or to work backstage.


Mere Bowls Club

 hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/information

Tues & Thurs 5.00pm, Sat 3.00pm £35 p.a.

The Green

Don Butchers (Sec) don.butchers@btinternet.com

 860775


The Club is located at The Green, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW. Potential new members are offered three free sessions and are then asked to join the Club. We currently have around 50 members. There is no age limit and your ability to hold and deliver a bowl is the only criteria for joining.

Mere & District Chamber of Trade

 merechamberoftrade.co.uk

Hamish Bell (President)

hamishbell@gmx.com

 0771 471 8625

The Chamber has two objectives; to encourage, support, and further the interests of all sizes of businesses in and around Mere, and to encourage tourism and community benefit. We cover Zeals to Maiden Bradley, West Knoyle to the Dorset border. Each year we host a number of business and networking meetings, giving members the opportunity to meet and benefit from talks on current issues. We provide training courses either directly or through other providers and have access to business, marketing, and financial advice. There is a modest annual membership fee. Our website provides a free online directory of local businesses.


Mere Gardening Club

 meregardenclub.org.uk

2nd Weds of each month 7.30pm £10 p.a.

Grove Building

Rose Heesom (Sec) roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk

 07791 559 674


We have informal talks, outings and a social each year running from February to November. Membership gives you discounts at some of our local garden centres. There is no age limit, new members are welcome.

Mere Footpaths Group

 facebook.com/MereFootpathGroup

weekly - Thursday morning

Alan Mead Chairman

 861567

We work out on the rights-of-way in and around Mere each week, clearing, repairing or replacing stiles and kissing gates, weather permitting. Contact us through our facebook page.


Mere Historical Society

 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

1st Tues 10.00am & 7.30pm (Winter) £10 p.a.

Grove Building

Gerry Cook (Chair) sixpenny1946@gmail.com

 861797

Talks covering all aspects of general and local history. We also run relevant visits by coach during the summer (at cost). Non-members always welcome to talks for a small donation (just show up) and on our trips at a supplement. See website for past programmes and copies of our newsletters. Updates also appear in Mere Matters. New members welcome.

Mere Matters

Monthly publications (excl January & August) Free

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

The publications are financed by advertising and donations. They are seen as an essential means of communicating within the community in regard events and news. The centre fold usually carries a monthly diary of all activities.

Mere Museum

🌐 meremuseum.org

Opening times as per Mere Library (Same building)

Mere Library

Rose Heesom (Hon. Curator) roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk 📠 07791 559 674

The Museum gives an insight to Mere and the local villages with 3/4 exhibitions each year. Local information and researches can be undertaken.

Mere Theatre Club

Membership £5 per annum

Madeline Morris madsmorris@gmail.com ☎ 861833

We organise trips to theatres within approximately a 2 hour coach drive from Mere, throughout the year. We usually attend matinees and sometimes arrange a lunch beforehand. We always provide transport. New members always welcome.

Merely Women

2nd & 4th Fri 10.00am (not Aug) Meeting donations Grove Building

Jean Eyles ☎ 863450

A group for ladies, meeting friends and making new ones. We have various activities, speakers and discussions covering both serious and more light-hearted topics, plus the occasional coach trip and arranged lunch. At every meeting, there is always tea, coffee and biscuits, along with a lot of chat and laughter. All ladies, either new or established residents, are most welcome to attend.

Pennybank Writers

Last Weds of the month 2.30pm – 4.30pm £12 p.a. Lecture Hall

Adrienne Howell howellatmere@aol.com ☎ 860475

A long established group for those interested in the art of writing either for pleasure or profit, poetry or prose. We are a mixed group of writers both experienced and beginners and would welcome new members. We workshop exercises, discuss, encourage, advise, share information on writing topics and participate in literary events.

Railway Modellers

Castle Street Car Park

Every Weds evening 7.00pm – 9.00pm
The standard annual membership is £55 for all of the family or just single. A Summer membership from April to October is £30.

Graham Avory (Chair) graham.avory@btopenworld.com

☎ 860439

Nancy Broach (Mem Sec) n.e.broach@gmail.com

☎ 861654

The club aims to develop friendships amongst members, which creates interaction on all topics of model railways and the running of the club. The joint construction of model railways, of varying gauges, offers much in the way of learning from more experienced members and the opportunity, with one's own growing experience, to educate and encourage other and less experienced members.

Rosemary Goddard Centre

Mon & Fri 10.00am – 3.00pm

Sandie Hawkins (Organiser) rgcorganiser@outlook.com

☎ 07835 272406

We are a registered charity whose aim is to reduce loneliness and isolation for elderly people from the locality. The Centre provides a safe and sociable environment for people aged over 60 to meet, enjoy a hot nutritious meal, stimulating activities and entertainments, plus the occasional outing chosen by the guests. Sessions run under the supervision of the organiser, enthusiastically supported by volunteers who assist with activities and help serve meals and drinks.

Rummikub Group

Every Tues at 2.30pm £2 per session

Lordsmead Barn, Edgebridge

Avril Fletcher avril.fletcher52@gmail.com

☎ 861285

A group of friendly ladies who enjoy getting together to play and chat.

Shreen Harmony

🌐 shreenharmony.co.uk

Thursday Evenings

Usually in the United Reform Church

Judy Fray Chairman judy.fray4@gmail.com

☎ 840913

Shreen Harmony is a community choir based in Mere, Wiltshire. Under the musical directorship of Caroline Radcliffe, the choir meet during term time and perform throughout the year in the local area at different events, ranging from church fetes to more established organised gatherings, like fundraising concerts for local churches, the annual fundraising concert in aid of the Alzheimer's Society and a Christmas Concert in aid of a different charity each year. The choir sing a variety of musical genres from all around the world, including traditional British, African, Eastern European, Spiritual and American folk, fun being at the heart of it all. There is a wonderfully informal attitude in the group and there is no audition. Please contact Judy Fray for further information.

Tai Chi for Health

Weds 9.30am (1st group) and Weds 10.30 (2nd group)

Grove Building

Sue Marks

bmarks9575@btinternet.com

☎ 631672

Tai chi is a very gentle exercise which helps improve balance, coordination, wellbeing, memory and helps prevent falls. It helps to encourage good posture in our daily life. Exercise can be seated or standing.

Tiddlers & Toddlers

Mondays term time : 9.30am -11.30am

Lecture Hall

£1.50 per child over 1 year old

Poppy Hall

poppycarolinehall@gmail.com

☎ 07576 970830

Anne Rich

arich4@icloud.com

☎ 07413 512023

Drop in session with toys, crafts, snacks and drinks included. Great place to meet and socialise. Foodbank at the end of each session.

Traidcraft

Monthly stalls at St Michaels Church & URC Coffee mornings

Janet Way

jwaywitsend@gmail.com

☎ 860884

Various sales throughout the year. Orders can be made from the catalogue at any time.

When I receive their information I am hoping to be able to add the following:

Duplicate Bridge

Film Shows (Moviola)

Friends of St Michaels

Girl Guiding

Karate

Mere Carnival

Mere Cricket Club

Mere Snooker Club

Suchana

Mere Town Council

Mothers Union

Movement for the Mind

Pilates groups (All 3 of them)

Scouts, Beavers and Cubs

If you run a group or club and want your details added then please let me know

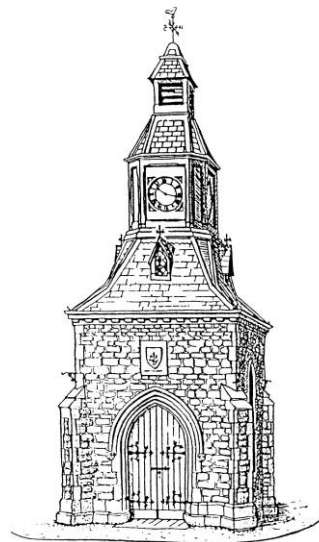
Richard Jefferies editor@merematters.co.uk



*Grove Buildings - Mere
Colin Anderson 1992*




43rd Wessex Division Memorial



Clock Tower - Mere

Colin Anderson 1992

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

Mere Rivers Group -Wildlife Sightings for April 2021

As stated in our March article, this is our last "Wildlife Sightings" article. We truly are very grateful to all of you who took the trouble to make a note of your sightings and then email them to us. These sightings made a big difference in our conversations with Wessex Water and the Environment Agency in regard to the abstraction of water and contributed to the reduction in abstraction during the summer months.

Below are the sightings for April which was a very cold and dry month. It did not stop the birds from being very busy nest building and feeding hungry chicks.

Along Waterside the daily life of the ducks and their ducklings was an ongoing "soap". At the beginning of the month there were only two ducklings left from the original clutch of ten. Another hen mallard had eight ducklings. Of these, five survived to the end of the month by which time this hen adopted the other two, who had been abandoned by their mother. The poor hens have a very rough time, trying to protect their young whilst consistently being pursued by various drakes.

Other sightings include:

Pair of Moorhen daily, initially on their nest and then, by the end of the month three moorhen chicks were seen being carefully looked after by their parents.

Seen once were the following: 2 trout, water rail, stoat, green finch, chaff chaff and a pair of grey wagtail. The call of a goldcrest was heard.

Nature Notes

April proved to be a very strange month weather wise. As stated above it was very dry and sunny but also very cold. As a result the trees were slow coming into leaf as were the plants. However it was an amazing month for the blackthorn blossom. The blackthorn remained in bloom for the whole month and lined our fields and roads with its beautiful white blossom.

By the end of the month, in sheltered areas, the bluebells, wood anemones and ramsons (wild garlic) were in bloom. Another plant that could be seen in several places was wild sage with its purple flower. Also the first swallows and house martins were seen flying over the town. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the swifts have arrived and are being heard screaming over our rooftops.



Once the weather improves and gets warmer there should be an abundance of wildlife so look out for butterflies, damselflies, beautiful demoiselles, fledgling birds and young mammals, especially hedgehogs in your back gardens.

Lynne Bann ☎ 860174 mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com

Link Scheme

Ton-up - Between January and April we made 101 trips taking people to their Covid vaccinations. Most were to Wilton but we also went to Bruton, Sturminster Newton and Westbury. The reaction from our passengers was very positive both for the work at the vaccination centres and for us getting them to their appointments.

Once again our main work in April was to Covid vaccinations and we took 30 local residents mainly for their second jab. We did a total of 78 trips in April and, once the outpatient clinics start catching up, I think we will soon get to the pre-pandemic number of over 100 trips most months. If you would like to help by volunteering as a driver please call our co-ordinator on 01747 860096.

One of our longest serving drivers, Gwil Hitchcock, has decided to stop driving after 18 years volunteering. A truly great effort and I have written to him thanking him for his help.

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to medical appointments, including Covid vaccinations, and shopping, if resources allow. Once you have an appointment please call 01747 860096 to book a Link driver. Please try to give us 48 hours notice if possible but we will try to arrange last minute requests.

We continue to use the safety guidelines we introduced to protect both clients and drivers from the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Both driver and passenger have to wear a face covering while in the car and passengers have to sit in the back where this is practical. Drivers carry hand sanitiser and wipe down all surfaces that may have been touched by the passenger while in the car at the end of each trip. Unfortunately, we remain unable to take people from different households in the same car.

John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096 🌐 merelink.org.uk

Friends of Mere Museum

As we write, Friends are busy in their gardens and buzzing about the town energetically assembling a splendid array of plants for sale on May 22nd. Of course by the time you read this the great Plant Sale will have happened on what we hope will have been a splendidly sunny day! But rain or shine, we'd like now to say thank you - in anticipation - to everyone who will have helped us in any way to make this step towards normality a success! We wish you happy gardening!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 ✉ jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere Art Group

There is great enthusiasm being shown for the 'outdoor session' mentioned in the May Issue. It is planned to be in the grounds of St Michaels Church, so safe-distancing will be easy. A number of photos have been circulated to whet the appetite.



We look forward to meeting 3 new, keen attendees. Please make contact if you would like to be added to our mailing list as well.

All we need is some decent weather – bring it on!

Helge Brock ☎ 861972 helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



Our next meeting will be at a different time of the month to the usual second Tuesday afternoon. We will be having a **Garden Meeting at 2.30pm on Tuesday 1st June** in a members' garden to say goodbye to three of our members as they move to pastures new. If you would like to know more please contact one of us, the names and contact details are given at the foot of this article. We will also be welcoming a new member who moved to Mere during Lockdown 1 so it is nice to at last be able to welcome her and anyone else who would like to join us.

We plan the following meeting on **Monday August 9th** which is **Mary Sumner Day**, celebrating the life of our founder, at 11am for a service at St. Michael's Church followed by a picnic lunch. As you can tell we are praying for good weather for these occasions!

Mother's Union is a Christian Worldwide Organisation to support families and people who need our care and prayer in our own parish and further afield. We would welcome anyone who would like to join our very friendly organisation.

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

Mere Theatre Club

A quick update. When we hear more about our possible freedoms after June 21st, the committee will meet to discuss the short term options for the theatre club and whether it is feasible to organise any outings or not. We'd love to hear what you think, so please do get in touch and let us know. Email or phone number below.

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 madmorris@gmail.com

Mere Historical Society

Unfortunately, the proposed visit to **Forde Abbey** on **8th July** will not now be possible, due to the present ill-health of our visits organiser Caroline Cook. We hope to be able to provide further information on the future of the visits programme in the next 'Mere Matters', and on our website in due course.

Peter Landymore ☎ 228819 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Mere Taxibuzz

Just a reminder to let you know that the Mere Taxibuzz is waiting to reunite, with their regular passengers and to welcome new passengers.

Ready to venture out of the house after the last lockdown? Don't forget, we will pick you up from your home too. If you are nervous to take this next step we can reassure you, we are doing everything to make your journey Covid safe and request you continue to wear face masks, while on the minibus.

Whether you need a short trip into Mere to the Doctors, Hairdressers or local shops or are ready to travel a bit further afield, to Shaftesbury, Gillingham or Warminster, just give us a call on **01985 218754** between Monday and Friday 08.30am -5.30pm and book a seat.

Journeys available Monday to Friday, between 9.00am-3.00pm

Minimal fares apply to concessionary pass holders, 50p single, within Mere and £1 single, outside Mere. For full details, just ask when you call.

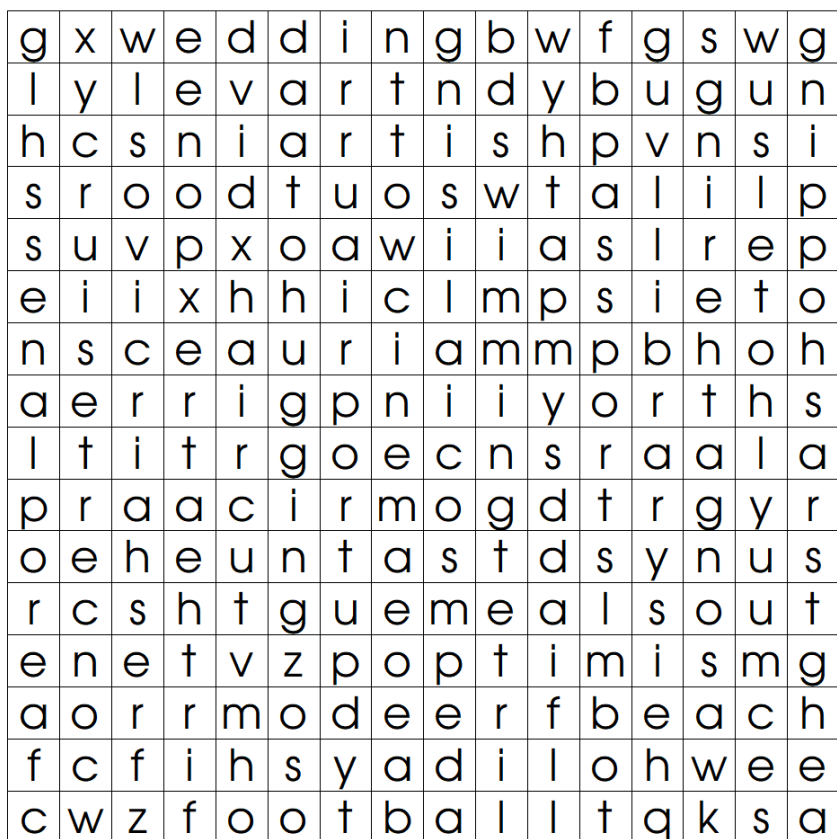


Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

It was in 1861 that Dickens published one of his best-known novels: Great Expectations. 160 years ago! Nevertheless the title of the book perfectly expresses the feelings that all MADS members are currently experiencing. That is to say we are in a state of exceeding and expectant excitement at the prospect of being able to meet in the foreseeable future and start to talk about planning our Autumn Production (fingers crossed of course; we take nothing for granted). We sincerely hope that this will be last MADS report which largely looks backwards and that in the July issue there will be something totally positive to write about. As we've said before: we live in hope.



Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

End of Lockdown Wordsearch

Words:

sun
fun
holidays
freedom
meals out
hugging
socialising
shopping
trains

beach
football
concert
theatre
cinema
hope
sympathy
wedding
library

outdoors
passport
gatherings
hotels
airport
aeroplanes

travel
cruise
fresh air
optimism
haircut
swimming

Answers on page 35 – no cheating!

Mere School

Reading is such a vital part of a child's education, not only because of its essential role in learning about every subject in the school curriculum but also due to how necessary it is to access information in our ever-changing wider world.

Reading allows children to explore the world that they live in. It allows them to understand books that contain the stories and information that form their view of their environment and that of the imaginations, views and feelings of others. Reading helps children to write. It shows them how to spell words and how to formulate and manipulate sentences. It teaches them to be creative and how to structure stories, reports, poems and instructions.

At Mere School we wholly value the importance of reading. At home, we encourage parents to support their children by listening to them read at least three times per week. The child does not have to read their school reading book and it doesn't have to be the child's parent who they read to. Grandparents, aunts and uncles can all get involved in developing the reading of a child. Adults have such a vital role in developing reading by checking understanding, asking questions, sharing views and making links with other books and the wider world. Importantly, adults can listen and enjoy books with others.



During the two recent periods of school closure that have had to occur due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the parents of our pupils have had to work incredibly hard to support their children in their learning, becoming the teachers at home and delivering multiple lessons each day. As a teacher and a parent myself, I have been astounded at the dedication of the majority of our parents, many of whom were working themselves throughout both lockdowns, but still managed to guide their child in learning from home. Because of this shift in focus of parents teaching at home, reading, in some houses, had to become secondary to the English, maths, science, geography, history, PSHE and art lessons that were asked to be taught. The workload for some parents and pupils unfortunately pushed reading for pleasure out of the day.

As we emerge from the shadow of this turbulent time in the education of our children, let's not forget the importance of reading and see this time, as households begin to meet, as an opportunity to deploy our whole community as willing listeners to our young readers. After all, as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child.

David Rich 860515  mereschool.co.uk

Mere Snooker Club

The Club has now reopened, in line with government guidelines, and members are returning to revise their skills. If you are interested in using the Club's playing facilities, then please make contact.

Kevin Smith  07803 006077 meresnookeclub@gmail.com

Mere Bowls Club

What a wonderful day we had, the Club opened on Saturday 22nd May in glorious sunshine, on a green that was cut in the morning thanks to Richard Coombs and Trevor Mead for their unwavering support. With a bit of luck we will have had the same weather for our two open days on the May Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday.

Bowls really is a great way to stay fit and healthy, sport for all in the great outdoors regardless of age and ability, who could ask for more?

Don Butchers – Club Secretary ☎ 860775 don.butchers@btinternet.com

🌐 hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/



Although Covid is still very serious in India, Suchana remains closed. Staff and volunteers have been very active in giving all the support they can for children and families in the local villages. They have been providing oxymeters, simple thermometers and basic medicines for families affected and some PPE so that in the absence of formal medical care, the sick can be cared for as safely as possible. They have even set up an emergency fund so that very sick people can be taken to hospital when a place can be found. We managed to find a way to get funds sent out to support this effort as quickly as possible, and await further news.

Meanwhile, as we go to print, we are preparing for our May outdoor coffee morning and bring & buy, and hoping for sunshine and good participation.

Our next fund-raising venture is a **Quiz-and-Pudding** evening at **7.30pm on Friday 2nd July** in the **Grove Building**, all being well. We hope lots of our Shrove Tuesday Quiz supporters will be able to come, and a good time will be had by all. In spite of current uncertainties re lifting of restrictions and the availability of the Grove Building, it would be very helpful if would-be quizzers would book well in advance – see contact details below. We will then be able to contact you nearer the time to confirm arrangements; and we'll also be able to get busy making delicious puddings. So please, if at all interested in coming to support this small but special charity in difficult times, phone or email as soon as you can so we can start making plans. Hope to see you there!

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

Farewell to Rev Carol Green

Rev Carol's Farewell service was held at Pentecost. People from across the Benefice of Mere with West Knoyle and Maiden Bradley and community gathered to say goodbye to Carol at St Michael's, Mere after serving here for 8 1/2 years. She was given a beautiful hamper basket and generous gift vouchers for books and for use at Waitrose from St Michaels. In farewells at the other churches she received an original watercolour of St Mary's church by Sue Torrington and cheque and in Maiden Bradley Pete Dean made a beautiful wooden bowl and garden vouchers. She thanked everyone for her gifts and for their prayers and support over the years. She said: "always know that God loves you and wants to bless you as you care for each other and your community"

Carol is looking forward with Mark to moving to Teignmouth for a new challenge and chapter. Her licensing service at St Michael the Archangel, Teignmouth is on Tuesday 27th July at 7pm. She would be glad to see you there.

Letter from the Churches ~ Deacon Michael Hughes *writes*:

We called them Pongles where I grew up. You probably know them as cowslips. Have you SEEN them this year – and the bluebells that have been stupendous for over a month, and the scented violets and the secretive wild orchids?

Such beauty surrounds us – not the artifice of our gardens created by our labour and money - but the free God-given plants which have flowered in our woods and hedges a thousand years and more.

Last year of a warm sunny Spring afternoon – it was in the frightening times - I went for a siesta after a good lunch and lay out, fast asleep, in the woods among the nodding bluebells, the archangel and the wood anemones. The thick carpet of flowers hid me from sight.

I was woken by a sense of presence, and opened my eyes to see the soft muzzle of a roe deer inches from my face. She had come to inspect me, and her limpid eyes- far more lustrous than all the cosmetics can make the human eye- and mine met in that stillness for a moment before she bounded away.

We are all given WOW moments when the beauty of our planet overwhelms us. When we don't just observe the deer (or the sunset or the ladybird on our hand) but feel it bless us in our core, like water on a dry wilting plant.

Can you think of such a moment of wonder in your life?

We did not know how fragile was this beauty around us- the natural world. Now we do.

We know we are abusing our planet, destroying the life of the oceans, the land and the air (a quarter of our trees in the bluebell woods around here are ash trees. There is a new disease, like covid for humans, which is killing them, and we shall hear the chain saws buzzing across the vale all year).

We know too that each one of us can make a difference.

If we care.

With minimal inconvenience to ourselves we can change the way we live, eat, travel so that our lives have less of a negative impact on the planet.

The effects of the way we destroy the environment will not be just on animals and plants. It will change the lives of everyone on earth for the worse. If we do nothing, people whose lives are already desperate, the hungry and the poor, will no longer be able to sustain life.

God gave us this beautiful blue planet to be our common home. We have to stop trashing it. What am I going to do? Go back to sleep among the bluebells, or take some tiny action to change the way I live?

I don't know if I will do anything. Will you ?

God bless you.



Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church, St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Isabel Page ☎ 860297, Richard Wilson 📠 07966-244373

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

6 th	Sun	8.00am 10.00am	BCP St Barnabas Service of Worship
13 th	Sun	8.00am 10.00am	BCP Parish Communion
20 th	Sun	8.00am 10.00am	BCP Parish Communion
27 th	Sun	8.00am 10.00am	BCP Parish Communion

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall ☎ 830534, Mr Colin Seaford ☎ 830263

6 th	Sun	9.25am	Service of Worship
13 th	Sun	9.25am	DIY
20 th	Sun	9.25am	Matins
27 th	Sun	9.25am	Holy Communion

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

6 th	Sun	10.00am	Communion
13 th	Sun	10.00am	Morning Service
20 th	Sun	10.00am	Morning Service
27 th	Sun	10.00am	Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

6 th	Sun	2.00pm	Balcony Lane Cottage
20 th	Sun	2.00pm	Balcony Lane Cottage

Note: We hope that by the end of June we will have a firm date for the completion of renovations in the church and will be able to resume our normal services in July.

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

Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	Nicky Ravenhill administrator@grovebuildingmere.com	??
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685

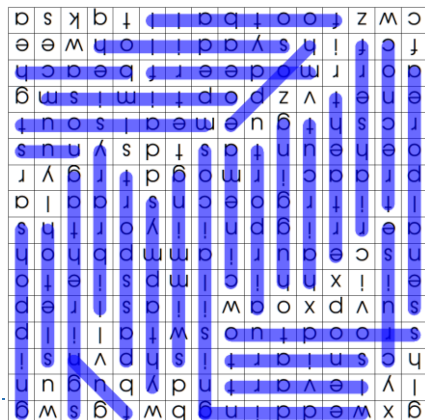
Mere Information Point @ The Library

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

Wiltshire Dementia Adviser Service	1 st Friday in month	2.00pm – 4.00pm
Registrar of Births & Deaths	Thursdays by appt only	☎ 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





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