

Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle



MERRY

Christmas

· AND HAPPY NEW YEAR ·

December 2022/January 2023

Mere Town Council

You may recall, that Mere Town Council has received contributions from C G Fry pertaining to the development of the Hill Brush site in Woodlands Rd. These financial contributions came with conditions for its expenditure but I am pleased to report that we are now progressing well with two of the projects that were identified as priorities – others will follow in due course.

For now though, we are hoping to go out to tender very soon for the refurbishment and improvements of the play area at Walnut Road. It was gratifying to learn that a recent questionnaire, distributed amongst the community, returned support for this amenity, whilst confirming an upgrade was essential.

The second project is also progressing – this is for the full-scale renovations of the footpath from Clements Lane to the centre of Mere, via Lordsmead Mill and Angel Lane and will include re-surfacing, removing invasive vegetation which has considerably narrowed the path and adding discreet low-level lighting.

I must give thanks to our Project Co-ordinator, Roger Pipe for his diligence with these projects.

The Vice Chair, the Town Clerk and I recently met up with Debs Shannon, a teacher at Mere School whose Year 6 pupils have formed a Mere School Eco Committee.

Whilst, we agreed that the Climate Change agenda is high priority, we were not able to support tree planting on the sports fields. This fact is substantiated by our landlord, the Duchy of Cornwall, who agree that the Town Council is limited on any suitable spaces for tree planting but who have pointed out that Mere will definitely not be behind the curve on the tree planting carbon offset work, since the Duchy of Cornwall has planted 900 trees as part of their hedgerow tree planting campaign and 70 trees as a commemorative wood for the Queens Jubilee campaign. Anyhow, we were happy to suggest some appropriate sites for wild flower sowing for the school's Eco Committee to consider and it is highly commendable that the school is embracing these ecological issues.

At the November meeting complaints were well voiced concerning the HGV traffic in Pettridge Lane and Clements Lane. Unfortunately, there is not a lot we can do about this. There isn't an alternative route which is better. The layout of Mere is what it is. We must try to find a way to promote conscientious, safe parking and driving. The Town Council did recognise that the safety of pedestrians on Edgebridge is paramount and, hopefully the progression of our footpath project from Clements Lane to the centre of Mere will, when completed, encourage pedestrians to use this route rather than the more hazardous route around Edgebridge.

On **December 2nd**, the Christmas Lights will be turned on in Mere along with a visit by Father Christmas. On behalf of the Mere Town Council, I wish you all a Happy Christmas.

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

The Remembrance Service was on Sunday 13th November, held around the War Memorial. I laid a wreath as Wiltshire Councillor and the South West Wiltshire Area Board chairman Cllr Nabil Najjar, was in attendance also laying a wreath. This year I contacted four local photographers who were all out of town or in the Remembrance Service. My wife stepped in and snapped some photos to send to press for those to see who could not be there, also help "keeping Mere on the map".

Mere is in the Canon of Mere, Zeals is in the Canton of Zeals and a little further west we have Wincanton, well that was what I was informed by one of the best performances made by Mere Amateur Dramatic Society in my opinion was, A LADD IN MERE. I attended on Saturday 19th November for the matinee, at The Lecture Hall, Mere. Many youths involved and new faces for this performance. Every performance was fully attended.

I get many complaints regarding the footpath hardtop that leads from The Walnut Tree Inn to Mere town centre, being Footpaths 66/50. At the time of going to print Mere TC progress the work required (alongside Wilts CC) and are submitting a bid to the LHFIFG for grant support for the work along with section 106 monies Mere Town Council have influence over from developers to develop a safe pedestrian way to the centre of Mere. My wife Sue and I had a near escape recently on the bend of Clements Lane and Edgebridge, a 4x4 was coming down hill along Petridge Lane so fast it was leaning as it cornered, had the road been slippery I think we would have been hit.

Wiltshire Council has from Monday 21 November launched a new campaign to combat fly-tipping in the county.

The striking campaign, which builds on the success of the council's hard-hitting 'We're Targeting Fly-tippers' (WTF) branding, focuses on three key areas: warning people of the penalties of fly-tipping including unlimited fines, prosecution and seized vehicles; encouraging residents to report fly-tipping; and educating and informing people about how they can safely and legally dispose of their waste, particularly highlighting the dangers of using 'tip run' style social media advertisements.

The campaign is part of the council's investment of an extra £150,000 each year for the next three years into tackling fly-tipping and environmental crime in the county. The bulk of this funding is being spent on more officers and equipment such as state-of-the-art cameras to catch these environmental criminals in the act.

The Cabinet member said "Excellent results in catching fly-tippers in Wiltshire during the past year, and this investment will help us to build on that, to prosecute more offenders, to educate people about how to safely and legally

dispose of their rubbish, and to ultimately see the blight of fly-tipping decrease in Wiltshire”.

On 10 January 2023, the cabinet will receive the council's provisional Care Market Sustainability Plan. This plan will assess and demonstrate how the council will ensure Wiltshire's local care market is sustainable as the council moves towards implementing reform. The plan will also assess the impact of care home and home care fees, risks to the market and the impact of the introduction of Section 18(3) of the Care Act.

Household batteries are to be collected soon as part of Wiltshire kerbside recycling service. From **5 December**, residents are able to put small household batteries in clear, sealed sandwich bags on top of their blue lidded bin and they will be collected for recycling. The batteries people can put out for collection are 'D', 'C', 'AA', 'AAA', 9V and button-type batteries, and these will be kept separate from other recyclable materials on board the collection vehicles. Domestic batteries find their way into both the household waste and kerbside recycling bins and are thought to contribute to a reported increase in fires affecting waste vehicles and waste management facilities.

From 21 November to 2 December hangers will be placed on the handles of blue lidded recycling bins to inform residents of this new service. But just to reiterate, the collections themselves will not commence until **5 December onwards**.


To ensure minimal use of plastic bags, please ensure you store batteries until you have enough to fill a sandwich bag, making sure it can be securely closed. Do not place one or two batteries out for collection as there is a risk the bag could blow away.

Batteries the Council will not collect:- Lead acid batteries, e.g. car batteries, Portable appliance battery units, e.g. handheld vacuums, power tools, Golf trolley/power caddy, E-Scooter battery, Mobility scooter battery, Batteries with trailing wires, Children's ride on toy batteries, Motorbike batteries, Sealed lactic acid/gel batteries, 12v leisure batteries, items with integral batteries i.e. electric toothbrush, mobile phone etc, Laptops.


New data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) shows shoppers lost over £15 million to cyber criminals during the festive period last year, with an average loss of £1,000 per person. We can all help reduce our risk of suffering similar losses during this year's pre-Christmas period by protecting our accounts, checking before we buy and making sure we only pay via secure websites online.

Wiltshire Council libraries will officially become warm spaces for people this winter, providing a warm and friendly welcome to support anyone who needs help through the cost of living crisis. Wiltshire libraries are open to the public throughout the year, but now anyone is welcome to drop-in to any library in the county during the usual opening hours to have a sit down, a hot drink where possible, pick up some useful information, take part in activities and enjoy a

friendly chat with staff should they need it. Working with Warm and Safe Wiltshire and The Rural Communities Energy Support Network, the council's friendly library staff will be able to assist residents seeking basic energy advice and make referrals to experienced energy advisors in all but its smallest libraries. All libraries will be able to signpost people to community partners and agencies that can support people through the rising cost of living. Libraries will also be collection points for Warm Packs, which includes a hot water bottle and blanket, for anyone who would benefit from some free essentials. These will be available for collection soon. All the other usual library facilities will be available too, including free access to books, newspapers, computer facilities, digital support, and tables for anyone who needs to do some quiet work. Libraries are also continuing to provide a home library service for people who are housebound or who struggle to get to the library. If anyone is interested in this service, they should contact their local library. There is no criteria for anyone who might need to use the library as a warm space, and staff will be friendly and welcoming so that people feel as comfortable as possible. There are many other warm spaces throughout the county that local communities have got up and running themselves. The council has a range of support and advice on its dedicated cost of living webpages. It contains information on council tax and benefits, energy advice, housing information, mental health support, local practical help, and support available for businesses. The council's recently launched interactive community directory can also be found there, which contains details of other warm spaces in the county as well as community food providers. It can all be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living. The council is always looking for volunteers to support library services, so if anyone has time to spare and wants to join a friendly team this winter they should email libraryenquiries@wiltshire.gov.uk or visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries. I said last month, at various Wiltshire Council meetings, I have attended, it has been acknowledged to get those with need to attend warm spaces this coming winter, may be problematic, please remember those requiring heat may because of pride or physical capability etc not attend. It was suggested perhaps invite a person you know and you suspect may require heat for say a cup of tea, you may then be able to further help and guide them. May be simple and common sense, however as has been done in council meetings I am again simply highlighting, if it comes, Christmas and afterwards is often the coldest part of the year.

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

How much do you value the Mere Matters editions each month?

If as an individual or on behalf of a group or business you would like to donate to these productions, please contact treasurer@merematters.co.uk  0754 7629923



Shreen Harmony
AND FRIENDS

A
CHRISTMAS
CONCERT

in aid of

Open Door

**A community drop-in centre on
Gillingham High Street**

SATURDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 2022

7:30 PM

United Reformed Church, Mere BA12 6DD

Light Refreshments Provided

What is the Open Door?

www.gillinghamcommunitychurch.co.uk

Wessex House is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 10am until 12 midday. Anyone can drop in for help: food, advice, debt counselling, benefits advice. Open Door will do their best to provide assistance or to point visitors to other services that meet their needs.

Mere Gardening Club

Our next meeting is our Christmas Social for all members on 14th December 2022 in the Grove Building starting at 19.30pm. Our next meeting after that is on 8th February 2023. Details to follow in the new year.

Scarecrow Festival 2023

After the success of this year's competition, we are holding a Scarecrow Festival next year with the theme of Book Characters. There will be fantastic prizes with thanks to our sponsors, Walton House Antiques, Jean's Electrical. F.J. Chalk, The Butt of Sherry, The Beauty Box and L.C. Hill Funeral Directors.

The First prize will be £100, second £50 and the third £25. Entry forms will be available from 1st May 2023 and must be returned by 19th May so that the trail can be printed. The scarecrows should be up by 12th June culminating with the festival weekend of 17th and 18th June with afternoon tea and a plant stall at the United Reformed Church on both afternoons. The Angel Tea Rooms will also be open as usual on the two days to welcome visitors.

The trails will cost £1 and the public will vote for the scarecrows this year returning the forms by 19th June (venues to be announced). There will be a random draw of all completed trails and there will be two cash prizes of £50. The event will be advertised widely.

Any excess funds will be donated to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and a local charity.

So please get your thinking caps on to make this event something special and help us to put Mere Scarecrow Festival on the map. More details to follow in the New Year so keep looking for the up to date news.

Les Manwaring Chair Mere Gardening Club

Rose Heesom  07791 559674 roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk  meregardenclub.org.uk


Mere Social Club – Dates for the diary

Mere Social Club - Entertainment for Xmas Eve disco with DJ Jon Baker. All Welcome eight till late.

New Year's Eve live music with The Rebels - great local band. Fancy dress optional, free buffet, free entry all welcome come and see in the new year with family and friends.

Christina Miles flowjo123@gmail.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

Mere Jelly

Once a month, Mere's creatives, freelancers, home-workers and small business owners emerge in public! You will find us, armed with cappuccinos and shiny laptops, at Visit Hillbrush on the last Wednesday of every month between 9am and noon.

For obvious reasons, there won't be a Jelly in December, but we will be back in January, so do come along and join us on the 25th, stay for the morning or just drop in for a coffee and a chat. We'd love to see you.

Jenni Bell ☎ 860400



Mere Museum

The current schools exhibition will end shortly to be replaced with a celebration of 50 years of Mere Museum. It was started in 1972 and the museum now represents the events, people and developments which Mere has experienced to the present day. The exhibition will open on 3rd December and as always your comments on photos and events are welcome to add to our records. So do come along and find out about how it all began!

Rose Heesom 📞 07791 559 674 meremuseum@btinternet.com

Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Calling all ukulele players. Come along to The Butt of Sherry and meet other players, of all abilities, who enjoy strumming and singing. We have great fun and play well known songs from the sixties, folk, country and songs that are easy to play!

Our December Ukes at The Butt will be on **Thursday 1st December at 7.30pm.**

We normally meet on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. Bring your ukulele and join us on **Monday 9th January 2023 at 7.30pm.** Check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt' for our song list or contact me.

Maggie Holmes maggieholmes101@gmail.com

Mere Library Rhyme Time for Babies and Toddlers

Come along and join us for this Fun, Friendly, Free Group, held in the Library 10.00-10.30 on Friday Mornings-

9th, 16th of December and a Special Christmas Rhyme Time on Friday 23rd of December – Wear something Christmasy !.

As from the first week of January 2023 we will be changing to Thursday Mornings 11.00-11.30 .

For More Information please visit the Library or telephone Mere Library 01747 860546.

For Further Information please contact the library on 📞 860546.

Don Was Bowled Over!

The year of 2022 has been an honour for me personally, as I was voted in as Junior Vice-President of Bowls Wiltshire (Men) way back in 2020, by way of natural progression I should have been President in 2023. But due to the Senior Vice having to stand down half way through 2021 for personal reasons, I only had a one year learning cycle instead of the planned two.

I had a great year as President, choosing the Wiltshire Air Ambulance as my charity and raising just over £1,338 for this wonderful cause, an excellent effort by all concerned. I would particularly like to mention the President's Tour of Carmarthenshire at the end of which I was presented with a cheque for £1,000 to go to my charity. Bowls Wiltshire (Men) lost slightly more than we won in the county friendlies against other counties in our area, but much more importantly we did manage to beat the Ladies of the county in the annual game at the end of the season by a magnificent 44 shots, this year the game was held at Mere BC, so a big, big thank you to all involved in getting the club, green and general area ready prior to the match.

My year ended with the Annual Men's Dinner held at Melksham, hosting all my guests and friends in the Green Room before the event was the highlight of my time in office, a special thanks to Richard and Chris Coombs who acted as bartenders, without them I do not know what I would have done. In all I had ten friends from Mere Bowls Club who attended as well as Mary, my wife. In all there were over 170 members of Bowls Wiltshire (Men) and their guests at the event, they all seemed to have a great evening.

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

Diary Dates (Recurring events are first shown in **Bold** then in **Blue**).

Venue Key for Diary :

AYP - Andy Young
CP - Main Car Park
Drs - Surgery

GB - Grove Building
L - Lecture Hall
Lib - Library

MSC - Social Club
RMC - Castle St Car Park
StM - St Michaels Church

URC - United Ref Church
WT - Walnut Tree Inn

DECEMBER

1	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Bridge (every Thurs)	L
		17:00	Girlguiding (every Thurs)	GB
		19:30	Ukes at the Butt of Sherry	
2	Fri	13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri)	GB
		18:00	FOMM	GB
3	Sat	10:00	Christmas Market	GB
		10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
4	Sun			
5	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
		17:45	Yoga (every Mon)	L
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon)	GB
6	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
		18:20	Zumba (every Tues)	L
		10:30	History Society	GB
7	Wed	12:45	Stretch Class (every Weds)	L
		14:00	Fitness and Friendship	GB
		14:45	Stretch Class (every Weds)	L
		18:00	Karate (every Weds)	L
			<i>Railway Modellers</i>	
8	Thurs		<i>Art, Quilters, Rubber Bridge, Girlguiding</i>	
9	Fri	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
			<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
10	Sat	19:00	Oasis Bingo	L
			<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
11	Sun			
12	Mon		<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Yoga</i>	
13	Tues	09:00	Little Angels	GB
		14:30	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	History Society	GB
			<i>Zumba,</i>	
14	Wed	19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			<i>Karate, Stretch, Railway Modellers</i>	
15	Thurs		<i>Art, Rubber Bridge</i>	
16	Fri		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
17	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
18	Sun			
19	Mon			

20	Tues	
21	Wed	<i>Railway Modellers</i>
22	Thurs	
23	Fri	<i>Dup Bridge</i>
24	Sat	<i>Coffee Morning</i>
25	Sun	
26	Mon	
27	Tues	
28	Wed	
29	Thurs	
30	Fri	
31	Sat	

Times, events and venues shown cannot be guaranteed as being correct

JANUARY

1	Sun	
2	Mon	
3	Tues	09:00 Little Angels (every Tues) GB 8:20 Zumba (every Tues) L
4	Wed	09:30 Tai-Chi (every Weds) GB 12:45 Stretch Class (every Weds) L 14:00 Fitness and Friendship GB 14:45 Stretch Class (every Weds) L 18:00 Karate (every Weds) L <i>Railway Modellers</i>
5	Thurs	10:00 Art Group (every Thurs) GB 11:00 Rhyme Time (every Thurs) Lib 14:00 Quilters (every Thurs) GB 14:00 Bridge (every Thurs) L 19:00 Mere Amateur Dramatics (every Thurs) L
6	Fri	13:45 Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri) GB
7	Sat	10:30 Coffee Morning (every Sat) URC
8	Sun	
9	Mon	09:30 Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon) L 17:45 Yoga (every Mon) L 18:00 Scouting (every Mon) GB
10	Tues	14:30 Mothers Union GB 19:30 History Society GB <i>Little Angels, Zumba,</i>
11	Wed	19:30 Gardening Club GB <i>Tai-Chi, Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>
12	Thurs	17:00 Girlguiding (every Thurs) GB <i>Art, Quilters, Rubber Bridge, Rhyme time</i>

13	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
			<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
14	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
15	Sun			
16	Mon		<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Yoga, Scouting</i>	
17	Tues	10:30	Historical Society	GB
			<i>Little Angels, Zumba</i>	
18	Wed	14:00	Fitness and Friendship	GB
			<i>Karate, Stretch, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers</i>	
19	Thurs		<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, Rubber Bridge, Rhyme time</i>	
20	Fri		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
21	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
22	Sun			
23	Mon		<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Yoga, Scouting</i>	
24	Tues		<i>Little Angels, Zumba,</i>	
25	Wed		PennyBank Writers	L
			<i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
26	Thurs		<i>Art, Quilters, Rubber Bridge, Girlguiding, Rhyme time</i>	
27	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
			<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
28	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
29	Sun			
30	Mon		<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Yoga, Scouting</i>	
31	Tues		<i>Little Angels, Zumba,</i>	

Times, events and venues shown cannot be guaranteed as being correct

Friends of Mere Museum

We hope that you all have December 2nd firmly marked in your diaries because we are expecting lots of Friends to come to help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of Mere Museum. If you are planning to come, please remember to send your RSVP to Peter Dethick (peterdethick@aol.com) or place it in the box (labelled) in the Library/Museum. We need to know numbers for catering purposes! Please come first (at 7 p.m.) to the Grove Buildings where there will be a Reception, with refreshments and diversions of various sorts. We shall then move on to the Museum where there will be a special commemorative exhibition on display for everyone to enjoy. All Friends of the Museum send congratulations to everyone who has contributed to its long and continuing success. We also send to everyone warmest seasonal greetings, and all good wishes for 2023.

Jenny Wilding 📞 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere School



It was so exciting that our Mere School Fireworks event returned. We welcomed many people from our local community and we all had an incredible evening with the most spectacular fireworks. A huge thank you to Bloomfield Associates for sponsoring the event and to the many helpers who made the evening so special. We raised almost £3000 for The Friends of Mere School.

Life in school is busy, especially now that Christmas is approaching. We have a full programme for Christmas planned which includes 2 productions, a Carol Service in St Michael's Church, a visit from Father Christmas, a disco and raffle, Christmas lunch and grotto and a visit to Salisbury Playhouse to see Cinderella. It is my favourite time in school.

The children (and teachers!) are all working hard and they had the opportunity to share their achievements with their families during Parent Interviews and at our 'Celebration Morning'. OFSTED also spent 2 days with us – more about this in the next edition!

The children have been on many educational visits this term (Montecute House, Nothe Fort, Rockbourne Villa, The Ancient Technology Centre, Farleigh Hungerford Castle) and we have welcomed visitors into school including Henry VIII, a roman soldier and Howard Carter. We were particularly delighted to welcome the crew and engine from Mere Fire Station when the children were learning how to keep themselves safe during Bonfire Night.

All the snagging work for our extended building has been completed and is fully operational. We have 4 lovely new classrooms, including a 'cooking room'. Our new car park has made the school so much safer for the children and easier for parents dropping off and picking up. We hope it has reduced the traffic on the surrounding roads. Our playground will be resurfaced shortly and some much needed painting will be starting.

Our sporting success continues and we retained the netball trophy after we won the Pyramid tournament again. Many more matches and tournaments are planned.

It may seem very early but we would like to wish you a lovely Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Catrina Williamson. Head Teacher

Mere & District Railway Modellers

Over the last couple of months the club has supplied layouts to three events:- Blandford Model Railway Exhibition, Westbury Model Railway Exhibition, and Creative Mere. We have further welcomed two new members to the club that

remains active of a Wednesday evening when we meet in the club house at the rear Castle Street car park.

As result of views expressed at our recent AGM it has been decided to start a series of short talks followed by practical experience covering all the aspects of Railway Modelling. These will commence from **7th December**.

Frome Model Railway Exhibition on **7th & 8th January 2023** is the next event the club is partaking in. This popular event is at Somerset's premiere exhibition centre the Cheese and Grain situated in Market Yard, BA11 1BE. The exhibition opening hours are 10am to 4pm and there is usually a market on the Saturday. The 78 members of the Wessex Association of Model Railway Clubs send a selection of their layouts to the show that is further supported some eminent traders for near and far.

Finally we wish you all seasonal greetings and thank for supporting our little club throughout the year.

Tom Snook.

Hear to Help Hearing Aid Clinic

Hurray we are back in action by **appointment only**.

This service is for Salisbury Hospital Hearing Aid users, and is run by volunteers from RNID. We offer retubing/cleaning of hearing aids and supply of batteries.

We will be at **The Surgery in Mere** the **first Thursday** of the month.

To book an appointment contact:

When you attend the clinic please wear a face covering and bring your battery card with you

Gill Drayson. ☎ 01722 580014 📠 07570 670 643 Gillian.Drayson@RNID.org.uk

Mere Social Club

The Table Top Sale was a great success. I Would like to thank everyone that supported this event.

It was a great community spirited morning and together we raised funds for Mere Social Club and most importantly £306 for DEMENTIA UK.

and of course the table toppers got to display and sell their beautiful crafts and wares. Everyone a winner.

My thanks go out to all the Mere businesses and my helpers that made this event possible. You know who you are. Greatly appreciated..

Chris Miles.

Mere Carnival 2022

Mere Carnival Committee proudly announce the arrival of Father Christmas to his grotto in the Clock Tower. He will be there on **Friday, 6th December from 6pm to 7:30pm**. The Mere Christmas lights will be turned on at 6pm.

This is a free event sponsored by Mere Carnival and by The Butt of Sherry Preservation Society. There will be a present for every child. The Ukes at the Butt will be performing and there will be a tombola.



MERRY CHRISTMAS - ONE AND ALL

John Jordan 📞 07840722835

Mere Historical Society

The Autumn Programme comes to a terrific climax in these months, starting with Susie Simmons's morning talk on 'The Museum of Somerset' on Tuesday 6th December at 10.30 a.m. Anyone who has been to Taunton to see it will know what a surprising treasure-store of material and stories it holds. Then on the evening of **Tuesday 13th December at 7.30 p.m.** we shall anticipate the coming of Christmas with wine, mince pies, and Andrew Pickering's talk on 'Bruton's History as seen through its Museum'. This will be the first time since the Covid outbreak that the Society has been able to celebrate the year-end in this way, so this evening alone will make your annual subscription excellent value.

Moving into the new year, we start with an evening talk (7.30 p.m.) on **Tuesday 10th January** by Martin Papworth on 'Corfe Castle in the time of King John and Richard, Earl of Cornwall'- can this be the same Richard of Cornwall who built Mere's lost castle? Then on the morning of **17th January** (10.30 a.m.) Ivan Smith will speak on 'The History of Arundells'.

Details of the Programme to the end of April 2023 can be found at merehistoricalsociety.org.uk.

All talks are in the Grove Building, opposite St. Michael's Church. We look forward to welcoming our current Members as well as Non-members for whom a charge of £3 is payable on the door. Joining the Society costs just £10 and gives entry to all talks. Anyone wishing to join may do so at any of the forthcoming talks or may contact the Membership Secretary at membership@merehistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Peter Landymore 📞 228819 plandymore@outlook.com

🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Link Scheme

We had a bumper month in October with 102 trips including 21 each to Odstock and for Covid vaccinations. Once again, thanks to those passengers who agreed to share a car for their vaccination in order to optimise the use of our drivers.

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to medical appointments, including Covid vaccinations, and, if resources allow, shopping. Once you have an appointment, please call 01747 860096 to book a Link driver. Please try to give us 48 hours notice if possible as we cannot guarantee to arrange last minute requests. Our co-ordinator isn't required to sit by the phone all day so if there is no answer please leave a message and she will get back to you as soon as she can.



The Link will continue to take people to medical appointments over the Christmas period but please note that our phone will not be “manned” between 23 and 28 December inclusive. So if you have an appointment between these dates please let us know by **22 December**.

As ever we are looking for new drivers so if you would like to find out more about driving for the Link please have a look at our website

Wishing all Link volunteers and passengers past and present a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John FitzGerald Chair ☎ 860096 🌐 merelink.org.uk

Mere Art Group

The Group is planning a get-together on our final day for 2022 with some simple ‘eats’ on 15 December.

Art work has been continuing in its normal fashion since the November Mere Matters.

The Painting provided for this Issue was done by Tony Rankin - Water Colours on Paper.



Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



We enjoyed a very interesting talk in November about The Royal British Legion and now look forward to our Christmas Carol Service on **Tuesday December 13th at 12 noon**, in St. Michael's Church followed by refreshments including mince pies in The Grove Building. This is always very well attended and we are really looking forward to a chance to sing those popular Christmas Carols and listen to the Christmas Lessons. Some people enjoy the opportunity of going to a daytime Carol Service.

As I write we are busy preparing for Creative Mere. We have a stall with all our Mother's Union information and some crafts made by our members. Many members will have been making cakes and sandwiches so busy times but enjoyable.

We have decided to have a bring and share new year meeting on **January 10 at 2.30pm in The Grove Building** with a Social Afternoon and an opportunity to eat cake. We always enjoy doing that. If you think you might enjoy Mother's Union on the second Tuesday of the month, please visit us and see if it is for you. We are a very friendly, caring group and enjoy a small service followed by interesting speakers and seasonal events.

Carol Lord ☎ 861923. Christabelle Kriticos ☎ 861065 Christine Marsh ☎ 861212

Mere Theatre Club

To all theatre lovers! Thank goodness we are now back visiting theatres at Bristol, Bath, Southampton, Chichester etc. We are also adding some non theatre outings like our visit to Kew Gardens in October. We are planning another non theatre trip for next spring.

All trips are coach driven so you can leave the car at home and enjoy a sociable outing with maybe some new friends. If you'd like to join us see contact details below. Still only £5 per year.

Have a very happy Christmas and an exciting and interesting new year!

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Copy date for the **February 2023** Issue

Closing deadline is: **4:00pm on Tuesday 24th 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.

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: TBA vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Elizabeth Howden ☎ 863424

Mr Richard Wilson 📞 07966 244373

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

DECEMBER

4 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Christingle Family Service
11 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Parish Communion
18 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
22 nd	Thur	18:00	Lessons and Carol Service
24 th	Sat	16:00 23:00	Crib Service Midnight Mass
25 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Informal Communion with Carols

JANUARY

1 st	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Family Service
8 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Parish Communion
15 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
22 nd	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion (Minister Archdeacon Alan Jeans)
29 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	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

DECEMBER

4 th	Sun	09:30	Lay Led Service
11 th	Sun	09:30	Matins
18 th	Sun	18:00	Carol Service
25 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion

JANUARY

1 st	Sun	09:30	Lay Led Service
8 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
15 th	Sun	09:30	Matins
22 nd	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
29 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: TBA vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Contact: diana@dianabourne.co.uk

DECEMBER

4 th	Sun	10:00	Catch up in the Village Hall
11 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Worship
20 th	Tue	18:30	Candlelit Carol Service
24 th	Sun	23:00	Midnight Mass

JANUARY

1 st	Sun	10:00	Catch-up in the Village Hall
8 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Worship
15 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Worship
22 nd	Sun	10:00	Holy Communion
29 th	Sun		No Service

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Elaine Laurence ☎ 0740 3845711 elainelaurence57@gmail.com

DECEMBER

4 th	Sun	11:00	Mrs. Christine Marsh Holy Communion
11 th	Sun	11:00	Rev S.Litchfield (TBC)
18 th	Sun	11:00	Rev. C Downing (Christmas Carol Seervice)
25 th	Sun	11:00	Carols and Readings

URC - JANUARY

Dates to be Confirmed.

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

St Mary's has been closed and ALL liturgies are now at SS Luke and Teresa South Street, Wincanton BA9 9DH.

Parish Administrator Jo Bentley: ☎ 01963 34408 hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867




Mere Library

Monday:	10:00 – 14:00* and 14:00 – 19:00
Tuesday:	09:30 – 17:00
Wednesday:	10:00 – 14:00*
Thursday:	09:30 – 17:00
Friday:	09:30 – 17:00
Saturday:	09:30 – 13:00

* Volunteer operated opening hours.

Sally-Ann Mere Senior Library Assistant

Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk	 0771 471 8625
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	 861063
URC Church Hall:	Mrs E Laurence	 07403 845711

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



Local Christian charity Alabaré provides support and accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless across Wiltshire and the South West. Last year they supported over 2,000 people and as winter approaches and with the rising financial pressures that tenants are facing, the charity is warning that many more people could

be tipped into crisis and homelessness.

Through their Riverside Sanctuary service, Alabaré also provides help for people in Wiltshire who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. This confidential service, both telephone and face to face, is aimed at anyone needing support with their mental health. The charity is concerned that financial worries and heightened overall anxiety will mean an increase in the number of people needing help and is determined to be there for all those needing support.

As a charity, Alabaré relies on the donations of all of us in these very challenging times. To find out ways that you can support them, please see the website www.alabare.co.uk or email Helen at supportercare@alabare.co.uk

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society



We would like to thank everyone who came to see our successful Autumn Pantomime, 'A Ladd in Mere'. We were simply delighted with the large and very enthusiastic audiences who came each evening (and to the matinee!) to enjoy this year's seasonal offering. It seemed to us that it all went extremely well (after all, Aladdin and Princess Raisin got engaged at every performance didn't they?), and to judge from your responses, you thought so too. A chance now to have a bit of time off ...but not for long. The Spring Production already beckons, and it won't produce itself! So we shall soon be taking to the stage once again to prepare to entertain you when the weather improves - and even if it doesn't. With this in mind, we are again holding Play Readings on Monday and Tuesday, **December 5th and 6th at 7 p.m.** in the Lecture Hall. Everyone who is interested in taking part in this next production is very welcome indeed to come along and have a go. We hope to see lots of you then! Meanwhile, all of us at MADS would like to wish all our supporters a joyous Festive Season, and all the very best for 2023. Next meeting **Monday 12th December 2022, 7.30 p.m. in the Lecture Hall**

"One of the best performances of Mere Amateur Dramatic Society in my opinion" says George Jeans with many of our youths involved along with some other new faces.

Every performance was a sell out.



Jon Noble as Widow Tankee



Behind the scenes; on the piano was Alan Benson, Guitar Mike Durkee and on the book (helping actors with forgotten lines of which there were few) Adrienne Howell

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Letter from the Churches

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland celebrates its 80th anniversary this year – having started life as The British Council of Churches in 1942. Our own local branch, Churches Together in Mere and District was set up in the 1970s as a covenant between the various local Anglican Churches and Mere URC, Mere Methodist Church and the Mere Roman Catholic Church. In the nearly 50 years of its life it has achieved a surprising amount in working together, worshipping together and seeking to serve our local community. The Churches Together in Mere and District Remembrance Sunday Service, the Good Friday walk carrying the cross up Castle Hill, Lent Lunches, Songs of Praise at Stourhead and Christmas Eve carols in the Square have all become part of Mere's annual calendar; and there have also been special initiatives like Sure Start, hosting hustings at General Elections and Christmas Day lunches and the One World Fair over several years.



Right now, however, Churches Together locally is suffering from what you might call 'staff shortages' at all levels. The Methodist Church and the RC Church in Mere have both closed; there are no active clergy in any of our Churches at present; and we've also had difficulty filling vacancies on our committee. But we are hoping and praying for better times to come, and, meanwhile, we are still committed to the mission statement, 'many churches, one purpose' interpreted as 'to worship God, to share good news and to work together for the good of all people' At the same time each church and denomination is also committed to 'deepening its fellowship with the others and, without losing what makes each interestingly different, to work with them towards a greater visible unity'.

In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from 18th-25th January every year we usually meet every day in a different Church each time, for a short service and discussion focussed on current issues and needs. In 2023 we are having to scale things back a little, but we still have 4 meetings, to which everyone is welcome:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Wednesday 18 th January | 4pm : St Martin's Church, Zeals |
| Friday 20 th January | 10.30am 1 Castle Hill Lane, Mere BA12 6JB |
| Monday 23 rd January | 10.30am 62 The Rank, Maiden Bradley BA12 7JF |
| Wednesday 25 th January | 4pm St Martin's Zeals. (This will be a Communion Service which will include prayers for Christian Unity) |

Please join us if you can for one or more of these services, especially if you would like to share in helping our churches work together in living out these values.

Meanwhile, we're all busy preparing to celebrate the birth of a baby 2000+ years ago whose life and teaching showed us the costly but joyful path to living

together in love and peace and justice. May we all, this Christmas and in the New Year, find opportunities for refreshment and renewal in doing this and, in a world that seems ever more war-torn and divided, in seeking peace on earth and good will to all.

Judith Thompson (Acting Chair Church Together in Mere and District)



Our Prosecco, Quiz and Pudding evening in mid-November was a wonderfully happy and enjoyable event – as many participants (not just us!) have said. And, because a necessary date

change caused a clash with MADS' excellent pantomime and meant lower attendance at our Quiz, we were pleasantly surprised that we made £300 to go towards life-changing work among marginalised children and communities in West Bengal.

It was especially good to welcome at this event Megan Taylor, granddaughter of our Mere Suchana Support Group's treasurer, who, when a student 12 years ago spent part of her gap year helping out at the Suchana project. Megan has just become one of the Trustees of our parent charity, Friends of Suchana, and came over from Bristol to be with us for the evening to take part in the Quiz and share some of her insights gleaned at her first Trustees meeting. These included a realisation of the impressive work Suchana is doing in promoting and enabling first language teaching among India's 'Adivasi' peoples in general and Suchana's children in particular; and of how a significant amount of the income for this small charity comes from our fundraising here in Mere: so renewed thanks to all our supporters.

Everyone is very welcome to join us for a Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy from 10.30am on Tuesday 17th January, kindly hosted for us by John and Isabel Page at Weaver's Cottage, off Hazzards Hill BA12 6ES; and – especially if you missed (or enjoyed) our recent Quiz – you may like to put in your diary the date of our Shrove Tuesday Quiz & Pancake evening, 21st February. More details in February Mere Matters.

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553, Chair judithvthompson@aol.com

Mere Walking Group

We managed nearly 12 walks this year and unusually had to postpone 2 because of the very hot weather. We are now looking forward to 2023 and with this in mind will have a planning meeting on Jan 31st 2023, 7.00pm at the Butt of Sherry. All walkers are welcome and, if possible, come along with a suggestion of a walk.

Roger Laidler ☎ 863447 Mary Wilson ☎ 229609 wilsonsmere@gmail.com



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