

Mere Matters

& so does West Knoyle

December 2024 / January 2025



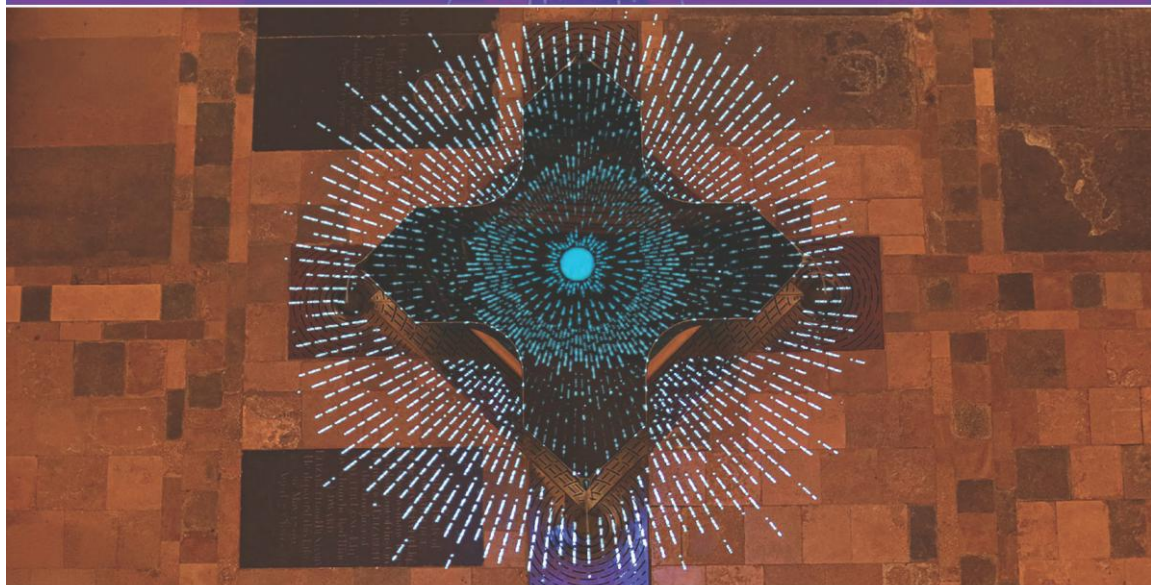
**Your community magazine
Including a guide to local events**

BRUCE MUNRO
**STAR OF
BETHLEHEM**

St Michael's Church, Church Street, Mere BA12 6DS

DECEMBER 6TH – JANUARY 5TH
2024 – 2025

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I would like to start by expressing thanks to all those who have helped in the production of this year's publications and to wish them, and the whole community, a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. Particular thanks go to the MMTeam; Alison Beall, Viv Sheppard, Ann-Marie Long who is now managing advertising and to her predecessor Jane Kennedy. Thanks also to George Jeans for all his photographic and other contributions – *a photo speaks a thousand words*.

As our income no longer covers expenditure, I feel that Mere Matters is reaching an impasse. Our printers are competitive but the costs are significant – changing to B&W printing will not save much. Cost per copy has doubled since 2020.

We have secured new advertising and looked at increasing advertising costs. Raising charges would likely mean losing many who are local and have advertised with us for many years and possibly decrease revenue.

It is clear we will have to move to a new model or close the production altogether.

We really do seek and need your opinions please:

- Is the paper copy magazine still required?
- Do we start to charge per copy? Where would we sell them?
- We do currently make all our monthly copies available digitally on the Town Council Website (*actually they are all held as an archive*). Last month some 68 people viewed the publication via this method. Would you be happy to access it this way? (Do have a look at: <https://merewilts.org/>)
- Would you be happy to get your copy straight into your email Inbox? People could easily register to receive copies this way. (*Not available just yet, though it could be done for February 2025*). Receiving them as .pdf files via email will allow links to other website sources to be clickable (Live links)!
- Not digital? I guess we would need to have some paper copies available but as to how they would get to you will need to be thought about!

I invite the community at large to respond please in order to find a way forward. If we don't get any views on this then a decision will have to be made one way or another.

Please let me have your views using an exclusive new email address for this purpose:

Editor4MM@outlook.com

Please do remember that Mere Matters has always been and still is, managed by volunteers.

Editor: Richard Jefferies 16 Underhill, Mere. 863425

A Few Words of Thanks

After a slight stroke and gradual recovery, I am able to walk again though not so far. I would be most grateful if a note of sincere thanks could be inserted in Mere Matters to all the very kind and friendly people who have been helping me cross the road and negotiate sloping areas, including some lovely young people from Seeds for Success who were so kind and gentle, helping me cross the road at Yapps corner.

Truly a wonderful community spirit. Thank you.

Received from a Mrs Honey Hitchcock - Editor

A Letter Of Appreciation

I would like to say how lucky we are to have such a good library in Mere. The librarians, Sally-Ann and Alice, are always friendly and helpful. I often go in to change my books or even if I am just feeling cold, or lonely. It was a godsend during the pandemic to be able to still get library books. We are not on the internet at home so I also use the computers there. It is lovely to hear the "tinies" enjoying story time and to see the changing museum displays. I also enjoy doing a little bit of the community jigsaw puzzle each time I pop in and to meet up with others for the Craft and Chat morning.

Received from Jackie Hopkins - Editor

Thinking of Making a Donation to Mere Matters?

To make a donation you can simply pay by BACS using A/C: Name: [Mere Matters](#)
Sort Code: [30-93-45](#) A/C. No: [00600262](#). Or contact our Treasurer Alison Beall
directly by email or phone. Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com 07547629923

Shreen Harmony Christmas Concert

On **Saturday 21st December at 7.30 p.m. in The Grove**, Shreen Harmony would like to invite you all to come along and join with us in starting the Christmas Season.

Free admission with a retiring collection in aid of "Seeds for Success"

Mulled wine, hot sausage rolls, mince pies and Christmas music, as well as Shreen Harmony we have guest singers! It promises to be a great night for all.

Sandra Fisher 861980 www.shreenharmony.co.uk

Mere Town Council

I hope that you have picked up this edition in time to see the Christmas Tree light up in the Square (6pm on the **6th December**) with the parents and youngsters lining up to see Santa in the Clock Tower, compliments of Mere Carnival. Also lighting up will be the Star of Bethlehem light installation, by Bruce Munro, in St Michael's Church.

I know that, these days, with the comings and goings throughout the day of shoppers, deliveries and passers by the Square can be somewhat fraught but it deserves our best efforts to keep it calm and polite. The Square was the scene, on the 10th November, of an act of Remembrance and at a well-attended ceremony, wreaths and poppies were presented by representatives of many groups.

The Town Council main meeting in November dealt with many of the regular matters but spent some time looking at alternatives for improving the public conveniences in Salisbury Street Car Park. The matter was not resolved and we will continue to try to find an affordable way to improve the provision. We also heard about progress with the lease of Town Council space at the Duchy Manor site. Currently, we are unhappy with the terms of the lease offered by Wiltshire Council.

I attended the Local Highway and Footpath Improvement Group meeting in Tisbury. I, like representatives from many other local parishes, was disappointed to hear about the lack of progress with our requests as well as hearing that parishes should provide more of the money required to make our roads and paths safer.

We will have had our annual budget meeting in November and it will be difficult to match the desire to provide more and better service as costs rise while keeping the precept manageable for residents. To name one pressure this coming year, Mere Town Council will now have to pay in the region of £9000 for the town council election. This alone is nearly a 5% increase in our expenses and not in our control.

Could I ask those of you who have hedges which border footpaths and roads to cut them back to keep the paths clear while there are no nesting birds.

To finish on a more festive note, I do hope that you have a good Christmas and New Year. I will, with many others be seeing the New Year in by joining the New Year - **New Bottom walk on January 1st**. There is more information about this elsewhere in Mere Matters.

John Jordan, Chair, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.
lindseywood@merewilts.org 860701  merewilts.org

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

Our Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) have spent 40% of next years budget, therefore no further schemes can be financed this financial year. The scheme for Mere reducing the Shaftesbury Road speed limit to 30MPH will be implemented in 2025. Kilmington will also get their speed limit on The Common lowered to 30 MPH.

When I attended the Police and Crime Commission Panel in Swindon, it was stated that 90% of 999 calls should be answered in 10 seconds. I was interested to also learn Drones are now being used more and more with the aim soon that they can get to an incident first.

It was mentioned that discussions were taken place with schools to enhance School uniform, with the aim of visibility especially during the dark periods of a winters school day, when travelling to and from.

At the recent Area Board The Wiltshire Towns Programme was briefly detailed, the programme supported the Cultural Strategy and aimed to improve high streets. Mere has benefited from the program. Part of this was the Explore Wiltshire Events Web application, which the council were keen to get more businesses contributing to. Energy Support was also available to certain businesses and Vibrant Wiltshire grants were available to breathe new life into vacant units in Wiltshire's town centres.

Project Gigabit (<https://www.wessexinternet.com/project-gigabit-south-wiltshire>) was a project being run by Wessex Internet to deliver full fibre broadband to around 14,500 homes and businesses in South Wiltshire.

Residents can now borrow thermal imaging cameras from Wiltshire Libraries to check for heat loss from their properties to inform home upgrades and save money on energy bills. The cameras are available free of charge and can help people make small improvements, such as covering gaps causing drafts in the home, or consider if more substantial home upgrades would be appropriate such as insulation. The cameras use infrared technology to detect where heat is escaping from the home, highlighting areas like gaps around doors, windows, letterboxes, and plumbing fixtures connected to the outside. These issues can potentially be remedied for a low outlay cost while delivering significant savings on energy bills. This technology will help people to make small changes to keep their homes warm during winter. A cold home can exacerbate health inequalities, worsening conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular disease and poor mental health. There are 11 thermal cameras available. They can be reserved by Wiltshire library members and collected from any Wiltshire library for a loan period of one week. The camera connects to a smartphone or tablet via Bluetooth and used with the FLIR ONE app.

Every month I publicise the fact Wiltshire Council is recruiting foster carers, (children are waiting) with a range of flexible roles on offer including full time, short break or emergency care. To find out more about fostering in Wiltshire, people can visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering or contact the team at fostering@wiltshire.gov.uk, I believe you can also call 0800 169 6321 or text the word Foster to 60002.

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

Plans for First Film Show

CineClub Mere looks set to be up and running with its first film screening in January and all those who have registered an interest in membership will be invited to join-up over the next few weeks.



In November, members of the CineClub Mere steering group, which has been working to establish an independent community cinema club in the town, were invited to see the new state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment that was installed recently in the Grove Building, where the club's film screenings will take place.

"We know a lot of you have been waiting to hear about progress with CineClub and we really appreciate your patience," said steering group co-chair Rosie Jordan-Barr. "It was so exciting to see the new equipment in the Grove Building as this has been such a central element to our own plans.

"We've had some great feedback from potential members about the types of films and other film-related events they'd like. We are aiming for a mix of classic, recently released and foreign-language films in a social setting accessible to all."

The initial aim is to screen films on the fourth Friday of each month starting in January. Membership forms and programme details are being sent to the almost 150 people who have already registered an interest.

If you'd like to be added to the list contact CineClub Mere, The Cottage, Castle Street, Mere BA12 6JF or email

Rosie Jordan-Barr rjordanbarr@hotmail.co.uk

Check Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payment eligibility

People of State Pension age (66+) are being asked to check their eligibility to get Pension Credit and the Winter Fuel Payment.

Pension Credit gives people extra money to help with their living costs if they're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges.

Checking entitlement is easy with an on-line calculator. Pension Credit calculator - (www.gov.uk)

In addition to Pension Credit, those who qualify could also receive Winter Fuel Payment and other support like help with

housing costs, Council Tax and a free TV licence for those aged 75 and over.

Thanks to the Pension Credit backdating rules, it is possible to apply for Pension Credit and have the claim backdated by up to three months, (ticking the backdating box on the claim form). This means that the latest date to apply and still qualify for Winter Fuel Payment is **21 December 2024.**

For more information on Pension Credit, please visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit.

For more information on the Winter Fuel Payment, please check <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/eligibility>

Sonya Ward - Clerk's Assistant Mere Town Council 01747 860701

Copy date for **February** issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Friday 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.

Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact Ann-Marie Long directly by email or phone. Media4MM@Outlook.com 07833-686742

Mere School Fireworks

We had a fabulous evening with thousands of people enjoying the 'best fireworks they had ever seen!

It was wonderful to welcome so many Mere residents and people from far and wide who enjoyed the bar, BBQs, pizza, fish and Chips, ice cream, face painting, Mere Fire Engine and traction engines.

A huge thank you to our sponsor Mr Bloomfield and the many volunteers who worked so hard to create this community event.

Your support raised over £9,500 for the children of Mere School which will provide the 'extras' that our diminishing school budget cannot run to, for example, a visit to the pantomime, VR headsets, a scientist visit, school outside area improvements, library books the list goes on!

We look forward to seeing you all again next year and tell your friends –

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8TH 2025!

Catrina Williamson



Time to Put My Feet Up

After some thirty years of running a foot care clinic in some of the halls in Mere I have decided to call a halt to my twice monthly visits to Mere

Over the time I have met some lovely & interesting people, some have become personal friends Some have been with me almost from the start, I have got to know them & their families, we have gone through life's high & lows together

I have got to know the town well all the streets & pathways. Like all towns it has grown not always for the best, but the friendship & community spirit remains

I thank all my patients for your loyalty & friendship. I am continuing to hold weekly clinics at Edwards Farm. Foyle Hill Shaftesbury SP7 0PT

Jenny Franks

The Tower Stories

Get rid of those January blues!

In **January** look out for the **Tower Stories 2025** programme which is being delivered directly to every household in Mere and East Knoyle. Thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund we are running a series of exciting and informative events throughout the first six months of 2025, culminating with the **Medieval Festival of Fun** weekend in Mere on **June 21st 2025**. There is something for everyone to enjoy – from pre-school on.



Look out for the full programme being delivered to your door in January. Put the dates in your diaries and look forward to a great 2025!



Human statues and stilt walkers - just some of the exciting acts coming to Mere in 2025

Elaine Stallard The Tower Stories

Mere Bowls Club

We had our 4-wood open pairs club competition on the 31st August which was won by Chris Coombs and Shaun Tealey against Roy Horlock and John Fitzgerald.

Our Club Finals Day of season long competitions was held on 7th September

with 3 matches taking place. The 2-wood singles was won by Richard Coombs from John Fitzgerald, the 100-up, first player to 100 points, was won by Les Manwaring over Chris Coombs and the Novice Singles was won by Shaun Tealey over Jon Wright.



Before these matches took place there was the 'Banana Trophy' where the Greens Teams, who cut the green on Tuesdays and Fridays played the most bizarre game of bowls, with nothing like the normal rules and very dubious scoring. The Tuesday team of Les, Ron and Jon W versus Richard, Trevor and John F. won by one point after a deciding end (?) had to be played.

A lot of league matches have been played recently with mixed results but we have maintained our positions in both the Wessex and Westbrook leagues, finishing mid-table in both.

The 60's/70's dance took place on the 13th September at the Grove Building and was a great success with over 40 people attending. We were all bopping away to 'The Rebbels', a local group and a good time was had by all.

Les, Alan Isgrove and Don played in a men's Wiltshire County match against Essex which Wiltshire won overall.

The last league match of the season was played last Monday, 16th Sept against Ilminster and we managed to win by just 2 points.

The very last outdoor match (?), of the season is the Narine Trophy, in which the 'Greens Team' play the ladies was held on 16th September. After 10 ends it was tied 29 each, so an extra end had to be played with the Greens Team winning 30-29.

The last day of the season was 21st September with some silly bowls games thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and this was followed by a cream tea.

Although the outdoor matches have finished we do have an indoor match against Yeovil on the 21st November



We are always looking for new members; whether novices or experienced,

Don Butchers 860775 don.butchers@btinternet.com

ere Theatre Club

As this is the festive and new year edition firstly happiness and good health to all the discerning readers of Mere Matters who are still enjoying a non-digital form of local information!

We've had a busy year with record numbers of members and visits both to theatres and to houses and gardens. We're planning an equally diverse programme for next year so if you feel like getting out and about in 2025 do get in touch and enjoy a friendly and sociable club. Our last outing of the year is to the Butt of Sherry!

Madelaine Morris 07481-555101 madsmorris@gmail.com

Mere Carnival Committee

I hope you all enjoyed the carnival this year although it must seem an awfully long time ago now. Everything seemed to go well and I am sure that having Jay our professional musician playing kept everyone entertained in the afternoon. I would also like to let everyone know that all four of the Megadraw prizes were given to the lucky winners who I am sure will enjoy their prizes.

As I say it must seem like a long time ago but we haven't been sitting around since September and have been busy putting together the annual Santa in the Square event. Santa will be making his first appearance in Mere on Friday **December 6th at 6 pm** and will be in attendance when we turn on the lights making Mere come alive for the festive season.

This year is a special event and we are glad to announce that we are teaming up with St Michaels Church and specifically the Tower Stories project. It has been fortuitous that we will be part of the whole lighting up of Mere and will be timing our event to coincide with the turn on of Bruce Munro's light installation entitled "Star of Bethlehem" in St Michaels Church. The Christmas tree lights will be switched on by Chloe Mitchell our Carnival Princess from the clock tower with a countdown by the children of Mere.

Hopefully you will all be able to make it to this great Mere event, so bring the little ones along to see Santa and collect a gift at the Clock Tower Grotto.

This entire event is being put on free of charge for the good people of Mere so just come along and enjoy a wonderful and magical evening.

PS keep your eyes out for the naughty little Elves that have got their hands on some sweeties to give out to our young guests.

And just to end we would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Mel Wilkinson. Mere Carnival Chairman

PennyBank Writers

PennyBank Writers enjoyed meeting visitors to their stall at the Creative Mere weekend. There was a constant stream of people to the Lecture Hall on both days and sales of PennyBank's latest booklet, *A Mere Miscellany*, went very well. A number of visitors also put pen to paper and added to the *Build a Story* file which will be read and discussed at our next meeting.

Our thanks go to the organisers of this successful event. We hope it will continue to showcase the talent in our small town.

There is no meeting in December as members meet instead for a Christmas lunch and a belated celebration of PennyBank's 21st birthday.

PennyBank Writers wish the Mere Matters team and all its readers a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Adrienne Howell 860475 howellatmere@aol.com

Merekits - Women's Institute

At the Merekits November meeting we were shown how to work with sugar craft which was fascinating. Several members had a go trying their hands with new skills making some festive flowers in time for putting on the Christmas cake. During this month we catered for the Creative Mere event, providing delicious soup, cakes and scones to several visitors. The craft group have also been busy preparing items for the Mere School Christmas Fete.

Our Christmas meeting is on the **18th December** which will be a Christmas party and a quiz – do come along ladies and join in with our festive merriment.

Merekits WI meet on the third Wednesday of each month in the Grove Building from 7pm to 9pm. New ladies are always welcome to come along to any meeting to find out more about us. The WI gives an opportunity to meet people and make new friends locally and there's always something going for you in Merekits WI to participate in as much or as little as you would like. There is a varied programme of events throughout the year including talks, demonstrations as well as many activities outside of meetings such as walks; meals out; book club; craft group; as well as trips to the local theatres and places of interest.

Verena Cooper 07971-790256 verenacooper2@gmail.com

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

Venue Key for Diary :

AYP - Andy Young Pavilion

CP - Main (Salisbury St) 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

VH - Visit Hillbrush

WT - Walnut Tree Inn

December

1	Sun			
2	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
			Food Bank	L
		17:45	Yoga (every Mon)	L
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon)	GB
		19:00	Mere Town Council Meeting	AYP
3	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic (every Tues)	GB
		09:30	Little Angels	GB
		18:20	Zumba (every Tues)	L
		19:30	MADS (every Tues)	L
4	Weds	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		10:00	Get Wiltshire Walking Group – Starter Walks (every Weds)	CP
		14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		14:00	Pilates (every Weds)	L
		18:30	Karate (every Weds)	L
		19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			Railway Modellers	
5	Thurs	09:00	Fair Trade Pop-Up Shop	Angel Tea Rooms
		10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church	URC
		10:30	Harmony for Health (every Thurs)	L
		11:00	Rhyme Time (every Thurs)	Lib
		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Rubber Bridge (every Thurs)	L
		17:00	Girlguiding (every Thurs)	GB
		18:00	Yoga (every Thurs)	L
		19:30	Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	URC
6	Fri	10:00	Walking Zumba	Mere Social Club
		13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. every Fri)	GB
			Dup Bridge	
7	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
		12:00	Mere School Friends Christmas Fayre	
		19:00	Oasis Bingo	L
8	Sun			
9	Mon		Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	

10	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	Historical Society	GB
			Little Angels, Zumba	
11	Weds		Get Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
12	Thurs	19:30	Ukulele	Butt of Sherry
			Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, Harmony FH	
13	Fri		Dup Bridge	
14	Sat		Coffee Morning,	
15	Sun			
16	Mon	10:30	Historical Society	GB
			Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
17	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
			Little Angels, Zumba	
18	Weds	14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		19:00	Merekits Women's Institute	GB
			Get Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
19	Thurs		Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, Harmony FH	
20	Fri	10:00	Walking Zumba	Mere Social Club
			Dup Bridge	
21	Sat		Coffee Morning, and Fair Trade Stall	
22	Sun		Fair Trade after morning service	StM
23	Mon		Yoga, Food Bank	
24	Tues		Little Angels	
25	Weds			
26	Thurs			
27	Fri		Dup Bridge	
28	Sat			
29	Sun			
30	Mon		Yoga, Food Bank	
31	Tues		Little Angels,	

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

January

1	Weds	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		10:00	Get Wiltshire Walking Group – Starter Walks (every Weds)	CP
		14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		14:00	Pilates (every Weds)	L
		18:30	Karate (every Weds)	L
Railway Modellers				
2	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church	URC
		10:30	Harmony for Health (every Thurs)	L
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		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Rubber Bridge (every Thurs)	L
		18:00	Yoga (every Thurs)	L
19:30	Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	URC		
3	Fri	Dup Bridge		
4	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
5	Sun			
6	Mon	09:00	Food Bank (every Mon)	L
		09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
		10:00	Walking Zumba	Mere Social Club
		18:00	Yoga (every Mon)	L
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon)	GB
7	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic (every Tues)	GB
		09:30	Little Angels (every Tues)	GB
		18:20	Zumba	L
		19:30	MADS (every Tues)	L
8	Weds	19:30	Gardening Club	GB
		Get Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers		
9	Thurs	17:00	Girlguiding (every Thurs)	GB
		Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters,, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, Harmony FH		
10	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
		Dup Bridge		
11	Sat	Coffee Morning		
12	Sun			
13	Mon	19:00	Mere Town Council Meeting	AYP
		Food Bank, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Scouting		
14	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	Historical Society	GB
		Little Angels		
15	Weds	14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
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		Get Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers		
16	Thurs	19:30	Ukulele	Butt of Sherry
		Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, Harmony FH		

17	Fri	Dup Bridge		
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19	Sun	Fair Trade after morning service		StM
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28	Tues	Little Angels		
29	Weds	am	Jelly Group	VH
		14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		14:30	Pennybank Writers	L
			Get Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
30	Thurs	Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, Harmony FH		
31	Fri	Dup Bridge		

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

1st Mere Brownies Pamper Night

Chilled and relaxing pamper night when the girls were able to wear night clothes headband bring a toy to our meeting.

Fun animal picture face masks and cucumber slices on the eyes then to sit quietly and patiently allowing the masks to work on the skin. Painting nails with sparkling and plain Polishes of various colours or choice Glitter tattoos

Sipping bubbly mocktails and nibbling chocolates

Evening rounded off with a disco



Organised by Tor Sparkly Owl and assisted by Brownie mum Amy Tibbet

From Times Gone By!

A short time since, the guard of stage coach desired some poachers, of Mere, to procure him a large basket of game, which they did, and demanded one Sovereign for it, which he paid, and was divided amongst them, but on its arrival in London, the honest guard found that the basket was packed only with hay and straw.

Salisbury & Wiltshire Journal, 31 December 1827

Sagacity of Dog.

The Reverend R. Cosens, of Mere, lately kept a dog in a house which stood in the yard. One night it began to rain, and the wind happened to be blowing in such a direction to drive the rain in at the door. The dog, being rather uncomfortable between wind and water, got out, pushed round the house (a heavy one) till its side came to the wind, and then entered it, and lay down as before. The ground near the windward side of the house was covered with the marks of his hinder feet, and the house with those of his fore ones.

Salisbury & Wiltshire Journal, 31 December 1832

Martyn Beardsley

Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Our next session is on **Thursday, 12th December at 7.30pm** at The Butt of Sherry. We will be playing our Christmas favourites!



In the New Year our first 'Ukes at The Butt' will be on **Thursday, 9th January at 7.30pm** at The Butt of Sherry.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month for an informal evening of strumming and singing. We play a wide range of popular songs and welcome all abilities. If you don't have a ukulele, but would like to join us you would be most welcome. Let me know if you would like to come along and we will have a ukulele for you to play. An evening of fun, laughter and song is guaranteed.

You can check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt' for our song list [Maggie Holmes](mailto:maggieholmes101@gmail.com)
maggieholmes101@gmail.com

Beware of text message scam!

We're aware of a text message scam where residents are being told they are eligible for financial assistance from the **Household Support Fund (HSF)** or help towards their energy bills, as long as they click a link to apply. This is a scam! We will never ask you to apply for HSF via text message.



THE MERE LECTURE HALL TRUST Grants Available for 2025

This independent Christian Trust was established in 1924 to promote the spiritual, moral, educational and social welfare of the inhabitants of the town of Mere and the surrounding area. The Trust supports a number of small schemes, charities and voluntary groups with grants for practical action.

The Trust is benevolent in a broad sense and seeks to help people of all ages to enjoy facilities they would not otherwise be able to access. It operates within a Christian ethos for the benefit of the whole community and welcomes a wide range of creative initiatives.

Applications for grant support are now invited for activities or projects based within 8 miles of Mere. The closing date is 28th February 2025 and successful applicants will normally be paid within two months of this date.

For further details and an application form please either send an email request to t.white615@btinternet.com or write enclosing an A5 stamped and addressed envelope to: The Grants Committee, The Mere Lecture Hall Trust, c/o Monkswell Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6DA.

Mere Jelly

The Mere Jelly crowd take a break over December (for obvs reasons!) But we are back with a vengeance in January, when we are delighted to see regular faces, and look forward to welcoming anyone who would like to join us for their first visit.

Jump right in and come along for the whole morning, or just dip your toes in for a quick coffee and a chat.

We meet for a morning of networking and co-working at The Brush and Broom on the last Wednesday of the month - (January 29th 2025!) from 9am to noon.

Jenni Bell 07956-869699

Mere Social Club

We will be holding our **Christmas Draw** at the Social Club on **Friday 20th December at 8pm**. This means that there is still plenty of time to come in and buy some tickets! There will be loads of lovely prizes including some donated by local businesses such as Lous it, Smart Step Footcare, Jeans Electricals, the Angel Cafe and Hunters Lodge. Tickets cost £1 each and all the proceeds will go to installing a defibrillator at the club.

On **New Year's Eve** we will be ringing in the new year with music provided by the **Chancers** from 8.30 till late. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Looking ahead to 2025, local talent **Jack Manning** will be playing in the club from **8.30pm** on **Saturday 25th January**.

During the Christmas period our opening hours will be

Christmas Eve	24th	19:00 - 23.30
Christmas Day	25th	23:00 - 01:00
Boxing Day	26th	Closed
Friday	27th	19:00 - 24.00
Saturday	28th	19:00 - 23.30
Sunday	29th	15:00 - 21:00
Monday	30th	19:00 - 23.30
New Years Eve	31st	19:00 - 01.00
New Years Day	1st	Closed

2nd onwards Normal Hours

Elaine Laurence, club steward. elainelaurence57@gmail.com

Creative Mere

The streets of Mere were a buzz between the two halls which held the third Creative Mere weekend on November 16th/17th. Twenty-two artists and craftspeople exhibited and demonstrated their skills to over 500 appreciative visitors. Many a unique and beautiful gift, Christmas decoration or card was purchased from the wooden, knitted, quilted, sewn, potted or painted items on show.



Jackets were re-waxed, jewellery strung, hair braided and even fishing flies made. The

Railway Club demonstrated one of their layouts, the PennyBank Writers sold their newest anthology created especially for the weekend and everyone was kept fueled by numerous cups of tea and coffee and refreshments by the Mothers' Union and WI (and of course plenty of delicious cakes!) Members of our wonderful Youth Group, 'Seeds for Success' lent their support of help throughout the weekend and created many a novel snowman for customers. What talents we have in our busy little town!



With the wonderful support of local businesses and such generosity of donations from the visitors to cover our costs, we are hoping that now established, Creative Mere will be a firm fixture on Mere's calendar and everyone is looking forward to another weekend in 2026 with a new team of organisers.

Janet Way

Mere Art Group

The Art Group has proceeded with good attendance in The Grove Building, through heating corrections and improvements in Film Capability.

It is planned to have a "Boot Sale" in The Grove Building in February 2025. Details will be provided in the February issue of Mere Matters.

With Christmas upon us, this months Artwork was produced by Tom Beall with Acrylics.



Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Fair Trade in Mere

It has been a tough year after the closure of the pioneering Fair Trade Company Traidcraft. In order to stock favourite products, I now have to order from 5 different sources and build a large enough order to qualify for free postage. I am therefore really thankful for all of you who continue to



support my stalls. A new product which I am excited to be selling this year are those from Bethlehem Baubles. Hand blown from recycled glass by Muslim artisans, painted by Christians and shipped by Israel. By working together in Bethlehem, they embody to me the true message of peace at Christmas. And they are beautiful!

Come and see for yourself at my December stalls.

Fair Trade Popup Shop:

Thursday December 5th at The Angel Tea Rooms 9.30-4.00

Janet Way 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com



In Mere & DISTRICT

Everyone is very welcome come to any of our Churches for our Christmas services and also to join us singing carols in Mere Square at 11am on Christmas Eve.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held, as usual from **18th – 25th January**, and on **Sunday 19th January**, instead of our usual morning services in our different Churches, we will meet together for a joint service led by the Revd Colin Marsh at Mere URC Church, using the service provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. There are also half-hour weekday prayer and discussion meetings at 9.30am planned for the following days:

Saturday 18th January at 62 The Rank, Maiden Bradley, BA12 7JF

Tuesday 21st January at St Michael's Mere

Thursday 23rd January at St Mary's West Knoyle

Saturday 25th January at St Martin's Zeals

These dates are subject to confirmation, so please check first. Everyone is welcome to come, but the Churches will be chilly, so please come wearing plenty of warm clothes!

Judith Thompson

Mere Mortals Petanque Club

'Like London's famous Windmill Theatre, Mere Mortals Petanque Club never closes (unless it is actually raining). We play during the colder months on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30pm and Saturday morning from 10.30am. Saturdays have been particularly well attended lately. However the terrain is open all, all day every day to anyone who feels the need to throw a boule about and it is not exclusive to club members. There is not a lot of petanque played in the Great Western Region during the winter months but one or two members have entered the region wide winter league



Colin Senneck 706008 colin2423@sky.com

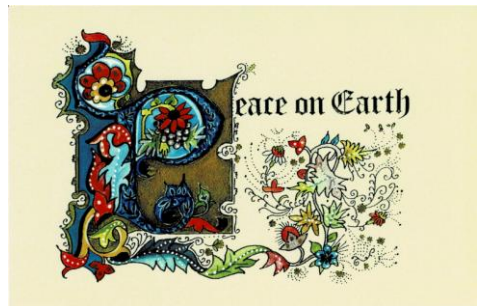
Christmas Greetings from Churches Together in Mere and District

The angels message to the shepherds was, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" That first Christmas, in Bethlehem, a town crowded with displaced people weighed down by worry, peace was found in the unlikely place.

Christ's message to us is, "My peace I give to you....do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid," but where can peace be found amidst the sorrows, stress and troubles of our world?

God's peace is a paradoxical peace, a calm at the centre of life's storm, a peace that is beyond our understanding and that peace is still to be found in Christ, God's gift of love to a needy world.

"May the joy of the angels.... And the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas."



Walking In Mere

- Janet Way's short walks will resume in February.
- Mere Walking group have finished for the year and we will have a planning meeting in February to organise the walks for 2025.
- Walking for Health continues every **Wednesday, 10am** outside the surgery for a 45 minute walk followed by refreshments at the Angel Café.
- New Year! – New Bottom!. We will be setting off from the Clock Tower in Mere at 11 am on New Year's Day!

Put the date in your diary and start 2025 with a breath of fresh air. If you haven't been on a Great Bottom walk – it is a four mile walk with a climb of 370 feet (6.6 kilometres and 112 metres, if you prefer). Splendid views and lungs full of fresh air throughout. We will be providing badges, a hot toddy or other warming drink for those who complete. Walkers will be wearing their badge and enjoying a hot drink between 12:30 and 1 pm!



Let us know that you are walking so we can prepare, register on:
<https://forms.gle/ztwvV6fMWc3NZyMr7>

Or, you can leave a message for John on 01747861567

We could do with some volunteers: a few to lead the walk and three people to serve drinks at the end of the walk. Contact John if you can help, many thanks.



Mere Amateur Dramatic Society (MADS)

For those of you with an early copy of Mere Matters you will be pleased to know that you are still in time to come and see MADS wonderful pantomime **Alice in Blunderland** which is taking place **Thursday to Saturday 28th - 30th November** at 7.30 and with a matinee on Saturday 30th at 2.30pm. There are a few tickets available on the door, so come along and join the fun! We look forward to seeing you!

MADS is also pleased to let you know of a wonderful show coming to Mere in January from The Forest Forge Theatre Company. Their new show is **A Christmas Carol** and will take place for one evening only in The Lecture Hall on **Thursday 9th January at 7.30pm** and is something not to be missed. Tickets for this will be available in December from The Library, Sprout and Flower and the Angel Tearooms, or telephone 07539329798 to reserve tickets. The price is £10 for adults and £5 for children. Look

out too for posters in the Town. Those of you who know Forest Forge of old will know that we are in for a treat.

We wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Jenny Wilding 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere Gardening Club.

Our November meeting was well attended and we were treated to an excellent talk by Dr. Francis Burroughs, it was a well informed and quite humorous talk. For those members who missed him we will hopefully be able to invite him again in the future.

Our next meeting takes place on **4th December** (please note the change of date) and is our annual Christmas social when mulled wine and mince pies will be served along with a grand raffle. The activities commence at 7pm and is at the usual venue - The Grove Building.

Looking forward to 2025 where we have a full programme packed with talks and events. Next year will also see the return of the popular scarecrow festival. It is hoped that all those who entered last time will do so again along with some newcomers. As Mere Matters is not published in January our meeting, taking place on **8th January** is a talk by Lyn Miles of Westcroft Gardens near Salisbury entitled "For the love of snowdrops". My committee and I send you all best wishes for Christmas and good growing in 2025.

Les Manwaring Chair 861941 lesmanwaring@yahoo.com



Friends of St Michael's Christmas Book Club



Come along to St Michael's on **Thursday 5th December** for coffee and a natter about books. 10.00am to 12.00.

£1 for a coffee and a book.

Father Christmas may have some presents!!

Mere Rivers Group

After the record-breaking rainfall in the previous month, the wet weather continued into October with an average of 132mm of rainfall across Wessex, 158% of the long term average (LTA). There was rain through most of the month but 6 to 8 and 13 to 18th of October were particularly wet periods. Monthly mean river flows across Wessex were all exceptionally high. By the end of October daily mean flows were reducing across most reporting sites in Wessex, although sites in Chalk catchments remained notably or exceptionally high. All groundwater reporting sites across Wessex reported exceptionally high levels at the end of the month. Reservoirs were at around 95% and 82% capacity for Wessex Water and Bristol Water respectively, slightly higher than the levels seen this time last year.

With all this rain it is not surprising that both the Ashfield and the Shreen are flowing well, without help from stream support.

The visit to Manor Pond (the main source of the Shreen) with Wessex Water and the EA was interesting, although very difficult to get to, as the bypass has cut off the footpath. The pond was full, if a little overgrown.

The Kingfisher and the Egret are seen most days but when the river turns cloudy with runoff from the fields they find it hard to find food. With the weather turning much colder we will see the arrival of winter migrant birds, Redwings, Fieldfares, more thrushes and blackbirds.

Have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Keep warm

Ian Sheppard ianjsheppard@outlook.com

Historical Society

We will be having two talks in December and one in January.

The first is on **Tuesday December 10th 7.30pm Fanny Charles and Gay Pirrie Weir** will speak on "**Dark Tales from the West Country**". As this is our Christmas session, wine will be served!

The next is a morning talk: on **Monday December 16th at 10.30am Dr Edward Treasure** will speak on "**Farming the land, opening the woods: an overview of recent work by Wessex Archaeology**".

In the new year our own **Julia Mottershaw** will give a morning talk on **Mon. 27th January 10.30 am** on "**Francis Faugoin , the Forgotten Gardener of Stourhead**". This reflects the original research Julia has done for her new book.

We welcome both current members, and non-members (for whom a charge of £3 is payable on the door). All our talks are held in the Grove Building.

Peter Landymore, Chair: 228819 Diane Ellis, Secretary: 861541

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: The Rev'd Michael Molano
 Churchwardens: Mr Kit Stallard 07803-086161 Mr Richard Wilson 07966-244373
 Admin Secretary: administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

DECEMBER

1 st	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Family Service
8 th	Sun	10:00	Parish Communion
10 th	Tues	11.00	Mothers' Union Carol Service
15 th	Sun	10.30	Parish Communion
17 th	Tues	10.30	Roman Catholic Mass
19 th	Thurs	18.00	Carol Service
22 nd	Sun	10.30	Parish Communion
24 th	Tues	16.00 23.00	Crib and Christingle service – children encouraged to dress as a Nativity character Midnight Mass
25 th	Wed	10.30	Christmas Day Family Communion
29 th	Sun	10.30	Parish Communion
NB In Dec, Jan & Feb the 8am service will be on the first Sunday of the month ONLY			

JANUARY

5 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Family Service
12 th	Sun	10:30	Parish Communion
19 th	Sun	11.00	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity joint service at URC
21 st	Tues	10.30	Roman Catholic Mass
26 th	Sun	10:30	Parish Communion
NB In Jan & Feb the 8am service will be on the first Sunday of the month ONLY			

West Knoyle Parish Church St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: The Rev'd Michael Molano
 Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall 830534 Sir Charles Burnett 01747 812089

DECEMBER

1 st	Sun	09:30	DIY Service
8 th	Sun	09.30	Communion
15 th	Sun	09:30	Communion
22 nd	Sun	18.00	Carol Service
25 th	Wed		Communion - Christmas Day Service
29 th	Sun	9.30	No Service

JANUARY

5 th	Sun	09:30	DIY Service
12 th	Sun	09:30	Communion
19 th	Sun	11.00	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity joint service at URC, Mere
26 th	Sun	09:30	Matins

The United Reformed Church

Minister: Vacancy

Mere Contact: Elaine Laurence 07403-845711 elainelaurence57@gmail.com**DECEMBER**

8th	Sun	11:00	Mrs Christine Marsh
15th	Sun	11:00	Rev. Patricia Dent
22nd	Sun	11:00	Rev. Sue Litchfield
25th	Sun	10:30	TBC at 10.30am
29th	Sun	11.00	TBC

JANUARY

5th	Sun	11:00	TBC
12th	Sun	11:00	Mr. David Burfitt
19th	Sun	11:00	Rev. Colin Marsh (Churches Together)
26th	Sun	11:00	Mrs. Christine Marsh

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

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

Parish Office: 01963-34408 hope.stlukeswincanton@outlook.com

Mass at St Michael the Archangel usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 10.30am but please check with John FitzGerald

Coffee morning at Visit Hillbrush on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10.30am.

John FitzGerald 860867

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

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.

'Craft and Chat' Sessions at Mere Library are moving from Friday to Tuesday Mornings 10.30 -12.00 as from Tuesday the 3rd of September.

Bring Along your Knitting, Crochet or other Craft projects to the library and meet other Friendly, Creative People.

For more Information, call 01747 860546

Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant

Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk	07714-718625
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	861063
URC Church Hall:	Mrs E Laurence	07403-845711

Investing in Wiltshire's highways

We've invested an extra £22m into filling potholes, road resurfacing and repairs, road safety and flood prevention.

Take a look at the graphic below which shows how we're spending the extra investment each year.



Mothers Union

Our members were very busy baking and serving at Creative Mere. It seemed the homemade soup, sandwiches, sausage rolls were all very popular and of course everyone enjoyed the selection of homemade cakes that we served on the Saturday.

Once again, we offer our hospitality on **Tuesday 10th December** for our **Christmas Carol Service in St. Michael's Church** which starts at 12 noon. We then invite you to The Grove Building for our popular Sausage rolls and Mince Pies and a warm drink. A wonderful opportunity to take part in a traditional Carol Service in the daytime, popular with so many.

On **January 14th** our speaker is the **Reverend Rodney Baxendale**, known to so many of us and his topic is '**A Vicar at Sea**'. Our meeting starts at 2.30pm with a short service and you are warmly invited to join us. For any enquiries please contact.

Vicky Goodfellow 840443 or Carol Lord 685429.

Recycle

Wiltshire Council's Cabinet has agreed its future approach to collecting recycling when its current contracts to carry out this service come to an end in 2026.

Once the changes are introduced in 2027 it should result in a significant reduction in annual revenue expenditure, increased income from commodity sales, improved recycling rate, simplification of the recycling sorting process and significant reduction in carbon emissions

Wiltshire Council has carried out extensive research and options assessment in order to identify the future recycling collection method that presented the best opportunity for successful implementation and allow the



county's residents to recycle as much as possible from the kerbside.

Based on all of the evidence assessed, Cabinet has agreed that Wiltshire Council adopt 'Three Stream' recycling collections during the next contract period. This means from 2027 it is anticipated that residents would be asked to present recycling in one wheeled bin or weighted reusable sack for paper and cardboard, a second wheeled bin or weighted reusable sack for mixed plastics, cans, cartons, and bagged flexible plastics, and a box for glass. Currently, most Wiltshire residents already use a blue-lidded wheeled bin for mixed recycling and have a box for the collection of glass. Cabinet made the decision at its meeting on 19 November.

To determine the impact of introducing collections of flexible plastics and separate weekly collections of food waste for recycling on current services, Wiltshire Council has been supported by the government funded advisory charity, WRAP in facilitating technical options modelling to inform decision-making.

The criteria used to assess the impacts of different future recycling collection services included revenue costs including costs of capital borrowing, kerbside recycling performance and carbon emissions.

The changes to the current arrangements are necessary as the council, and all local authorities, need to comply with new statutory requirements under the Environment Act 2021, which confirms that councils must offer households a regular collection of the following recyclable items:

Glass, Metal, Plastic (including flexible plastics from 2027)

Paper and card, Food waste (from 2027), Garden waste (charges for collection may be applied)

Aside from food waste and flexible plastics, Wiltshire Council already collects all of those materials. As previously confirmed, it has agreed with Defra to collect food waste by August 2027 and flexible plastics must be collected from households by April 2027.



Teeandee Productions

Web Design
Web Hosting
Domains

Tim Cook
mobile: 07790 113621
www.teeandee productions.com