

Mere atters

& so does
West Knoyle

March 2025

Mother's Day 30th

Your community magazine
Including a guide to local events



MERE'S MEDIEVAL WONDER

March 20th 19.00 - 20.30 at St Michael's Church

Kit Stallard talks about medieval Mere and the fascinating history of its Church Tower. An illustrated talk to explain how Mere could afford to build a 124ft tower on the church, the tallest in the area. What did Mere look like in 15th century England? How did our forebears & predecessors live?



The Tower pre-school fun party

April 1st 9.30 - 12.00 at Grove Building

A special Tower Stories party for pre-school children and their parents and child-minders. From Diddy Cars to Magicians, from crafts to face painting and not forgetting taking away your very own Paddington Bear! And of course, plenty of hot drinks and cakes for adults.



Meet the Restoration team

April 3rd 19.00 - 20.30 at St Michael's Church

Meet the experts who restored the Church Tower. Brian Watts (Church Architect), Leigh Dawson (Gilder) and Pete Michell and Marc Rose (scaffolders) tell the story of the restoration of St Michael's Church Tower 2024. Also see Steve Hawkins' magnificent photographs of the restoration.

For our latest information go to

www.thetowerstories.co.uk

TOWER STORIES FULL EVENTS PROGRAMME AVAILABLE
FROM MERE POST OFFICE AND THE LIBRARY



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ST. MICHAEL'S
CHURCH



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The Editor Writes.

A Big Thank You:

We are delighted to report that the future of Mere Matters looks very much brighter as a consequence of our appeal. We have received many donations and letters of support for which we are incredibly grateful. Alison Beall (our Treasurer), tells me that her spreadsheet has grown exponentially to record everything but adds there is still room should others wish to donate as well. Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated – brilliant!

Please remember that your donations are not subscriptions as we just couldn't manage to make individual deliveries. Printed copies of our 10 monthly/yr productions will continue to be available for collection/delivery in the usual way. In addition, we are now sending e-copy to anyone who has registered for this service (55 people at the time of writing this and room for many more). The more who register for e-copies, the more we will save on paper and printing!

You can get copies of Mere Matters delivered direct to your Inbox.

Register here: <http://eepurl.com/i44fBo>

3 Apologies:

1. It was an omission that I did not give an easy option for people to send donations by cheque or cash – these are of course still more than welcome to: **Alison Beall, Holly Cottage, North Road, BA12 6HP** or by BACS.
2. It was an oversight that in last month's supplement I recorded details for **Mere Day Centre** using the old name The Rosemary Goddard Centre – apologies.
3. Update to **Friends of St Michaels**

The entries should have read as follows

Mere and District Day Centre

Sandie Hawkins 07835 272406

Mon & Fri 10.00 – 15:00

manager@meredaycentre.org.uk

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

Friends of St Michaels

Simon Edkins

£10.00 p.a or £75 life membership

friendsofst Michaels.org

membership@friendsofst Michaels.org

Richard Jefferies 863425 editor@merematters.co.uk

Mere Town Council

The weather forecast for March that I read says that it will be a cold month. Time for indoor pursuits and one which I would recommend to you would be a visit to Mere Library and Museum. With a good selection of reading materials and such helpful staff and volunteers it is easy to spend purposeful time there and, if you have youngsters with you, there is plenty of provision for them. In the museum there is a standing exhibition of Mere history as well as resources relevant to Mere where you can find out about the Town and area that we live in. There is also a changing display on topics of local interest.

If you look through the diary in Mere Matters, I am sure that you can find other things to attend or groups to join. While there are so many things to watch on our televisions these days, few of them can hold a candle to spending some time with other people in a common pursuit and all within walking distance of your home.

Last March I reported on a highways meeting (LHFIG) where we persuaded the meeting to take on our suggestions to improve road safety at Edgebridge and Hazzards Hill. While money has been allocated, progress has been slow and we are still waiting for Wiltshire Council teams to finalise the matters and send in teams to make them happen.


At our February council meeting we took on board suggestions from Councillor Hansford about how we (the Town Council) communicate with residents and how we market Mere. The Chair's contribution to Mere Matters will look different and be, hopefully, more useful to readers.

The Tower Stories has been a big success in promoting interest in St. Michael's and Mere and we supported the proposal for an art installation on Castle Hill called the Solstice Beacon by artist Bruce Munro which is part of the Tower Stories Community Group's offerings. It looks exciting and well thought out and something to celebrate.

- We also discussed measures to improve the Public Conveniences by the Salisbury Street car park, doing as much of the work 'in house' to keep costs down.
- The Vice Chair and I signed off the Council Action Plan for allocating the funds we receive from the Wiltshire Towns Program. Which will, over the next two years, go toward:
 - Promoting Mere in an online vehicle called Explore Wiltshire Events.
 - Improving planters and seating in the towns.
 - Adding some new Blue Plaques
 - The artist in Mere – Solstice Beacon
 - Another event – smaller but similar to AIM last year.
 - Promoting walking in Mere with maps and trails

- We heard from our Wiltshire Councillor about plans to improve the walking route to Hillbrush.
- As usual, we had planning matters to consider and checks on the town council's finances.

John Jordan, Chair, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.

lindseywood@merewilts.org 860701  merewilts.org

Information from the Town Clerk:

Town Council Elections

The Wiltshire Association of Local Councils has organised a special online event for anyone interested in standing for their local Town or Parish Council in the May 2025 elections.

If you are interested in finding out more about the role of the Councillor, the way a Town Council meeting works, which services a Parish Council can influence and how the Parish Precept is raised and spent, then this is the session for you!

Join a panel of experts drawn from a variety of roles within Town and Parish government to ask your questions and understand more about the role and responsibilities our representatives have on the first tier of government.

This event is for anyone interested in standing for election in May. To receive the joining instructions, please email Ian Nockolds the Local County Advisor at inockolds@communityfirst.org.uk

Event Information:

Zoom Meeting: Wednesday March 5th 2025 18:00 - 19:00

Open to:

Anyone thinking about standing for their local Town and Parish Council. This event is NOT for current Councillors. Anyone booking the event will be supplied with the link to the Zoom meeting ahead of the event.

The Wiltshire Marque

A new accreditation scheme helping shoppers locate Wiltshire food and drink was launched in October 2024. The aim of the scheme is to collaborate and keep people buying from local companies who source, make and sell their products locally. It is to celebrate craft and passion in Wiltshire food and drink makers. Participants of the scheme will be showcased on a searchable, online directory that members of the public and businesses can access for free, which will also include news and updates from the initiative's members, interviews with local businesses and foodie event listings. The Wiltshire Marque is being funded by Wiltshire Council's 'Wiltshire Towns Programme' which is aimed at supporting activity on the high street. If you are interested in signing up or participating, please see the website below:

https://www.wiltshiremarque.co.uk/?trk=public_post_reshare-text

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

In the coming weeks Wiltshire Council are organizing the largest local elections in the country, being held on the 1st May. 98 unitary divisions, 308 city, town and parish council areas and 2118 town/parish council seats. Note new postal vote applications deadline is 5pm on the 14th of April.

You may be aware by now that the joint bid with Dorset, BCP, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils to be part of the Government's Devolution Priority Programme (Elect a Mayor) was not one of the 6 bids accepted by Government.

At present Wiltshire has about 1600 potholes to repair at any one time. Wiltshire has machines such as Bobcats that can repair very effectively even in the winter although many are still repaired manually. An officer said in public there should be no potholes, rarely if ever is a pothole seen on a motorway, this is because of better maintenance. It appears the spending per mile on C class and non-classified roads appear to be more in Salisbury than here, this may be justified however I as a councillor am monitoring it. An officer said we have not the money for good maintenance, therefore we have potholes and have to repair them. Wiltshire has put £22 million towards highway repairs, which is extra this year to the Government's contribution of £20.7 million. Potholes are a problem nationwide.

Project Manager Jo Flye made a presentation to the South West Wiltshire Area Board regarding The Stourhead Portfolio which consist of several local National Trust properties. Stourhead on its own has 500 volunteers, around 100 employees. The lake at Stourhead is designated as a dam. It does not provide drinking water, I always thought dams were for drinking water. Also, the SWWAB give grants, in the last four years a 120 projects have been helped with £200,000.00 in grants.

Tuesday 4th March, 11am, St Thomas's Church, Salisbury is a chance to meet a range of local disability organisations in and around Salisbury organised by our South West Wiltshire Area Board. Although a long way to travel, it could be worth it for some in the Mere Area.

Rents for Council tenants are due to rise £2.98 a week for a two- or three-bedroom property. The Government has reduced the discount for right to buy property, this has reduced the sales from 20 a year down to 5 a year.

Wiltshire Council's Environmental Enforcement team has been highly commended for its work to tackle environmental crime at the national Keep Britain Tidy Awards.

Fly-tips in Wiltshire have been on a downward trend over the course of last year. A 31% increase in fly-tipping prosecutions year on year.

Wiltshire Council continuing to crackdown on environmental waste crime with the seizure of a vehicle believed to have been involved in fly-tipping. In a joint operation with Wiltshire Police, the white Ford transit van was seized from the Amesbury area on 10 January.

Wiltshire residents are set to benefit from improved walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure as Wiltshire Council has secured £1,042,507 from a national fund aimed at making active travel easier and safer across England. The funding,

announced by the Government and Active Travel England (ATE), will enable the council to develop new and improved footpaths, cycle lanes, and junctions to make sustainable travel a more attractive option for local communities.

Wiltshire Council is supporting an initiative to promote oral health among young children by encouraging regular toothbrushing in primary schools and nurseries. In recognition of National Children's Dental Health Month this February, Wiltshire schools and nurseries have partnered with the Big Brush Club – a supervised toothbrushing programme commissioned by NHS England and delivered by mobile dental provider At Home Dental. The initiative supports daily in-class toothbrushing for children aged 3 to 5 as part of a wider two-year campaign spanning the south west. Wiltshire joins more than 50,000 children across the region in helping develop healthy dental habits from an early age. In Wiltshire the number of 5- to 9-year-olds admitted to hospital for tooth extractions due to tooth decay is more than 70% higher than the England and Southwest average. For more information about the supervised toothbrushing scheme visit <https://bigbrushclub.co.uk>.

Many from our area visit Salisbury by rail. Salisbury Railway Station's forecourt remodelling scheme has reached a key milestone, with work now entering its third and final phase.

Penny Fennon gave January rainfall for Salisbury Street as 29cm with the wettest day being on the 5th with 6cm.

Pam Baldock gave the rainfall for Lordsmead in January, as 127.75mm. Several days with no measurable amount. Wettest day being 26th January with 29mm.

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

Wanting to make a Donation by BACS to support Mere Matters?
A/C Name: [Mere Matters](#) Sort Code: [30-93-45](#) A/C No: [00600262](#).
Please enter your surname in the Reference Field. Many thanks.
Treasurer - Alison Beall Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com



CELEBRATING
Age Wiltshire

Stories in the Dust Theatre Show
Fovant Village Hall
Friday 28 March 2025, 5.00pm - 6.00pm



Join theatre makers Anna Harriott & Iona Johnson for their show '*Stories in the Dust*'.

A funny, heartfelt and hopeful post apocalyptic show with live music and puppetry.

This is a **FREE** event organised by Celebrating Age Wiltshire. To book, please contact Rebecca on 07955 249288 or email CAWSupport@wiltshiremusic.org.uk.

Music for Eastertide

Wincanton Choral Society will be performing J S Bach's St John Passion on **6th April** at **St. Luke and St. Teresa's Church**, Wincanton, three hundred and one years after its first performance in Leipzig when Bach was in his first year as director of church music there. It tells the Easter story according to St. John's Gospel. It is a hugely significant work for the Society to sing in this their 35th year of performing.

The concert starts at 7.30 pm, tickets £15 (under 18 free) are available from www.ticketsource/wincanton-choral-society or on the door. For further details: 01749 860457

MERE SURGERY PPG

Raising money for a defibrillator for adults and children to be used in the surgery
COFFEE MORNING THURSDAY 27TH MARCH 10.30 TO 12.30 AT
UNITED REFORM CHURCH,
 Raffle Refreshments Cake Stall
 Please join us and bring your friends.

Mere Art Group

There has been activity on the 'financial front' in the last month. The charge for The Grove building will increase from 1 April 2025, but to a lower extent than was initially advised. Our charging rate will be £3.00 for each Thursday till the end of March, and £4.00 from 1 April. Our revised rate will include 'Refreshments' - everyone was pleased to hear.

The artwork for this month is of the easily recognised Freddie Mercury of "Queen". Acrylic paint was used by the Artist, Aubrey Coleman..

Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com



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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



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Karen Lester ☎ 835012

Heather Stone: DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

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Heather: 07874 079 913

LENT Lunches

Once again it is time when we welcome all to come along and join us for a Lent Lunch.

They will be held in The Grove Building as usual. Commencing at 12.30 p.m. on Mondays, **24th** and **31st** March and **7th** April. Finally on Good Friday the **18th** April.

We will be serving jacket potatoes with various fillings, salad, fruit and tea or coffee. Price will be £7.50 per person and all proceeds shared between Christian Aid and CAFOD.

We would love to have your support for as many lunches as you can make.

Sandra Fisher, Judy Bickerstaff, Jane Hurd

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society (MADS)

We are delighted to tell you that MADS' rehearsals for our Spring Production, a comedy drama entitled '**Lucky Balls**' by Louise Roche, are speeding along happily! The play is set in a wedding reception where nine guests are the victims of a bad seating plan. But when one of them suggests buying a Lottery ticket - for which they all chip in - and their number comes up, the trouble really starts! What happens next? Come and find out! Performances are in Mere Lecture Hall on **Thursday 27th, Friday 28th and Saturday 29th March at 7.30 p.m.** with a matinee on **Saturday 29th at 2.30 p.m.** Tickets priced at £10 are available from The Library, Sprout and Flower and the Angel Tea Rooms, or by telephoning 07539 329798 to reserve tickets. However, we do advise that this play is not suitable for those under sixteen years old.

Owing to the different staging of this play there will be fewer seats than usual for our audiences, so do make sure to get your tickets early to avoid disappointment! We look forward to seeing you all there!

Jenny Wilding 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Croquet and Boules Club

THE NEW SEASON BEGINS - SOON!

It is wonderful to know that Spring is just around the corner with, hopefully, an improving weather picture so that we can again enjoy those outdoor sports that have been locked away over the winter months. With this in mind we are pleased to announce that the Croquet Club's new season will begin on **Saturday 26 April 2025**. The club plays from 14.30 hours **every Saturday and Sunday** and new members are always welcome. Equipment and tuition is provided by the club. As an outdoor sport croquet is a sociable game, sometimes challenging, sometimes frustrating but great fun and with the added benefit of enjoying afternoons in the fresh air.

Jill Beadle 07393 560459 jill49jim@hotmail.co.uk

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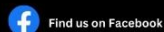
MERE FOREST CHARITIES - Assistance Available

The charities exist to support those persons resident in the Parishes of Mere and Zeals who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

Currently supporting a number of individuals with an annual grant before Christmas, applied for in October. Applications for assistance are welcome at any time during the year. For further details and application form please write and enclose an AS stamped addressed envelope to:

9 Clements Lane, Mere. BA12 6DF

Mereforest@gmail.com



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Fair Trade in Mere

Fair Trade stalls this month are on March 15th 10.30-12.00 at the URC and March 16th after the morning service at St Michael's Church.

It is the time of the year when I hold a Big Brew in aid of Transform Trade, the charitable arm which supports many of the Fair Trade Groups whose products I sell. This year, why not come along the URC Coffee morning on **March 15th**, sample some of the delicious products, take part in a fun quiz, and peruse my stall for other tempting goodies.

The Year Clock:

We are delighted that Tim Lacock is bringing his amazing play to Mere in April. It is a play following the life of William Barnes through his wonderful words and Dorset dialect poetry. Barnes began his teaching career here in Mere in 1823 in the Market Croft (where the clock tower is now) and later, with his wife Julia, his boarding school in The Chantry. The event is being supported by Friends of St Michael's, who are providing refreshments and sharing the proceeds with the William Barnes Society who are raising money to have all of the Barnes' archives digitised. So how appropriate that we should hold this event here! It is an experience not to be missed.

Keep the Date free: Sunday April 27th at 5p.m. in St Michael's Church. Watch out for the posters. Details of tickets will be available in April's magazine.

Janet Way 860884

Mere Toddlers Foodbank Quiz

The Foodbank 4th Quiz night:

On **April 12th**, at The Grove Building there is another round of brilliant questions from the inimitable Penny Fennon. We are holding a raffle, providing cake and hot drinks, and prize money of £100 from a generous local sponsor (yet to be named) .

We have space for just ten tables, and many have rebooked already, but if you would like to come, please ring **Penny** to book a table. Tel: **07833 131712**

It costs £3 per head, teams of eight max, starts at 6.30 pm. We also ask if you would bring a contribution per head for the foodbank by way of something long-life. Feel free to bring your own bottles - glasses are provided.

Beware however, of the jokes! You have been warned.

Finally, to tantalise the whole family, we are also holding a Word Quiz sheet competition, starting mid-April, costing just £1 each from the usual local venues, and running until the end of May. Prize money £10 - all proceeds of both will go to Mere Toddlers Foodbank.

Anne Rich /Mere Toddlers Foodbank [07413-51202 arich4@icloud.com](mailto:07413-51202_arich4@icloud.com)



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The Garden Café

Situated within The Club at Holbrook Manor & Spa, The Garden Café is an ideal place to relax with family and friends whilst enjoying a selection of drinks, barista coffees, home baked cakes and freshly prepared light deli bites.

On warmer days you can sit outside on the café terrace which overlooks the Manor gardens.

Traditional afternoon tea is also available.



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The Holbrook Manor, Castle Cary Road, Wincanton, BA9 8BS

Mere Bowls Club

39 members attended the Mere Bowls Club's annual dinner and prize presentation which took place on Tuesday 24th January at the Old Brewery in Gillingham with cups being awarded for all the club competitions and presented by Mo McCormack, our most senior member having turned 90 only 2 weeks before and still playing.

The most prolific winner of the season was Shaun Tealey only playing in his first season and walking away with 3 cups: The 2-wood Pairs with John Fitzgerald, The Open Pairs with Chris Coombs and the Novices Cup.

The big achievement of the 2024 season by Mere Bowls Club was in winning the Westbrook League Harold Ford Cup. The final was played on the 23 August 2024 against Downton Bowls Club and played at Salisbury, Mere won by 38 shots to 23.

Photos by Jon Wright and George Jeans



Don Butchers 860775 don.butchers@btinternet.com



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

Venue Key:

AYP - Andy Young Pavilion**LH** - Lecture Hall**SCP** - Salisbury St Car Park**VH** - Visit Hillbrush**Drs** - Surgery**Lib** - Library**StM** - St Michaels Church**WT** - Walnut Tree Inn**GB** - Grove Building**MSC** - Social Club**URC** - United Ref Church

1	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
2	Sun			
3	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	LH
			Food Bank	LH
		17:45	Yoga (every Mon)	LH
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon)	GB
4	Tues	09:30	Little Angels (every Tues)	GB
		19:00	MADS (every Tues)	LH
5	Weds	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		10:00	Get Wiltshire Walking Group – Starter Walks (every Weds)	CP
		14:00	Pilates (every Weds)	LH
		18:30	Karate (every Weds)	LH
			Railway Modellers	
6	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church	URC
		10:30	Harmony for Health (every Thurs)	LH
		11:00	Rhyme Time (every Thurs)	Lib
		14:00	Rubber Bridge (every Thurs)	LH
		17:00	Girlguiding (every Thurs)	GB
		18:00	Yoga (every Thurs)	LH
		19:00	MADS (every Thurs)	LH
		19:30	Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	URC
7	Fri	13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start - every Fri)	GB
8	Sat		Coffee Morning	
9	Sun			
10	Mon	14:00	Short Walk (Janet Way)	SCP
			Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
11	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	Historical Society	GB
			Little Angels,	
12	Weds	19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
13	Thurs	19:30	Ukulele	Butt of Sherry
			Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	
14	Fri	10.00	Merely Women	GB
			Dup Bridge	
15	Sat		Coffee Morning , The Big Brew and Fair-Trade Stall	

16	Sun	Fair Trade after morning service	StM
17	Mon	10:30 Lent Lunch Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	GB
18	Tues	Little Angels, MADS	
19	Weds	19:00 Merekits Women's Institute Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	GB
20	Thurs	Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	
21	Fri	Dup Bridge	
22	Sat	Coffee Morning	
23	Sun	14:00 Walking Group	SCP
24	Mon	10:30 Historical Society 10:30 Lent Lunch Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	GB GB
25	Tues	09:00 Ear Treatment Little Angels, MADS	GB
26	Weds	Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
27	Thurs	Mads Production Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	LH
28	Fri	10.00 Merely Women Mads Production 19:00 Cine Club Dup Bridge	GB LH GB
29	Sat	Mads Production	LH
30	Sun	Mothering Sunday	
31	Mon	10:30 Lent Lunch Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	GB

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

Make a Donation by BACS to support Mere Matters?
A/C Name: [Mere Matters](#) Sort Code: [30-93-45](#) A/C No: [00600262](#).
Please enter your surname in the Reference Field.

Many thanks

OR cash/cheque to Alison Beall - Treasurer at Holly Cottage,
North Road BA12 6HP. Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com



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Mere Gardening Club.

It was lovely to see so many members at our last meeting, our speaker for the evening was Martin Young who gave us a very interesting talk on "Plants for Spring"

Our next meeting on **Wednesday 12 March** is the club AGM followed by a talk by Adam Wallis of Castle Gardens entitled "From Grower to Garden Centre". If this talk is anything like the one he gave last year it will be very enlightening.

If any members would like to stand for the committee at the AGM, then please contact the secretary. (temeraire44@icloud.com).

Annual Memberships are due at the March meeting with subscriptions rising to £12. This allows members to attend all talks and socials, it also includes a 10% discount at Plant World and 25% discount vouchers for Castle Gardens twice a year. Members are requested to attend the March meeting early so as to facilitate membership renewals.

The committee has a full programme for the ensuing year including a coach trip to the RHS Rose-moor gardens along with the scarecrow festival which has a theme this year Historical Characters which ties in with the Tower Stories.

The members annual show will have additional classes than last year, so please try and take part. The show schedule will be available to members at the March meeting. We have also managed to arrange for **Paul Martin** (the antiques expert from Flog It and other TV shows), to give a talk at our **May 14th** meeting. As this is likely to be a popular event and numbers in the Grove building are limited to 80, we will be issuing free tickets to our members at the March and April meetings.

All meetings take place in the Grove Building on the second Wednesday of the month with refreshments at 6.45 pm followed by a talk at 7.30 p.m

Les Manwaring Chair 861941 lesmanwaring@yahoo.com

Mere Jelly

Working from home, particularly in the winter months, can get a bit lonely...

The Mere Jelly is an informal, co-working event for creatives, freelancers, home-workers and small business owners. It's a chance to work in a different environment, bounce ideas off others, get some office chat in or just get your head down and get some work done. We meet on the **last Wednesday of the month** at Visit Hillbrush from 9 am - 12 noon.

Join us for the morning or just drop in for a coffee and a chat. We'd love to see you.

Jenni Bell 07956-869699





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Nick 07702 363672

Copy date for **April** issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Friday 21st March**

Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies 863425
editor@merematters.co.uk or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

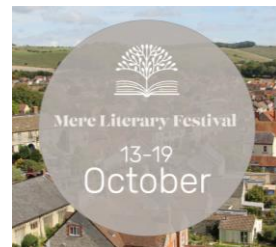
Please be sure to state your name and a contact telephone number to ensure inclusion.

Mere Literary Festival

The first Mere Literary Festival was held in 1997 to raise funds for the Mere & District Link Scheme and has continued to provide funds to that original cause as well as others, such as Seeds4Success.

This year, we will introduce some exciting new elements to the whole of Mere Festival Week and hope you will join us on the 13th - 19th October.

Sign up to our email list and get all the updates about Festival 2025 here: www.mereliteraryfestival.com



Jenni Bell 07956-869699

Mere Theatre Club

Spring is round the corner we hope, so we are getting out and about with visits to Bath, Salisbury, Bristol and Powderham Castle! We don't just visit theatres. Apart from historical castles we are booked to see a Hitchcock musical, a Who Dunit and a blockbuster!

If you too fancy getting out and about why not join us? Coaches provided for all trips and new friends to be made. Contact details below

Madelaine Morris 07481-555101 madsmorris@gmail.com

Merekits - Women's Institute

At our February meeting we learnt some of the skills of walking netball, it was a truly hilarious evening, and great fun was had by all. We have also started developing our skittles team in time for the autumn league, everyone who has attended has stated how much they are enjoying it.

The 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 ladies an opportunity to meet like minded people and make new friends locally. There's always something happening for both nationally and locally in the WI for you to participate in as much or as little as you would like. There is a varied programme of events throughout the year including talks and demonstrations as well as many activities outside of meetings such as walks; meals out; book club; craft group; skittles as well as trips to the local theatres and places of interest.

Our next meeting will be on **19th March** where we will be attempting to make lanterns so we can join in the festivities of the Tower Stories in June - do come along and join us!

Verena Cooper 07971-790256 verenacooper2@gmail.com



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To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact

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Mere School

Science Day!

The Friends of Mere School funded an exciting and interesting day for us all.

A scientist came to school and every class took part in a science workshop completing investigations which were fun, engaging and hands on. These helped our children to develop skills in planning, prediction, observation and fair testing.

There was an excited buzz around the school as the children learnt about adaptation and camouflage, skeletons, light, the water cycle and the planets. The children dropped eggs, made rockets and watched a bunsen burner distil water and as well as many more fascinating experiments.

Primary children are naturally curious and are at the best age to develop a life long love of science. It is important that our children are literate and numerate but our aim is to provide a broad curriculum and days like this bring learning to life.

The children are hoping that The Friends might be able to fund 2 days next year!

Catriona Williamson



Mere Museum

Thank you for the positive comments about the Exhibition of St Michael's Church.

Just a reminder that the 'children's quiz is available still, it would be great to know that some children have looked at the exhibition.

We continue to work through our collection of photographs to make sure they are named and dated where possible. Please look out for a new set of photos in the next couple of weeks.

Rose Heesom, Hon. Curator 07791-559674 meremuseum@btinternet.com

Mothers Union

This month Mother's Union will be enjoying some Music and Singing with Peter Jane from another area of our Deanery. We have some good voices in our group of ladies and gentlemen and music and singing are so good for the soul.

Last month we were creative with our members creating Patchwork Mug Rugs for their cup of tea or coffee. Next month we have our AGM. We also had a very creative group thinking of so many ideas for future meetings.

The date of our meeting is at **Tuesday 11th March, 2.30 pm** in the Grove Building and we always welcome people who would like to join us for an afternoon short service and of course refreshments after.

Vicky Goodfellow 840443 or Carol Lord 685429.

Mere & District Link Scheme

The Link Scheme is a local charity and our volunteer drivers primarily take clients to medical appointments. New drivers are always welcome. If you want to find out more about volunteering as a driver, please call our co-ordinator on 01747 860096.

We had a busy start to the year with 124 trips in January including 42 to Salisbury District Hospital.

Once you have an appointment, please call 01747 860096 to book a Link driver. Please remember that our co-ordinators work in their own homes – we do not have an office - so please keep calls to 9-5 Monday to Friday and only use the 01747 860096 number. Also, please try to give us a minimum of 48 hours' notice (not including Saturdays and Sundays) as we cannot guarantee our co-ordinator will be at home to arrange last minute requests. If you have to leave a message please do so slowly and clearly.

As a charity we do not charge for trips but we do ask for a donation.

John FitzGerald Chair 860096  merelink.org.uk

Walking In Mere (All ages are welcome to join in all of these walks)

"Get Wiltshire Walking", Starter Walk:

Every Wednesday, a 40 minute stroll for those who wish to become more active, or are recovering from illness, injury or surgery. All walks are on flat, stable terrain and finish at the Angel Tea Room. Meet by the surgery at 10.00am. Unfortunately, for safety reasons, no dogs are allowed on these walks, except assistance dogs.

Dave and Wendy Drewett 07508 340105

Short Walk:

Meet at the surgery car park at 2.00pm on **Monday 10th March** for a walk of 2-3 miles around the lanes and paths of Mere. Enjoy a refreshing cuppa afterwards at The Angel Café and even indulge in one of Paul's delicious cakes.

Janet Way 860884

Mere Walking Group - Sunday afternoons, 3-5 miles:

Members of the group met last month and have set dates for our Sunday walks for the rest of the year. All walks start from Salisbury Street car park at 2.00pm with car sharing to the start point, if appropriate. All are welcome to join in, dogs on leads please.

Our first walk this year will be on **Sunday 23rd March**, and we'll be doing the Tower Walk, which is local and has a view of the church tower all the way.

Finer details of the remaining walks will be advertised nearer the time.

27th April, 18th May, 9th June, 20th July, 31st August, 21st September 19th October

Dave and Wendy Drewett 07508 340105

Mere Rivers Group

Spring is in the air; well, the birds think so. I am not convinced. The ducks are behaving particularly amorously.

January was a return to wetter weather following the dry end to 2024 with an average of 137mm of rainfall across Wessex, 154% of the long term average (LTA). Rain largely fell over a few days at either end of the month. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) remained close to zero during January. In most river catchments on the Chalk, recorded monthly mean flows were above normal and sites in the north of Wessex varied between normal and exceptionally high. Groundwater sites monitoring the Chalk varied between normal and exceptionally high at the end of January while all other monitoring sites reported notably high groundwater levels. Reservoirs ended the month at approximately 99% capacity for both Wessex Water and Bristol Water. For both water companies this was similar to levels in January 2024.

We look forward to a summer like they used to be, plenty of warm sunshine and a little rain for the streams and gardens but do we only remember the good bits. Now if we have a dry season we have stream support to keep the streams flowing.

The storms in January did not help the river banks which in places are being undermined but they did clear some of the rubbish which had built up.

Keep warm

Ian Sheppard ianjsheppard@outlook.com

Mere Tiddlers and Toddlers

At Tiddlers and Toddlers we welcome anyone with children from 0-5 years old.

We offer space (without judgement) for your child to burn off energy, get creative with our craft, and use their imagination and practise taking turns with our small world toys. Whilst the children are busy the parents/carers have an opportunity to have a hot drink and get to know other local parents.

You can find us at the **Lecture Hall** every **Monday** (during term time) from **9:30-11:30am**.

We believe it takes a village to raise a child and we'd love you to come and join us!



Jen Ritter meretiddlersandtoddlers@gmail.com

Letter from the Churches:

As I write, the Vicarage garden looks somewhat bare, we have had a lot to strip back, brambles to cut down and get rid off and dead wood to cut up, since we moved here in November. Without the leaf cover, it has been much easier to see what is dead and what is living, what should be left or what can be improved by a good cutting back. A large tree split in the recent high winds and became dangerous, so that had to be cut down. The skies seem so often grey, the air cold, but despite all the pruning, there are little splashes of white, snowdrops showing off their beauty, proving that there is life in the seemingly dormant plant world. Looking closer, daffodil stems are pushing up, yellow primroses and purple crocuses too are readying to flower in the otherwise barren flowerbeds. Life is preparing to return again.

As you read this, it will be March, a time in the Church calendar when many Christians prepare for Easter, a time we called Lent. It is a time of stripping back, of getting rid of bad habits and that which is not beneficial, of seeking to take stock and say sorry to God for things we have done wrong and good things we haven't done. In Lent, we prepare the ground, the garden of our hearts, for the greatest celebration of the Church, Easter, when we remember and give thanks for the death and resurrection of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Before Easter, we get ready, it is a really necessary time of pruning, before new life can spring forth in greater abundance as a result.

It has been a huge privilege to be able to take up the position of Vicar of Mere and West Knoyle, and it has been my joy to get to know so many in our communities and I look forward to getting to know many more of you in the months ahead. Our churches of various denominations, within Mere and at West Knoyle, are a happy bunch, keen to work together and I am very grateful for all so many do, as tireless volunteers. This Lent, it is my hope that you may decide to come along to one of our churches and will find a warm welcome, and that together we can prepare to grow closer to God and to one another.

May God bless you, The Revd. Michael Molano

Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Our next session is on **Thursday, 13th March** at 7.30pm at The Butt of Sherry.



We are a group of ukulele enthusiasts who 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 can 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.

You can check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt' for our song list.

Maggie Holmes maggieholmes101@gmail.com

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Vicar: The Rev'd Michael Molano 07396 979448

Churchwardens: Mr Kit Stallard 07803-086161 Mr Richard Wilson 07966-244373

Admin Secretary: administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

2 nd	Sun	08:00 10.30	BCP Communion Informal 'Sunday First' Family Service
5 th	Wed	10.30	Ash Wednesday Communion Service
9 th	Sun	08:00 10:30 18:00	BCP Communion Lent- Parish Communion Evening service of Worship for Lent
16 th	Sun	08:00 10:30 18:00	BCP Communion Parish Communion Evening service of Worship for Lent
18 th	Tues	10.30	Roman Catholic Mass
23 rd	Sun	08:00 10:30 18:00	BCP Communion Parish Communion Evening service of Worship for Lent
30 th	Sun	08:00 10:30 18:00	BCP Communion Mothering Sunday- Parish Communion Evening service of Worship for Lent

West Knoyle Parish Church St Mary the Virgin:

Vicar: The Rev'd Michael Molano 07396 979448

Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall 830534 Sir Charles Burnett 01747 812089

2 nd	Sun	09.30	DIY Service
9 th	Sun	09:30	Communion
16 th	Sun	09:30	Matins
23 rd	Sun	09:30	Communion
30 th	Sun	09.30	Mothering Sunday- Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister: Vacancy

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

2 nd	Sun	11:00	TBC
9 th	Sun	11:00	TBC

16 th	Sun	11:00	TBC
23 rd	Sun	11:00	TBC
30 th	Sun	11:00	TBC

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

Be vigilant of scams

Scammers may place fake QR codes in parking areas including on official signage, leading users to fraudulent websites designed to steal payment information. Here's how you can spot and avoid them:

- Check for tampering: always inspect QR codes for signs of tampering. If it looks like it's been placed over the original, do not scan it.
- Look out for the URL: when scanning a QR code, always check that the website address (URL) is legitimate, or is from the relevant app store link.
- Use the official app: for secure payments, always use the relevant official app or website. If in doubt, manually enter the URL into your browser instead of scanning an unfamiliar QR code.



We've also received reports of cold callers targeting residents, offering services like energy-saving measures, insulation, or home repairs. Legitimate schemes will never pressure you into making quick decisions.

- Check credentials – Always ask for ID and verify the company before agreeing to anything.
- Say no to pressure sales – If you feel rushed or uneasy, politely decline and shut the door.
- Never pay upfront. Reputable traders won't ask for upfront payments or large deposits.
- Do not pay cash or agree to be taken to the bank. Pay by bank transfer so the payment is traceable, or even better use a credit card as you have greater protections via the credit card company.

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 860546

Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant 860546

Booking Meeting Venues

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

Mere Mortals Petanque Club

Mere Mortals Petanquers look forward to the sunlit uplands of Spring and Summer having battled through a pretty dreary winter. When the clocks spring forward we can resume Tuesday evening play from 6pm.

Wednesdays continue at 2.30pm and Saturday morning play starts at 10.30am.

Newcomers are always welcome. Boules and tuition are provided if needed and a fun time is guaranteed and you are assured of a friendly reception



Colin Senneck 706008 colin2423@sky.com

From Times Gone By!

Inquests held by Gearge Sylvester, Esq

At Zeals, in the parish of Mere, on Phab. Mansfield aged 75 years. From the evidence it appeared the deceased had been keeping her bed for some months, in low and desponding condition: James Mansfield, her husband, retired to rest on Tuesday evening, the 6th ult, at ten o'clock, and on awaking at two the following morning, found the deceased absent; on descending the stairs, the door of the house was found open. He searched the garden in vain, and called Eneas Henwood, who went down into the well of the depth of between forty and fifty feet, where he discovered the body and with the assistance of a rake he brought it up - Verdict Found Drowned; but how, or by what means, no evidence appears to the jurors.

Wiltshire Independent, 22 March 1849

Hindon Petty Sessions

James Mills and Joseph Mores, two little boys, in the employ of Mr. E. P. Mitchell, of Mere, yeoman, were summoned for leaving his service without notice or just excuse. Reprimanded and discharged on the payment of the costs. John Parfitt, of Mere was summoned by Mr. E. P. Mitchell, for cruelly beating a sheep, his property. After hearing the evidence, the Bench dismissed the complaint.

Wiltshire County Mirror 22 March 1853

Martyn Beardsley

Mere Brownies and Guides

We spent a very happy and productive evening with Hayley from Hayleys hair design Mere, ably assisted by her 10-year-old daughter. After a talk on the variety of procedures, Hayley had brought her Training heads for the girls to practice with. They created some amazing hair styling



Afterwards some of the girls with longer hair were practiced on with French plaits and left the meeting with their new styles

A great fun time was had by all.



Text by Sue Jeans Pictures by Vicky Wagland

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