

BRIDE VALLEY NEWS



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 2026

Bride Valley News – the magazine of the Bride Valley Communities and the Bride Valley & Chesil Churches

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Information for Contributors

February 2026 issue deadlines: Articles, photographs, etc must be sent to the appropriate Village Correspondent (contact details at the head of each village section) by Friday 9th January for the February issue. Contributions from outside the Bride Valley can be emailed to bvnburton@gmail.com. Handwritten or typed copy must be delivered to village correspondents well before the deadline. Please contact bvnadverts@bvn.org.uk for information on advertising in the BVN. Articles, notices and advertisements in this magazine may not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the Editor or the people and organisations funding and supporting the BVN. Copies of the BVN, in colour, can be found at bvn.org.uk or via links on Bride Valley village websites. **Note:** Contributors are asked to note that space in the BVN is strictly limited and the Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse submissions and cannot guarantee that items will be included.

The Bride Valley News is delivered to every home in the valley and is entirely produced and distributed by volunteers. Donations to help us continue to provide the magazine would be welcome and if you feel able to contribute - please make a BACS payment to:
Account: 'Bride Valley Churches Team Council', Sort code 30-91-21
Account number 00074071.....and please quote BVN.

The Bride Valley & Chesil Churches

St Mary The Virgin: Burton Bradstock
St Michael & All Angels: Littlebredy
Chilcombe (dedication unknown)
St Martin: Shipton Gorge

St Mary: Litton Cheney
St Peter: Long Bredy
St Mary The Blessed Virgin: Puncknowle
Holy Trinity: Swyre

Rector: Rev'd Andrew Rawding (01308) 898799

To enquire about Baptisms, Marriages or Funeral arrangements in the Bride Valley & Chesil Benefice Churches please contact Rev'd Rawding by phone (see above) or email rectorbridevalleychesil@gmail.com.

Lay Pastoral Assistants

We have 2 Lay Pastoral Assistants in our team and they are available for anyone throughout our community and can respond to any need, great or small, for pastoral care. The team are: Jenny: 01308 898768, Liz: 01308 897451 alternatively you can get in touch with your churchwarden, or Helen Fry, Benefice Administrator on 01308 897260.

Home communion is available by arrangement. If you would like to become an LPA, please have a look at the Diocese of Salisbury webpage:

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whoweare/news/is-god-calling-you-to-be-a-lay-pastoral-assistant->, and then chat with Rector Andrew.

Safeguarding

The Churches of this Benefice have adopted the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and are 'Promoting Safer Churches'. The Benefice Churches have an open door to all survivors.

For further information or support please contact our Safeguarding Officer: - Les Keatley. Tel: - 07833545450 email: - Les@Keatley.me.uk

From the Rectory

Dear friends,

How are you feeling about the New Year?

I was running around 'St Mary's Parkrun' on Saturday in Bridport. It was hard work. It's always hard work. Each time I run it I feel like my heart is going to explode. It's a physical battle as well as a mental one. I always go off too fast, then hang in there until I might be able to produce a final sprint. It would not be hard work if I ran at a slower pace. It would be easier if the course had less twists and turns, uphill, and changes of direction. My average heart rate running the 3.1 miles (5km) was 171bpm. In the last four minutes I was running at 193bpm. 19 minutes 31 seconds of hard effort. It's an incentive to train better, to run faster, just so it can be over quicker. As I ran, I tried to distract myself from the desire to ease off and slow down. I counted down from 59 seconds, to make another minute go past. I thought about the 'ABC' of running: attitude, breathing, cadence. ATTITUDE: I told myself, "You've got this Andrew." BREATHING: I regulated my breathing, focusing on exhales. CADENCE: I checked my stride pattern to increase effectiveness and speed.

We're running into yet another New Year. We can't control that. But what's your 'ABC' for 2026? We can control that.

ATTITUDE: I don't know where you are in the race of life. I don't know whether you are on a course which involves twists and turns, up hills and changes of direction. But I'm wondering if you can say to yourself: "You've got this. Whatever the New Year brings you'll get through this. At some point, if there's pain, it will pass." From a psychological view point it's better to address yourself in the third person. "You can do this Andrew" rather than "I can do this." I get through marathons imagining my children cheering me on from the sidelines or waiting for me, jumping up and down at the finish line. In Christianity we talk about a 'great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1), that is faithful ones from the past. You may feel on your own right now, but who can you hear as a voice of encouragement, maybe from your own past, letting you know "You've got this!?" In my years in the military when I was feeling at breaking point, I would remind myself of the apostle Paul's: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13). Later in life it became: "I can do all things though love which gives me strength."

Start with ATTITUDE. Ask the sun (Son) for inspiration, listen to the encouragement of the birds, hear the waves willing you on, give it to the everlasting arms of divine love and tell yourself: “Whatever 2026 brings, you’ve got this, you’ll get through it, you’re going to be ok.”

BREATHING: I’m sure you know about breathing, but how much do you focus on the exhale, letting breath out, rather than gasping to get breath in? The exhale is crucial for activating the body's relaxation response, shifting from ‘fight-or-flight’ to ‘rest-and-digest’. Hyper-ventilation is linked to anxiety and panic attacks. No fault of our own but a response to environment. Focusing on the exhale, and extending it, as if you are blowing out candles on a birthday cake, signals the brain through the vagal nerves, lowering heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension, while promoting deeper sleep and overall calmness. A full exhale empties the lungs and makes way for fresh oxygen. Practice your exhales: holding for four seconds, and you will be better at managing stress and improve your mental well-being in 2026. It’s built into church tradition in the reading of the Psalms. ‘Inhale scripture, exhale prayer’ is more than that. There is a pause at the colon in our traditional prayer books; for rhythmic breathing through recitation which brings both physical and spiritual calm. Oh, and see all that ill-feeling, unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness or anything which makes your breathing shallow and your heart tense – breathe it out, pray it out, and let it go. Give it to the wind, to be carried on the clouds, and leave it there. It will return as tears, to water the earth, and bring new life.

CADENCE: It’s a marathon not a sprint. You’ve likely heard that before, but are you living by it? Check your pacing, and your stride pattern. If right now it feels like you’re going uphill, then shorten your stride and slow it right down. It’s a long climb I know, but you will reach the top. At the top look back and see how far you’ve come; how much you have persevered, and overcome. Smile, relax, enjoy the view and then some downhill. Pacing can be particularly important with grief. Run your unique race. Go at your pace. The course might go round in circles, then uphill, downhill, back the way you’ve come. At some point you will get to a junction, and you’ll be able to choose the best path, and feel more in control. Check ATTITUDE, check BREATHING, adjust your CADENCE to suit where you are right now. Keep going. You’re going to be OK.

With my prayers for this New Year. You’ve got this,

Andrew

Christmas Greetings in the BVN

We are delighted to report that the BVN and the Three Ells Trust will each receive £638.50 this year. Thank you to everyone who contributed for your generous donations!

SAVE THE DATE for a St Bride's/'Imbolc' Pilgrimage on Sunday 1st February 2026.

We are planning a pilgrimage to celebrate light and life, and new beginnings, on Sunday 1st February which is St Bride's Day and also 'Imbolc'. Imbolc marks the halfway point between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, signalling the first signs of spring like lengthening days, new growth, and lambing season, honouring the goddess Brigid with fire, purification, and themes of rebirth, fertility, and new beginnings. The pilgrimage will go from the Hardy Monument, through the 'Valley of Stones' to the source of the River Bride at Littlebredy, and then through the Bride Valley to Freshwater, where the river enters the sea. We are planning to hire a minibus to take pilgrims to the start and facilitate transportation as required along the route. Timings are planned to be 12.00noon - 5.00pm. Full details will be confirmed and published through 'From Source 2 Sea' and Facebook. From 5.00pm there will be a welcoming 'Winter Warmer' event for pilgrims at Othona, followed by a candlelit evening of friendship to lead us into the light and love of 'Candlemas'. If you would like to register an interest in the pilgrimage walk please email BVchurchesTA@outlook.com, with subject 'St Bride's Pilgrimage 2026'

BRIDE VALLEY CAR SERVICE

The BVCS is a volunteer scheme offering residents of the Bride Valley transport to and from medical appointments when they are unable to drive themselves or be driven by relatives or friends. Clients are charged a mileage fee (currently 50p per mile) plus a standard charge (currently £2.00 per journey). Because the service depends on the availability of volunteer drivers, clients are asked to give as much notice as possible – we are unlikely to be able to respond to requests within 48 hours of an appointment.

To book a journey please call our voluntary co-ordinator on
07393 607025

We always welcome new drivers.



Bride Valley and Chesil Churches
invite you to



Plough Sunday 11th January at 3pm
Puncknowle Manor Farm Grain Store, DT2 9BX
by kind permission of Sarah Wild

**Please come along to think about those who
work on the land and produce food in this and
other communities.**

There's parking at Puncknowle Manor Farm and there will be refreshments
too.

Everyone is welcome! Please bring your friends and family.

The Churches of this Benefice have adopted the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and are 'Promoting Safer Churches'. The Benefice Churches have an open door to all survivors. For further information or support please contact our Safeguarding Officer:- Les Hextley, Tel:- 07833045450 email:- Les@Hextley.me.uk



Thorners CE VA School

Happy New Year! - We are looking forward to welcoming the children back after the Christmas break on January 6th 2026!

Mike Sitch, Headmaster



Burton Bradstock CE Primary School

'Do justice; love kindness; and walk humbly with God' (Micah 6:8)

We are inspired by this verse from the bible and how it shapes all we do. We all believe that fairness, kindness and being humble are the key to flourishing for all. The links between this and our school values of Happiness, Friendship, Hope, Love, Courage and Respect are clear.

Message from the Headteacher

What a busy end of term we have had at Burton Bradstock Primary! The term has flown past and I cannot believe my time at Burton is coming to a close; this is my last BVN article as I leave to take on the headship at Bincombe Valley Primary School after Christmas. I am extremely proud of all we have achieved at Burton over the past few years. So much has happened which has positively impacted the children's time at school and I know that the dedicated staff team will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the best for the children and community moving forward. Burton is a very special place and it has been an absolute joy to lead the school. I am confident that the school will continue to go from strength to strength and wish the children, families and community all the best for the future.

From the School

As I write preparations continue for our carol concert at St Mary's Church in Burton Bradstock at the end of term. We are doing our own version of 9 lessons and carols complete with a Nativity Tableaux played by our Nursery and Reception children. This is always a highlight of the festive calendar and I am thoroughly looking forward to it!

Children in the Nest had a magical and special morning at Groves as part of their learning about celebrations. They had a wonderful time looking at all the Christmas decorations and lights. The tree netting machine was a hit and so was the hot chocolate and biscuits in the Ivy house. A huge thank you to Charlie Groves and all his team for making us feel so welcome and festive.



Our school choir sang carols at the Bridport Christmas Cheer which was really well supported by our children and staff. They are looking forward to singing at the Coffee Mates morning and around the village before Christmas.



You may have seen our wonderful Christmas decorations at school over the past month. The wreath which adorns our gate was kindly made and donated by Alexandra in the village. It is an amazing piece and the children and families have loved seeing it on their way in and out of school each day. Our Christmas tree was kindly donated by On Your Marks Gardening and the friends of school have spent many hours decorating the tree and school itself!

Happy New Year from all at Burton Bradstock Primary.

Adam Gough, Headteacher

Bride Valley & Chesil Help Our Planet (HOP)

There will be a meeting of Bride Valley & Chesil Help our Planet at 6.30pm on 29th January at St Mary's Church, Burton Bradstock. Would you like to 'Help Our Planet' through activities in and around your village? Do you have knowledge, skills and experience to share?

All are welcome to the meeting to consult our local community about how we can come together to take action to 'Help Our Planet' (HOP). This will include thinking about events, supporting our schools to run HOP clubs/activities and local action to support wildlife and our environment. HOP was founded by Burton Bradstock resident Professor Philip Howse OBE and others, influencing 'COP' discussions on climate change and the Amazon, and holding regular talks at Sladers Yard, West Bay.

Our Night Sky in January 2026

Saturn will be setting in the West at about 2200, while Jupiter will be well up in the sky all night, as will Orion. A great time to be out with binoculars to see the nebula in his sword, hanging from his belt. You can also see Betelgeux and Rigel, the two brightest stars in the constellation, and Sirius, the Dog star, following his master, and twinkling in the low atmosphere with all the colours of a sunlit diamond.



A potentially record-breaking ultramassive black hole in the Cosmic Horseshoe galaxy, and a "naked" black hole in the early universe that exists without a host galaxy. These finds are challenging existing models of how black holes and galaxies form and grow. Black holes form when a star larger than about 3 times bigger than our Sun, runs out of fuel which had prevented it from collapsing under its own gravity. If it does not collapse and rebound in a Supernova, it can collapse under its own gravity into a black hole from which not even light can escape.

You are earnestly advised not to go near one, otherwise your New Year would most definitely be spoilt

With thanks to NASA

Bill Turnill

Bride Valley WI

As with recent tradition in the Bride Valley WI our November meeting always involves some type of craft. This year we returned to our "Carousel of Crafts". Members were able to make a selection of Christmas decorations. Cutting, folding, gluing and lots of concentration as well as artistic license and of course laughter, ensued. Angels, Stars, Snowflakes and Wreaths were crafted and great fun was had by all.

A group of eight Bride Valley WI members joined us for our November walk. We walked from Shipton Gorge's pub, The New Inn, on a route that took us over fields, paths and into the village of Walditch before returning to Shipton Gorge. We viewed the town of Bridport, the coast and Golden Cap and there was still plenty of autumn colour around for all to see as we climbed back up to the village. Sadly, we also found an area of soil in one of the fields where

black plastic bale wrapping had become partially embedded in the ground, making it impossible to be picked up. The area in which we live is so beautiful and the members were grateful for the opportunity to see views they may not have seen before. We managed to complete the walk and have a recovery drink at The New Inn, luckily before the expected heavy rain set in for the day. Thank you, Kathy, for leading the walk and arranging a dry morning.

The skittles team continue to do well in the league. Only one defeat so far. In their latest match an amazing 16 scored in one hand, by one of the team members ensured another win. The team continues to work hard on retaining the coveted Skittles Trophy.

Should you wish to join the Bride Valley WI we meet on the third Thursday of the month in Puncknowle Village Hall at 7.30pm.
Please contact us at bridevalleywi@gmail.com

The Bride Valley Book Club Review

“Prophet Song” by Paul Lynch

Prophet Song - a Booker prize winner from a few years ago - is a dystopian novel set in an imagined alternative present of the Irish Republic. After a democratic election an ultra-right-wing government is voted in and the Gardai form a military wing of state security secret police. The story follows one family - Eilish, a scientist, and her husband, Larry, a trades union official. Incrementally the state suspends the rule of law and human rights, people are arrested and then “disappear”. The Judiciary and the Press are intimidated and opposition is suppressed. The country descends into a totalitarian state run by the paramilitary. Flags are flown to indicate allegiances, service is refused in local shops and employment contracts are torn up. Eilish and Larry have four children and the novel focuses on the family’s plight after Larry fails to return from a demonstration and their eldest son joins the rebels. Eilish struggles to keep what remains of her family and home together. Civil war breaks out and Eilish, partially in denial, fails to grasp opportunities to leave her country - to get out while she still can. Many of history’s war-torn scenarios are played out - arrest and detention without trial, state sanctioned torture and murder, street barricades and the building of walls, bombing and snipers - and ultimately traffickers who put families in boats exploiting their misery and desperation. We felt this was a very prescient but disturbing book - a heart-breaking read.

Liz Pinfield

Events in the Bride Valley and Nearby

A Very Happy New Year to everyone from Artsreach in the Bride Valley!

The Artsreach 2025 Autumn programme in the Bride Valley was very successful with good attendance figures and bar sales contributing to the financial well-being of both the

Artsreach charity and our village halls. The 2026 Spring programme for the whole county has been finalised and can be found on the Artsreach website www.artsreach.co.uk. It will also be available from the Bridport Tourist Information Office. In the Bride Valley we have another good selection of theatrical and musical events coming up and this is the opportunity for you to put the dates in your diaries.



Burton Bradstock

Sunday 8th February, 3.00pm. VRi

Specialising in unearthing tunes and melodies from Wales's past, folk trio VRi combine fiddle and cello with powerful vocal harmonies to create toe-tapping rhythms with elegant finesse. VRi has unearthed fragments of Welsh songs and melodies from over two hundred years ago, allowing them to shed new light on forgotten music. VRi blends them into a joyous celebration of Welsh identity and a contemporary rediscovery of lost traditions.

Testament to the old Welsh meaning of their name, which translates as 'uplifting', VRi combines the energy of a rowdy pub music session with the composure of a Viennese quartet.

Saturday 14th March, 7.30pm. "The Duke"

Funny and poignant, Shôn Dale-Jones combines original storytelling with an inventive spirit. "The Duke" weaves together the tragi-comic fate of a family heirloom - a porcelain figure of The Duke of Wellington - the quandary of a scriptwriter stretching his integrity and an unfolding disaster as thousands of children flee their homes. Blending fantasy and reality, this playful show gently challenges our priorities in a world full of crisis. "The Duke" received The Scotsman's Fringe First Award when it premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2016.

Shipton Gorge

Thursday 22nd January, 7.30pm. Sarah McQuaid

Sarah McQuaid's stunning and distinctive vocals combine with her engaging personality, subtle mastery onstage and brilliant musicianship on acoustic and electric guitars, piano and floor tom drum to create a truly immersive experience. Born in Spain, raised in Chicago, and now settled in rural Cornwall, Sarah's performances are full of warmth, wit, and intimacy, and have earned her loyal followings on both sides of the Atlantic. Bringing the eclecticism of her multi-national background to her song-writing and choice of material, Sarah's work spans contemplative ballads, playful blues and atmospheric instrumentals, an eclectic programme of original and folk songs, plus a few familiar covers.

Quote 'Artsreach' for 15% off pre-show meals at The New Inn, Shipton Gorge (01308 897302)

Litton Cheney

Thursday 19th February, 10.30am. "How to Catch a Book Witch"

A half-term children's show presented by the Coppice Theatre. Kira loves reading. Visiting the library for a new book is her favourite thing. One day the words in the books start to disappear and the adults start to get grumpy. Graham Grey says the library will be knocked down to make way for a car park! With her new friend, the book worm, Kira has to uncover why words are vanishing, and where these book monsters have come from!

Could there be a Book Witch in the library? Exploring the importance of libraries, sharing stories and not judging people, this show features live music, puppetry and storytelling. Created with accessibility in mind, it also includes key word signing and integrated captions.

Saturday 7th March, 7.30pm. "Wonder Women"

Part recital and part storytelling, "Wonder Women" is a celebration of the remarkable stories and piano music of forgotten female composers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Canadian pianist Sarah Hagen brings her unique blend of humour and musical excellence to the stage in this personal and intimate recital, exploring the lives and music of composers including Clara Schumann, Cécile Chaminade, and Agathe Backer Grøndahl, amongst others. Breaking down barriers with her engaging personality and hilarious sense of fun, Sarah warmly invites listeners into the incredible and distinct world of classical music.

Portesham

Thursday 19th March. Swing from Paris

This all-string quartet take inspiration from the music of the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Their Parisian-flavoured jazz and gypsy swing has been delighting audiences for over 15 years: from major jazz festivals including the Django Reinhardt Festival, to the opening of the award-winning Gloucester Services! Performing on violin, guitars and double bass, they play a range of swing classics inspired by Gershwin, Edith Piaf, Django Reinhardt, Stéphane Grappelli and the master of tango, Astor Piazzolla, amongst others. Expect a variety of repertoire, with humour, storytelling and historical context, helping you to further appreciate the music. The quartet builds a great rapport with their audience, and are a lot of fun to watch!

All tickets are now available via the Artsreach website. We look forward to seeing you at our events.

David Witham – Burton Bradstock 01308 897403

Mark Sexton – Shipton Gorge 01308 897649

Patricia Scholfield – Litton Cheney 01308 482514

Julie Mason – Portesham 01305 871117

Rossini

**Petite Messe
Solennelle**

St Swithun's Church Bridport
7.00pm Saturday 31 January
Tickets £15 (under 18s free) from
Bridport Music Centre
or www.ticketsource.co.uk/wds

www.westdorsetsingers.org
Reg charity No. 1125032.




West
Dorset
Singers

A Very Cornish Vet, Back Along

By Quentin Blacke

Our pet ewe, Tosh, so called because she was given to us as an orphan lamb in a Toshiba carton on a winter's morning in 1972, was somewhat poorly. Financial constraints at the time precluded a vet's visit, so I did what many Cornish folk did then which was to take her to see Mr D, the next best thing – he'd sort her out!

Getting Tosh in to the back of the old Volvo estate, was no mean feat; big, woolly, smelly and reluctant were only part of the problem, (Tosh, not me), but we did it and toddled off to the remote, unmade, country lane where Mr D., MRCVS held court. As usual the queue of vehicles filled the lane, for this was a rather unique 'drive-in' vets, a one man surgery without any of the frills associated with a normal practice. No reception or waiting-room, no pharmacy, just an old shed and a rather ramshackle country cottage, which was strictly off limits to clients.

By the time a car attained the front of the queue, Mr D. had not only interviewed the occupant, but also treated him to a few minutes of banter and the 'joke of the day', for the vet, a tall, stooped gentleman in his late sixties was also an inveterate entertainer (no pun intended). A bit like an old-fashioned pub landlord with an endless supply of corny jokes.

Before each pet was examined, Mr D. had also repeated the performance with several cars up the line. That is why a visit would literally take hours, many seasoned clients taking sandwiches and a flask of coffee to survive the ordeal.

His patients were small animals, cats, dogs, rabbits, birds etc. who were examined insitu or taken in to the hut for a closer look.

Inevitably, out would come a syringe and a packet of pills for ongoing treatment, all of which looked suspiciously similar, but seemed to do the trick. Those needing surgery or more serious treatment, were carted off in to the cottage from which they sometimes 'escaped' into the surrounding countryside. As a result, there were often Lost Cat or Dog posters pinned to neighbouring trees or anxious owners calling out the names of their missing pooches or moggies.

His charges were quite random and ridiculously cheap, 'Call it a fiver,' he'd say for example, and that's why people travelled from all over Cornwall to see him, including breeders with whole litters needing vaccinations or neutering.

On this day, I watched, getting nearer and nearer, until he reached my car window. 'What's wrong with your dog?' he asked. 'She thinks she's a sheep,' I replied, and, as if on cue, Tosh let out a mighty baa! 'I don't do farm animals,' he said, taken aback. 'Then the joke's on ewe isn't it!' I laughed.

Prince of Wales & Portesham Surgeries

Thank you: A heartfelt thank you to everyone that supported Elf Day on Wednesday 3rd December in aid of the Alzheimer's society. Between the online donations and cash contributions in both branches of the surgery we raised £208 for this wonderful charity.

Contacting us: Telephone: You can call us on 01305 871468 during our opening hours to make an appointment, make an administrative request or to find out test results. You can also select the option to speak to the dispensary directly between 10.00am-12.00noon and 2.00pm-4.00pm. Don't wait in the queue if you are busy, please use our call back service.

SystemConnect: You can complete an online consultation form for a range of clinical and administrative enquiries via the online services section of our website. This request is usually seen by your own GP, within 2 working days.

Email: You can email our Patient Services Team via pow.reception@dorsetgp.nhs.uk for routine enquiries.

In person: Our Patient Services Team are available to support you face to face every weekday between 08.30-1.00pm and 2.00pm-6.00pm.

NHS App: To view your medical record, including all consultations, letters and test result or to order medications day or night 7 days a week.

Litton Cheney

Village Correspondent: John Firrell

email: jfirrell20@gmail.com 01308 482313

Village web-site: www.littoncheney.org.uk



St Mary's

Writing this well before Christmas makes it difficult to report on events - that the church looked splendid and the music was wonderful are beyond question. A big thank you to everyone who decorated the church, sang carols around the village, prepared the services, lit many candles, rang the bells, provided warming refreshments and floodlit the church for many nights over the holiday period.

Come January the clearing up starts! Our annual **Church cleaning** morning will be on **Monday 12th** from 9.00am. Many hands make light work, so do please come along if only for a short time. Refreshments will be provided.

May the New Year be peaceful for us all.

Parish Council – Next Meeting 7.00pm Tuesday 13th January 2026 – LATCH

At this meeting we will decide the amount of the Parish Precept for 2026/27. Inevitably decisions being made at national and local government level will affect funding for town and parish councils, i.e., us. The message being received indicates rural communities will suffer at the expense of metropolitan and urban regions. If we want something, that in the past has been provided by the state or unitary authority, it will need to come out of parish funds.

The Parish Council wishes everyone in Litton Cheney and the Bride Valley a very Happy New Year. May 2026 be all that you wish it to be.

Parish Plan – Looking to the Future

In 2005, Litton Cheney produced a Parish Plan which set out the hopes and wishes of village residents as to how Litton Cheney might develop and grow over the coming years, much of which came to fruition. Now 20 years later we are updating the Parish Plan and during 2026 we will be seeking your thoughts and involvement via a steering group operating outside of the

Parish Council. Eventually it is envisaged a new Parish Plan will emerge looking to the future and what then needs to be put in place to achieve its objectives.

The Parish Plan Steering Group will need to recruit village residents who have a genuine wish in converting the collective constructive thoughts of their fellow residents into eventual reality. Are you one of those people? A copy of the 2005 Parish Plan will be placed on the village website – litttoncheney.org.uk – give it a read please; you will find it quite illuminating. If it inspires you to put your name forward with reference to your involvement with the new Parish Plan, then we would be delighted to hear from you. More to come on this in February’s BVN and village website.

What’s on at Litton and Thorner’s Community Hall (LATCH) in January		
REGULAR EVENTS		
Tuesdays	4.45 – 5.45	Short Mat Bowls (Ron Davidson 482661)
Wednesdays	4.45 – 5.45	Table Tennis (Paul Kingston 482162)
	7.00	Yoga with Jane (Jane Hutchins 07882 527697) from 7th
Thursdays	9.15 – 11.15	First Steps Toddlers (fortnightly, term time only)
OTHER EVENTS		
Thursday 15 th	6.45	BV W.I. Greek Dancing
Saturday 17 th	10.45 – 12.45	Dance Connection class (07795 431004)
Sunday 18 th	10.00 – 13.00	Yoga with Nadiya Wynn
Sunday 25 th	4.00	Community Church
Coming up.....		
Thursday 5 th Feb		Film Night -The Salt Path

Village Cafés: The hall is available for hire free of charge on Saturday mornings for a Café to raise funds for any group. It’s a good social event for the community and always popular.

Hall Bookings/viewings: Wendy Firrell 01308 482532 wtlitton@gmail.com

Bride Valley Films at Litton Cheney Village Hall

After due consideration we have decided that this film based on Raynor Wynn’s bestseller would be a topical one to show, particularly because of its setting...

THURSDAY 5th FEBRUARY (2026) THE SALT PATH ‘*thought-provoking and emotional*’ The Salt Path tells the emotional and life-affirming story of a couple whose connection with the natural world helps them overcome challenges and ultimately reconnect with one another. Capturing the beautiful scenery of parts of the South West Coast Path. Starring **Gillian Anderson** and **Jason Isaacs**.

2hrs. Cert.12

Doors Open: 7.00 p.m. Films start 7.30pm, TICKETS: £6.00 (to include a glass of wine) Tickets in advance from: Sally Dyke 482752, Elizabeth Kingston 482162, Bella Spurrier 482367 or on the door. (All nos. 01308)

Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington

Village Correspondents:

Elizabeth Slater (Puncknowle)

Puncknowle. mail: liz@ruddle.org.uk 01308 897751

Jill Neill (Swyre & West Bexington)

email: Jill.neill@live.co.uk 01308 897479

Village websites: [www.https://puncknowle-swyre-pc.gov.uk](https://puncknowle-swyre-pc.gov.uk)

www.swyre.org.uk www.westbexington.org.uk



Plough Sunday

On Sunday 11th January at 3.00pm we will be celebrating Plough Sunday. It will be held in the Grain Store at The Manor Farm in Puncknowle. There will be signposts to it in the village. This is an old tradition of blessing the plough at the start of the year. It will be a time for us to start the new year afresh after Christmas. All are welcome whether or not you plough the fields. Warm clothing is advised.

Candlemas: On Thursday 5th February at 7.00pm we will be holding a service for Candlemas in Puncknowle Church. This is a quiet candlelit service of meditation and music to celebrate ‘Christ’ – the light of the world. Everyone is welcome and there will be refreshments afterwards at the Crown Inn.

Puncknowle Swyre & West Bexington Lunch Club
Incorporates Chilcombe, Long Bredy and Little Bredy

Puncknowle Village Hall 12.30pm for 1.00pm, Lunches cost £6

20th January: Chicken Casserole, Dessert to follow

Future dates 2026:

17th February: Fish Pie, Dessert to follow

17th March: Vegetable Lasagne with Salad & Garlic Bread, Dessert to follow

All meals include fruit juice to start and cheese and biscuits with tea or coffee. Vegetarian option can be provided.

Enquiries – please contact David Buckland 01308 898492 for more details

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet's nest found in Swyre

On 17th November 2025 this Yellow-legged Asian Hornet's (YLAH) secondary nest was found in Swyre and destroyed by the National Bee Unit. The YLAH is an invasive predator that poses a threat to both honeybees and other pollinators and thus, to the local ecology. YLAH queens will be hibernating now so your local bee group, the West Dorset Beekeepers' Association (WDBKA) will be running a



trapping and awareness raising campaign from February 2026 when the queens start to emerge. We will be encouraging as many local people as possible to set specially designed traps in gardens and fields throughout the parish. The more queens that are killed, the fewer nests we will have to deal with. Locating and destroying YLAH nests is both time consuming and requires specialist equipment and clothing. There will be more information about obtaining and setting traps in the February BVN and on local Facebook groups. In the meantime, the WDBKA website

www.westdorsetbees.org.uk and our Facebook group has up to date information.

If you are interested in becoming a beekeeper, our new course for beginners runs from 24th February to 31st March 2026 and is held in Bridport. For more information and to sign up, please contact secwestdorsetbees@gmail.com or call 01308 456210. Tackling YLAH is one of the topics covered.

Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington village hall 100 club

November winners: *1st Jeff Litchfield*
 2nd Claire Hart

Long Bredy

Village Correspondent: Helen Horsley
Email: bvn@longbredy.org.uk 01308 482585
Village website: <http://www.longbredy.com>



Long Bredy 100 Club Results

£30 no.84 C Randall
£15 no.20 E Bailey
£5 no.121 L Hemsley & S Evans

Drawn on the 24/11/2025, at the Village Hall, after the Parish Council meeting.

Don't forget if you wish to take part in the 100 club during 2026 return your application form to Ruth Cullingford by the 12th January 2026. £12 gives you one number in each months draw for the year. If you already pay by standing order you don't need to do anything unless you wish to make any changes.

New members are very welcome, just contact Ruth for an application form, ruth.cullingford@btinternet.com or call 01308 482562

Village News and Updates

It is with sadness we let you know of the passing of Brian Lee in November. Brian lived with his wife Carol, at Whatcombe Cottage. He passed peacefully away in hospital with Carol and daughter Briony, by his side.

Tribute to Juniper Greener

In November 1978 John and Juniper Greener moved into Langebride House, Long Bredy. This move started Juniper's long term love affair with the house, garden, village and the Bride Valley. Juniper was also active within all the churches within the valley. She was also a founding member of the Healing Centre held at the Friends Meeting House, stalwart of the Dorset Health Trust and the patient energy behind the Dorset Children Centre and Joseph Weld Hospice (now known as Weldmar). John died in 1994 just months after the hospice opened; he was one of the 3 founders and chairman.

The garden at Langbride was always one of Juniper's loves, opening it to the public especially in early spring when the garden sung of anemones, croci and many other early spring jewels. In 2021 Juniper said farewell to her beloved home, clutching no3 King Charles, she moved to the far side of Broadoak, loving the fact that the farm was called Buckett's - she considered herself the new Hyacinth! Juniper's amazing beauty, strength and wicked humour was there till the final moments. Juniper was a beloved Mother and Grandmother and would like to be remembered with a random act of kindness.

See St Peter's church news for details of the thanksgiving service in memory of Juniper.

From the Parish Council

Fireworks - Thank You

On behalf of a resident, we've been asked to pass on a massive Thank You to everyone who let the community Facebook page and/or the network know about their fireworks during November. Your updates made it possible for at one resident to make sure their dog was with them and not left alone during the displays. I'm sure many other pets and people benefited too, but it also helped those who enjoy fireworks to make the most of the shows. Thank you again for looking out for one another.

Come Along Inn

Thank you to all who attended last November's opening. It was certainly very cold outside but a warm atmosphere inside the hall was created by your

presence. During the evening the six charities that would benefit from any surplus made through the year were announced with each receive a donation of £500:

- 1) Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance who offer a rapid response emergency service to people of the two counties. Whilst we all hope we shall never require their services living in a rural situation, often isolated, it could be the difference between a satisfactory outcome or not.
- 2) ReadEasy. With 2.4 million adults in England unable or barely able to read, ReadEasy's vision is for all adults in the UK to have the literacy skills to fulfil their potential and live life to the full. Whilst they are a national organisation the donation will go to the local branch at Bridport.
- 3) National Coastwatch are manned solely by volunteers, they support the Coastguard, RNLI and land-based emergency services by reporting and monitoring incidents at sea and shore. They will also give safety advice to anyone interested,

Our donation will go to the local station at Burton Bradstock and Charmouth.

- 4) Bride Valley Car Service, this is a service for people living in the Bride Valley who are unable to drive to their medical appointments.
- 5) Dementia Friendly Exercise Class, this is a class that runs at the Bridport Leisure centre providing contact and exercise for people with dementia. It is run by Ruth Cullingford and two other ladies who have to raise funds to pay for the tutor and facility hire.
- 6) TwoLittleBirds, is a charity set up by the parents of two teenagers who took their own lives. The aim is to raise money to support children with mental health issues and avoid a similar outcome.

Making these donations will bring our total donations since the beginning of the Come Along Inn to just over £14,000.

Thanks to all of you who have attended, your support makes it all worthwhile and a special thanks to all the hard-working volunteers for making it happen.

St Peter's Church

Thank you to the village for all the help and support given to St Peter's Church during the last year. It's very much appreciated.

As reported previously the lime tree to the left of the gate into the churchyard has unfortunately died. For safety reasons it will be removed at the end of January.

Future Events

Coffee Break

This month's coffee break will take place on Saturday 10th January 10:30am–12:00noon. Come and meet friends and locals over a hot drink and some delicious cake.

Come Along Inn

We look forward to welcoming you to the next Come Along Inn on Friday 16th January, 5.30pm – 9.00pm. There will be a warm welcome and it is a good way to help banish the January blues.

St Peter's Church

4th January, 11.00am, Holy Communion.

This will be a thanksgiving service in memory of Juniper Greener, who lived for many years in the village. Juniper's Ashes will be buried with her husband John in the Churchyard at 10.30am - everyone is welcome to attend this and the service after. Weather permitting the field behind the Church will be open for parking.

Burton Bradstock

Village Correspondent: Pat Grafton

Email: patgrafton43@gmail.com 01308 898264

Village website: <http://www.burtonbradstockvillage.org>



Tots' Time

We've had a great first half of the year and are looking forward to the new year and what the spring will bring. We've had arts and crafts, playdoh and singing so far with more to come. Thank you to everyone who has helped the play group carry on, with out you it wouldn't be able to go ahead. The first Tots takes place on 9th January 2.00-3.15pm. Look forward to seeing everyone then.

Knitting for Ukraine

I was amazed and delighted to see the response to my request for knitted strips for blankets for the maternity hospital in Kyiv. I have already dispatched the first six and I know many more are in the 'pipe-line'.

Thank you very much, *Heather Rogers* (01398 897780)

Burton Bradstock Village Hall

Village Hall Bookings

Should you wish to use the Hall at any time, the booking officer can be contacted via email at bbvht.bookings@gmail.com or by phone on 01308897648.

Coffee Mornings

The popular monthly coffee mornings where you can get a sensibly priced coffee/tea and cake plus a chat with friends will be held on the dates below. They run from 10.00am to 12.00noon and all are welcome.

Wed 14th January Village Hall Trust (Bacon Rolls)

Wed 11th February Village Society

Burton Bradstock Films

Friday January 30th - The Salt Path

Based on Raynor Winn's bestseller 'THE SALT PATH' tells the story of husband and wife, Raynor and Moth Winn's 630-mile trek along the Cornish, Devon and Dorset coastline. After being forcibly removed from their home, they make the desperate decision to walk in the hope that, in nature, they will find solace and a sense of acceptance. Tickets are £6 each and include a glass of wine or a soft drink and can be bought beforehand from Burton Bradstock Post Office or on the door if available. Doors open at 7.00pm and the film starts at 7.30pm.

Thanks

The Hall Trust would like to thank all who have supported and helped to run the many Christmas activities that took place in December, several of which contributed to Hall funds. The Hall is looking as good as it ever has thanks to everyone's support.

Burton Bradstock Village Hall "200 Club" December 2025 Draw

Congratulations to the winners:

<i>1st</i>	<i>£66.00</i>	<i>No 25:</i>	<i>Mrs Chris Green</i>
<i>2nd</i>	<i>£33.00</i>	<i>No 89:</i>	<i>Mrs Hilary Page</i>
<i>3rd</i>	<i>£16.50</i>	<i>No 18:</i>	<i>Mrs Anne Southgate</i>

Anyone wanting to become a member in time for the January 2026 draw should telephone Keith Britton on 01308 898008 and let him have £12 -

one pound for each monthly draw in the year. There are double prizes in the December draw.

WDDC Licence no: SL0080

Burton Bradstock Bridge Club

We are a very friendly group who meet every Tuesday afternoon from 1.45pm until 4.30pm to play duplicate bridge. If you have played bridge before but feel you are a bit rusty this would be ideal! We could find you a partner if necessary and you would be assured of an enjoyable afternoon with a break for tea and biscuits. Please come and make some new friends.

For more information please contact Kathy on 01308 485626.

Burton Coffee Mates

Burton Coffee Mates meet in the church on the second Thursday of the month from 10.30-12pm. Although everyone from the village is welcome, this is particularly suitable for older people and facilities are provided for wheelchair users. Do come and join us.

The Friends of Burton Bradstock Library

Happy New Year to one and all! Many thanks to all who bought Christmas cards in support of the Friends. The Trustees will be starting the process to replace our windows in the near future so all extra income is most welcome.

Assuming that there might be some chilly days this month, why not pop into the Library to borrow books and jigsaws to keep you occupied. Our stock continues to change and be refreshed and you can order books online to be collected in Burton.

If you want help from a Digital Champion, please leave your details at the desk and we will arrange dates and times.

Opening hours are:

Monday 2.00-4.00pm,

Wednesday 10.00am-12noon

Thursday & Saturday 2.00-4.00pm

burtonbradstocklibrary@gmail.com

www.burtonbradstockvillage.org/library

01308 897563

Sue Brown, Chairman

Supper Club

Happy New Year to you all! This month's supper club will be held on Monday 12th January. Look forward to seeing you there.

Any enquiries please phone Mags Chue on 07790811905.

Burton Bradstock WI

Happy New Year to all.

The WI has had a heap of festive activities, which got us all into the spirit of Christmas. Thank you to all who bought at the Christmas Fayre or attended our coffee morning, lunch, party or Carol Service. Thank you to everyone who sent donations for the Bridport Foodbank.

As we enjoy a quieter January, our speaker will be the vet Martin Fielding, back by popular demand! I'm sure he will have lots of tails to tell us and it will give us all paws for thought! Our meeting is at 2.00pm for a 2.15pm start on Tuesday 13th January 2026.

From 8th January, through till Easter, the Burton Bradstock Busy Bees (4Bs) is open to any women who would like to pop in, you don't have to be a member of the WI. We offer a chance to chat, tea/coffee & a biscuit and the opportunity to either bring you own craft or join our Spring Knitting Project. We are making blanket strips for the children's wards at a hospital in Kiev, Ukraine.

We have lots of double knitting wool & needles (old size 8/new size 4mm). It's just 30 stitches all done in plain knit. Many of the ladies are super knitters & always happy to help anyone who would like to learn to knit but doesn't think they know how. We usually meet on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month from 1.30pm – 4.30pm in the village hall. If you can't face another repeat of *Escape to the Sun*, come & join us! Feel free to pop in for a while or come for the whole afternoon. Here's to a wonderful year with the WI.

Carol Higho

News From Burton Bradstock Players

What a lovely atmosphere we had at the Radio Plays Evening in the hall back in November. Four very different plays were performed with the evening starting off with a melody of songs relating to the plays performed throughout the evening.



A big thank you to Burton Bradstock Male Voice Choir for their splendid singing and flute playing, also a big thank you to The Three Horseshoes for the delicious sausage rolls and to Will Orza for providing the bar, to all the front of house team who looked after us so well and Nick Good for the lighting and sound effects. A big thank you to all the cast and to everyone who came along and supported us so well in our efforts to try something a little different.

So... Whats Next for the Burton Bradstock Players....

PANTO 26

Cinderella at Burton Bradstock Village Hall

By Kind Permission Of Alan Frayn Stage Right Creative Ltd

**Thursday 19th February – 7.30pm. Friday 20th February – 7.30pm
Saturday 21st February – 2.30pm. Saturday 21st February – 7.30pm**

**Bar – Evening Performances Only and Cash Only
Ice Cream, Raffle**

Adults £10 Under 16's £5

Tickets On Sale from 5th January 2026 from Burton Bradstock Post Office or
Bridport Tourist Information Centre On 01308 424901 or online
www.Bridportandwestbay.Co.Uk/Tickets

For More Information,

Please contact Carole Houghton on 01308 898521 or 07764523182

Vacancy: Honorary Secretary, Burton Bradstock Village Society

Over some considerable time, the Society has been advertising the post of Honorary Secretary to the Society, but sadly without success. The Constitution states that this is one of the minimum of three essential posts to constitute the Committee.

The Burton Bradstock Village Society was formed in May 1973 and is open to all Parish residents. "The aim of the Society shall be to protect and further the interests of the residents and the amenities of the Parish of Burton Bradstock (in conjunction with other organisations as appropriate)."

Village Society activities include:

- Monthly talks on a wide range of topics for the benefit and enjoyment of parishioners. These talks are held in the Village Hall from September to May each year.
- A major event is the Annual Flower and Produce Show held in July. Entry to the competition is open to all Parish residents, and viewing the show is open to all.
- Annual Outing to a place of interest.
- Representing the view of Parishioners on local issues of importance.
- The Village Society has a financial interest in the Post Office having made a substantial loan towards its purchase. As such, we have responsibility for some aspects of this vital asset to the Village. Most recently paying our share for the new front window.
- Any profit made by the Society is invested back into the Village, for example, a significant donation was made in recent years towards the refurbishment of the Children's Playground.

The Honorary Secretary is a voluntary and pivotal role within our community and one which I cannot recommend more highly. The role puts the Secretary at the centre of village activities with the opportunity to make a difference within our community. It has given me a great deal of pleasure and I've made many friends. However, after over ten years, I feel it is time for me to handover the responsibilities to someone new.

Being Secretary is not gender specific! When I took on the role, I had no secretarial skills, having had the privilege of administrative assistants to rely upon whilst at work. I type one-fingered and I am mildly dyslexic but once I changed from paper to digital and we had 95% of members on email, that part of the job became much more straight forward. The position will become vacant at the Village Society's AGM in May 2026. Whomever comes forward

and is elected at the AGM will have a comprehensive handover and my support for as long they need.

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please either email bbvillagesociety@gmail.com or telephone me, Roger Ashman, on 07971 649020.

Littlebredy

Village Correspondent: Tim Laycock

Email: t.laycock70@gmail.com 01308 482443

Village website: <http://www.littlebredy.com>



In December a real link with the past life of Littlebredy ended with the retirement of Phil Hallett. Phil has been working for the Williams family in the village for 52 years. He was apprenticed as a carpenter at Ricardos in Dorchester, and arrived here in 1973 to take on the mantle of general estate management from Reg Ring. His duties included not only general repairs to the farm buildings and houses, but also maintaining the Victorian water supply and the sewage system. His carpentry skills encompassed everything from making window frames for odd-shaped cottage windows to re-timbering the Bridehead Stable block, and working a team to erect new barns at Longlands and Whitehill; there is scarcely a house or building at the top end of the valley that hasn't benefited from his craftsmanship.

Phil and his first wife Annette raised their family at 1, Yew Tree Cottages, and they entered fully into the social life of the village, including the skittles week at Bridehead, and seasonal work picking asparagus. In his spare time Phil was involved in the activities of the Dorset Youth Association, taking groups to Dartmoor. Phil is now remarried, and he and Julie now live very happily in Dorchester.

When asked what he had most enjoyed about living and working in the valley, Phil replied that the peace and tranquillity, coupled with the friendliness of the community, and the wide variety of work has kept life constantly interesting. What he won't miss quite so much is many tins of the Buckingham Green paint that he has applied to village doorposts and window frames for generations! His last job was to help us by replacing rotten joists and floorboards in the church, a complex piece of carpentry accomplished with skill and generosity. Thanks Phil!

Shipton Gorge

Village Correspondent: Richard Hewlett

Email: richardhewlett419@gmail.com 01308 787278

Village web-site: www.shiptongorge.org.uk



To find out all that's going on in the village visit the village diary at <https://shiptongorgediary.co.uk/>

St Martin's Church

Floodlights are shining in January for:

Lesley & Graham in memory of Lesley's mum.

Terry Hunt for his birthday on 24th and Ann Hunt for her birthday on 27th

Anne Crowe in memory of her parents.

Jo Warren thinking of Gary on his birthday.

Lesley & Graham wishing Doreen a Happy Birthday on 3rd.

Mary Boughton for her own birthday and also daughter Jo and Doreen Rogers' birthdays and for Arthur Boughton and Pamela Bates, both greatly missed.

For all our hard-working farmers

A big thank you to everyone for their generous sponsorship.

If you would like to light up the church, please contact Phyl Webster on 01308 898657 or push a note through Cuckoo Cottage post-box, on Chapel Street. This can be for any occasion and will be published in the Bride Valley News and on the church notice boards. A suggested donation of £5, is greatly appreciated and helps to maintain our beautiful church building.

Wishing Everyone a Very Happy New Year

Village Hall

December 100 Club Draw results

1st No.80 £100 Sally Parker

2nd No.24 £25 Cathryn Johnson

3rd No.34 £20 Hilary Cunningham

4th No.134 £15 Howard Marshall

5th No.38 £10 Janice Symes

Congratulations to all winners.

'Access for All' building project

Hall Trustees now have a *provisional* date when building work might commence – Monday 5th January. By the time you read this it might have been made definite! Up to date details will be posted on the village noticeboards. The hall will be available to hire and use while the building work is undertaken. The builder will be occupying the area at the front of the hall so a temporary access (and exit) will be created using the door at the rear. Full details will be provided to everyone wishing to use the hall. Please note that in order to comply with fire regulations the number of people in the hall will have to, temporarily, be limited to 60.

Graham Garner

Shipton Gorge Heritage

Hope you all have had a good Christmas – and we wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Heritage Gin Club – The winner in the December draw was David Newell – congratulations and trust it helped with your Christmas festivities.



Saunders Richardson Wood

A group of members planted up some trees and saplings as part of National Tree Planting week. If you look carefully along Smacombe Lane, you will see some of the new Hawthorn in the hedge line – which we have marked up with some white tape so that we can monitor their progress. Some further trees including Oak were planted within the wood. We are aware of a number of gaps in the hedge along the lane and will need to add some more whips over the winter. The wood will be open on **Wednesday 21st January – 11.00am to midday.**



This is a member only event but we can sign you up on the day and there is no fee to join.

Shipton Gorge Orchard

Unfortunately, it was far too wet on the day, and the sowing of wildflower seed in November had to be cancelled. Too late in season to do this now, therefore we will rearrange in early spring. We have asked our local expert, David Squirrell, to hold a fruit tree pruning workshop in the Orchard on **Monday 12th January at 11.00am** – if weather lets us down, then we will try again the following Monday at the same time. The trees had a tough season this year with the heat and drought - and will probably need quite a bit of care and attention. All Shipton Gorge residents are welcome, just come prepared with gloves and your by-pass secateurs cleaned and sharpened. The top border has become a little overgrown and will need some of the more invasive plants removed and other, more pollinator friendly plants put in. If anyone would like to volunteer to oversee this, please let us know – we just need some thoughts and ideas, we can provide the manpower.

If you are interested in supporting the charity in any way, please contact Anne Crowe on 07393 214635 or email annecrowe2016@hotmail.com. Details as usual on our website: http://www.shiptongorge.org.uk/Shipton_Gorge_Heritage__16417.aspx and in the Shipton Gorge Diary <https://www.shiptongorgediary.co.uk>

The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from Uncle Eustace

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Darren,

I do hope you have now settled down in your first parish - although it is such a pity that you did not choose a more distinguished one. I know you feel your vocation lies in inner city work - whereas mine, fortunately, has always been to the better sort of rural village. I have always felt that the Almighty understands me well in that regard.

We had a little flurry of activity in church on Sunday. At the signal "let us pray", as the congregation dutifully flopped to their knees, sounding like a flock of geese settling in for the night, Major Hastings lost his glass eye. Yes, *again!* That man is so careless at times. Anyway, released from captivity, the eye rolled under the pews like a fugitive marble, ricocheting from hassock to handbag over the stone flags.

My sonorous entreaties to the Almighty were completely lost as the entire congregation scuttled under pews, trying to retrieve it. It finally appeared on the collection plate - along with £4.17, 100 pesetas and Miss Simpson's front door key. I was unsure whether the last item represented a fit of absent-mindedness or an improper suggestion. I returned it to her very firmly at the end of the Service.

The eye stared at me mournfully as I blessed it, along with the money. But it left a small social dilemma. What is the etiquette of returning a lost glass eye to its owner?

To have processed down the aisle with it, accompanied by crucifer and vergier seemed a little too public. To sneak it to him as we shook hands at the door seemed a little too furtive. I finally decided to send a server to deliver it during the last hymn. I still wonder if it was the right decision. Perhaps you could look through that new Common Worship book and see if they have included an appropriate rite for returning lost glass eyes. We here at St James-the-Least-of-All haven't yet got round to Common Worship. The days are evil enough as it is.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Ephiphany, 6th January – Where did the Wise Men come from?

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany – the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them ‘Magi’, and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn’t until the third century that they were called kings – by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three – to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing – and even embalming. Certainly, Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Magi from the East – it isn’t a lot to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first century the Magi in Matthew’s gospel could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some scholars believe they might have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we would say today, southern Arabia. It is true that in the first century astrology was practised there, and it was the region where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She of course had visited Solomon and would have heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king. Matthew’s gospel (chapter 2) is clear that the Magi asked Herod: ‘Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.’

So, it is possible that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba’s story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. Certainly, there are a number of other early legends that connect southern Arabia with Solomon’s Israel. To many people this makes sense: that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study, prompted these alert and god-fearing men to the realisation that something very stupendous was happening in Israel.

They realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born. One more interesting thing that gives weight to the theory that the Magi came from southern Arabia is this: if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine ‘from the East’.

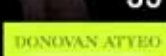
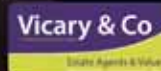
Bridport Youth Dance, the BYD Street Dance Crew
& BYD Alumni present

Celebrating
25 years
of BYD

Revelations & Dance Snippets

Saturday 7th March
2.30PM & 7.30PM

Ticket Line:
Bridport TIC
Tel: 01308 424901
Adults - £15/Under 18 - £9
www.electricpalace.org.uk/theatre



Bridport Electric Palace
35 South Street
DT6 3NY

Photographs by Len Copland

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Home Help & Support Services Offered Throughout Bridport, Beaminster, and Dorchester Areas:

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- Cleaning & Laundry/ Ironing Service
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- End of Tenancy Cleaning
- Dog Walking & Pet Sitting
- Administration Support



I have over 16 years of adult care experience supporting a range of individuals with varying health & social care needs. Being qualified to NVQ/ Diploma levels 2, 3, and 5 and having spent almost ten years working as a Registered Care Manager within both Residential & Home Care settings. I have a further 50+ adult care, lifestyle, and accommodation management related courses to which support me to offer you the above quality and professional services.

Being fully insured, referenced, and DBS checked: Please contact me for a free no obligation information pack issued via post or email and/ or a free informal home visit to discuss your home support needs.

Contact 07882800613 or email ivershomesolutions@hotmail.com



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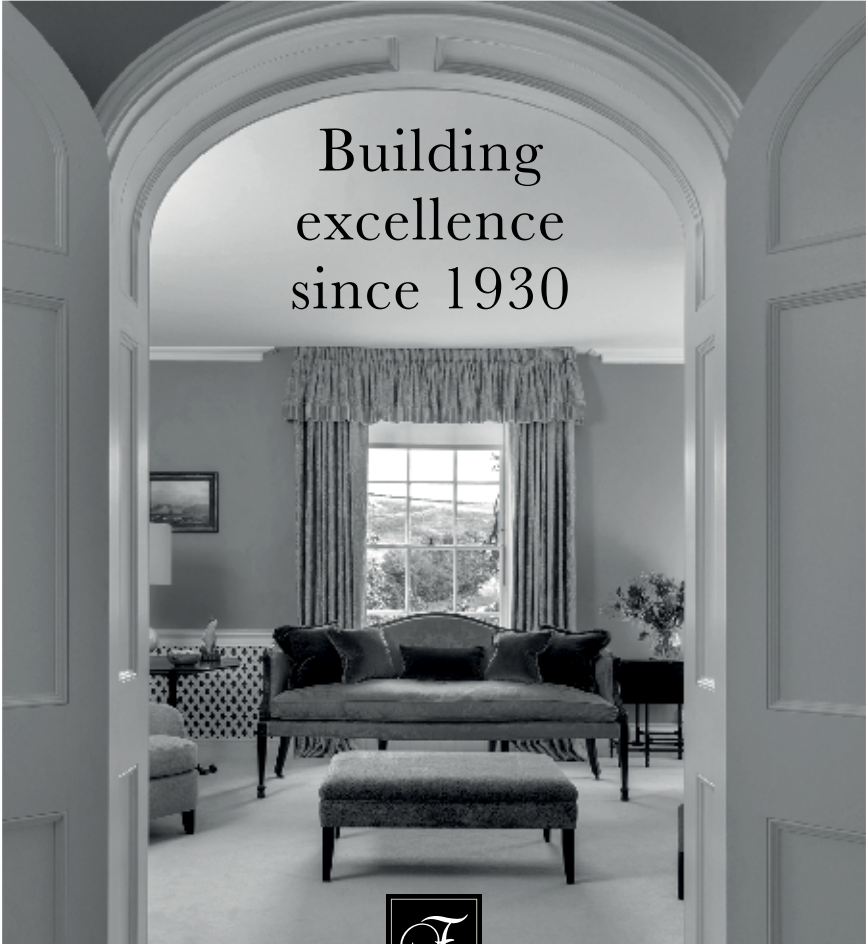
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Burton Bradstock	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion	9.30am Café Church	8.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Breakfast Church
Litton Cheney	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Worship	9.30am Morning Prayer	4.00pm Community Church at LATCH
Punchknowle		9.30am Holy Communion 3.00pm Plough Sunday Punchknowle Manor Farm Grain Store		11.00am Café Church
Swyre	3.00pm Epiphany Carol Service		11.00am Holy Communion	
Shipton Gorge		9.30am Breakfast Church		11.00am Holy Communion
Long Bredy	10.30am Interment of ashes of Juniper Greener 11am Holy Communion		9.30am Morning Worship	
Littlebredy				11am Holy Communion
Portesham	4.00pm Community Church, Portesham Hall	10.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion	
Abbotbury	11.00am Holy Communion		10.00am Morning Worship	
Langton Herring	9.00am BCP	11.00am Morning Worship locally led	10.00am Holy Communion	
Midweek Holy Communion Services	Wednesday 7th January Holy Communion at Burton Bradstock Wednesday 28th January Holy Communion at Portesham			11.30am followed by a light lunch. 11.30am

