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St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

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The Messenger

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Sundays at St Mary's

9 am Holy Communion
with hymns and prayers

10.30 am Morning Worship
Communion alternate weeks
Band-led worship for everyone.

SHINEon Sundays groups for children aged 0-14 yrs take place during the service on alternate weeks

Explore@4

An informal service open to all and planned for families with pre/primary school children. It takes place on alternate Sundays at 4pm during term time.

Audio recordings of the Sunday sermons can be accessed at any time via the church website.

For full details of services visit the church website and do check before coming as there are occasional variations to this usual pattern.

Weekdays at St Mary's

Contact the church office for more information

Bright Sparks

*Baby and Toddler Group
Mondays during term time 2-3.30 pm*

Fuel

*Fridays during term time 6-7.30 pm
for young people in school years 6-9*

Bulb

*Alternate Sundays 5.30-7 pm
for young people in school years 7 and up*

Connect on Tuesdays

*Conversation, coffee, craft in church
10-11.15 am with Communion service to end*

Thursday Lunch Club

*A hot lunch in the church hall
Please book in advance*

St Mary's Singers

*Choir at 9am Sunday services
Rehearsals alternate Tuesday evenings - see our website What's On calendar*

Bellringing

*Contact the church office
for more information*

Small Groups

*Bible study and informal support
Daytime and evening groups*

Alpha

*An opportunity to explore the Christian faith
in a small group or 1 to 1*



St Mary Magdalene Church
(@StMarySB)

BS9 Arts Trail 2025
weekend of 7th and 8th June, 11 am to 5 pm

Caroline Casswell interviewed by Jane Krish

Caroline recently stepped down as chair of the small organising committee-team that runs the BS9 Arts Trail, having been involved since it began in 2014.

Prior to Arts Trails, serendipity guided her in several directions, such as managing the Friends of the Earth café when she ran a screen-printing business in the same building, and becoming an admin team member for Glastonbury Festival, data inputting for a neighbour who happened to work there. She has also worked with children with Special Education Needs and managed the children's area at World of Music Art and Drama (WOMAD).

Caroline has been making things for as long as she can remember, encouraged by her mother, a super practical person who saw play as crucial to child development; there was always something in the toy cupboard, like paints and clay. When she became a single mum, her son was only a few months old (he's now in his early forties), she heeded her brother's wise advice to take a year off to find where her creativity might lead her. Thanks to various grants then available, she learned several

new skills and started making mosaics and polymer clay jewellery.

But let's not rush her story! Having been on a silkscreen printing course, she and her friend Jane Snook, set up on their own. One of their first contracts was for 300 T-shirts for the Terence Higgins Trust. Here they learned about business the hard way, but gained valuable insights for the future. After a woodworking course, she thought nothing of constructing the UV light box essential for the silkscreen work. Whilst designing funky gear for surfers, they frequently drove to the coast to find new customers, as well as taking on other contracts when they came up.

Bristol and Cornwall are Caroline's stamping grounds, and she derives much of the inspiration for her mosaics from woodlands and wildflowers. She loves the countryside, having grown up in a vicarage on the edge of woods in Essex – her father was the vicar. All her mosaics are decorative, but some are also combined with usefulness, such as unique splash backs for basins or cookers, that break conventional straight edges. She mixes coloured glazes, then paints them onto glazed ceramic tiles before fixing the colours in a kiln. (Originally, she used her home oven before taking on a half share in an actual kiln.) In this way, she finds exactly the impact and colour combinations she's looking for.

Her polymer clay jewellery is bright, cheerful and delightful...and it's very reasonable to buy. Here too, she has a great feel for colour and what goes with what, including some surprises! During lockdown, she began creating paper cut images for a small range of greetings cards and has produced portraits using the same technique.

Why not come and meet Caroline at Venue 9, Badminton School, and see her range of gorgeous work for yourself?



Caroline, above and one of her mosaics, below.



Contact:

BS9 Arts Trail: www.bs9arts.co.uk
Caroline: caroline_casswell@hotmail.com;
@carolinecasswell; www.carolinecasswell.com

Champions at Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School



Stoke Bishop Primary School's 'Toad Patrol Team' were on a mission to help toads cross Pill's cycle path and get to their breeding grounds earlier in the year.

In late February these brave Eco Warriors helped over 120 toads in their perilous journey towards their pond. They had great fun doing it, and were delighted with their efforts. It's wonderful to see children fired up as Eco Champions, passionate about making a difference for our local wildlife and countryside.



Unrelated, but nonetheless important, news from school is that we are in need of a Community Governor to join the Board of Governors. Governors are in many ways champions of the school – people who hold the school leaders to account in their pursuit of excellence and flourishing for everyone within the school community.

Anyone can be a Governor and our board is made up of a diverse group of people who play a vital role in promoting high standards of educational achievement. Our Governors are interested in the education, welfare and opportunities for children and young people in our school, and willing to give some of their time freely to support the school in a variety of ways.

No formal qualifications are necessary although there are eligibility criteria, and Governors must be over 18. Terms of office will usually be a minimum of one to a maximum of four years.

If you would like to explore whether serving as a Community Governor is for you, please contact our Co-Chairs, Sophie Summers and James Wiggins, and they would love to chat further.

clerk.stokebishopp@bristol-schools.uk

43rd Bristol Scouts Community Centre Build Update

The Group achieved another very big milestone in March with the demolition of our beloved wooden Scout Hut! Groundworks are underway and we are watching with excitement as the building starts to take shape.

It's taken 10+ years of effort by so many volunteers, supporters and the community to reach this point. To each and every person involved, your contribution has helped to get us this far and we are extremely grateful.

We still need your support to help fit out and kit out our new Scout Community Centre as it is built.



Concrete pouring for the foundations of the new Scout Hut in progress!



Please visit www.43rdbristolscouts.org.uk to make an online donation or to take part in our Buy-a-Brick campaign.

Love Squared in Stoke Bishop

By Judith Sheather

Arriving quietly last summer as the new tenant of the old Post Office/ Premier Home Care premises was the charity, Love Squared, relocating from Stokes Croft. The ten office staff, when not out on assignments, appreciate the friendliness of the village, the shops, parking and lunchbreak local walks.

I asked Maddie and Hannah how they would describe Love Squared's mission. 'To show love to young people with social, emotional, mental health needs. On rebranding in 2023, young people were involved in choosing the new name, *Love Squared*.'

The charity's outreach arm gets grants from Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset local authorities to arrange tutoring and mentoring for children unable to access the usual education provision. 'Referrals through parents, schools and professionals lead to us sending in mental health practitioners to give weekly fifty-minute one-to-one sessions to help with coping strategies and improving confidence.

Distinctively we are not profit directed. We're able to give time



and not be limited, for example to six sessions. We can stick with them long-term. We aim to bring love into how we work, in all we do, with good outcomes. Any surplus from our outreach funded service goes into our second unfunded arm, *Glow*.

Glow is a free mental health, therapeutic project which runs in school holidays, offering art, cooking, forest school, graffiti workshops, gardening in care homes (mainly in the Easton area) and a listening telephone service, *Drop the Pressure*, for 10-18 year olds.

Bristol is our main base. For many years there have been practitioners working in London -

Ealing and Merton but no offices there.

We were the Named Charity for last summer's Balloon Fiesta and spoke to many families. Showing love does work!

If you would like to encourage Love Squared, donations can be made via their website or with this QR code.



<https://lovesquared.org.uk>

Stoke Lodge Update



Photo: Bruce Quilter

With the court trial about our village green registration now concluded, and the judge's decision not due for a few months, you might think there's not much going on at Stoke Lodge. But there are still things bubbling away both on and off the field.

Three new trees have been planted to give pleasure and shade to future generations, including one in a new location in the children's playpark. We look forward to seeing them flourish. Off the field, objections from Cotham School to the four public rights of way across the field mean that those applications will be headed to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. Meanwhile, it's always a delight to see the return of better weather allowing more of us to enjoy this beautiful open space. See you on the Village Green!

Helen Powell

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Free To Believe?

By Peter Weeks

We can, I think, rightly take some pride on the generous level of religious freedom that we enjoy in this country. It was not always so of course. During our history all kinds of beliefs have been seen as dangerous or wrong and people persecuted for their religious convictions. Freedom of religion and belief is protected by law in the UK. What about other countries?



In 1955 a young Dutchman started smuggling Bibles to the persecuted church in Communist Europe. The organisation that he started, Open Doors, has grown to become a major force for religious freedom, and as part of its work publishes an annual ranking of countries where Christians face extreme persecution. These countries cover large areas of Asia, North and Central Africa, and Central and South America. The country where it is hardest to be a Christian is North Korea.

St Mary's church supports the work of one person known as a Mission Partner who operates in a country in Central Asia where it is dangerous to be a Christian. This person works through a charity to manage teams on the ground that provide vital ante-natal and peri-natal services in an area with high death rates of mothers and children in and after childbirth. Causes of death include outdated and in some cases primitive birthing practices, lack of attention to cleanliness and often simple ignorance. To save our Mission Partner from being traced and persecuted, both the identity of this person and the country where they work have to be kept secret.

I was privileged to have a conversation recently with the person who is St Mary's link with this Mission Partner and to read some of the e-mails from the country where they work. The e-mails speak warmly of their affection for what, after 30 years there, they describe as their "adopted country".

The e-mails also talk about the antagonism and official hostility aimed at someone who is working to help the young women of the country; women who often have no-one to turn to for information and advice on maternity and childcare or basic public health. It seems impossible to believe that a government could be so uncaring about the welfare of its people, but these e-mails paint a vivid picture of brutal disrespect for human rights.

The work of the teams that the Mission Partner supervises is not fully funded so many workers in these teams can only work part-time. More women could be served if the programme was fully funded. If any reader would like to contribute, please contact the church office so you can be given details of how to transfer funds to the sending agency for this work.

Taking a wider view, one of the challenges in many countries is the rise in recent years of religious nationalism where a predominant religion is used by governments or groups to support policies of national identity. So for example Hindu extremists are in power in India; Iran is governed by a Muslim theocracy; rural Christians are persecuted by Sri Lankan Buddhists; guerrilla groups have expanded their violence against Christians in Colombia. We are fortunate indeed to live where we can enjoy toleration and religious freedom.

Late Starters



At Connect on Tuesday mornings in the church, we meet for coffee, cake, chat, communion, craft and companionship.

We learn new things as we attempt various crafts organized by encouraging and creative helpers. We were given a vast array of embroidery silks, seemingly in every possible shade, so we decided to have a go at embroidery - a first for us all. We loved it and surprised ourselves with the outcome. Average age around 80, we completed about 80 embroidered blocks of flowers and have assembled a quilt and a wall-hanging which is currently displayed in the James Chapel (see picture left). Do have a look!

Hazel Trapnell

St Mary's Care Home Ministry in Stoke Bishop

St Mary's church has had a long-standing history of ministering within the care homes of Stoke Bishop. We cover most of the care homes: Druid Stoke nursing and residential home, Saville Manor, Waltham House and occasionally Stokeleigh.

The team is made up of clergy, licensed lay ministers, and volunteers. We each have a home to visit once a month where we offer a communion service and an opportunity to chat and pray. For many years we were able to offer 'singing for the soul', singing favourite and well-known hymns to those suffering from dementia, and we hope to restart this ministry in the future.

The residents are always pleased to see us and look forward to our visit. Some residents were long-standing church members and really miss attending church. Other residents may not be people of faith but are seeking meaning in their life now they are older. All residents are invited to take part in the services we offer and are very much encouraged by the activity co-ordinators of each home. We are often able to chat to and offer prayer for the wonderful care staff. At Christmas other church members join us to form a big group to sing carols and retell the Christmas story; we had a wonderful time last year and the residents sang out with great gusto.

Many of the residents become our friends, and it's a real privilege to listen to their concerns and offer spiritual and practical support. We may pray with someone who is worried and then see them feeling encouraged as the burden is lifted.

There have been changes to our team as older members who have served faithfully for twenty plus years are now retiring and new members join, so that the ministry continues with a fresh approach.

I became part of the team over a year ago and have found it to be a wonderful way to connect with older folk. I always take my guitar with me to play some of their favourite hymns and songs, as well as offering communion and prayer. I get blessed by them as much as they get blessed by me.

Here are some of the comments residents have made.

'I used to love going to church, I really miss it, it's very important to me.'

'I love singing, thank you for playing for us'

'Thank you for coming, I love to take communion and feel close to God'

'I'm worried about my family who live abroad where there are floods, please can you pray'

'Can you pray a prayer of blessing over me.'

If you have a member of your family who is moving into one of these care homes and you wish us to visit them or for them to receive communion please let the care home co-ordinators know or contact us at St Mary's church office. We'd love to help.

Revd Julie Summers



Parish 'Weekend at Home'

In March we had a parish weekend of fellowship, teaching and worship which culminated with the uplifting Confirmation service on Sunday afternoon (see pp10-11).

One popular activity was a walk, pictured above.

Church Rooms Development Project



We're inching closer to starting the work in a substantive way, but the last three months have brought new frustrations and delays.

Bristol City Council have granted us permission to go ahead, but the plans needed amendment in order to appease the decision-makers at Bristol Diocese, who must give approval due to the rooms being a listed building, along with the church. At the moment we're busy doing a spring clean, and clearing in readiness for the work to begin.

Donations towards the cost of the project are warmly welcomed. Ideally, please donate via BACS and use the reference CHURCHROOMS. Cheques may be made payable to St Mary Magdalene PCC, and sent to the Church Office.

St Mary Magdalene Church (Business Account)
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The Cold Water Challenge

A couple of years ago I watched a docu-series called ‘Freeze the Fear’ where a group of celebrities spent several weeks staying in the Italian Alps practising cold-water therapy with expert Wim Hof. It is believed that when the body is immersed in cold water, the blood rushes to surround the vital organs including the brain. Your heart then is forced to pump more efficiently, pushing blood through all your vessels and supplying every part of your body with the oxygen and nutrients it needs. If this is done regularly, it can help promote healthy blood circulation and ultimately, a healthy body. The science makes sense, but it still wasn’t enough to get me to try it!

The celebrities not only discovered these health benefits, they also found that the immersion techniques helped them to work through traumatic memories, grow in confidence and some described finding an inner peace. Through a series of cold-water challenges, which made me shudder even to watch them, the participants gradually increased their tolerance to the cold and clearly reaped some important benefits from it, at least in the short term.

I wonder if you’ve noticed that the difficult things in life can often help us to build resilience and make us better able to handle other challenges in the future?

For a variety of reasons the Spring Term has been a tricky one for St Mary’s; we’ve said goodbye to much-loved church members who have died; we’re supporting staff who are battling with illness and we’re navigating a lot of red tape relating to our forthcoming building project, amongst other things. And yet, these challenges seem to be helping us to become a more resilient community – where members support one another and we are increasingly reliant on God to provide the things and the people we need.

None of us likes to go through hard times, but they can be instructive. Some of my favourite verses in the Bible are from Paul’s letter to the Romans:

We can glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. Romans 5:3-4

I pray that if you are going through challenges at the moment, you will find that they help you to grow in perseverance, character and hope. And if you feel you need support in what you are facing, please reach out to St Mary’s, we would love to walk with you.

Jema

Revd Jema Ball
Vicar of St Mary’s



From the CHURCH REGISTERS February - April 2025

Baptisms

27 April Rupert Young

Confirmation

16 March Malachi Ball
Richard Brailsford
Ashlee Chambers
Tristan Haggard
Harper Hall
Florence Nash
Erin Whitfield
Lucas Whitfield

Funerals

12 March Valerie Brooks
20 March Mike Barwell
21 March Mark Crane
27 March Susan Lopez-Bernal
16 April Albert Pearson

Memorial service

24 April Christopher Bigwood

Steps of Faith

By Jema Ball

If you've been into St Mary's church you may have noticed a banner at the front promoting Christenings, which says 'First steps on an amazing journey'. A Christening (also known as Baptism) is a symbolic opportunity for a baby, child, teen, or adult to take their first steps on the journey of following Jesus.

When babies or young children are baptised, their parents make promises on their behalf. They promise to help their child to be part of the church and to discover more about God's love in the years ahead. When an older child, teen or adult is baptised, they make the promises for themselves, with baptism often marking a decision to become a Christian. Whatever the age, baptisms are always an exciting moment at St Mary's and if it's something you would like to explore further then we'd love to chat with you.

For those who were baptised before they could make the promises for themselves, the Church of England offers another symbolic opportunity called Confirmation. This is usually for teens or adults, who have come to their own decision to follow Jesus, and now wish to affirm (confirm) the promises that were made on their behalf by their parents.

In March three adults and five young people from St Mary's were confirmed at a service led by the Rt Revd Neil Warwick, Bishop of Swindon. We were joined by members of St Peter's Henleaze and Holy Trinity Westbury-on-Trym; ten candidates from those churches were confirmed at the same service. Two adults were both baptised and confirmed during the service.

Also during the service, seven younger children from St Mary's received certificates in recognition that they had taken part in preparation sessions aimed to help them understand more about Communion. They had explored the origins of why Christians celebrate Holy Communion, and the symbolic meaning of the bread and wine.

Some of the candidates from St Mary's have shared, in their own words, what being Confirmed meant to them:



The Rt Revd Neil Warwick, Bishop of Swindon, with t

What brought you to the point of wanting to be confirmed?

It's the next step in my journey and a reinforcement of my commitment to God.

(Lucas, 16)

My Confirmation is part of our family's journey in following Christ, making an outward confession and commitment of our faith in Jesus.

(Richard, adult)

Getting Confirmed is publicly announcing my faith and deciding to take the next big step in my Christian life.

(Florence, 12)

Confirmation is a symbol of my conviction of giving my all to Christ, to lay myself down and be a servant.

(Tristan, adult)



the confirmation candidates at St Mary's on 16 March

In what ways are you aware of God being at work in your life?

Following Jesus motivates me to work with integrity and honesty.
(Richard, adult)

God's quiet answering of my prayers comforts me in my everyday life.
(Lucas, 16)

Given me faith and hope through my journey as a Christian.
(Florence, 12)

I am incredibly honoured to know and to follow Jesus. I have received salvation through his sacrifice on the cross and resurrection. I keep myself open to his leading in my life through prayer and worship.
(Ash, adult)

One of the Confirmation candidates noted how helpful it was that the response in the service to the questions of commitment to living out the Christian life is: 'with the help of God I will'. We follow Jesus, not in our own strength, but empowered by His Spirit.

If you would like to talk with a member of the St Mary's clergy team about exploring your faith further or deciding if Confirmation could be the right next step for you, just contact the church office. Be reassured that you certainly don't have to have it all figured out in order to take the first step!

Can you describe how you picture God?

A golden ray of light and positivity.
(Harper, 14)

A warm ball of light that will always be there, even in darkness.

(Erin, 14)

Light, an ember, fire, a dove.

(Malachi, 11)

What have you learnt about during your preparation for being Confirmed?

Ways to talk to God.
(Erin, 14)

We learnt about the origins of the Passover and how this links to Holy Communion.
(Malachi, 11)



Living from Rest: Less

By Hazel

Driver or driven?

I will own up. I have been quite a driven person in the midst of quite a driven society, and it took a long time for the Lord to really get my attention to allow him to do something more radical about it than the odd tweak. It was going to need major surgery. I had come to realize that I needed healing deep down – the healing of my springs of motivation. My roots needed attention, for instance the roots of a tendency to perfectionism. But how would this be possible?

Listening to God and listening to myself

Getting me to listen initially took the form of my fainting at a party. I had been under pressure and I was trying to cram a quart into a pint pot. To be honest, I was my own worst enemy. What I needed that evening was a quiet doing-nothing kind of evening at home – space - but I didn't want to miss out and I am in the post-war habit of eating everything on my plate!

I realize now that what I needed to learn was to listen to my body to become aware of my biological rhythms, and to live within my limited capacity. I had to become more sensitive to my legitimate needs and resist the urge to do, belong and create. I did put the brakes on, and began to slow down and in the slowing down, I began to listen better to what God seemed to be saying to me – 'you need to learn more about living from rest', 'start with a sabbatical'. Having finally got the message the wheels were put in motion to allow this to happen.

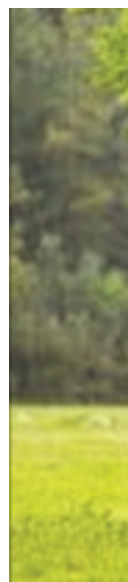
The art of living from rest

It is a pretty basic part of being a Christian – learning to rest in the Lord, learning to arrange our lives to make this possible, so why don't we find it easier? I knew the verse from Hebrews which talks about entering into God's rest and the importance of it. Entering into God's rest has taken me an age to learn (and I guess I will keep on learning). It is an art for every Christian to learn and our culture doesn't help us to acquire the habit. Learning to live from rest is definitely counter cultural. We can be slaves to our employment, to our families, even to our hobbies! But didn't Jesus say he came to set us free?!

Making a start

Three months off in the winter over Christmas surprisingly turned out to be the perfect restorative and teacher. I arranged to go to Ty Mawr Convent near Monmouth for five weeks from Advent to Epiphany. It was five weeks living in a community dedicated to prayer. I took part in the basic rhythm of their day which included a fair helping of silence and five offices a day in the chapel. It is the perfect setting for learning to slow down and to be quiet. I still had choices to make – how would I spend the afternoons for instance?

Living from rest? How does that sound impossible in the h



Ty Mawr Convent in winter

Lessons from Sabbatical

Trapnell

*Sound? Does it sound attractive but
burly burly of life?*



A rule of life

I agreed with the community a rhythm of life that would keep rest as a focus. I actually managed to keep things simple (not easy for me). My morning occupations were planting trees, peeling pears, mulching a vegetable garden and on the five feast days – which they take seriously – I was elevated to the more demanding but creatively enjoyable task of table decoration. Knitting became my afternoon and evening occupation. I listened all the time to myself and to God as I carefully made simple daily choices.

Aids to a life of prayer

I had been loaned a book – the City is my Monastery (Richard Carter) – and I took that with me and read it a little at a time in easily digestible chunks which helped the nutrients reach my roots.

Have you heard of St Martin's, Trafalgar Square in London? They have an amazing ministry among the homeless. The homeless have many needs and it has been challenging to include them in the church. It has led to the development of a contemplative community in the heart of London! In our Lent series we were introduced to the idea of a rule of life and other aids to Christian growth. Well similarly St Martin's has developed a rhythm or rule of life based on monastic disciplines, which are geared towards living from rest. They have chosen Seven practices all beginning with S as their framework. These include Silence, Service, Scripture, Sacrament, Sharing, Sabbath and Staying with. For the more mature Christians among us, to some extent these will already be part of our diet.

For several years part of our rule of life at St Mary's, is a week of 24/7 prayer when we are encouraged as a community to pray. The idea is that as a church we pray without ceasing for a week. The church is set up creatively to make it easy and attractive. That is the first week in June – so if you read this in time, do have a look.

Going deeper with God

But as well as that, in our resolve to go deeper with God this year by making space to encounter him, we have a month of guided or accompanied prayer – which will start at the same time as the 24/7 week, on 1 June. Participants will be encouraged to use the 24/7 week as part of their prayer. The whole month is a first for us at St Mary's. We have invited experienced listeners and some trained spiritual directors to come alongside those who feel prompted by God in some way to venture further into the water of faith (using my swimming analogy). It is about making a space for God – allowing him in so that we might encounter him in a new way. Fundamentally the prayer guide/companion will allow the 'pilgrim' a holy space once a week, the gift of time to be listened to – to be listened into life and encouraged and supported in prayer, so that they may have a direct encounter with God and find new life.

God says 'I make all things new'. I was renewed by my sabbatical and I hope others will find their own renewal in faith and prayer.



Stoke Bishop Fish Bar, 13 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, BS9 1EW

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Thursday 4.30 - 9pm

Friday and Saturday 12 - 2.30pm & 4.30 - 9pm

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*For further information visit our website
www.stokebishopfishbar.co.uk,
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Coming up @ St Mary's

2 – 7 June: 24/7 Prayer Week
In conjunction with Thy Kingdom Come

*

Saturday, 28 June 10am – 12 noon
Going Deeper Creatively

*

30 June – 4 July
Stoke Bishop School Art Exhibition

*

Sunday 6 July, 7pm Choral Evensong

For further information on events please go to
our website nearer the dates.



Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve are celebrating their 30th anniversary!

Join us to explore the beauty of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve through expert guided walks and talks

Saturday 7th June 2025
1pm to 4.30pm

For the programme of talks and walks,
please see our website

Booking details There is no charge for the above talks, however places are limited, so please email outreach.ospnr@gmail.com to reserve your place!
Further details, including meeting points, will be provided after booking.

Please note:
There are no toilets or refreshments on site. All children must be accompanied by an adult.
www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org - registered charity number 1080376

Bristol Cabot Choir
Saturday 28 June, 2.30 pm
St Peter's Church, Henleaze
Concert performance of
HMS Pinafore

By
Gilbert and Sullivan

Full details and tickets on our website.

A number of members of St Mary's sing in this choir: do
come and support us for this fun event.
Retiring collection for Mothers for Mothers.

SCAN TO GIVE TO ST MARY'S



If you would like to contribute to the production costs of The Messenger, or to the work of St Mary's, please use this QR code.

We are grateful for all donations.

Community Diary Summer 2025

Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

Saturdays 10 May, 10 am - noon: Working party.

Access from Glenavon Park entrance. Please bring gloves and, if possible, secateurs, loppers etc and a hot drink. (Chocolate biscuits provided!)

For further details please see our website

www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org

To register for a working party, join the Friends, or
contact the committee, email fospnr@gmail.com

Stoke Bishop and Sneyd Park Local History Group

Friday 16 May: Maid of the Haystack - a young woman's life in the 18th Century by Martin Powell.

All talks in Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Visitors welcome, £3 per meeting .

Membership £6 pa.

For enquiries, please email
sblocalhistory@gmail.com,
or phone 0117 9686010

University Botanic Garden

From March, open every day 10 am to 4.30 pm.

Chandos Deli refreshments daily 11 am to 4 pm

'Friends', children & students, free.

Staff, & alumni £5, Adults £9.

Wednesday is DAISY day (donate as it suits you).

See website for up-to-date information on events

www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project

Full programme of walks, talks and activities.
Booking essential for all events

For full details of events and courses, and booking
arrangements visit

<https://avongorge.org.uk/whatson>
phone 0117 428 5600 or

Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Ward Forum

Public meeting with Local Councillors tba.

Everyone welcome.

To receive notice if meeting, join the mailing list: email
stokebishopforum@aol.com

Stoke Bishop Townswomen's Guild

1st Thursday of each month 2.15 pm

Hulbert Room, St Mary's Church Rooms

Friendly tea, chat and social outings.

For details, contact Sheila 914 7159
or Angela 968 6473

Cubbaccino's

There will be no Cubbaccinos until further notice
due to building work.

Stoke Bishop Village hall

By Peter Weeks

One of the most recognisable buildings in an area that has many beautiful and unusual buildings is the Village Hall on Stoke Hill.

With its large bay window, white woodwork, elaborate chimneys and tile-hung walls, the Hall is a good example of the Queen Anne revival style of architecture popular in the late 1800s.

Opened in 1885 (the date can be seen above the big window) the Hall is 140 years old this year and still going strong.

The Hall stands on the site of a former pub the "Three Stars" and three prominent local businessmen – Sir George Edwards JP, Henry Fedden JP and James Goodwin – were the team who raised the money, got it built and became the first trustees. The architect was Edward Gabriel who also designed what is now the Watershed by the harbour, the Cambridge Arms in Westbury Park and several other notable buildings in Bristol. See his original design for the Hall. It's interesting that the land was bought by Bristol City Council when Stoke Bishop was not yet part of Bristol.

Over the years the Hall has been used for many different purposes. Following the building of St Mary's Church in 1860 the Hall was the obvious place for parish council meetings and community events. At that time Stoke Bishop was largely open fields and orchards surrounding some large houses, but the population was growing and there are records of a boys' club started in 1893 for boys over 13 who had left school. They could use the library, play games such as chess, bagatelle or billiards and learn shorthand and woodwork. Monthly entertainment organised during the winter months included concerts, recitals, magic lantern shows and travel talks. A men's club opened in 1898.

During the First World War the Hall was set aside for the use of Belgian refugees – see photo - and after the war the Hall was the focus of fundraising for the memorial at the top of Stoke Hill.

In the 1920s and 1930s the Hall continued to be used as before, but there were more dances, social evenings and jumble sales to accommodate the growing population as new homes were built in the surrounding fields. Badminton was introduced. Then during WW2 the



STOKE BISHOP HALL AND READING ROOMS.
EDWARD GABRIEL, ARCHT'T.

THE BRISTOL ANTHROPOLOGICAL
JOURNALS, 1885, (Copyright)

Hall was used for Air Raid Precaution (ARP) and Red Cross meetings and for issuing ration books. After Stoke Bishop School (behind Kewstoke Road) was largely destroyed in an air raid in November 1940 some classes were held in the Hall until the building of Cedar Park School in 1951.

Upstairs there was a flat for a live-in caretaker until the 1970s when this was converted into rooms for public hire at the same time as other updating and expansion. Parish meetings in the Hall ceased in 1964 on the opening of the church rooms.

Since 1973 the Hall has been leased from Bristol City Council by the Stoke Bishop Community Association and run by a local volunteer committee which looks after the fabric of the building and manages income and expenditure. The Hall has regular daytime and evening users. Outside these times it is available for hire for one-off events.

Born 1885, 140 years old and still going strong. How nice to have and enjoy this useful and beautiful building!



Get Creative Using Natural or Discarded Objects

With Sarah Harris



When you are on holiday, perhaps by the sea or in the country, why not collect shells, pebbles or driftwood to remind you of the holiday? You can incorporate them into paintings, make artworks from your collection alone or use them in the garden. This page is to give you inspiration.

The pictures left following a beach holiday include shells and pebbles. Lucia, aged 7 added creatures from her imagination. Tristan, aged 11, used handcrafted paper to represent sand and rocks and created a calm sea in contrast to Lucia's surf.



The fish picture was inspired by our visit to the Aquarium. We used all sorts of scrap materials for the imagined fish, cutting the shapes from cartridge paper and sticking on the fabric and other bits.

I have never thought that using bits of leftover fabric was 'recycling' before, but I guess it is, if the alternative is throwing it away. Certainly milk bottle tops and bits of netting from fruit and veg bags used here are definitely recycled.

At the top right is a shell collection design. Below it is a picture of the bird-bath we made with pebbles for the birds to stand on.



The picture below shows the huge Street Art Fish made from plastics and other rubbish collected from the sea by Portuguese artist Artur Bordalo created in 2019, and sited on a quayside in Funchal, Madeira.



Get creative and have fun!



Rules on Collecting Natural Objects

Look around you to find things with which to be creative but remember to be aware of rules and the law that states you cannot gather wild flowers and plants, (except those you grow in your own garden), because these are disappearing so we need to protect and preserve them. Bear in mind that everything belongs to someone and nothing is infinite, even beaches, so although pebbles and shells come and go with the tides, it's also a good idea to collect just a few at any one time.

The Great Riverbank Robbery by Martin Kiszko

Reviewed by Sarah Harris

This is a moving story about a community of animals who live in, on or near the banks of a river, close to a wood. It is very much in the genre of such books as Wind in the Willows and Watership Down.

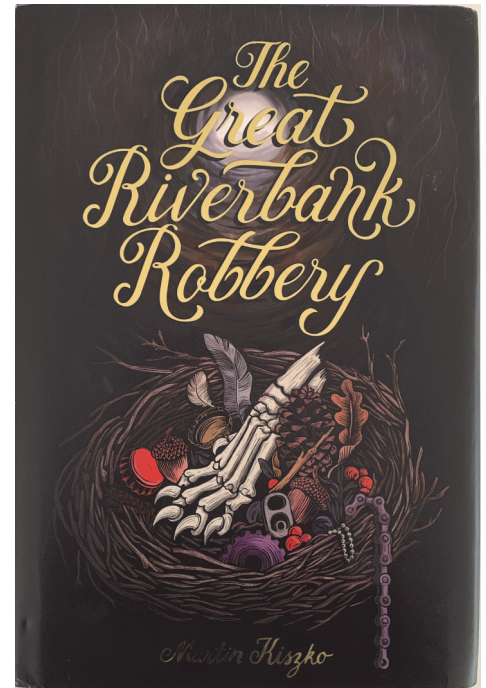
We meet the main characters immediately and they all represent characteristics which we find in humanity the world over, both good and bad. Meanwhile, each species and individual has its own distinct attributes and each, in its own way, is dependent on the inimitable river that flows throughout their environment and throughout the story.

The river has a definite spiritual character, as well as being the lifeblood of the community and immediate environment. Not only is it crucial to the story, it is also the Story Teller. The story begins quite slowly yet the book is hard to put down as it gathers pace and excitement and races towards the conclusion, much like the river itself races towards the sea.

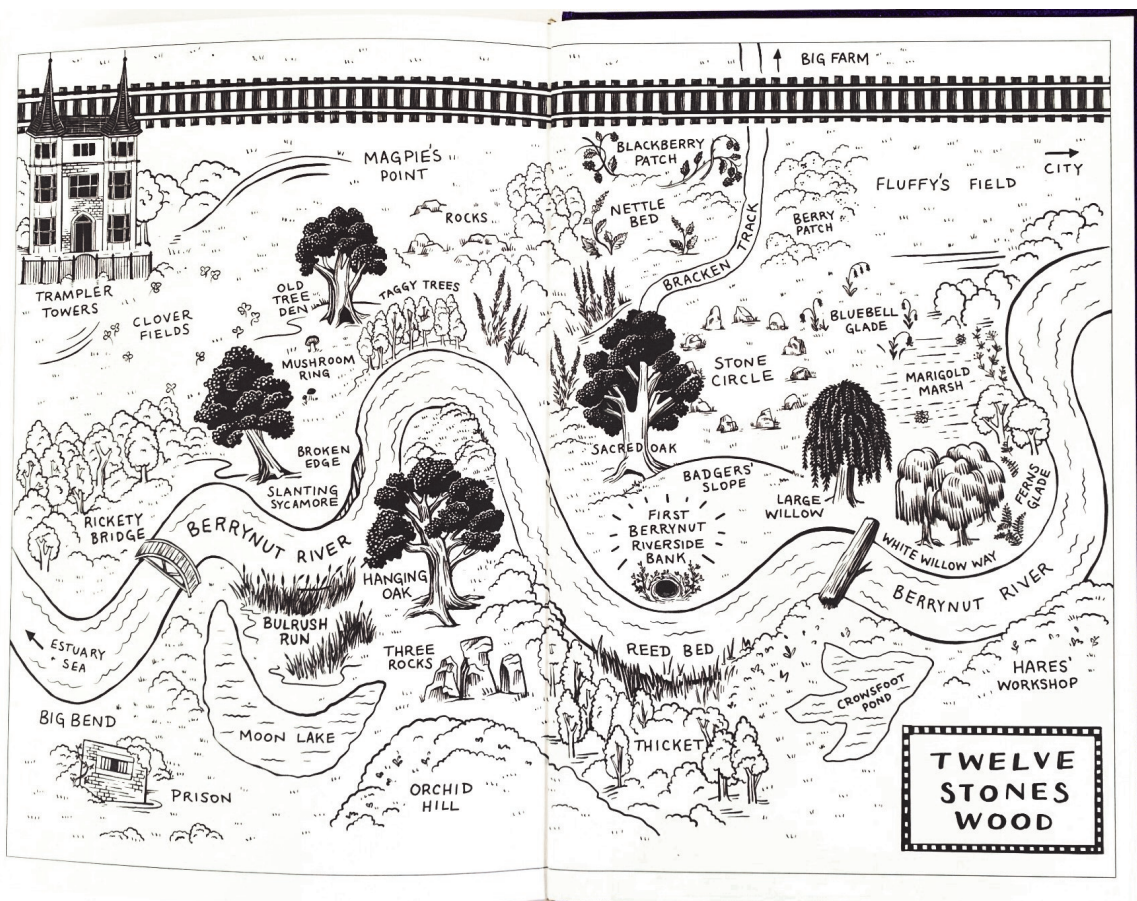
En route we learn about the health of the river and how man damages it, how it is able to adapt to different conditions and repair itself with careful management, despite man's carelessness. It draws us into a belief in caring for our environment and for the creatures that inhabit the riverbank, even as we are drawn into the excitement of the story itself.

There is a socio-political hierarchy among the animals which demonstrates how all creatures need to be valued. When this does not happen, it creates a background of discontent, resulting in movements for change and sometimes dangerous expressions of anger.

Overall, this is a lively adventure story, with an atmosphere of impending danger, a compassionate, spiritual element and a terrific ending. It draws us into the life of the riverbank and enables us to see beyond it. Although it is a book for adults, it has universal appeal, so I have



given a copy to my eleven-year-old grandson. He has commented that he thought the cover would be better with a red background! I'm not sure about that, but I do agree with him that the book could make a good animated movie.



Map from the inside cover of the book

It's Hard to Be Green

By Eileen Stonebridge

It is generally understood that 'being green' means that a person or organisation is aware of the environment, the impacts which are made on it and the finite nature of the resources which we take from it.

'Being green' aims to use resources sustainably. Gradually, society is realising that a less profligate use of resources is essential if humanity is to continue.

These concepts have been about since the 1960s and yet action is still very limited reflecting a general lack of concern. There have been various attempts to bring about change through legislation and resolutions such as the Paris Agreement in 2016.

The agreement includes working towards the mitigation of change, adaptation and financial support for those countries which are suffering most from the effects of climate change. The main characteristic of progress so far is its slowness.

To achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement cooperation and effort is required from governments, businesses, and individuals.

In the case of governments there are several factors which prevent action. They can be summarized as political inertia and economic constraints. Added to this there are no strong enforcement mechanisms. The main problem is that governments act in the short term and climate change is a long-term problem, though not so far into the future as we are seeing with recent climate events.

Pressing economic factors tend to dominate governments' thinking and there is a risk in making large scale investments, for example in green energy, though we are seeing some progress here but generally there is not enough progress being made. Recent developments in the U.S.A. do not engender confidence in investment.

Despite warnings from such bodies as the Climate Change Committee and the United Nations, fast implementation of mitigatory measures is not on the agenda. Only the UK has issued new climate targets in time for the Paris Agreement 10th February deadline. On 1 April this year, a top insurer warned that soon it will no longer be able to offer cover for many climate risks; without the revenue from insurance many other financial services, such as mortgages, become unviable.



Pavegen pavement which generates electricity from footfall, in Oxford Street.

Business enterprises face similar challenges to those of governments in that they seek economic growth and financial security. Tried and tested ways feel safer than entrepreneurial green enterprises, added to which it seems cheaper not to bother to be green. Many companies do aim for sustainability, but most could do more by having sustainable practices such as dispensing with disposable cups and restricting paper use. It is estimated that a fifth of waste in the UK comes from offices. Sourcing sustainable materials is a very significant contribution which a business can make.

One company, Pavegen, has invented paving which when trodden on can generate electricity; they have been used in busy spots such as shopping centres. Invention, innovation and lateral thinking are key.

The Australian business man, Andre Forrest, who has recently made huge investments in making his multibillion Australian dollar company green, says to consumers "Don't stop consuming, instead demand change in how what you are consuming is produced. It's our fault, not yours - we have got to be held to account" (Sunday Times, 16th March 2025).

As consumers we can be vigilant in our choices, invest in green technology where we can and avoid waste.

My article in the next issue of The Messenger will address the challenges facing us as individuals attempting to be green.

HEALTH

Doctors

Sea Mills Surgery 968 1182
W-o-T Primary Care Ctr 962 3406

NHS Direct - 111

For Dentists, Opticians and other medical services: www.nhs.uk

Chemists

Buxton & Grant 973 5025
(Blackboy Hill)

Jhoots Pharmacy 962 3415
(Westbury-on-Trym)

Westbury Pharmacy 962 8986
(Stoke Lane)

North View Pharmacy 973 3140

Well Pharmacy 968 1272
(Sea Mills Surgery, 2 Riverleaze)

Hospitals

BRI 923 0000
St Michael's 921 5414
Children's Hospital 927 6998
Southmead 950 5050
Spire 980 4000
Chesterfield/Nuffield 911 6919

AGE AND CARER SERVICES

Age UK 922 5353

Care Direct 922 2700
adult social care

We Care 0300 323 0700
help for over 60s and young disabled
www.wecr.org.uk

Carers Support Centre 965 2200
free advice and training
www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk

Dementia Wellbeing Service 9045151
www.bristoldementiawellbeing.org.uk

Action for the Blind 934 1719
Advice on support

Holidays for Carers: 0800 999 3365
www.carersholidays.org.uk

Growing Support 07419 825261
<http://growingupport.co.uk/get-involved>

Bristol After Stroke 964 7657
Support for those recovering from Stroke
www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk

POST OFFICE

Welcome 968 1961
Druid Hill

EDUCATION

Pre-School

W-o-T Baptist Church Pre-School
Church Office 962 9990

Muddy Boots Nursery
Trinity College 968 4493

White Tree Pre-School 07804 269289

Primary Schools

Stoke Bishop 377 2173
Head Teacher: Mr D Forrester

Elmlea 377 2266
Head Teacher: Mrs L Wright

Libraries

Westbury-on-Trym 903 8552
Sea Mills 903 8555
Henleaze 903 8541
Central 903 7200

At Home Library Service

for people who have difficulty visiting their local library. 07714 898 558

CINEMAS

Orpheus Henleaze 0300 124 0275
<http://bristol.scottcinemas.co.uk>

Vue Cribbs Causeway 0345 308 4620
w.myvue.com

TRAVEL

Buses

3 and 4 link Broadmead to the Mall via stops in Stoke Bishop

11/11A to Southmead Hospital via stops in Coombe Dingle/Canford and Westbury village.

Portway Park & Ride

9 to Centre, stops at Roman Way
<http://www.travelwest.info/parkandride>

For information about bus and coach travel in UK contact Traveline
www.traveline.info

Darren Jones

is MP for Bristol North-West.
darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk

phone: 0207 219 2302

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Bristol City Council

www.bristol-city.gov.uk

Switchboard 922 2000
(inc. refuse, streets, litter etc.)
Emergency 922 2050

Stoke Bishop Councillors
John Goulondris 922 2227
Henry Michallat 922 2227

Police

Emergencies only 999
Non-emergencies 101

Lost valuables:
Report your loss at
www.reportmyloss.com

Power Cut Call Line

Phone 105 to check for or report a local area problem.

Save money on phone calls:

For alternatives to 0844 etc
go to www.saynoto0870.com

Helping Hand

is compiled by Paul Lewis-Smith.
If you have changes, additions or updates to suggest please contact him on 968 4221 or e-mail: plewissmith@blueyonder.co.uk

Dial-a-ride

For those unable to use conventional public transport.

Free (after small joining fee) to BCC Travelcard holders.

Tel: 0117 244 7337
http://bristolcommunitytransport/transport_for_individuals/bristol_dial_a_ride

Trains

Severn Beach Railway

Temple Meads to Severn Beach via Sea Mills (No official parking)

National Rail Enquiries 0345 748 4950
www.nationalrail.co.uk

Bristol Airport 0871 334 4444
www.bristolairport.co.uk

Cover picture:

Staff of Love Squared charity outside their base in Stoke Bishop.

Photo by Judith Sheather

