

BRIDE VALLEY NEWS



February 2026

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

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Information for Contributors

March 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 6th February for the March 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

To enquire about Baptisms, Marriages or Funeral arrangements in the Bride Valley & Chesil Benefice Churches please contact Rev'd Rawding by 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: 07932192908, and 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-,](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 registers

Funeral: Peter Fowler, Burton Bradstock 23rd January.

From the Rectory

Dear friends,

Greetings and prayers from Southampton General Hospital, my home for the last three weeks. I arrived here by a yellow air ambulance helicopter on 19th December. It wasn't my first trip in a yellow helicopter. When I was ten years old, I was winched up from a cliff face above the sea in Ilfracombe, Devon, into a RAF Wessex Search & Rescue helicopter. This time was also by the sea, taken heavenward from a field, just west of Abbotsbury Hillfort after a crash on my motorbike. I have so much to be grateful for over the last three weeks. After the collision I was catapulted high into the air. I had an out of body experience looking at myself in the air before I crash landed onto the B3157 road. In those seconds before I impacted, I wondered if this was the end of my life. Once I landed, I was able to pull myself up into a seated position, remove my helmet and find my phone. I had one priority: to get a message to St Peter's Church, Portesham, to let them know I could not take Bill Halford's funeral. There was no phone signal. An 'ex copper' introduced himself and I asked him to support me behind my back. Thank you. Other people arrived from the stopped cars, including someone who said: 'I'm a nurse' and another who said: 'I'm a doctor.' Thank you. I couldn't believe I was in this situation. I kept repeating 'I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry.' I was distraught. I felt like I had let Bill, his family and all the people waiting in church down. I felt I was letting everyone down by interrupting their journeys. I started to prioritise my breathing. I had seriously intense pain in my right leg. I couldn't see it as it was snapped and bent. Somehow, I had to deep breathe my way through this pain and stay conscious. I also had to let my wife Loveday know. I tried to give her number out to anyone who could call her.

I was moving my hands and my left foot to keep the blood running around my body. I thought I might die of a catastrophic bleed. Someone tried to apply a tourniquet to my right leg which was torturous. I knew from Afghanistan that this was the right thing to do but unlike in Afghanistan I was not carrying morphine and could not inject myself. The pins and needles increased in my hands and in my foot. I could feel the blood withdrawing. I thought I was bleeding out. I was so cold. I asked two people near to me to hold my hands. It brought such warmth and comfort. Thank you. If I was going to die on that road I did not want to die without the warmth of human love.

Police arrived and were keeping me safe. Thank you. I think I heard an ambulance arrive too. Thank you. I understand that a consultant from 'BASICS' Dorset turned up. Thank you. I recall a woman's voice saying: 'Let's cut this

clerical collar off. That will free you up.' I heard a helicopter arrive nearby. The air ambulance must have arrived. Thank you. I was given a variety of painkillers: morphine, fentanyl, and ketamine. Midazolam too.

At one point I felt like I was floating above my body in a conscious unconscious state. It was a state of the deepest calm. I thought that I had been transported to an operating table somewhere in a hospital or was in another world. Then I found myself in a kaleidoscope tunnel of very fast white, gold and red flashing lights. I thought this was the end. I could see within my face but could also see my face from the outside. I remember hearing and watching myself naming my children, and my voice fading away. The tunnel got faster, the lights brighter, the gap narrower. I was accelerating within my face through and towards a narrowing chasm of flashing lights, like my head was being squeezed through the tightest gap, until 'Puhf!' like a bullet leaving a gun barrel, I was through. Was I dead?

I opened my eyes. The first thing I saw was blue sky. I looked ahead and I could see that I was surrounded by a blurry halo of fluorescent emergency services' jackets. I reflected that heaven is a place where you are surrounded by people who care about you. To my front a man in a red overall was calling my name: "Andrew, Andrew..." His name was Tony, the air ambulance doctor. I was still alive. I was still on the B3157 tarmac. I was so sorry, so sorry that all these people were involved just because I had collided with a grey car, which to me had appeared from nowhere. All these people giving their time, their skills, their compassion to me. Humbling. Crazy. Divine. All these people being Jesus to me; giving me resurrection new life.

I learnt that the flashing tunnel experience was possibly when they were clamping my head ready to be lifted into the helicopter. I learnt I had to be lifted over a locked gate to get to the helicopter. For all that additional effort, thank you. I learnt the other air ambulance doctor was called Neil, and the pilots, Paul and Andy. Thank you, and to everyone who supports Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. I sang Christmas carols in the helicopter on the way to Southampton. Tony said: "They'll love that. When we get to the Emergency Department, I'll nudge you and you can start singing." I was wheeled in, Tony nudged, I sang: "Silent night, holy night...sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace."

Since I've been in hospital I have been cared for by such dedicated, highly talented and skilled compassionate staff from all over the world. Thank you wonderful NHS! I was told and could see in all the consultants' eyes that my right leg was not good: "Your knee has been smashed into 200 pieces." "It's like your knee has been in a bomb!" My femur had several fractures, my hip too. I was at peace. For me it was a spiritual experience. I was suffering like the Fusiliers and

the Royal Marines I knew had suffered. I was suffering like so many fellow humans are suffering right now. I was prepared to lose my leg. I was told I might. The survivor guilt which I've had since my early 20s was finding some forgiveness, rest and peace. Since I've been in hospital I have been sustained by such kindness, good wishes, thoughts and prayers. Thank you. I have been empowered by community: by my fellow patients on my ward, some survivors of motorbike and car crashes, several with their partners and children also in the hospital; and empowered by the amazing community in which we live. Thank you.

By the time you read this I will be home. I'm told I have multiple surgeries ahead on my right knee. It could take 12-18 months to walk properly again. But that's OK. I am alive. I am loved. And hey spring is coming; the bleak midwinter is giving way to new life and to new possibilities. I may not run or jump again soon, but the lambs are running and jumping for me, for us, in the fields.

I was chatting to a man in the bed opposite me. His whole family was in a car, which was hit by another car. He goes to church. He told me he had turned to Christ when God answered his prayer for his wife to have children. I was listening to the complexity of his thoughts on it all. I strongly disagreed that he was being punished. As we were talking a Bible verse came to my mind, which I shared with him as a possible inspiration on the journey of faith:

'We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.' (Romans 8:28)

I have been called anew to follow on the journey of suffering, the journey of the cross. I have been given the gift of new purpose. Thank you. Love is born and grows out of suffering, bringing joy, gifting peace and producing hope.

Love, joy, peace and hope be with you,

Andrew

St Bride's Day/Imbolc Pilgrimage

On 1st February, everyone is invited to join a pilgrimage from Littlebredy to Othona, a walk of approximately 10km, taking in the magnificent scenery of the Bride Valley. We will park at Othona, arriving there by 10.15am, from where there will be transport to the start point of Littlebredy, St Michael and All Angels, meeting at 11.15am for a 12.00noon departure. It will also be possible to join at various points along the route, so don't be put off if you would prefer a shorter pilgrimage. At the end of the walk, Othona will provide hot drinks and a chance to warm up! They are also hosting a special evening to which everyone is invited, whether you are walking or not!

St Bride's Day, Imbolc and Candlemas at Othona Sunday 1st February at 5.30pm – 7.30pm

The Othona Community invites you to join in a celebration of these three festivals. Enjoy an hour of music, readings, prayer and blessing in our chapel full of candlelight (Candlemas is 2nd February). Then stay for a simple shared supper of tasty homemade soup, bread, fruit etc. You'll be connecting with resident and visiting Othona Community members *and* with walkers who have made the Pilgrimage of Peace that day from Little Bredy to Othona. There is no charge – donations will be welcome. Spaces in the chapel are limited to 60 on this occasion, so please let us know if you'd like to come by emailing

Tony: warden@othonawestdorset.org.uk

Othona is on B3157 between Swyre and Burton Bradstock. To assist with transport, please email admin Helen (bvchurchesta@outlook.com) or pilgrimage leader Ed Hubbard (edmund@hubbardartconsultancy.com) for further details and to confirm your place.

Please help to keep the BVN sustainable

The Bride Valley News is delivered free to all the 1500 homes in the Valley and is entirely compiled and distributed by volunteers. This valuable resource is funded by advertising and donations, both from individuals and from organisations who value the means of communicating with all the local communities. Residents and holidaymakers alike value its content. It is thanks to all these donors that the production costs were covered in 2025 with a small surplus.

However, these costs are continuing to rise and, without increased financial support in 2026 the future of the magazine is not assured. It will, therefore, be necessary to increase our advertising charges and we hope that our regular advertisers will still consider that we offer value for money compared to similar outlets. It is important that organisations who wish to publicise their activities will consider increasing their donations too – as a rule of thumb, one page of content costs at least £15 to print. Organisations may wish to check how many pages were allocated to them in 2025! We continue to welcome individual donations from those who wish to support the magazine although it will continue to be delivered free so long as the income balances the costs. A suggested minimum of £6 per year per household would help to ensure the magazine is sustainable but more will, of course, be most welcome.

If you feel able to contribute, please make a BACS payment with reference **BVNDON** to the Bride Valley Churches Team Council, sort code 30-91-21 and account number 00074071

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.



Thorners CE VA School

The children have ensured that the new year begins as a happy one - by getting stuck in to a huge range of activities from the first week back!

After a visit from our Diocese Advisor, who was impressed with the children's singing, reading and performing in their retelling of the 3 Wise Men the children have moved on to some wonderful Ukulele playing in class thanks to Dorset Music, swimming lessons at Bridport Leisure Centre and cooking classes in school - all in the first 4 days of term!

It was lovely to see the younger pupils also take part in the local schools football tournament as well as see all the children take part in a series of music workshops arranged by the local Tree of Strings group - more news to follow about this next month!

Teachers have also been busy out of school with some excellent new training on AI in schools and some excellent new resources on how best to support those most in need in our classrooms. Stemming from this there will now be an annual initiative held each January to raise funds for the local Prout Bridge Trust which supports children and young adults who are struggling with both mental health issues and school attendance.

A fundraiser is to be held on "Blue Monday" - the third Monday of each January when the glow of Christmas has all faded but the long winter nights and typically poor weather tend to combine to dampen spirits for all. In riposte to this dour combination, pupils and staff across all local small schools will be dressing up to do our bit to banish the January blues and raise funds to help those most in need locally - photos to follow next month!

Lastly, all here at Thorner's send their love and best wishes to Rev. Andrew as he recovers from his terrible accident - we do hope to see you soon and wish you all the best in your recovery.

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.

A message from the Headteacher

I am delighted to be writing to you as the new Acting Headteacher of Burton Bradstock Primary School. The school and the local community are incredibly special to me and I am honoured to have the opportunity to lead it for the next two terms.

It has been a joy to welcome the children back to school this term and it has been wonderful to see the purposeful and vibrant atmosphere across all classrooms. The children have started exploring their new topics: Owls are learning about the Frozen Kingdom; Kingfishers are learning about Misty Mountains and Winding Rivers; Robins are learning about Magnificent Monarchs and the Nest are learning all about what happens when they are asleep. Friendship is our school value for this half term and it has been great to see the children reconnecting with each other following the Christmas break.

We have spaces available in our Pre-School for children who are due to turn 4 before August 31st 2026. If you would like to visit our happy and friendly village school, please contact the school office to arrange a tour: 01308 897369 or office@burtonbradstockprimary.org.

To stay up-to-date with all our news and events please follow our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BurtonBradstockPrimarySchool> or the hashtags #LoveWhereWeLearn #TeamBurton!

Holly Varndell-Paulley, Acting Headteacher



World Day of Prayer

You are invited to join the people of Bridport and the surrounding area at this year's World Day of Prayer service at St Mary's Church, South Street, Bridport DT6 3NW on Friday 6th March 2026 at 10.30am. Refreshments will be served after the service. This year's celebration has been written by women

in Nigeria and it is a service that reflects on the biblical theme, "I will give you rest". For 2026, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their Christian faith and experiences in a world filled with struggles and anxieties. This day is a powerful demonstration of global solidarity. It begins in Samoa and moves across the world in a continuous wave of prayer, finishing 38 hours later in American Samoa. It truly is a worldwide day of prayer to which you are all are welcome.

*Sue Bird
On behalf of Bridport World Day of Prayer Group*

Our Night Sky in February 2026

Venus and Saturn will be too close to the rising Sun to observe, but Jupiter will be visible throughout the night, as will Orion.



Astronomers using pulsar timing may have detected the first dark matter sub-halo inside the Milky Way—an invisible clump weighing millions of Suns, just 2,300 light-years away. If confirmed, it could transform how we map the galaxy's hidden structure.

A Pulsar is a celestial object, thought to be a rapidly rotating neutron star, that emits regular pulses of radio waves and other electromagnetic radiation at rates of up to one thousand pulses per second.

Bill Turnill

Bride Valley WI

The Bride Valley WI enjoyed its Christmas celebrations with a well-attended 'bring and share' supper. The members excelled themselves with a wonderful array of both savoury and sweet delights. Entertainment was provided by 'The Big Foolini', a local magician, who mystified and amazed.

The walking group took the month off but still met up for a festive coffee and cake at The Abbotsbury Gardens Cafe.

The skittles team have now completed their league matches winning 4 out of their 6. We now wait to hear if we've made it through to the next round...fingers crossed. Skittles returns on the Tuesday 3rd February after its winter break. If you'd like to join us, then let Charlotte know and she'll add you to the mailing list.

A massive thank you to The White Horse Pub for looking after us so well over the year, and Evie L for being a brilliant sticker upper. Should you wish to join the Bride Valley WI we meet every third Thursday at 7.30pm at Puncknowle Village Hall. Our 2026 programme will be informative, gently physical and entertaining. Please contact us at bridevalleywi@gmail.com

The Bride Valley Book Club Review

"The Invention of Nature - The Adventures of Alexander Von Humboldt"- The Lost Hero of Science" by Andrea Wulf

Humboldt (1769-1859) was born into a wealthy Prussian family and he travelled extensively, recording everything meticulously. He gave his name to more species (I am sure most of us know about Humboldt's penguins) and geographical features than any other scientist. He is often referred to as the father of Geography and the founder of Ecology - a true polymath. Despite this he remains not that well known outside of Germany. His first major journey spanned 1799 - 1805 during a time of great turbulence in Europe.

He sailed from northern Spain across the Atlantic calling in at the Canaries and Azores then on to the coast of modern Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Cuba, the Gulf of Mexico then up to the New England coast where he called in at Washington before heading eastwards back across the sea to Bordeaux. Humboldt was energetically curious about the natural world and his achievements span many academic disciplines. His ability to collaborate with other pioneers in making important intellectual connections was astonishing in its reach and range. His second major exploration (1829) was to Russia, first to St Petersburg in the Gulf of Finland, then on the Moscow and Ekaterinburg, Siberia and returning via the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.

Andrea Wulf has achieved a formidable work of scholarship - not something that is always said of biographies. About a quarter of the book was taken up with footnotes, textual references and an extensive bibliography. Not all of us were equal to the task but enough of us did finish despite the length and small typeface. Whether we finished it or not - we all learned from this impressive book. Alexander Humboldt clearly deserves much greater recognition.

Liz Pinfield

Prince of Wales & Portesham Surgeries

Photo's for FeNO!

A huge thank you to Margaret Preuss-Higham, who has kindly donated several of her wonderful, mounted photographs to raise funds for a FeNO machine. We are fund-raising to buy a FeNO (fractional exhaled nitric oxide) which is a test that measures the levels of nitric oxide in your breath and is used to help the more accurate diagnosis of Asthma. We currently borrow a FeNO machine once a month and this is shared across both branches. These photographs are currently on display in the surgery corridor in front of the waiting room.



The photographs are priced at offers over £50 each. Please

contact Site Operations Manager Ros Fuller at the surgery on 01305 871468 or Andrew Bailey, Chair of our Patient Participation group via enquiries@porteshampatients.org.uk if you would like to make an offer.

February is Heart Month

February is the British Heart Foundation's Heart Month. Throughout February they aim to raise awareness and support for cardiovascular disease. Their website is full of interesting information such as delicious recipes good for heart health (I can personally recommend the slow cooked Greek Lamb!). You can also do their free online training to learn CPR in 15 minutes and get a certificate too. They also have various ideas to raise money such as the February walking challenge which could not only support a great cause but also make your body feel better, boost your energy and mood and help you get a better night's sleep.



Surgery website → www.princeofwalessurgery.co.uk On Facebook → Prince of Wales surgery and → Portesham Patient News.

Events in the Bride Valley and Nearby

The Valley of Stones Polissoir: a neolithic artefact and its prehistoric landscape



7.00pm, 2nd February, in Puncknowle Village Hall, admission free.

In 2023 Past Participate CIC announced the discovery of a rare earth-fast polissoir. This sarsen stone was used during the Neolithic period for polishing stone tools and today is located in the Valley of Stones, Little Bredy.

In this illustrated talk Hayley Roberts will not only discuss the polissoir but also lead us through the complex prehistoric landscape within which it sits, considering the nearby monuments, their purposes and connections. Hayley is a Co-Director of Past Participate and will also highlight the work that Past Participate do to connect local people with archaeology and the important contribution this makes to their research.

For more information about the talk please
email paul.bullen@icloud.com.
For more information about Past Participate please
visit www.pastparticipate.co.uk



**VRi: Artsreach in Burton
Bradstock
Sunday 8th February, 3.00pm.**

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.



Tickets are now available via the Artsreach website. We look forward to seeing you at the event. For more information, please contact David Witham on 01308 897403

BURTON BRADSTOCK PLAYERS PANTO 26

CINDERELLA

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

BURTON BRADSTOCK VILLAGE HALL

**BAR – EVENING PERFORMANCES ONLY AND CASH ONLY
ICE CREAM, RAFFLE**

COME AND HAVE SOME FUN

ADULTS £10 UNDER 16'S £5

TICKETS ON SALE

**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**

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 - February sponsors

Doreen Rogers Wishing Everyone a Happy New Year

Marilyn & Ray for our lovely village

Ann & Tony Jones for grandson Ollie's 21st birthday on 12th

Chris G-H for Dara Dog, in memory of her birthday on 14th

Jean Ayers in memory of her Mum & Dad, Anne & Pat

Cathryn Johnson for Nell's second birthday on 19th

Lesley Garner for Graham's birthday on 22nd

Jenny & Peter wish family & friends a happy new year and happy birthday to grandson Ethan and

"Grand-neighbour" Graham

Kate & John Kent for Erin's birthday on 23rd

Ed Buck for Linda's birthday

Patsy Jacob wishing her brother Tim Crowley, recovering at home after 11 weeks in hospital, a Happy Birthday.

It was wonderful to get such a great response when I asked on our Community Facebook page, if anyone wished to light up St Martin's. Thank you so much to everyone and also to those who gave anonymously. It is so good to know how much the lights of St Martin's are appreciated and of course, your sponsorship goes towards the upkeep of the church. If you wish to sponsor the lights for future months for a suggested donation of £5, please contact Phyl on 01308 898657 or push a note through Cuckoo Cottage letter box.

Services in February:

8th February at 9.30 a.m. Breakfast Club in Village Hall

22nd February at 9.30 a.m. Holy communion with the Rev'd John Wood

(N.B. Change of time from usual 4th Sunday)

Your help is needed . . .

Is there a kind person in the Village who would be willing to take over organising the distribution of the Bride Valley News in our village? It takes just an hour once a month to receive delivery, count them out and take them to the people in our village who deliver them through your letterbox. After 15 years Ed and I would like to retire!

If you think you'd like to take this on please give me a call on 01308 898278.

Linda

Parish Council

We are currently working on several initiatives, the key ones being:

Mobile phone access: the provider of masts to boost the signal is showing interest again and we are following up with them to encourage them to finalise their plans as soon as possible.

Playground: the refurbishment of the main gates and maintenance of the equipment has been delayed due to the weather, with the aim now being to complete the work before Easter.

Resilience and Emergency Plan: we have completed the first draft with the next step being to obtain input from the various village societies. Following revisions, we intend to put it out for general consultation, with the intention being to adopt it by the autumn.

Surface Water Inundation: following submission of our report, including the videos and photographs provided by the village, we have been accepted as a project by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. Updates will be provided as the project progresses. Also, can you please clear debris from the drain grills near to your home and report any blocked drains to Dorset Council Highways.

Highways: we met with the Dorset Council Highways officer to raise concerns about the state of the roads and problems with incidents at the crossroads at the end of the village at the junction with Icen Lane. Please do report any potholes or other matters on the Dorset Council website under the roads and highways section.

Our next Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 12th March at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. Do come along to raise any issues that may be of concern and to hear updates on the ongoing initiatives.

Village Society

Quiz Night Wed 4th February at The Village Hall, with fish and chips.

Teams of 2 to 8 people.

Hall opens 6.30pm for 7.00pm start.

Food will be served in the interval.

Please bring along your own drinks as there will be no bar.

Come along for an enjoyable evening.

Contact Sally 897168 or Graham 897357 to book your table and advise your food order. We cannot take late orders. Cost £13.50 all in.

A Huge Thank You

From all the village carol singers that braved the cold, to sing their hearts out to all the villagers. We were rewarded with mulled wine, cake and sweets that was warming and very thoughtful. Thank you Tony, Jane and Diane.

Recognition of the carol singers has not yet come our way, we are still hopeful, but from your generosity we managed to raise a total of £312.00.

This is being split into three amounts of £104 and remitted to RNLI, Julia's House and Children in Need. Thank you.

Village Hall

By the time you read this, building work should be well under way (weather permitting!).

There's a new, temporary route into and out of the hall so please follow the signs and any instructions you're given. Access is through the adjacent paddock so please take care over the uneven ground. Additional lighting and a temporary surface have been provided but care still needs to be taken.

January 2026 100 Club Draw results

1st 112 £25 Village Hall

2nd 19 £10 Jean Ayers

3rd 99 £5 Ann Hunt

Congratulations to all winners.

Shipton Gorge Heritage

Heritage Gin Club – The winner in the January draw was Marilyn Elgie – congratulations Marilyn – we are hoping you had not made a New Year's Resolution which prevented you enjoying your prize!



Saunders Richardson Wood

Following up from our session late last year, we are planning another date in February to plant up a further batch of saplings and whips. Please look out for posters, etc. to confirm the date but it will probably be either a Saturday or Sunday to give those who work full time the opportunity to participate. Meanwhile as the hedge line along Smacombe Lane is quite low following the work in the Autumn, it is always worth having a look into the wood to catch a glimpse of the deer or other wildlife which inhabit it.

Shipton Gorge Orchard

We have recently undertaken some work on the top border to attempt to clear the rosebay willow herb which has rather taken over. However, we will need to do some further work on both borders so that the spring flowers can be seen in all their glory and therefore, we will be there on Monday 16th February at 11.00am. All Shipton Gorge residents are welcome, just come prepared with robust gardening gloves. The top border does need a bit of a refresh with 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.



Thank you to everyone who came along to the Christmas Market in mid-December and purchased jams and preserves from our table – this all helps towards covering our costs. We also successfully applied to be one of the charities in the Waitrose Community Matters Scheme during January – you might still have a few days before the end of the month to pop into the Bridport store and put your green tokens into our box!

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>

Litton Cheney

Village Correspondent: John Firrell
email: jfirrell20@gmail.com 01308 482313
Village web-site: www.littoncheney.org.uk



From St. Mary's Church

It was wonderful to welcome many to our Christmas services, though the midnight service on Christmas Eve had to be cancelled due to Clergy shortages. The collections raised a total of £316, divided between Christian Aid and the Weldmar Hospice. In addition, the carol singers raised over £350 and with further donations, £400 was sent to Julia's House. Our thanks to all who braved the cold to sing and to those who provided welcome refreshments along the way.

No doubt everyone is aware of the motorbike accident involving the Rector just before Christmas. He is now back at home following a lengthy stay at Southampton Hospital and we send our warmest good wishes to him, Loveday and the children, hoping his recovery will be rapid and successful.

The supermarkets are already displaying Easter eggs though Lent does not start until Ash Wednesday, 18th February, leading to Easter Day on 5th April. There will be Lent courses to join and special services, with details in Source to Sea nearer the time.

Christmas Floodlights at St Mary's.

Thank you very much to the following for sponsoring the floodlights over Christmas; they did so in memory of some person or event or just because it would add cheer to the festivities – Pete and Beverly Dennis, Peter Strange, John and Lesley Salvetti, Philip and Sally Dyke, John and Wendy Firrell, Lyn Lacey, Paul and Diana Cheater and Hugh and Mary Lantos.

Parish Council – Next Meeting: Tuesday 10th March, 7.00pm at LATCH

During its January meeting, the Parish Council determined what the parish precept would be for 2026/27. The precept is the amount of money the council believes it will cost to administer and look after the village during the coming fiscal year. At the time of writing, it would appear the precept will need to rise to cater for anticipated additional expenditure as central and local governments look to move costs further down the line, requiring town and parish councils to take on more responsibilities. Whilst in monetary terms the rise will be small (around £20 p.a. for a Band D residence), this will of course be in addition to any rise in Council Tax administered by Dorset Council.

Rest assured, every effort will be made to ensure those extra £'s are used effectively, and wisely. Part of our ability to minimise costs comes from the willingness of a number of local residents such as the Premier Crew to help out with tasks that would normally carry a cost if carried out by a contractor – thank you.

2026 – The Year of the Parish Plan

We are looking for people to offer up a small amount of their time over the next nine months or so, and can apply their sense of vision and enquiring nature to help put together a new Parish Plan for Litton Cheney. A copy of the last PP from 2005 can be found on the village website littoncheney.org.uk and it will give you a flavour of what needs to be achieved. It comes down to what residents of Litton Cheney would like their village to become over the next ten to twenty years, and what needs to be put in place in order for that to happen.

The first thing we need to do is put together a steering group of independent minds – it will work outside of the Parish Council - who will put together an initial village survey asking residents to indicate their thoughts and hopes. This is not another shot at deciding if more housing is required in Litton and of what type, although it will have a part to play.

Please, take a look at the 2005 Parish Plan, which hopefully will give you a clearer picture of what needs to be achieved. If you believe this is something you can assist with, please contact a member of the Parish Council (details can be found on the village website). Without your involvement, this is going nowhere, it is time to stand up and make a difference. Thank you in anticipation.

Village Christmas Tree – Thank you to those gallant souls who installed the Christmas Tree at the Triangle, and lit up the Jubilee Hut and trees, plus did it all in reverse as 12th Night approached post new year.

Litton Cheney sends very best wishes to Rev'd Andrew Rawding as he begins his epic journey of recovery from his horrendous motorcycle accident prior to Christmas.

Bingo!

On behalf of the Bingo Fundraising Group, I would like to say a huge Thank You to everyone who supported us by donating prizes and/or coming to our bingo evening in December where we raised £800 for Weldmar. It was a hugely enjoyable evening.

The next bingo event will be on Friday 27th March 2026.

Jackie Horsley

What's on at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall (LATCH) in February

REGULAR EVENTS

Tuesdays	4.45 – 5.45pm	Short Mat Bowls (Ron Davidson 482661)
Wednesdays	4.45 – 5.45 7.00pm	Table Tennis (Paul Kingston 482162) Yoga with Jane (Jane Hutchins 07882 527697)
Thursdays	9.15 – 11.15am	First Steps Toddlers (fortnightly, term time only)

OTHER EVENTS

Thursday 5 th Feb	From 7.00pm	Film Night -The Salt Path - Film starts 7.30
Saturday 14 th	10.00am	Deanery Synod. Open meeting for PCCs
Thursday 19 th	Morning 11.00	Artsreach Show for children – “To Catch a Book Witch”.
Sunday 2 nd	10.00am	Yoga with Nadiya (nadiyasime@hotmail.com)
Coming up.....		
Thurs 5 th March	From 7.00pm	Film Night – The Roses – starts 7.30
Sat 7 th March	Evening	Artsreach Show - Details yet to come.

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 wlitton@gmail.com

Artsreach



HOW TO CATCH A BOOK WITCH

Thursday 19th Feb 10.30am

Litton Cheney Village Hall

An exciting children's show and workshop for half term from the

Coppice Theatre

Will the library be knocked down to make way for a car park?

Could there be a Book Witch in the library?

Find out how to outsmart the monsters and the Book Witch who are suspected of stealing words!

A storytelling show, with music and puppetry that highlights the importance of libraries, reading books and sharing stories, followed by an optional puppet-making workshop (additional £4 per child).

Suitable for children age 4+ and includes signing and integrated captions

Refreshments available – cash only

Standard ticket £8, <18yrs £6, Family £24

Book with Patricia 07799 612941 or on-line at Artsreach.co.uk

BRIDE VALLEY FILMS at Litton Cheney Community 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...

Reminder - THURSDAY 5th FEBRUARY - "THE SALT PATH" 'thought-provoking and emotional'

The Salt Path tells the touching 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

THURSDAY 5th MARCH - "THE ROSES" 'Coleman and Cumberbatch are sublimely well matched'

Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Ivy and Theo Rose: successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. But beneath the façade of their supposedly ideal life, a storm is brewing. As Theo's career nose-dives while Ivy's own ambitions take off, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentment ignites in this wonderfully wry, dark comedy. Starring Olivia Coleman and Benedict Cumberbatch.

1hr. 45" Cert.15

Doors Open: 7.00pm. 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)

The White Horse

Hi all! What a fantastic festive season we had! Thank you to everyone who came along to support our various events and here's wishing a calm and peaceful 2026 to all. We are writing this halfway through our break and the view out the pub windows is ghastly, howling wind and rain. But we are cosy inside and the nights are drawing out, so it won't be long before we see signs of Spring. Looking forward to starting a new chapter next month. See you then.

Andy & Liz

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

Plough Sunday held recently in the Grain Store at The Manor Farm in Puncknowle was a great success despite the weather. This is an old tradition of blessing the plough at the start of the year, so we also blessed the seed, the soil

and the churn in hopes of a good harvest ahead. Followed by tea, cakes and biscuits this was an enjoyable and memorable event.

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 and West Bexington Village Hall 100 Club

December winners

1st Nick Tait

2nd Richard Kennelly

Puncknowle Swyre & West Bexington Lunch Club

Incorporates Chilcombe, Long Bredy and Little Bredy

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

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 – Spring trapping programme

In November 2025 a Yellow-legged Asian Hornet's (YLAH) nest was found and destroyed in Swyre. 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 emerging from hibernation from mid-February so now is the best time to set specially designed traps to catch them. In France, spring trapping reduces the number of nests built by up to 90% so is by far the most effective control method. The West Dorset Beekeepers' Association have traps available for £15 (at cost price) and the more set up in the local area, the better. To order one, please email Peter Crabbe (YLAH coordinator) on Petercrabbe@btinternet.com. The traps are specific to YLAH so bycatch should be minimal, but they should be checked regularly. Bait can be any sweet liquid, dark beer or apple juice mixed with sugar is ideal.

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.

Long Bredy

Village Correspondent: Helen Horsley

Email: bvn@longbredy.org.uk 01308 482585

Village website: <http://wwwlongbredy.com>



Long Bredy 100 Club Results

December 2025

£30 no.21 C Lee
£15 no.112 J & F Farley

2025 Super Draw

£170 no.37 C Lee
£120 no.127 L Downton
£60 no.75 J Maltby
£5 no.40 S Pitcher

Both were drawn on 21/12/2025, at St Peter's Church, Long Bredy after the live nativity service.

Village News and Updates

Although the February issue of the BVN seems late to be talking about Christmas the deadline for January's submission was too early to comment. I just wanted to say well done to the residents of Long Bredy on the wonderful display of Christmas lights. One person said, "What a treat driving back through Long Bredy ...what a super illumination display, so lovely to see the colourful seasonal spirit of the villagers."

Sending our best wishes for a speedy recovery to a number of Long Bredy residents who are currently recovering from various operations and medical procedures.

Congratulations to Delia Andrews, Lola and team on their success in the equestrian world.

Coffee Break

The cold and icy weather didn't put people off attending the January Coffee Break. It was lovely to see so many people there enjoying a warming drink, an open fire and of course the delicious refreshments provided. News was exchanged including how Christmas and New Year was celebrated in the various houses in the valley. As it was the first Coffee Break of the year this was all offered for free. Thank you to everyone who makes this monthly event happen, which is clearly enjoyed by many people.

Come Along Inn

December saw a busy and festive Come Along Inn. It was great to see so many people there beginning their Christmas festivities. Thank you to the team of volunteers for making it happen and the wonderful complimentary nibbles that were provided throughout the evening.

St Peter's Church

A grand total of £1,194.60 has been raised for the church and we would like to say a huge thank you to all those who contributed in any way. Making up the total was £515 from the Christmas Grand Draw, £415 from the sale of the Trickle Cheeses (a donation from Ford Farm) plus donations and sales at the Christmas Coffee Break.

The 'Live Nativity' was a lovely event with Donkey and Sheep and the Holy Family.

This year we heard the story of the 'Grumpy Owl'

who lived in the stable and witnessed the birth of Jesus. With thanks to technology (and Andrew Bailey) this was read by a narrator from the website with sound effects which was very atmospheric. The Church was beautifully decorated - along with the Grumpy Owl (knitted by Eve Bailey).

In January a packed Church attended the Holy Communion and Thanksgiving for the life of Juniper Greener (a long-time resident of Long Bredy). She has now joined John her husband in the Churchyard.



Bell Ringers

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers visited St Peter's Church on the 17th December to ring a full peal on the bells. The peal was completed in 2 hours and 40 minutes and consisted of 5040 Doubles (11 methods): 2 extents Grandsire; 4 extents each St Nicholas, Winchendon Place; St Remigius; Huntly; Reverse Canterbury; St Simons; St Martins; St Osmund; Eynesbury and Plain Bob.

The peal was dedicated to the memory of Juniper Greener. Juniper was a ringer for 30 years at the Church, with No 3 being her favourite bell to ring. This bell was tolled before the thanksgiving service for Juniper on Sunday 4th January by St Peter's ringer, Liz Hemsley.

Future Events

Coffee Break

The next coffee break will be on Saturday 14th February, 10.30am-12.00noon held at the Village Hall.

Come Along Inn

The next Come Along Inn will take place on Friday 20th February, 5.30pm – 9.00pm at the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Burton Bradstock

Village Correspondent: Pat Grafton

Email: patgrafton43@gmail.com 01308 898264

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



Knitting for Ukraine - Update

As the shelling and the fear continue, and increasingly the infra-structure is being targeted, many people are spending more and more time in cold basements and are extremely grateful for the blankets for their babies which they can take home with them after their time in the maternity hospital in Kyiv. So far, I have been able to send four large parcels of strips you have knitted to the team of Ukrainian and local knitters. A big thank you to the W.I. in Burton Bradstock for making this your project till Easter. Thanks to knitters from several villages in the valley and especially to Daphne for a large number of completed, beautiful baby blankets.

Thank you to all of you for your hard work.

For any further information please contact Heather Rogers (01308 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 11th Feb Village Society (Bacon Rolls)

Wed 11th Mar Burton Bradstock School

Burton Bradstock Films

The Roses: Friday 27th February

“The Roses” is a dark comedy based on the disintegration of the marriage between Ivy and Theo, beneath the facade of a supposedly ideal life a storm is brewing. Blending plenty of sharp humour with genuine emotion the film contains strong performances and plenty of satire. Starring Olivia Coleman and Benedict Cumberbatch, it is directed by Jay Roach and is a modern adaptation of Warren Adler’s novel “The War of the Roses”.

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.

Burton Bradstock Village Hall “200 Club”

January 2026 Draw

Congratulations to the winners:

1 st	£31.40	No 95:	Mr Bryan Brown
2 nd	£15.70	No 16:	Mrs Jane Stubbs
3 rd	£7.85	No 140:	Mrs Susan Allan-Baker

Anyone wanting to become a member in time for the February 2026 draw should telephone Keith Britton on 01308 898008 and let him have £11 – one pound for each monthly draw in the year. There are double prizes in the December draw.

WDDC Licence no: SL0080

Burton Bradstock Parish Council

Allotments – Plots Now Available

A limited number of allotment plots are currently available in Burton Bradstock. These plots offer a wonderful opportunity to grow your own produce, enjoy the outdoors, and be part of a thriving local community. Whether you're an experienced gardener or just starting out, the allotments provide a rewarding and sustainable hobby in a beautiful village setting.

For availability, costs, and further details, please contact clerk@burtonbradstock-pc.gov.uk

Save the Date - Annual Parish Meeting

- 6.30pm
- Thursday 21st May 2026
- Burton Bradstock Village Hall, Church Street.

Refreshments will be served.

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 10.30am -12.00noon. 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.

Supper Club

This month's Supper Club will be held on the 9th February.

Any enquiries please phone Mags Chue 07790 811905

Burton Bradstock Village Society

Our talk this month, on Friday 13th February at 7.30pm is by Chris Challis and is entitled **The Lost Abbotsbury Railway**.

Chris is an author and Society member who has researched this beautiful branch line's history from before its inception until it closed in the 1960s.

Doors open at 7.00pm and the talk starts at 7.30pm. Tickets on the door are £1.50 for members and £5 for non-members. Complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits will be served, and there will be a raffle and wine available for purchase. You are welcome to bring your friends.



On Wednesday 11th February 10.00am-12.00noon the monthly **"Coffee Stop"** is hosted by the Village Society where we would love to entertain you all with lovely things to enjoy and great company.

Change of dates for your Diaries. For administrative reasons the dates of the **AGM & Plant & Cake Sale have been changed from those published in your programmes to 1st and 2nd May respectively.** This will be further advertised nearer the time.

The subjects for this year's Flower & Produce Show Photography Class are "Colour Blue" and "Happy Memories". This will give everyone plenty of time to produce something good. We will keep you in suspense on the Limerick title while we come up with a pertinent subject for 2026.

The Friends of Burton Bradstock Library

2026 is officially the National Year of Reading. Events will be organised by Dorset Libraries throughout the year and we hope that everyone will consider the benefits of books, for real or online. There are so many to choose from within the Libraries West catalogue, all for free with your library card. All ages are catered for from 0 to 'more mature' customers.

Burton Bradstock Library offers jigsaws to borrow along with printing, laminating, public computers, information. If you want help from a Digital Champion, please leave your details at the desk and we will arrange dates and times.

Our next **Lego morning** will be on Tuesday 17th February, from 10am to 12.00noon. We hope to see lots of children there – please spread the word.

Opening hours are:

Monday 2.00pm-4.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am-12noon

Thursday & Saturday 2.00pm-4.00pm

We hope to see you soon,

burtonbradstocklibrary@gmail.com

www.burtonbradstockvillage.org/library

01308 897563

Sue Brown, Chairman



Littlebredy

Village Correspondent: Tim Laycock

Email: t.laycock70@gmail.com 01308 482443

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



The Christmas season was celebrated in grand style in Littlebredy. Many thanks to everyone who helped decorate the church with greenery, candles and a spectacular Christmas tree. The 'Carols by Candlelight' service on was a real community effort, and it was lovely to have St Michael and All Angels full of people singing lustily together to tell the Christmas story. Thanks all our readers, to Sandra for playing the organ, and to everyone who donated to the Christmas refreshments afterwards. Thanks also for the generous donations to the collection. We have been able to send £75 to the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance as a particular thank you to them for the assistance that they gave to our Rector Andrew following his accident.

On Boxing Day, The Duck Race was able to start as usual at the waterfall, by kind permission of Richard and Sarah Burt. Many thanks to everyone who helped to prepare for the event, clear the stream, and run the race on the day. A large crowd of villagers and related friends and family enthusiastically cheered on the participants.

Your correspondent can report that conditions on the day were ideal, overcast but dry. The recent heavy rainfall meant that the course was very fast. The winning duck (by a beak) was trained by 2-year-old Theo Wakeman, a regular visitor to the village. Sandra and John March's entry was a very close second.

Sadly, seven ducks are missing in action, so if anyone should spot them, please return them to the village. The event raised £365.00 for the Bridport branch of the RNLI.



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

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren.



You closed your last letter with the remark that it was time to retire to bed with a cup of cocoa. That may be all very well for the pious intensity of a theological college - although a stiff whisky was always acceptable in my day - but it is not a style to continue once in the parish. I do feel obliged to give you a few hints about what should and should not be drunk in public as a parish priest.

Morning visits are to be discouraged, but if one is unavoidable, and you are invited to have a drink, then it has to be coffee. It is the only time of day when a mug is acceptable - provided, of course, that it is bone china or porcelain. In the afternoons one changes to tea, but only from

cups. Blended varieties may be all very well for Curates in their first year, but it should be Darjeeling for an incumbent. And fruit teas are for Quakers only.

If an inappropriate vessel is offered, then the drink should be accepted, but left untouched. Since the visit will be discussed in the finest detail throughout the parish the moment you have left, your host will soon learn why and not make the same error a second time. It is for the same reason that if you ever want to circulate a piece of news round the parish as quickly as possible, never put it in the parish magazine, just mention it casually during one of your visits. Everyone will know by teatime.

Alcoholic drinks must be carefully judged. A sherry - dry, naturally - is probably best if you are invited to lunch. In the early evening, a gin and tonic would be the drink of choice. To ask for whisky would indicate that you are about to go over to Rome, and a mineral water that you have your roots in non-conformity. Beer is never, ever drunk in someone's house unless you suffer from some personal tragedy, such as being the diocesan youth chaplain.

However, an occasional beer in the pub with the bell-ringers (who will be real ale fanatics to a man) or after choir practice - which seems to be the real purpose of holding practices anyway - or as a treat for the sacristan, will show you are a man of the people. It is some years since I visited the pub.

Understanding wine should be taught at every theological college as an essential part of the ministry. Develop a taste for claret, dear boy, and you will be starting your journey towards high office. And perhaps you should give that tin of cocoa to the verger.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Saints this Month

**Do you know how many Saints Days there are in February?
Here is a complete list plus two short histories about three
Saints which whose lives and work are celebrated in February.**

- 1 Seiriol – saint of Puffin Island
- 1 Brigid of Ireland – Abbess of Kildare, c 525
- 2 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas
- 3 Anskar – Archbishop of Hamburg, missionary.
- 3 Blaise – bishop of Sebastea
- 4 Phileas – Christian bishop/martyr of Egypt
- 6 The Martyrs of Japan – courage amidst persecution
- 8 Kew – or how to tame a wild boar
- 10 Scholastica – or how to get your brother to listen to you
- 11 Caedmon – the poetic shepherd
- 13 Modomnoc and the bees
- 14 St Valentine's Day
- 14 Cyril and Methodius
- 15 Thomas Bray, founder of SPCK
- 15 Sigfrid, apostle of Sweden
- 18 Fra Angelico, patron of artists
- 17 Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, martyr, 1977
- 17 Shrove Tuesday
- 22 Margaret of Cortona – sad search for acceptance and love
- 23 Polycarp – the faithful servant who would not deny his Lord
- 24 Matthias the Apostle
- 27 Gabriel Possenti – and the enjoyment of romance
- 27 George Herbert, priest and poet
- 27 The Vicar's a Poet

1st February – Seiriol, Saint of Puffin Island

You can find traces of old saints in most corners of the British Isles, but Seiriol is one of the only two saints connected to Anglesey, and certainly the ONLY saint connected to Puffin Island. It was back in the 6th century that this gentle abbot first settled in Penmon, and built a little church. His ruined beehive cell still survives there today, as does the well from which he drew water, both for his own use, and also for baptising local people.

Although he lived as a simple hermit, Seiriol soon attracted followers, and eventually he decided to establish a small monastery. He chose to build it on nearby Ynys Seiriol, now called Puffin Island. That little monastery on Puffin Island saw some scary action in 632, when Edwin of Northumbria was chasing the Welsh king, Cadwallon, and ended up besieging him on the island. Cadwallon was finally conquered, and history moved on, but the monastic ruins of Seiriol's little monastery are still there today. Seiriol seems to have been a purely local saint who never attracted a very great number of followers. The only known dedications to him are at Penmon and Puffin Island. But Seiriol's life and work are still a testimony today.

14th February – The Two Valentines

If you dig into the history of Valentine's Day, you discover it has a complicated past. There seems to have been two Valentines: Valentine of Terni and Valentine of Rome. But there was only one road involved: the Via Flaminia, or Flaminian Way. According to some sources, Valentine of Terni was a third century bishop found "guilty" of having encouraged some young men to convert to Christianity. When the prefect of Rome heard of this, he was furious, and had Valentine of Terni arrested. Valentine of Terni was then taken to Rome on the Flaminian Way, which was the road linking Rome and Terni. In Rome, he was beheaded in 273. His remains were then taken back to Terni for burial. Valentine of Rome was a priest who was also martyred in the middle of the third century, this time under the authority of Claudius II. But Valentine of Rome's death may have occurred on the Flaminian Way, where a basilica completed by Pope Theodosius about three centuries later, bearing his name, has also been found. The two stories have understandably become confused!

One thing seems sure: our present-day custom of sending cards and flowers to declare our love has nothing to do with either Valentine. Instead, these may come from the poet John Donne in about 1632. He wrote a marriage song which includes religious commemoration of Valentine along with fertility symbolism. Even the pagan Lupercalia festival may have gone into the mix which flavours our current celebrations of the day.

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



Revelations & Dance Snippets



**Saturday 7th March
2.30PM & 7.30PM**

Ticket Line:

Bridport TIC

Tel: 01308 424901

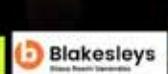
Adults - £15/Under 18 - £9

www.electricpalace.org.uk/theatre

Photographs by Len Copland



**Bridport Electric Palace
DT6 3NY**



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Upton Chearey	9.30 Holy Communion		9.30am Morning Worship	9.30am Morning Prayer		9.30am Breakfast Church
Punknowle	11.00am Holy Communion		7.00pm Candlemas Meditation			4.00pm Community Church at LATCH
Swyne	3.00pm Evening Prayer				11.00am Holy Communion	11.00am Café Church
Shipton Conye				9.30am Breakfast Church		
Long Bradly	11.00am Holy Communion				9.30am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion
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Portesham					10.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion
Abbotsbury	9.30am Holy Communion				10.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion
Langton Herring	9.00am BCP Communion			11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion	
						11.30am 4 th Feb at Burton Bradstock (No lunch this month)
						11.30am 25 th Feb at Portesham

