

Food Bank p3

Remembrance p15



St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

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The Messenger

St Mary's Messenger is published quarterly and distributed to 3,000 homes in the parish. Contact us by email: messenger@stmarysb.org.uk or by telephone:

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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

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 Tuesday evenings

Bellringing

Contact Simon Tomlinson 962 4020
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*



@stmarymagsb



St Mary Magdalene Church
(@StMarySB)

Insight into NW Bristol Foodbank

By Judith Sheather

The hampers for food donations in the church porch and on the office stairs are familiar, but not everyone understands the 'mechanics' of the food bank. I asked Shauna, one of two Foodbank administrators in Avonmouth, to explain.



'To access the foodbank, a client is referred from a recognised agency. This could be an advice service like Citizen's Advice, Social workers, Schools (for people with children). A conversation between the client and the agency about their circumstances can lead to the conclusion that a client needs food support, possibly alongside other types of support (e.g. housing).

'The foodbank is an emergency service, aimed at helping clients in the short-term whilst they're in crisis. Each case is different, and therefore the frequency of food support varies. Usually, we provide food that would feed an individual or family for at least three days. We provide food boxes with non-perishable items, along with a fresh fruit and veg bag and toiletries. Food is boxed for collection, and we accommodate special dietary requirements (e.g. gluten free, halal, vegetarian) which are disclosed to us in advance. Some clients go through their box when they come to collect it and leave behind items that they won't use, which helps to reduce waste.

'Bristol NW Foodbank has four outlets that are open from 10 am to noon at different locations: St. Andrew's Church in Avonmouth on Mondays, Hope Chapel in Hotwells on Wednesdays, Hope café and Church in Lawrence Weston on Thursdays and Emmanuel Chapel in Henbury on Fridays.

'The office team receives notification from an agency of a client's referral and notes special dietary requirements. They contact the client by text or phone to make sure they know where and when to collect their food. When clients arrive at a foodbank outlet to collect they may also have access to an advice worker and to other resources.

'Clients qualify for food delivery if they have an illness

or disability that means they are physically unable to collect from an outlet. This can be physical or mental health. We allow other people to collect on behalf of clients (e.g. referrers, family/friends) by arrangement to add flexibility. Our delivery area covers all of BS8, 9 and 11 and occasionally also parts of BS1, 6, 10 and 35.' Members of St Mary's volunteer to help with the sorting of donations and delivery.

'We ask for non-perishable foods and toiletries. We have partnerships with supermarkets in the Bristol NW area, who provide us with surplus and near-dated fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers. Some also have customer donation points for giving non-perishable goods whilst shopping. Our local community, churches, schools, and local companies give generously. These types of regular donations have really kept us going whilst we have seen a huge drop in our donations overall.'

As volunteer deliverers we have certainly noticed the smiles of delight when clients receive the treat of a bunch of flowers on top of their food. Please do keep filling the hampers with dry food donations to support the help given in these challenging times by both the Foodbank and the Sisters of the Church in St Paul's. Our donations do count.

*Cover picture: Hazel Craig at the food bank
Above: boxes ready for delivery in the store-room*

Green Gym

By Ian Kerr



The green gym is the outdoor, and rather more useful, equivalent of spending time on a boring exercise machine in an expensive club: a morning in the open air doing something useful among like-minded friends. Our nearest Green Gym is at Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve.

When the Friends of Old Sneed Park was formed in 1995, there was an extensive backlog of maintenance to be carried out to make the reserve usable. The meadows were quite extensively covered with bramble, and mature trees had fallen in from the woodland, which was largely impenetrable. The lake was silted up at the upstream end and infested with willow at the dam end. The dam was leaking, mainly because a magnificent Scots Pine stood on it, the roots in the middle of it. The small island was overgrown, and carried a mature tree, whose branches mixed with the trees in the gardens on the far side, making a bridge for raiding rodents in search of birds' eggs or young.

So, we have been holding our Green Gym working parties for twenty-seven years, and the results are impressive on the ground and beneficial for the participants. We operate on Saturday mornings, every four weeks from September until April, leaving the summer months for nature to get on with the business of breeding and rearing. Typical attendance is 10 – 20, and there is a job list with a choice which can range from light secateurs tasks to digging out bramble roots. The tasks undertaken over the years include clearing the hedges of bramble, planting bluebells, taking out non-native Spanish bluebells, clearing scrub, scything reeds, planting hedges and larger trees, raking cut hay, repairing steps and trimming hedges. When we started, Japanese Knotweed was widespread; last year we found one stem – this year, none. Enthusiasm and vigilance help to keep the place in order.

Working parties are fun and at half-time we break for refreshment and chat, with complimentary biscuits. Young and not-so-young come along. Our oldest regular was Ken who joined us until he died aged 92. Some children come with their parents; we have been joined by Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates and the Brownies have helped us plant trees.

Do come along this autumn. Dates are published in the Messenger (see p13), on the website of FOSPNR, in Bristol 9 magazine and on our notice boards.

Making Memories

By Glenda Lindsay

I have lived in Bishop's Knoll flats for 29 years and my husband, Ian, and I used frequently to walk in the beautiful woods of the Woodland Trust down to the meadows of the Nature Reserve. When the three children of my Bristol resident son were small, we would take them down through the woods to the far corner of the first meadow past the lake. We all carried a rucksack with a picnic and a teddy bear peeping out from the top. We would sit together and once we had finished eating Emily would announce a rest time (all of a minute!) Then they would all set off to learn the names of simple wild flowers from Ian and me. When Ian died in April 2020 I asked for a bench donated in his memory and it has finally been installed – imagine my delight to discover it's sited in our memory spot!



Stoke Bishop Local History Group

By Peter Weeks

Our local history group started in 1988 at a meeting in the Village Hall organised by Penny Jetzer to see if people were interested. They certainly were!

Penny Jetzer and her husband Roger lived in the flat above what is now Ciao's Restaurant – Roger ran the delicatessen below - and she worked as a gardener in Stoke Bishop. Her work brought her into contact with many older people in the area and through her contacts she was able to collect photographs, documents and memories relating to Stoke Bishop and Sneyd Park. Before long she had built up a substantial archive. Ten years later this archive formed the basis of *A Pictorial History of Stoke Bishop and Sneyd Park*, the Group's first publication produced by Penny, Liz Floyd, Diana Bourne and Monica Carp. The book sold well; you can still pick up second-hand copies today.

Sensing a demand for talks about local history, the Group launched a programme of Friday evening meetings with speakers and slides. These popular talks are the main activity of the Group and help bring everyone together to share their interest in our local area, the wider area of Bristol and further afield. Many of us are curious about where we live and want to find out more.

Compared to our older neighbour Westbury-on-Trym, most of the houses in Stoke Bishop and Sneyd Park were built in more recent times. However, people have lived here since before the Romans used the harbour at Sea Mills. We have Stone Age remains, the village of "Stoce" is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and for hundreds of years the land was owned by the Bishops of Worcester until Henry VIII passed it to one of his courtiers Sir Ralph Sadleir. It was not

until 1853 that an Act of Parliament enabled the development of houses (as well as St Mary's church) on the land between the North side of the Downs and the River Trym.

At an exhibition at the Council House Keith Sheather suggested making a film of the history of Stoke Bishop. "Country Air, Channel Breezes" came out first as a video and then a DVD with David Garmston of the BBC as presenter.

Liz Floyd and then Jenny Weeks became Chair of the Group after Penny Jetzer. With the centenary of the First World War, the idea of a book about all the men from Stoke Bishop named on the war memorial came up. So, Liz and Jenny researched and wrote *Leaving Home to Fight* telling the stories of 102 men all connected with Stoke Bishop who did not return from the conflict. Copies available from Salvatore or e-mail sblocalhistory@gmail.com

This year the Group has commissioned a new history of Stoke Bishop being written by Keith Sheather. This book includes much new material discovered since Penny Jetzer's time and will tell the full story of Stoke Bishop as a chronological narrative, from pre-history right up to the Covid pandemic. At various points it weaves Stoke Bishop into the national story. It will be published in 2024.

If you are interested in joining the SB Local History Group there is a website and a Facebook page with details of forthcoming events and contact details. Or email sblocalhistory@gmail.com



At Last - The Decision About Stoke Lodge TVG!

By Helen Powell

Readers of the Messenger will have been following the saga of Stoke Lodge since late 2018 (if not before.) At last we can report that on 28 June 2023, the Council's Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee voted with cross-party support and a strong majority to register Stoke Lodge Playing Field as a Town or Village Green. It has been a long and challenging process and we are so grateful for all the support and encouragement we have received from the local community along the way. Once the land is registered, the fence will have to be removed, restoring the fully shared and open access we enjoyed at Stoke Lodge for generations, with school sports use coexisting with club use and informal recreation. We are absolutely delighted with this outcome and hope it will mark a fresh start for relations with Cotham School as we move forward together.



Perhaps this is an appropriate moment for a reminder of past St Mary's events on the field. Can you recognise anyone from nearly 40 years ago?

Home Library Service

By Judith Sheather

Love reading but unable to get to a library? This service, run by the Royal Voluntary Service in conjunction with local libraries, is wanting to reach you. I asked Janice Walsh, Service Manager, to explain how it works.

'The Home Library Service is available to anyone over the age of 18 who cannot get to their local library for whatever reason. This could be a mobility issue, a disability or sensory impairment, or even caring responsibilities that make it impossible to find the time to get there. If someone would like to start receiving the Service, they can just contact us and we will arrange to visit them to complete a short registration form. They will then be put on our list of people waiting for a volunteer. Sometimes we have a volunteer waiting to be matched while other times it might take a little while to find someone.

Volunteers select books on behalf of the reader, based on the genre(s) they enjoy. The reader can request specific books from their volunteer if they have something particular in mind. Alternatively, if the reader is happy to use the Libraries West App, they can order all their own books online and their volunteer can just collect them from the library. The volunteers visit once every month and generally are happy to stay for a chat if the reader wishes.



All volunteers are DBS checked and have provided identification, proof of address and references. They use their own vehicles for their deliveries, although many cycle or walk to their reader.'

What an opportunity not to be missed!
Ring Royal Voluntary Service 07714898558 or email bhlsvisits@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Transformed Library at Stoke Bishop Primary School

By Ann Smith, School Business Manger



It has been a busy year for Stoke Bishop Church of England Primary School as we have undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the school site. This has included the refurbishment of the school's library. Thanks to a combined effort from staff, pupils and parent volunteers we have transformed our library into a bright, light and welcoming place which children can visit and learn as a class or as individuals.

The new library space was opened by Pip the Reading Dog, our Special Guest of Honour (see picture left). Lots of the children know Pip as he is a regular in school. Since then, the children have been busy learning how to use the space well. Our Year 5 librarians are excited about taking on their new role of keeping the library in order.

Reading is such a wonderful activity but not all children have access to books at home. Many studies across the world have shown that the more children read, the more they grow as people and as learners. That's why we felt it was essential that our library space was turned into something worthy of the name. Here children can find and read books, and there is space for them to research using dedicated laptops which were kindly donated by a parent. We have tried to make the library a place where children can be comfortable and inspired, whatever their age.

We look forward to many children taking pleasure from this exciting new space, both now and in the future.

A Year in the Life of Hazelnut Community Garden

By John White

What a year it has been for Hazelnut! We were busy running our community garden church on two locations in Upper Horfield and Lockleaze, but in October 2022 we had to vacate them because the land was being sold. This was very difficult for our community as we loved our space behind Eden Grove Methodist Church.

But good news! We were on another site by the end of March this year. It is in East Bristol and connected with St. Anne's church. Though it is a smaller church there is much more community activity on the site and we are able to connect with those living in East Bristol quickly. Since our arrival we have worked hard to create new garden areas and grow pollinator-friendly flowers and vegetables.



Above is a picture of our new space when we first arrived and were thinking about what our new plant bed locations could look like.

And below is the same space two months later!



We have also grown in other ways. We have a youth drop-in called Create and Explore. The picture below shows young people from Create and Explore eating sticky rice to celebrate Dragon Boat festival.



We also hired our first employees! Bryony is our Community Garden enabler and Angus is our gardening lead. It has been so amazing to be able to continue to worship and be a church in a garden and grow together.

Hazelnut is also a network; we now have over 30 groups in our network across the UK and international partners beginning in the Congo and Hong Kong.

This next year promises to be just as exciting as we work to establish an Eco Hub in East Bristol. Look out for us, as we will be on Songs of Praise in October. And we will be starting a seed library full of heritage seeds and seeds that reflect food grown from all the cultures around East Bristol.

Would you consider supporting our work?

If you are interested, email John at office@hazelnutcommunityfarm.com

Hazelnut Community Garden is one of St Mary's Mission Partners and John White was one of St Mary's curates before moving to work full time for the Hazelnut Community Garden.

St Alban or St Mary Magdalene?

By Sue Hook

Among the female figures in the stained glass at St Mary Magdalene are Lydia, the first known Christian convert in Europe, Mary Magdalene, the first witness of Jesus' resurrection and the Samaritan woman at the well. Probably the least observed because of its location high up above the Jesse (west) window is one of the smallest stained-glass windows in the church. The fair-haired figure depicted is dressed in a yellow/green garment with a white drape, holding tenderly a cylindrical container with a domed lid.

The location of the window is strikingly visible when standing in the chancel, interestingly more visible to those who officiate during services while the congregation looks eastwards. Beneath the image is an inscription of three letters and the date 1897.

The current identification of the image is that of St Alban, the first British Christian martyr (1). I would suggest, however, that the image is that of St Mary Magdalene. Depictions of St Mary Magdalene in other stained glass around the country frequently portray her holding a container which holds the nard with which she anoints the feet of Jesus. St Alban, in contrast, often, but not exclusively, has military garb (e.g. armour) or a military attribute (e.g. a sword) or both.

The inscription beneath the image has been interpreted as 'GPP 1897'. However, upon detailed examination of the letters, it is clear they read 'GHP'(2). The published version misreads the second letter. So who might GHP be? He could be identified with the churchwarden G.H.Perrin who is listed as one of fifteen who served between 1880 and 1925 (3). He was also a local timber merchant documented from 1894-95 in the Bristol city archives.

Could it then be that this image is that of St Mary Magdalene (to whom the church is dedicated) and not St Alban? The first British martyr or the first person to witness the resurrected Christ? A puzzle but such a treasure for such a small window.

1. See the booklet '*St Mary Magdalene Stained Glass Windows*' produced by Keith and Judith Sheather based on the work of Evelyn Libra.
2. The type is formal Gothic Bookhand upper case; littera gothica textualis formata.
3. *St Mary Magdalene, The Story of Stoke Bishop Church 1860-2000*; Roy Henderson and Keith Sheather, page 112.



Diamond Wedding Congratulations!

Congratulations to David and Jenny Baker who celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary in July. They are pictured here with their card from the King and Queen Consort.



Welcome to St Mary's Office Team, Siân!

By Sarah Harris

First of all, a very warm thank you to Carrie Patterson for all her work in the St Mary's Church Office from 2016-2023. We are also grateful to Helena Whitwell for standing in as interim Office Manager between posts and covering for Rachel Sandford, while she had her hip replaced. Rachel is back in the office and recovering well. As Administrative Assistant, Rachel deals with bookings for the Church and Church Rooms and handling general enquiries. She points people to those who have specific tasks, like Stephanie Wren, who administers Life Events services such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Lucy Allen is also a great asset to the office team as Facilities Manager.

Siân Steel has now taken up the role of overall Operations Manager at a time of considerable change in St Mary's office environment, not just in terms of personnel, but also because we are on the cusp of significant alterations to the Church Rooms, where the office is located.

Siân is very experienced at working in an organisational and administration capacity and has worked in three churches. She spent 10 years with the BBC before she felt called to work within a Christian organisation. She was guided towards a role at her local parish in Wraxall, which she enjoyed for just over three years. The parish of Wraxall and Failand includes two churches, All Saints Wraxall, a community church and St Bartholomew's Failand, which has recently become famous for its church camping or champing!

Siân and her husband Dave have lived on the Tyntesfield estate for 21 years and love being surrounded by countryside. They bought one of the estate cottages which were sold off in 2001-2 after Lord Wraxall died and spent a lot of time doing it up themselves. They acquired many new skills and Siân even learnt how to plaster! Later their daughter, Jemma, now 19, was born and grew up there.

Siân then became Operations Manager at Holy Trinity, Nailsea, which is a similar size to St Mary's. The job was very rewarding yet challenging, especially during the pandemic. Her role there came to an end in January 2023. Siân really enjoys working in a church office environment, where every day is different and she can serve a whole variety of people with different needs.



Siân describes her main responsibility at St Mary's as providing good structures and systems to enable the clergy and other staff to be freed to carry out their particular roles. She is part of the Leadership Team and responsible for running the church office, its procedures, communications and its policies. She is also Secretary to the PCC and on the Buildings Committee.

I asked Siân what she thought her greatest challenge was going to be. She replied, "The building work is going to be a big challenge as the office and foyer are to be extensively adapted and we shall have to move offices. There have been various setbacks beyond our control, but the PCC is doing everything possible to secure a start date with the building contractor. We are hoping to keep the bookings we have in our various rooms during the construction period but there is a lot to think about." Siân is still finding out where everything is before the move! She is confident everyone will be working prayerfully and happily as a team. "I have only been here a few weeks and have very much enjoyed working with Jema and the staff team who have all been very welcoming. I am settling in, working things out and enjoying getting my head around it all...and it's also a good place to go for a walk!"

***The church office is open on weekdays from 9.30 am until 1 pm
or at other times by appointment.***

A Bereavement Journey

I recently sat beside the hospital bed of my god-father who was dying. We enjoyed sharing in West Ham's recent success and he proudly showed me the signed photo of the team that an anonymous well-wisher had sent to him. We shared treasured memories of people we'd known.

We talked about his grand-daughter's recent baptism and remembered his own baptism. We reflected on how Christian baptism is a one-off event but how it symbolically encapsulates a whole journey from death to life: a journey passing through deep waters (in my god-father's case, of literally being submerged in deep waters); a moment of cleansing and of burdens being lifted by God; a moment of resurrection out of the water and to new, eternal, life. There were many resonances between my god-father's journey through baptism and his more recent journey through death to life beyond the grave.

The churches of the Avonside Mission Area (the parishes of Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston, Sea Mills and Coombe Dingle, Shirehampton, and Stoke Bishop) have recently been hosting a 'Bereavement Journey' at St Mary's, Shirehampton, facilitated by Rev Alison Sowton. It has run over 7 weeks looking at topics such as loss (attachment and separation); the pain of grief; obstacles to the grief journey; coping

with change; moving forward; and an optional session looking at questions of faith.

Guests are invited to watch two films each week and respond through facilitated discussion groups. Each week there are additional resources to help people continue to reflect and explore the topics more deeply.

Rev Alison says, "The opportunity to work on personal loss in a safe and supportive environment has proved to be hugely helpful to those attending. Providing a mixture of tools to suit many different experiences and personalities, the course encourages each person to work on their own grief journeys. Guests sharing their individual stories has allowed others to find understanding, support and hope in new ways to living with loss."

This course, which is run by churches all over the UK, is designed for anyone struggling with a bereavement be it in recent months or many years ago. The churches of the Avonside Mission Area will be running this course again in the autumn and spring and intend to alternate between daytime and evening courses to meet people's needs. Please contact office@stmarysb.org.uk for more details if you would be interested in attending.

Revd Simon Potter



Celebration of Harvest
Sunday 1 October
9 am and 10.30 am

Please bring gifts of non-perishable foods or money for distribution by the Foodbank and the Sisters of the Church.

Help decorate the church on Saturday 30 September at 10 am, bringing greenery or flowers from your garden.

Contact Barbara Spedding for more information.
barbaraspedding@icloud.com

Sister Theresa at play



Sister Theresa of The Sisters of the Church, one of St Mary's mission partners. Judith Sheather was delivering tins etc from the church to the Sisters in St Paul's and found Sister Teresa wearing her clerical collar having been ordained deacon in July. She was delighted with the bat included in the hamper - as the Sisters know so many children - and decided to give it a try.

AI—whose words do we follow?

I shared with my husband over breakfast that one of my tasks for the day was to prepare this article. He immediately replied, *you should get AI to write it for you!*

You might have heard in the news recently about the rise in AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology which has made it possible for internet users to access free software which enables computer to generate text on your behalf. For example, I could command the software to *write 300 words for a parish magazine about ice cream, linking it with the Biblical account of Jesus walking on water*, and a second or two later it would provide me with an article.

I tested out a few scenarios and discovered that the software is uncomfortably clever. None of them were articles I would feel entirely happy passing off as my own, but they were better than you might expect them to be, given that they have been produced by a computer!

AI is a huge, concerning area of technological advancement which I am clearly not going to do justice to in a short article like this, but the news headlines did get me thinking. Will words begin to lose their power if increasing proportions of what we read has been generated by AI? Is there something more authentic about things that have been written or spoken by actual human beings?

I'm not against the use of AI technology, as I can see how it could be beneficial in certain industries, but I think I'm a very long way from asking AI to write my sermons! For me, the most powerful words are God's words. I find these in the Bible and also through prayer (two-way communication with God).

It's not always easy, but I try and live in accordance with God's Word. In the Bible, 'The Word' is a shorthand way of describing Jesus. He is *the Word made flesh*. As a Christian, my ultimate aim is to try and become more like Jesus, to grow in Christlikeness. I won't ever achieve this fully, but trying to apply what the Bible says to my life is an important discipline as I seek to become more like the One I follow.

Words are powerful. I'd encourage you to give some thought to whose words you are following. Are those words helping you to live the life you want to be living?



Rev'd Jema Ball
Vicar of St Mary's



From the **CHURCH REGISTERS** May to July 2023

Baptisms

- 21 May Alfred Butt
- 28 May Florence Farrall-Miles
- 2 July Louis Kislingbury

Weddings

- 15 July Ian Sutherland and Vivienne Francois
- 22 July Jamie Rossiter and Danielle Jones
- 29 July Alistair Hardie and Joanna Hodnett

Funerals

- 4 May Anne Bodenham
- 4 May Rosalind Oaten
- 19 May Judy Reynolds
- 1 June Mary Roy
- 19 June Irene Shore
- 21 June Julian Chapman

Interment of Ashes

- 1 July Gwen Sutton
- 30 July Myra Higgins

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Mr B, client's son

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Diary

Wednesday 27 September
 Celebration service at St Edyth's
 to welcome their new vicar

Sunday 1 October
 Harvest Sunday
 services at 9am and 10.30am
 See page 10

Sunday 12th November
 10 am Service of Remembrance
 4 pm Holy Communion

The Messenger - Please help!

Just four times a year...

We still need to increase the Messenger
 delivery team and would love to have
 volunteers for these streets:

Druid Road (part only)
Stoke Park Rd
Tunstall Close (flats)
Avon Grove
Sea Walls Rd & flats
Sambourne Court & Flats

Contact Rachel Sandford in the church office.
 Or email messenger@stmarysb.org.uk



Our sympathies to these householders. A reminder to us all that steep slopes are increasingly apt to fail as the climate changes. (Photo by Judith Sheather)

Community Diary Autumn 2023

Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

Saturdays 16 Sept, 11 Nov, 9 Dec 10 am-noon
Working parties: Glenavon Park entrance.
 Please bring gloves, secateurs, loppers etc. No
 experience needed. Refreshments provided.
www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org
 To join the Friends, book a place or contact a
 committee member: fospnr@gmail.com

Stoke Bishop & Sneyd Park Local History Group

Fri 27 Oct: Slavery and Bristol by Gary Best, local
 historian.

Fri 1 Dec: The Story of the Modern Matthew by Clive
 Burlton, local historical writer and publisher.

*All talks in Village Hall at 7.30. Visitors welcome £3.
 Please email sblocalhistory@gmail.com,
 or phone 0117 9686010 for news and joining details.*

University Botanic Garden

Stoke Park Road
Open every day 10 am - 4.30 pm
 Adults £9
 (Friends, children, students, staff, alumni free).
 Wed is DAISY day (donate as it suits you).
 Chandos Road Deli refreshments daily 11 am-4 pm

*See website for up-to-date information
www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden*

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project

Varied programme of events and courses.
 Conservation centre on Guthrie Rd remains open.

*For full details of the programme, and booking
 arrangements visit the website
<https://avongorge.org.uk/whatson>
 phone 0117 903 0609 or
 email avongorgewildlife@bzsociety.org.uk*

Stoke Bishop/Sea Mills Ward Forum

The next meeting is expected to be in the autumn
 To join the mailing list, email stokebishopforum@aol.com

Cubbaccinos

1st Saturday of month 10 am – 12.30 pm
 Coffee, cakes, books etc in aid of the Scout Hut.
 Kewstoke Road

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*

St Francis at Creationtide

By Hazel Trapnell

A recent Sunday morning service was broadcast from the sell-out exhibition on St Francis of Assisi at the National Gallery. Those who missed the exhibition, like myself, could view it on-line; I thought you might like a taste...

St Francis, who lived in the first half of 12th century, is the saint of ecology; his feast day is on 4 October just after we celebrate harvest at St Mary's. He was a man whose thinking changed the world and who challenged the church in its luke-warmness and corruption.

I must admit that St Francis both attracts me and scares me, with his total embrace of poverty. He attracts me with his courage, his simplicity, his joy in the world around him, in his deep association with and his love for his fellow creatures. He scares me (or should I say, challenges me) with the dedication of his life to rebuilding the church, joyfully living an austere life as he sought to love all God's creatures.



Zurbaran, a Spanish artist, must have been fascinated by St Francis as he painted many portraits of this intriguing figure who continues to speak to many today. Zurbaran shows him in his tattered brown habit, holding a skull, and apparently meditating on death (1693). One of the exhibits at the National Gallery was apparently St Francis' habit, patched and worn. St Francis was apparently unafraid to die and spoke of

'Sister Death', such was his deep fellowship with his Lord and Master, and his assurance of life beyond the grave.

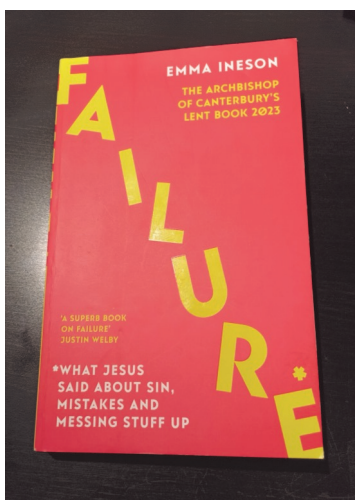


A mark of his divinity was his association with all living creatures, treating them as equals. Two paintings from different eras show Francis and the birds. In the one above, painted by Giotto de Bondone, (14th century) St Francis was preaching to the birds on the subject of gratitude (they should be grateful that the Lord provided all their needs and should therefore sing joyously).

Stanley Spencer's painting (right) on the same subject, is based on the artist's father going out to feed the hens in his dressing-gown. (1939)



Do join us as we continue, centuries later, to celebrate the gifts of the natural world at our services of Harvest Thanksgiving on 1 October.



Why we all fail and what to do about this...

Emma Ineson's recent book, *Failure*, the Archbishop of Canterbury's choice for a Lent book this year, unpacks the Bible's teaching, current thinking and the language of failure and explores how we can live with our failure. Emma considers individual failing and corporate failing (including the failings of the Church) as well as original sin, and explains how Jesus's death atones for the sin of the whole world and everyone in it.

Emma's style is conversational and quietly humorous, and will be recognised by those fortunate enough to have heard her preach. The book is well-researched and referenced as one would expect from a scholar of Emma's standing.

The Reverend Doctor Emma Ineson, formerly Principal of Trinity College, Bristol is now Bishop of Kensington following a spell as Bishop of Penrith and then Bishop to the Archbishops, after leaving Bristol.

Gillian Baxter

Remembrance

By Peter Weeks

Why does it matter that we remember those from our area who died in two world wars and later conflicts? Few, if any of us, personally know the men who died in WW2. The most recent Stoke Bishop resident to die in armed conflict was Andrew Chesterman in Helmand, Afghanistan in 2012. But throughout the year we see wreaths of red poppies lying on our local war memorial, the stone cross at the top of Stoke Hill. Something about death and loss in war moves many of us every year to wear a poppy and attend a Remembrance Day event.

The centenary of WW1 a few years ago prompted two local historians, Liz Tomlinson and Jenny Weeks, to write a book telling the stories of the men from Stoke Bishop who did not return from that conflict. They began with the sixty-six names on the Memorial Cross and then researched the stories of the men named on two other local war memorials; one memorial destroyed in WW2 but recorded in a photograph, the other displayed in St



Mary's church. Their book "Leaving Home to Fight" lists one hundred and two names in total, all with some connection to Stoke Bishop, many of whom lived in the houses that we now live in.

One local road, Downleaze in Sneyd Park, has a particular resonance for me. At the time of the First World War most of the houses in Downleaze were family homes where many of those named on the Memorial Cross lived. Typically the sons of businessmen, they enlisted as junior officers, often in infantry regiments that fought on the Western Front and which had the highest casualty rates. From time to time, I deliver leaflets in this street, and in my mind's eye as I walk along I am taken back in time to see the postman bringing the War Office telegram that every family must have

dreaded. Ten families on our memorials lost more than one son – sometimes within a few days. Four families lost three sons; I cannot imagine the pain that these families had to endure.

Remembrance is about trying to understand loss and death, but I think it's important also to remember those who survived but were badly damaged in body or in mind. Both Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon wrote moving poems imagining the fate of these victims of war. "Disabled" by Wilfred Owen, for example, describes the loss of

any purpose or hope in life for a young man after he "threw away his knees" in battle. And Siegfried Sassoon asks a casualty of war: "Do they matter? – those dreams from the pit? ..." Names of men like this appear on no memorial although they made a similar sacrifice.

Postcard shows the dedication of Stoke Bishop Memorial Cross on 15 May 1920.



St Mary's Remembrance service will be held on 12 November at 10am.



Make Harvest Designs

With Sarah Harris

Here are some finished decorations we have made as examples

- * Left is a large jar lid
- * Below is a biscuit tin lid
- * Right is a small jam jar lid.

Can you see what we used to make our designs?



To make designs you will need:

- * a variety of seeds and beans in different colours and maybe nuts, dried fruits, rice, oats...
- * old lids from jam jars, tins or other containers (bigger ones are best), washed and dried.
- * plasticine or air-drying modelling clay to keep your design in place (or use card and glue)



One of us noticed that a piece of dried mango looked like a red squirrel's tail! So we made a squirrel picture on one of our lids. The mango doesn't always stay deep into the plasticine and some bits were on top of others, so we used a glue-stick to help. He has a black bean for an eye and is eating a piece of almond nut.



Now it's your turn!
Use the pictures on the left to help you.

1. Prepare your plasticine.

- * Plasticine comes in layers and sections. Separate a couple of layers and break them.
- * Squash the plasticine, squeeze it and make it warm and soft. Then turn it into a ball.
- * Flatten your ball. Make it the size of your lid. Then squash it into the lid.
- * If you are using the lid of a bigger container you might need to use a rolling pin to flatten the plasticine evenly across the lid.



2. Think about your design and begin it.

- * Select your first seeds or beans and squash them into the plasticine.
- * Carry on with more seeds and beans, creating your design until you have covered the plasticine or have completed the design.
- * Designs with patterns of seeds and beans as in the jar lids we picture on this page seem to fit the small jam pot lids best.
- * Remember that you can't 'go wrong'. It is easy to change something if you decide you don't like it.
- * This is how Lucia's design started. At first, she added these seeds, fruit and beans.
- * Then she took some away and added different ones until she was happy with her design.
- * Her finished lid is pictured on the right.



Keep your beans and seeds tidy!





Goodbye and Thank You to Hayley Brydges

Interview by Rachel Powlesland
and farewell painting by Keziah Ball

So, Hayley, tell us what you are moving on to do.

I am going to continue working for the diocese as Mental Health Adviser and to be working part time for Müllers, a Christian charity based in Ashley Down, as their operations administrator. I am hoping to do some study alongside in the area of mental health/psychology, but I think that's going to look different to how I originally planned!

What are you most looking forward to in this new role?

I'm looking forward to getting to know the team at Müllers more and supporting their work in Bristol and further afield. After 7 years of youth work in the church I'm excited to use the skills I've learnt and apply them to something a bit different!

You have done many things since joining us in 2020. What has filled you with the most sense of achievement?

I think the confirmation course that Andrew and I ran in 2022. Eight young people attended weekly to dig deeper into the Christian faith and enjoy a meal together. Seven young people from that group went on to be confirmed, publicly declaring their faith to friends and family. As I watched them go on this journey and seeing how they've lived their lives since this event I am in awe of how they live for Jesus in the everyday.

Tell us about a highlight of the last three years.

The highlight has probably been attending Explore@4 on Sunday afternoons! I love the creative ways we've been able to do church, the conversations with children and their parents, and all the new things I've learnt along the way.

You have enjoyed getting together over food with our Young People. What has become your favourite thing to eat since hanging out with our Young People?

Ooo, now this is probably the hardest question so far. I'd probably have to say caterpillar cake for the number of times we've had it at Bulb and not got bored with it yet!

Have they introduced you to any new foods?

No, I think it's been mostly me with my weird or 'unusual' food combinations! I don't think chips and custard is that weird...

What has been your favourite game to play at Fuel?

All v all dodgeball!

Can you share a funny memory of your time at St Mary's?

Oh it's so hard to pick one! Probably a Bulb session where we were having dinner and we got on to the discussion of dream meals. Andrew and I laughed so hard and the young people had a spirited conversation about if snails are or are not a dream starter. As I write it down, it might have been a 'you have to be there' moment!!

What is your strangest memory from your time at St Mary's?

It's walking into the hall every so often to see what random things are being stored there! My favourites were a big cross by the vacuum cleaner and the mannequins in the Goodbody room.

Thank you, Hayley, for all you have done and the many ways you have blessed us as a church.

Do come back and visit us!☺





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A Different Kind of Harvest

By Eileen Stonebridge

When we think of harvest we usually think of cereal crops or horticultural products but some farmers are devoting several acres to wild flowers in order to gather the seeds for wild flower meadows. Nationally, there is a move to grow more wildflower meadows as it is now well known that there has been a loss of 97% of these since 1945.

The Wildlife Trusts and other conservation organisations are actively encouraging the conservation and planting of wildflower meadows. This year “No Mow May” was widely promoted by the Royal Horticultural Society, in addition to many conservation organisations, and many Councils left areas of grass uncut. The fashion for a perfect green lawn began in the 1770s, when rich landowners who could afford to, left areas without crops or stock. Grass was scythed until the first lawn mower was invented in 1830. By reducing the amount of mowing we reduce energy costs and carbon dioxide emissions as many councils are discovering.

For several years now I have left part of my lawn uncut from the end of April until July and it is amazing what an array of wildflowers have colonised: Ox-eye daisies, red clover, bird’s-foot trefoil, hawkweed, and cat’s ear, to name a few examples. I’ve found nothing uncommon or unusual such as orchids, although there have been plenty of reports of them growing in some people’s lawns. (See picture.)



The beneficiaries of “no mow” are the insects, especially pollinators of which there has been a significant decline over the years. Long grass also provides a place for insects to shelter and many of the larvae feed on the various grasses or wildflowers.

There is a huge interdependence between the mammal world and the insect world, not least our dependence upon insects to fertilise the flowers which become food crops. Fruits, seeds, nuts, vegetables, and oils all rely on insect pollination. It is estimated that between 5% and 8% of world food crops depend on natural pollinators (*Pollination and Food Production 2016 Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*.) Commercial crops such as cotton, palm oil and timber depend on insect pollination too.

There has been a long-term decrease in the number of pollinators due to various factors. Invertebrates react much more quickly to environmental changes than any other group of creatures. This is due to their short life cycle and the fact that many species can fly

away to a more suitable environment. Ray Barnett, a local etymologist, reports that numbers of pollinators are down in 2023 due to the hot dry summer of 2022 which caused a paucity of greenery, and was followed by the cold wet spring. (*Bulletin Bristol Naturalists Society July 2023*). Whether populations can recover depends to a certain extent on weather patterns, which are changing.

A far more likely reason for the decline in the number of butterfly and moth species in particular, is habitat loss - not only the loss of wildflower meadows but also of areas of rough ground and roadside verges. Cutting and spraying with herbicides in the interests of tidiness has caused the depletion of habitats as has the introduction of modern farming methods where larger fields have caused a huge reduction in hedgerows which are important habitats.

The situation is of great concern, but we can all make an effort to do something to help insect populations increase, either by growing more pollinators in our gardens or leaving a few areas of long grass until a late-summer cut.

Helping Hand

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)

J hoots Pharmacy 962 3415
(Westbury-on-Trym)

Westbury Pharmacy 962 8986
(Stoke Lane)

North View Pharmacy 973 3140

Well 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
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Trinity College 968 4493

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Elmlea 377 2266
Head Teacher: Mrs L Wright

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Sea Mills 903 8555

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Darren Jones

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

phone: 0207 219 2302

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London SW1A 0AA

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www.bristol-city.gov.uk

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John Goulandris 922 2227
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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

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Vue Cribbs Causeway 0345 308 4620
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www.nationalrail.co.uk

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

Cover picture
Hazel Craig at the NW Bristol foodbank—see page 3

Photo by Judith Sheather

