

Messenger



**Talent from Stoke Bishop Primary School:
The Piano p3
Spirited Arts Exhibition pp10 -11**

St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

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The Messenger

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Sundays at St Mary's

9 am Holy Communion
with hymns and prayers

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

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

Explore@4

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

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

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

Weekdays at St Mary's

Contact the church office for more information

Bright Sparks

Baby and Toddler Group

Mondays during term time 2-3.30 pm

Fuel

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

Bulb

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

Connect on Tuesdays

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

Thursday Lunch Club

A hot lunch in the church hall
Please book in advance

St Mary's Singers

Choir at 9am Sunday services
Rehearsals 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)

Anton at the Piano

By Gillian Baxter

*The day I visited Anton to talk about his recent TV performance on Channel 4's *The Piano*, he was just back from Y6 camp at Morfa Bay, which, he said was 'so much fun!' He'd tried paddle boarding, mountain biking, ziplining, climbing...the list went on.*

Anton is a pupil at Stoke Bishop Primary School and soon to start at Bristol Grammar School. I hope they are ready for a pupil who is bi-lingual in Russian and English, also speaks Spanish and French, writes poetry, paints and is 'really interested in science'. In Year 5, he gained a Bronze Crest award for an independent study of the DNA extracted from kiwi fruit. He also learns fencing, dances (modern and tap), and enjoys drama. I wondered if he ever sleeps.

But back to music. Anton started to play the piano as a toddler – copying his elder brother, Mark - and has had lessons since the age of 5; at the same age he entered his first competition. It was his piano teacher who suggested Anton respond to Channel 4's call for *The Piano Series 2* in August 2023. He sent a video, (filmed on holiday in



Antwerp) had a telephone interview followed by an audition and by November found himself meeting Claudia Winkleman, Mika and Lang Lang and playing in Cardiff Station with his family amongst the crowd. For Anton the best part was meeting Lang Lang and having him praise his performance. I wondered if he'd got autographs, and was shown a photo of the three of them, duly autographed, proudly displayed on the piano! Anton also has photographs of himself with each of them – of course he selected Lang Lang for this article. (See bottom left)

There were 16 people filmed for episode 2, but only a handful made the cut to the programme where the whole of their performance was shown. Anton was amongst them, but not until a week before the broadcast in May, did he know he had been selected to appear in full. If you missed it, it should still be available 'on demand' by the time you read this. On the day of the finals Anton travelled to Manchester. He didn't reach the final but still had an amazing day and played the piano in the nearby shopping centre as part of the event – pictured above.

How does fame feel? 'Great. People recognise me!'

And what of the future? Playing in lots more competitions, eisteddfods and festivals, and continuing in the National Children's Orchestra on bassoon. That orchestra meets for two weekends each year, so in between, Anton hopes to join the Orchestra at BGS. He has just had his Grade 7 exam result in piano and Grade 5 on bassoon – a distinction on both instruments! A wonderful achievement, especially at the age of 11.

Our time together ended with Anton playing me a piece by Piazzolla – beautifully and with extraordinary expression. I felt very privileged.



Botanic Garden Honours Guangzhou Gift

By Judith Sheather

Guangzhou city 120 miles north-west of Hong Kong has been linked with Bristol since 2001. Following its Gold medal and 'Best in Show' award at the 2021 Chelsea Flower Show, the city of Guangzhou gifted its eco-garden to Bristol, its twin city. Peter Chmiel and Chin Chen, landscape architects of Grant Associates, Bath, co-designed the garden.

The University Botanic Garden has been working hard to prepare the ground for the re-creation of the garden inspired by traditional Chinese philosophy and environmental city planning. This May saw its opening and the beginnings of its growth.

Guangzhou is described as 'the city between mountain and water'. In the Garden its green lungs are its trees (yew, magnolia, dawn redwood, handkerchief), cleansing the air and providing shade for the ferns and water flowing through the site, reminiscent of its native Pearl River. The water trickles over Horsham stone transferred from Chelsea, an ancient sandstone featuring prehistoric water ripples. The ripples in the stone allow air to be trapped below the surface water, producing sparkles.

The heart of the city, the economic and social centre, is represented by sustainable 'tower' buildings, constructed from glulam (glued-laminated) Moso bamboo, a very fast growing and therefore sustainable species. The structures are strong, long lasting and recyclable. Sitting at rest inside, visitors can hear the peaceful splashing of water from the small cascade and enjoy a moment of calm, gazing upon the reflecting pool. When lucky enough to have a blue sky, its blue waters become the Garden's blue kidneys, cleansing and vital for good health.

The original weed-infested soil was removed from the site for the construction of the water system and has been replaced with Hort Loam and other organic matter. The Loam is produced from the recycling of waste from the British sugar beet industry.



An accessible path curves through the Garden and the small bridge is made secure by stainless steel railings, maintenance free.

The compact size of the original Chelsea plot design makes for easy spotting of the young plants as they settle in. It was not possible to use the Chelsea plantings but all the plants featured here originate from Southwest China and Guangdong Province. Each plant has many functions: pollution mitigation, coppicing, nectar production, edible and herbal uses, water retention. Look out for yellow, blue and white flowers and red stemmed shrubs.

Underscoring the Garden's design and the sense of well-being induced by it, are the five elements of the philosophy of Wu Xing: wood, fire, water, earth, metal. While the plants are establishing themselves, the steel sculpture of the kapok flower of Guangzhou, an earlier gift from the city, attracts attention, its surface catching dew.

Previous residents of Stoke Bishop planted their gardens and avenues for later residents to enjoy at their best. We are now at the start, watching the development of the Guangzhou Garden with its eco-message.

Globe Flower



Lt-Colonel Erskine Magniac DSO

By Peter Weeks

Although not a Commonwealth War Cemetery, St Mary's churchyard has six graves that commemorate family members who died in WW1. Close to the entrance from Church Avenue is the grave of Beatrice Magniac, and on the slab covering her grave is a poignant reminder of the loss of two brothers just three days apart in 1917, Erskine and Meredith Magniac. This is the story of Meredith Magniac.

Meredith was born in 1880, the son of a Major-General, and entered Clifton College in 1893, going on to officer training at Sandhurst. This was followed by army service in South Africa, India, Malta and Ireland with his regiment The Lancashire Fusiliers. On the morning of 25 April 1915 he was part of the first wave of the assault landing from small boats onto "W" beach at the southern tip of the Gallipoli peninsula, an action which led to the award of no fewer than six Victoria Crosses to members of his battalion. Later this episode became a byword for conspicuous bravery widely known today as "six VCs before breakfast".

Meredith served throughout the Gallipoli campaign and was mentioned in dispatches for his bravery and leadership. Following the evacuation from Gallipoli, Meredith arrived in France as Lieutenant-Colonel in command of the battalion to join the war on the Western Front. On 1st July 1916 he was in charge of one of the most infamous actions on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. Several hundred men of 1st Lancashire Fusiliers were to attack from a sunken lane in no-man's-land toward German positions outside the village of Beaumont Hamel. On the evening before the attack, Meredith and his men had occupied the sunken lane to shorten the distance they had to cover the next morning. Unfortunately, one of the huge mines that had been dug nearby in advance of the attack, was blown ten minutes early. This alerted the Germans and as the Lancashire Fusiliers advanced they met a hail of fire. In a few minutes almost 90% of the battalion had become casualties. Miraculously Meredith was unwounded and would continue to lead his battalion through the remainder of the year.



However, his war ended on 25 April 1917 during the battle of Arras when he was killed by a shell near the village of Monchy-Le-Preux. A soldier's life and death commemorated in our churchyard; just one of the hundreds of thousands of names from the First World War.

The best-known memorial in our parish is of course Stoke Bishop War Memorial near the top of Stoke Hill. Interestingly though, Meredith Magniac does not appear in the list of 62 names there from WW1. It seems strange that a senior Army officer with local family connections is not remembered this way.

St Mary's Remembrance Service

10 am on Sunday 10 November

At this service, we remember by name the local servicemen and women killed in the first and second world wars and in more recent conflicts.



The Society of Merchant Venturers Today

By Hazell Trapnell

In our last issue we explored the origins of the Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV) in an article by Peter Weeks. Now, we bring the story up to date. This historic society may have its traditional elements, but it has certainly moved on.



Michael Bothamley

This year's Master of SMV is Michael Bothamley. He has been High Sherriff of Bristol and by profession he is a lawyer, but also currently churchwarden at St Mary's Leigh Woods, which is where I met him.

SMV interests and membership

Michael brought me up to date – post 1861 - when SMV's old association with the Port was handed over to the City Council. It soon became clear to me that Michael had a very well developed social conscience, and that that is where his heart lies. He and SMV are alert to the changing needs of society and evolve to keep pace with what is now relevant to the City.

Today, SMV is a philanthropic association with charitable aims and interests – supported by successful business people who have the necessary talents and resources and want to return something to their parent city, Bristol, for its flourishing. Their main concerns include a continuing interest in the education of young people from disadvantaged communities but in new ways, having recently passed responsibility for their schools to a national multi-academy trust. They continue to support older people, through the Cote charity and their role as endowment trustee of St Monica

Trust. Sustainability is high on their agenda and recently there has been investment in a wind turbine in Lawrence Weston. The Society is administered by a standing committee of eighteen members, who meet eight times a year, and sub-committees responsible for its various activities.

The elephant in the room - slavery

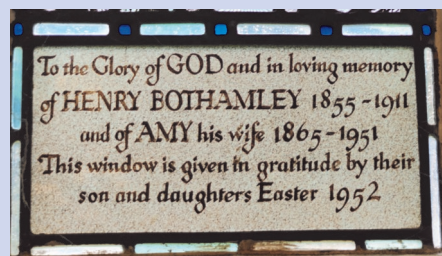
When Bristol's statue of Colston was pulled down and deposited in the docks, it was time for SMV to answer some very difficult questions so they commissioned an independent report through the University of Bristol to establish the extent of the Society's historic connections with slavery. A very sobering draft report dropped through Michael's letterbox just before Christmas. It became clear that, historically, members of SMV had invested in and/or managed around half of Bristol's slaving voyages, transporting a quarter of a million enslaved Africans, of whom almost 45,000 had died. At the time of abolition in 1834, while several members were active abolitionists, eleven members were enslavers.

What measures could SMV take to right old wrongs? How could they compensate the descendants of the slaves and the black community in Bristol, many of whom have been scarred by their history? How could they best support black and minority groups of Bristolians? The Society decided that they should use their business expertise to support black-led enterprises in partnership with African heritage communities, and support the work of the Bristol Legacy Foundation. It is proving to be a heart-warming relationship and an amazing privilege.

Isaiah 58:12 seems very apt: 'Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls; restorer of Streets with Dwellings'.

The Bothamleys and St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

Michael's father, Canon Henry Bothamley, was vicar of St Mary Magdalene from 1949 to 1954, and the St Chad stained glass window in the James Chapel, see below, is dedicated to Michael's grandparents, Henry and Amy. Michael himself was a member of our youth group at one time and made some life long friends there.



Joseph Bilal in South Sudan

By Hazel Trapnell

One of our mission partners, the Revd Joseph Bilal, used to live in Stoke Bishop with his family; you may remember his smile when he served in the Spar.

Since undergraduate days at Trinity College (from 1997) he has gained a Ph.D., become a British Citizen, been a hospital and prison chaplain, a founder member of the Episcopal University of South Sudan, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and, perhaps most importantly, a national and international peacekeeper and maker in that war-torn country.

Joseph now commutes to Juba in South Sudan from his home in Henleaze. After a Christmas break, he returned there in February. As soon as he arrived back here on 18 June, he collapsed and went down with a life-threatening attack of malaria on 28 June 2024. He was rushed to Southmead and mercifully saved. When we met, I quizzed him about his health, his family, and the achievements and challenges he had faced over the last six months.

Since something of a cabinet reshuffle in the restructuring of the infant University, Joseph has appropriately become the Deputy Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Church Relations. His responsibilities are quality assurance and academic excellence at every level. A five-day workshop was held to agree a five-year development plan and to revise and update the curriculum.

There are many practical matters to attend to - some tedious. The new University has been gifted a large area of land around Rokon (Joseph's home village) and, in order to protect it from squatters before it is developed, it has been necessary to build a surrounding fence. Joseph has made the 106 mile round trip many times.

This new University must become sustainable. Joseph was responsible for convening a heart-warming conference with all the Bishops to encourage ownership of the University by the church and to explore expectations.

We know how tricky elections can be, but in South Sudan, the uncertainty and risk is greater. There are to be elections in December 2024. What could they do to encourage fair, free and credible elections? Joseph and the Archbishop's team decided to invite all the government officials, ministers and senior civil servants to a retreat where the focus would be on prayer. One hundred came together on 24 March. In Joseph's words 'it was brilliant'. Liturgy was written and Bible passages chosen to encourage accountability and responsibility. They discussed 'working together' towards stability. Joseph could see that God had gone before them to prepare the way. He beamed as he spoke.



Joseph (in white shirt, back row) and University staff

Joseph's peace-making has been practised in a dispute between tribal chiefs near Rokon and there have been family crises to negotiate. 35 of his family in South Sudan came together and Joseph encouraged them all to play their part in peace-making and public service.

I hope you will pray for Joseph and his health, but also for the health of South Sudan towards which the whole University enterprise is directed.

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Sonia Home and Jenny Rowbottom in the Prayer Hub

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Prayer Hub

Across The Avonside Mission Area, many of the churches host cafés during the week. St Mary's Shirehampton is open on most days from 10 am to noon, including on a Wednesday. This means that you can grab a tea or coffee (and a biscuit!) and then pop in for prayer. Children are very welcome to come with you.

You may or may not choose to share what it is you would value prayer for - that's up to you. We will lift you and your concerns in prayer both in silence and words. You can book in or drop in, it's up to you. Bookings will take priority however, so to guarantee a time of your choice we would encourage to book (details below).

We believe God can meet us when we come before Him in prayer, and that prayer has the power to change things, so why not come and find out for yourself?

Book in using this QR code, call 0117 9687449 or email hubprayer@stmarysb.org.uk



Sonia Home
ASMA Curate

Would you value prayer? Perhaps for something significant happening in your life or simply to know inner peace more fully. Every Wednesday morning in the side chapel of St Mary's Shirehampton, there are a couple of people ready to pray for and with you.



Our Harvest Festivals

will be held on

Sunday 29 September

At 9 am and 10.30 am.

Please bring gifts of non-perishable food.

We shall be arranging flowers on Friday 27 September at 10 am

Please join us and bring greenery or flowers from your garden.

Contact Sue Wood or Gillian Baxter for more details.



New Growth

Late last year a large, seemingly healthy, silver birch tree in our garden fell down during a storm. To our relief, it didn't hit the house! It seemed inexplicable to me that something so solid could be uprooted by the weather without warning. In the months since it happened, that area of our garden has undergone something of a transformation.

In the Bible, Jesus tells a story, a parable, about a farmer who sows seed (Mark 4:1-20). Some of the seed falls 'amongst thorns' which grow up and choke the new growth. He describes these 'thorns' as *the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things*. What are the things in your life which are choking the 'good seed' within you? What needs to be uprooted so that there can be healthy growth?



A sapling I hadn't noticed before is already 4m high; the apple trees, located a few metres from where the silver birch had been, seem to be thriving and the brambles are on the rampage.

This is nature doing what it does best – filling with new growth the spaces created when death occurs. It's a helpful image to have in mind as we consider our own

lives. Sometimes we will experience unexpected 'deaths' – maybe through bereavement or illness or the ending of a relationship. As devastating as these things are, we can expect there to be new, sometimes surprising, growth in response.

Another way that this picture from nature might speak to us is in relation to the things in our lives which need to be 'uprooted'. The silver birch tree looked healthy, but the roots must have been diseased, otherwise it would not have toppled. All of us will have habits, we might call them sins, which are unhealthy – perhaps addictions of some kind, pervasive attitudes or behaviours. These things can be deeply rooted in our lives, and hard to get rid of, despite our best efforts.

As our gardens and green spaces change along with the season, readying themselves for the cooler weather, perhaps we could use this as a prompt to do some autumnal uprooting in our hearts. This pruning will be all the more effective if we invite God, the Master Gardener, to do the work. Jesus promises: *He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.* (John 15:2)

Jema

Rev'd Jema Ball, Vicar of St Mary's



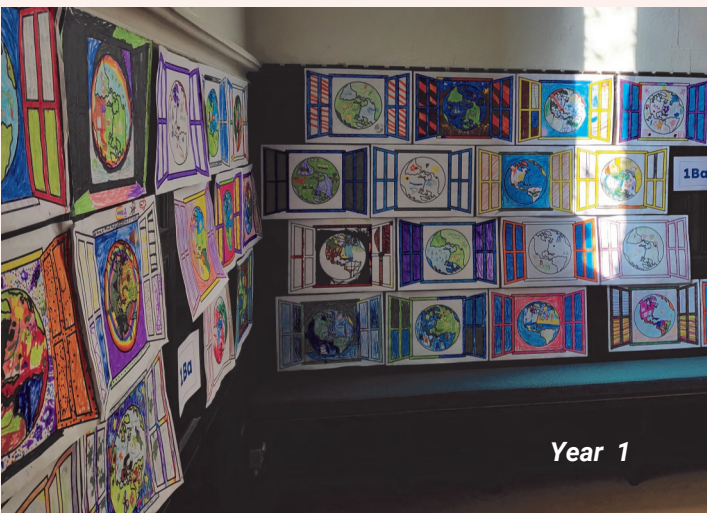
**From the
CHURCH REGISTERS**

May–July 2024

Baptisms
18 June Wilfred Micklewright

Funerals
17 May Jan Serjeant
29 May Roger Baird
17 July Pat Sherwood

What does Spiritu



What does Spirituality mean to you?

During the summer term, this question was posed to all the children at Stoke Bishop CE Primary school. Every child in the school was given the opportunity to express their response artistically. This artwork was then displayed as a Spirited Arts Exhibition at St Mary's in May. We invited members of the church to take part too.

The variety of artwork was amazing. So many children had clearly thought deeply about what they were doing, expressing their beliefs and feelings in all sorts of creative ways. Every picture was different, and the church was filled with colour.

Classes from the school visited the gallery of art during the day and children brought their parents and families to see it after school too. The Exhibition was also enjoyed by many others within the community - members of St Mary's and passers-by.

After looking around the exhibition, children had the chance to reflect on what they had seen; they were asked whether they had enjoyed the artwork and why, and also, how seeing it had made them feel.

These were some of the responses:

- I felt calm; peaceful; amazing colours; lots of detail; inspired; contented; enjoyed seeing all the art displayed; helped me think about my feelings, about others and about the world; the pictures made me feel bright because of how vibrant they were; the colour and beauty of expressing your feelings is so nice; made me think about the inner thoughts of other people; I like that they are all different; some of the artwork made me laugh, some made me feel happy and sometimes it made me feel sad.*



Quality mean to you?

Later, I asked the some of the older children about their experiences in producing their artwork as they explored the meaning of Spirituality.

Y6 (age 10 – 11)

- No one's artwork was the same*
- Unique to you It was so relaxing*
- There's personality in each painting*
- I didn't feel any pressure, because all of the work was displayed*
- So much easier than using words – I can't describe it in words, but I can explain it in a picture. It has helped my understanding of spirituality – I realise it is so much bigger than I thought*
- Everyone has been included*

Y5 (age 9-10)

- I really liked it – it was based on spirituality, but you could then draw on whatever you felt it meant.*
- Drawing feelings is much easier than speaking*
- Express self It's 'out of the box'*
- Really enjoyed using different media.*
- Everyone had a different idea*
- We all have different imaginations*
- Could see everyone was different and unique*
- So much colour Got to be free*
- Helped my understanding of the word - at first, I didn't know the word, but by the end, we were all expressing it in art.*
- Could express how you were feeling*
- Didn't feel stuck to the paper - I could release my imagination and thoughts inside.*
- No right or wrong answer*



The Art and RE Lead Teachers said:

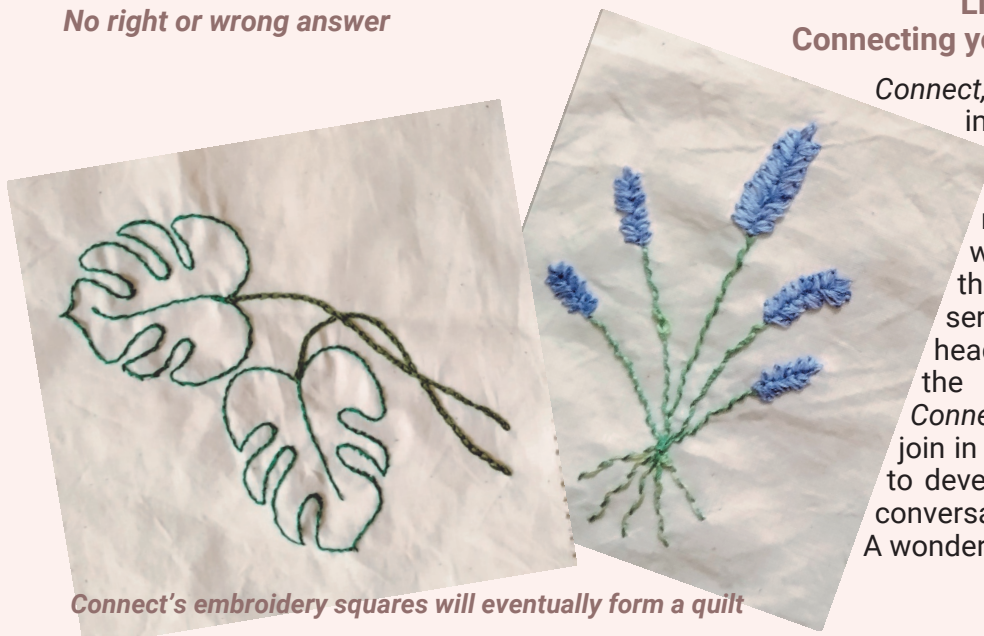
'We were so excited to see all the children's artwork displayed so beautifully in the church. They loved finding their piece and seeing how others responded to the same theme. Thank you, St Mary's, for this wonderful opportunity.'

Rachel Powlesland
Children and Families Minister

**Life is full of surprises:
Connecting young and old through embroidery**

Connect, which meets on Tuesday mornings in the church for craft and more, has recently found embroidery very popular, although most of us were novice embroiderers to begin with. When the school came to view the exhibition, children from Year 5 served refreshments with their headteacher, David Forrester. David and the children quickly became part of *Connect* with both boys and girls opting to join in the embroidery. Relationships began to develop between young and old and the conversation was extraordinarily rich. A wonderful morning!

Hazel Trapnell



Connect's embroidery squares will eventually form a quilt

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Mr B, client's son

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St Mary's Autumn Events

Sunday 29 September: Harvest Celebration
see page 8 and website for further details

Saturday 12 October: Springs Dance Company
7.30 pm 'A time to mourn, a time to dance'
Further details to follow on our website

Sunday 13 October: ASMA Celebration Evening
5pm at St Mary's

Sunday 10 November: Remembrance
10 am service only

STOKE BISHOP LADIES' CHOIR ...

...starts again on Monday, 9th September.
1.45 - 4 pm in Stoke Bishop Village Hall.
Concert 9th December.

Enquiries to
Carolyn on 0117 279 1409
or Elizabeth on 0117 968 1759

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What we do:

- deliver events and activities like educational talks, pond-dipping and wildflower planting
- organise and fund capital works like the dipping platform, benches and footpaths
- manage the Reserve for nature so that visitors can enjoy wildflowers, butterflies and birds

To join from just £10 per year, visit our website

oldsneedparknaturereserve.org/membership
or email FOSPNR@gmail.com

Community Diary Autumn 2024

Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

Saturdays 14 Sept, 12 Oct, 9 Nov, 7 Dec, 10 am–noon:
Working parties. Hot drinks and biscuits provided. Please bring gloves and tools.

www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org
To join the Friends, or contact a committee member: fospnr@gmail.com

Stoke Bishop and Sneyd Park Local History Group

Fri 6 Sept: Hannah More (1745-1833), Her Life and Work by Jo Edwards

Fri 4 Oct: The Gibbs of Tyntesfield—their Business interests and social circles, by Liz Tomlinson and Margaret Wilcock

Fri 8 Nov: Book launch! Stoke Bishop—Bristol's Leafy Suburb. Talk and Exhibition.

All talks in Village Hall at 7.30 pm.
Visitors welcome £3. Membership £6 pa.
Please email sblocalhistory@gmail.com,
or phone 0117 9686010 for news and membership.

University Botanic Garden

Sept/Oct Open weekdays 10 am–4.30 pm
Nov–Feb 10am to dusk. Adults £9

'Friends', children, students, staff, alumni free.
Wed is DAISY day (donate as it suits you).

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

Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Ward Forum

Fri 13 September: 7 – 9 pm
in Stoke Bishop Village Hall.
Public meeting with Local Councillors.
Everyone welcome.

To receive notices, reports and contacts, join the mailing list: email stokebishopforum@aol.com

Cubbaccinos

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Meet Our Organists

By Peter Weeks

Having the voice of a crow and being tone-deaf, I was immediately ejected from all choirs and singing at school. Instead, for a time, I was made to copy out and learn long poems by heart. Meeting our organists for this article I've had an opportunity to find out something about choirs, organs and music generally.

St Mary's is fortunate to have three people who take it in turns to play the organ at our services. Organists are generally heard but not seen, so this is their moment in the spotlight.



Chris Embrey (above) started playing the organ at the age of 15, moving from the choir to the organ bench when cajoled by the vicar in a north Shropshire village. He came to Bristol in 1966 to study physics at the University of Bristol and after graduation he stayed on to train as a physics teacher. The relaxed demands of the PGCE course were such that he was able to pursue the study of the organ at examination level with the Associated Examination Board of the Royal School of Music for one more year and had regular lessons at St Mary Redcliffe.

After Bristol, Chris lived and worked around the country and in West Germany as a teacher, deputy head, consultant and LEA adviser. Playing the organ had to take second place to work and the demands of family life. Retirement, however, has meant more time to enjoy playing the organ and supporting music in local churches. Yvonne Penn, a former Administrator at St Mary's, discovered Chris played the organ and persuaded him to come to Bristol occasionally and play at the 9 am service. The welcome he received persuaded him to move to Bristol in 2017.

Richard Powell (below) began his love of the organ at a young age in Jersey, listening to his father's LP of Dudley Holroyd playing the organ of Bath Abbey.

Lessons followed on the fine 3-manual Walker organ at his local church. He played for daily chapel services at school as a sixth-former, then for college chapel services at university.

Following musical roles at churches in London and Cambridge, for the past seventeen years Richard has run the music at a church that meets in a Bristol school. Sadly, the school has no organ, so Richard was delighted to accept an invitation to play for the 9 am service at St Mary's.

He loves traditional hymns - magnificent words and beautiful tunes that have stood the test of time - and enjoys accompanying the friendly, welcoming choir at their fortnightly rehearsals. Richard lives in the parish with his wife Helen and has two grown-up sons. When not playing the organ, he is an accountant with a local firm.



Ed Yates (left) was a member of a youth church band for a few years and has been an organist since 2018. He came to Bristol in 2020 and joined St Mary's in 2021. A busy man, Ed is a medical student coming to the end of his fourth year. He sits on our Parochial Church Council and he is also part of the tech team. Once a month he also plays the organ at a church in Somerset.

These three people, who discovered their musical talents at a young age, make a vital contribution to worship at St Mary's. People with great musical skills make up for people like me who don't know a crotchet from a bucket. We thank them all for what they add to our worship each week.

Rest: the rhythm of life has a powerful beat

By Hazel Trapnell

Autumn is here, a new academic year has begun and now, the long haul to Christmas. At Trinity College, Stoke Hill, where I worked for 17 years in the Courses Office dealing with academic administration, from the end of August, it was all go. You needed stamina to get through that term – student, teacher or administrator.

Even if not driven by your employment, there are so many attractions, so many things you can sign up for – day classes, evening classes. And then there is the pull of social media and television programmes we mustn't miss.

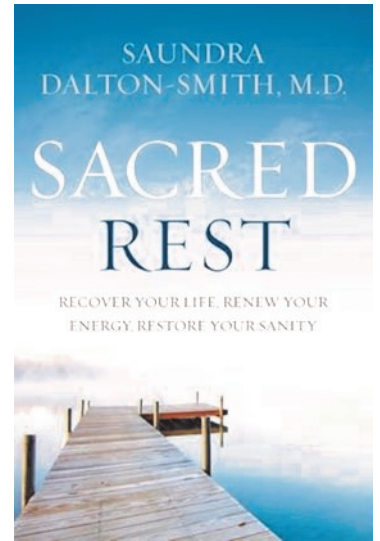


The Rest and be Thankful (or just the Rest) – is a mountain pass between Arrochar and Inverary in Scotland, (pictured above.) Not so long ago, car engines would regularly boil on the long haul uphill and cars would stop as steam belled from open bonnets. Drivers could be seen filling their radiators with water, resting awhile to let engines cool down.

I hope you were able to rest and cool down during the more relaxed season of summer and enjoy a change of pace. I found the winter months hard going last year - apart from a lovely break at Christmas, when I did refill. I had bitten off more than I could comfortably chew. By March, the writing was on the wall. I had run out of steam again (my radiator had run dry) and my body was saying 'no'. Would I listen? I tried to quieten the voice that said 'please no more'. But after a while I realized that my deficit of energy was serious. I must stop. I began to think more about REST and my pace of life.

It isn't easy to withstand the pressures we face. The Bible has much to say on the rhythm of life – and how to live a healthy and fruitful life. But we have to listen, take it in and practise. This includes a good work-rest balance, roughly in the ratio of 6:1! At a minimum it is important to take one day off each week. The Sabbath is a brilliant institution, something we have brushed aside in this country, as we run faster and faster to stand still.

But there is more to it than that. Jesus tells us how to live at a sustainable pace of life and provides for that too. He invites us to take his yoke upon us, (Matt 11:28-30), to walk at his relaxed pace, to learn from him. I was intrigued by the phrase in Hebrews (4.11) – strive to enter into God's rest! Yes, it does take thought and some work to change our more driven ways, and we will always have to resist that voice that tells us to try harder, work harder, do more.



Try this book

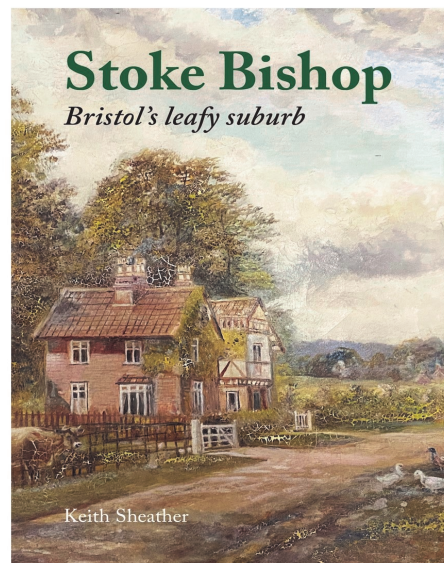
I have been renewing my efforts to enter into God's rest and to live in 'the unforced rhythm of God's grace*'. Do join me and tell me how you get on.

"But those who wait upon the LORD will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint"¹. Read Isaiah 40: 28-31. (KJV)

I wonder if I can learn the art of saying 'no' to some good things in order to have more white space in my life, in order to be able to breathe. Remind me.

**The Message – Eugene Peterson.*

Stoke Bishop Local History Group



A comprehensive fully illustrated history of Stoke Bishop from prehistory to the present day

Published 8 November

The Three Grains

By Eileen Stonebridge

Harvest is the time of celebration of the gathering of the crops, although most of us have become removed from the stress of gathering the harvest, the anxiety about yields, whether the crop will ripen before rain batters it and if the weather will keep fine until all is safely gathered in. Harvests have been gathered since time immemorial, but how long is this? When did humans first cultivate crops?

Three major grain crops make up 50% of the world's food supply; rice, wheat and maize. All have been bred from wild grasses, and there are similarities in their histories, some of which archaeologists and plant scientists have unravelled through the study of DNA.



Rice (*Oryza sativa*) as a food has its origins in the Middle and Lower Yangzi valley in China. There is evidence that between 13,000 and 14,000 years ago wild rice was being gathered in this part of China. It was a long step between the hunter-gatherer stage and cultivator, possibly as much as 7,000 years. Archaeological evidence exists from around 4,000 BC of bone scapulars, perhaps used as spades, and of the ground being cultivated. The grains themselves had become larger which suggests selection was taking place.

Once cultivation began, the better grains were increasingly selected for seed until modern plant breeding brought more strains and breeding for other desired characteristics such as length of stem. There is also evidence of early development of different strains of rice in the Indus Valley and an entirely different type of rice, (*Oryza glaberrima*) not requiring the water of paddy fields, in parts of West Africa around 1,000 BC.

Wheat developed as a food in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the area known as the Fertile Crescent, which is part of modern Syria. The story is similar, first the hunter-gatherer stage around 11,000 years ago and later the first cultivation here and in southeast Turkey. The skill of planting, growing and harvesting gradually passed from people to people,



with wheat reaching Britain around 4,000 BC in the Neolithic age. Two early forms of wheat were Einkorn and Emmer; these ancient strains are still used in plant breeding. Today, there are more than 30,000 different strains of wheat and wheat is made into more products than any other grain.

Genetic studies have extended our knowledge of the origin of **maize**. Archaeology has shown that the first domestication was in the Balsas river valley in México about 7000 BC. It spread quickly along the coast to Panama around 5800 BC and to Peru by 4700 BC. At around this time it also reached the Mexican highlands.



Geneticists have recently discovered that at around this time the plant hybridized with a different species of maize, the new hybrid varieties spreading quickly to replace the earlier variety and spreading north to the south-west of North America by 2000 BC. The new variety does not appear to have been larger so that does not explain its popularity, but it seems to have been developed during the period when nomadic lifestyles were replaced by agriculture in these regions.

All three grain crops have played a very significant part in human development, first from the transfer from hunter-gatherer to farmers and then in the development of civilisations and population growth.

Make Harvest Hearts

With Sarah Harris

In early September, there will be some sheaves of wheat and dried lavender available just inside St Mary's church for you to take away and try your hand at making traditional harvest hearts—or whatever else you would like.

The only other things you need are sewing thread, scissors and ribbon...plus nimble fingers!

1. To begin, make the wheat pliable by placing it in a sink or bath and soaking the wheat overnight. When out of water, keep it in a wetted towel.

2. Choose three wheat heads of about the same size with the thickest stalks for strength. Carefully remove any leaf remains taking good care of the leaf joints on the stalk, as these break easily and you need that stalk!



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6

3. Now gently tie the three seed heads together, underneath them, at the top of the stalk, using sewing thread. Flatten the stalks as you plait.

4. When it is long enough, gently let the seed heads drop to form half of a heart shape.

5. Next form the other half of the heart in exactly the same way and simply turn it over to make a mirror image of the first half.

6. Then tie off each of the plaits and tie them both together with the stalk using thread. Finish your heart with ribbon.



Variation: Adding lavender to your heart. Soak the lavender stems for 2-3 days before you begin, keeping the flowers completely dry.

Add two damp lavender stalks to each damp wheat stalk and plait them in groups of three. If the stalks get in your way, turn your work round to plait.

Then use the same method as above.

Tip: Dried lavender tends to drop its petals - add a drop or two of PVA glue to the flowers to stop this happening.



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A Critical Moment in History

By Eileen Stonebridge

Those are the words used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2023 in its report, the latest in a series of reports on climate change. Globally we are at this critical time because the decisions nations make about cutting carbon dioxide emissions now are the major factor as to whether we, as a world population, can act soon enough

to prevent the global mean temperature rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. All the evidence to date shows that we are not on track to achieve this and that action on the part of every nation and every individual is required NOW.

That was more than a year ago and although there are developments taking place to curb CO₂ emissions and actions to offset the emissions, they are neither large enough nor happening fast enough. On 10 June 2024, over 400 scientists in the UK wrote an open letter reminding politicians that it is a "Make or break decade" for the planet. They asked the politicians how they plan to keep the climate stable, people safe and nature protected. The Green Party was the only one which had made the issue central to its planning though others did mention the issue but without giving the impression that it was central to their thinking or strategic planning. Maybe it was not noticed that the Office of Budget Responsibility had said the cost of failing to pursue net zero of CO₂ emissions will be greater than the cost of achieving it. The figure of debt rising to 300% of GDP by the end of the century was predicted. Those who say we cannot afford some of the measures to avoid climate disaster should take cognisance of this estimate.

Costs of failing to hold the level of CO₂ will not only be the obvious ones such as coping with frequent flooding, breaches of sea defences, slope failure, or food shortages but indirect ones such as the consequences of new diseases and pests being introduced (for example malaria or dengue fever and their associated carriers). Massive impacts on infrastructure such as the effects of high temperatures on road surfaces and railway lines, plus coping with the effects of heat on the elderly and vulnerable, will add to the costs. As many parts of the world will suffer even more, the British Isles,



being more temperate, will be seen as a desirable place to live, a likely consequence being large-scale immigration. The scenario is not encouraging.

Set against such scenes of impending disaster and political inertia there are more positive ideas coming from the academic world. Oxford University Saïd Business School is currently running an on-line course for professionals and senior managers in businesses. Its aim is to increase understanding of climate change and to develop the skills to transform businesses to take advantage of the opportunities of the changing climate. Problems such as air pollution, extreme weather, water quality, food security and biodiversity can all provide opportunities for new ways of thinking and working. Regenerative farming is an example of change in practice which is proving to be successful both financially and for long term security.

A survey carried out by Oxford University across 77 countries with 1.2 million responses, showed 80% of people want their country to do more to mitigate climate change and 72% said they wanted their country to move away from fossil fuels. It seems that a large majority of people want change, but the groundswell of opinion needs to be supported by action on the part of governments. Individuals must play their part too but this requires fundamental changes in lifestyle.

Guidelines can be found in *A Special Address on Climate Action. A Moment of Truth* by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres ([un.org/actnow/ten-actions](https://www.un.org/actnow/ten-actions).) Better to make changes by choice now than be forced into many unpleasant situations in the future.

Above: Five Principles of Regenerative Farming as recommended by The Game and Wildlife Trust. Image used with permission

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Cover picture:
Year 2 children's artworks in the
Spirited Arts Exhibition.
See pages 10-11.

Photo by Rachel Powlesland

