

Messenger



St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

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The Messenger

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9th Brownies	Wendy Hughes	962 4580

Sundays at St Mary's

9 am Holy Communion
with hymns and prayers

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

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

Explore@4

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

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

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

Weekdays at St Mary's

Contact the church office for more information

Bright Sparks

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

Fuel

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

Bulb

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

Connect on Tuesdays

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

Thursday Lunch Club

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

St Mary's Singers

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

Bellringing

*Contact the church office
for more information*

Small Groups

*Bible study and informal support
Daytime and evening groups*

Alpha

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

facebook

St Mary Magdalene Church
(@StMarySB)

The Bells of St Mary's

By Simon Tomlinson, Ringing Master



If you've ever wandered through Stoke Bishop and heard the joyful sound of bells ringing out across the rooftops, you've experienced one of our parish's most cherished traditions: bellringing at St Mary's Church.

Bellringing has been part of English church life for centuries, and here at St Mary's it continues to thrive thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers who meet regularly to practise and ring for weddings and special occasions. By sounding out across Stoke Bishop they help to remind everyone of the presence of St Mary's at the heart of the local community and of all it has to offer.

At St Mary's there are six bells that can be rung "full circle", a peculiarly English way of ringing bells that enables multiple bells to be rung in coordinated unison. They range in weight from 3 cwt to 7¾ cwt, which may seem heavy to some, but in ringing terms this is considered relatively light. For example, St Mary Redcliffe has 14 bells with the heaviest weighing over 2 ½ tons.

These are not the first bells to be hung at St Mary's. The original bells were cast in 1874 by John Taylor & Co and weighed up to 12 cwt. By the 1970s these had become increasingly difficult to ring, so in 1978 they were melted down and recast by the Whitechapel bellfoundry in London and rehung in a new steel frame located lower in the Tower. Each bell carries a unique inscription, many commemorating past parishioners and contributors to church life, including James Benet Bennett, Winifred Mary Codrington, Henry Louis Bothamley and William Edwards George.

Following the recasting and rehung of the bells there was a thriving band at St Mary's and they were rung regularly for Sunday services and weddings, with a practice every Thursday evening. However, over time

as people got older or moved away, the band dwindled until eventually, in 2017, the bells fell silent.

In 2018 I agreed to take over the custodianship of the bells and reestablished a ringing practice again with ringers from other churches across north Bristol on the second and fourth Thursday evening of the month. This practice has paid off and the bells are rung again for weddings and other special occasions but sadly not Sunday services yet, as these ringers normally ring at their own churches.

It is my hope that one day there will once again be a local band of ringers at St Mary's and I don't have to rely on ringers from other churches. If you are interested in learning to ring, or in returning to ringing, please get in touch with the Parish Office and they will forward your details to me. You don't have to be musical or be particularly strong, but it does help to have a good sense of rhythm and coordination. So, whether you're drawn by the history, the challenge, or the camaraderie, there could be a rope waiting for you at St Mary's.

Above: The band that rang a fully muffled quarter peal in 2022 in commemoration and thanksgiving for the life of HM the late Queen Elizabeth II

Below: The bells at St Mary's after being recast and rehung in 1978 (Set "up" ready for ringing)



43rd Bristol Scouts Community Centre Update



We have just been announced as a charity partner for the Co-op for the next year and will receive funds according to how many people choose us via their Co-op accounts. Please help!

CHOOSE US AS YOUR LOCAL CAUSE

Co-op Members can help us receive a share of £5m from the Local Community Fund.



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co
OWNED BY YOU.
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The walls are up, brick work, cladding looking good, windows and doors in - we finally have a new building and we are so pleased with progress!

We are indebted to so very many individuals, groups and local businesses who are supporting this community build, and we are doing our best to ensure our environmental credentials are solid also - our solar panels installation has kindly been donated, and we are seeking grants and discounts to support an air source heat pump installation.

We are still hard at work fundraising for fit-out and kit-out items to make this a new home for all our young people and volunteers, as well as creating an enjoyable space for local events and groups - but we are getting there! Please use the QR code above or visit www.43rdbristolscouts.org.uk to make an online donation or to take part in our Buy-a-Brick campaign.

Our Christmas tree sale will be happening as usual Saturday 6 December. Please do come along and support us !

Carolyn Jenkins



Stoke Bishop Primary School Open Days

You might be surprised to hear that almost as soon as the new academic year begins, one of the main focuses is to welcome new families into school for a tour so that they can decide whether to apply for a place if their child is due to start school the following year. These sessions are a great opportunity to help people see what makes Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School such a special place. During October more than 60 prospective parents were shown around the school by Year 6 children, who have been proudly appointed as Values Ambassadors. The school values are Courage, Passion, Integrity and Grace, and these older children demonstrate these characteristics in spades!

Parents particularly enjoy seeing the dedicated space for the Reception children, made up of safe, vibrant and creatively designed indoor and outdoor areas which facilitate learning through play, spark imagination and give children a sense of adventure and fun. The school's vision, Believing It's Possible, is lived out every day and makes a real difference to adults and children alike. It helps to fuel academic achievement as well as making the school a place where everyone flourishes, and an inclusive place to learn and belong. If you have a child starting school next year, there's still time to come and have a look around!

Jema Ball

Street Art for Advent

If you walk along Kewstoke Road in the days before Christmas, you will see, shining in the window panels of a conservatory, a representation of the birth of Jesus.

This imposing Advent Calendar is the work of Caroline and Julian Rivers and their daughter Alice. Caroline remembers hearing from her grandparents in Germany how windows shone with colourful depictions of the Nativity. During Covid she had the idea of brightening up the street by decorating their conservatory which by happy chance had enough panes of glass to replicate the windows of an Advent Calendar.

The designs are created on tracing paper and applied to sticky black sugar paper. Each day a new part of the design is applied to a window, much to the fascination of passersby. Caroline remembers one woman coming back each day to see the next picture.

Our cover shows the window from the street and here are Caroline and Julian showing the back.

Keith Sheather



Stoke Lodge update

In the 15 year rollercoaster of the Stoke Lodge journey, we have certainly travelled over some bumps recently. First, the High Court handed down a judgment that came as a shock to all concerned, ordering that Stoke Lodge should not remain registered as a village green. Then the judge decided that the community should pay 90% of the agreed costs, even though normally the lion's share of liability would be awarded against the authority that made the decision to register the land. But in the face of adversity, our community has yet again shown its strength, its support and its determination to protect precious green space for generations to come. We have been absolutely overwhelmed by the response.

The court's decision does not affect the four public rights of way across Stoke Lodge - once these are added to the Definitive Map, they will ensure continuing public access to this beautiful and historic open space, regardless of village green status.

Helen Powell

Photo by Geoff Causton

Palmeri's Misatango

meets Christmas Carols

Bristol Cabot Choir, Conducted by Ben England

Bristol Cabot Choir, which has several members from St Mary's congregation, will perform this unusual work plus a programme of Christmas music in Clifton Cathedral on Monday 1 December.

The *Misa a Buenos Aires*, known as *Misatango*, is a setting of the Latin mass by Martín Palmeri. The music uses the style of the nuevo tango and its typical instrumentation, scored for mezzo-soprano, mixed choir and an ensemble of bandoneon, piano and strings. The world premiere was on 17 August 1996 at the Avenida Theatre in Buenos Aires. It has been performed and recorded internationally (but never before in Bristol), often with the composer as the pianist, and is regarded as his signature work.

Clifton R.C. Cathedral
Monday 1 December at 7.30
Tickets via [Ticketsource](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk) or from
choir members
www.bristolcabotchoir.org



This wonderful quilt was made by members of Connect with no previous embroidery experience.

It will be auctioned to raise funds for a specific item for the new church rooms – to be decided upon.

Look out for details!

Advertising

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Bristol North-West Food Bank Appeal

The Bristol North-West food bank is well-known to St Mary's as one of our Mission Partners, and has many St Mary's members amongst its volunteers.

Pictured right are some of the delivery team photographed by Judith Sheather, who is on the team.

Our team at Bristol North West Foodbank would like to thank you all for your generosity. Food donations have significantly reduced since last January, but regular food collections from local churches throughout the year really keep us going. We are so grateful.



Winter appeal

Help support our food bank this winter

During December 2024, we fulfilled 368 referrals, feeding 1081 adults and children facing hardship. Due to the busy month, we are often low on supplies heading into the new year. You can support us the following ways...

Donate food



Donate an item or two from our shopping list, ensuring we can provide food for people facing hardship in your community.

Donate money



Help to cover the costs of storing and distributing food, as well as developing sustainable projects.



Shopping list

Tinned fruit

Rice

Tinned Meat

Instant Coffee

Long-life fruit juice

Tinned Fish

Pasta

Long-life milk

Biscuits

Instant mashed potato

Dr Lydia's Visit



On 11 September we had a visit from Dr. Lydia Nakitende and her husband Brian, who had just been to London for her graduation ceremony as a Master of Business Administration, achieved by distance learning over several years. About 35 people enjoyed the evening together with coffee and cake.

St Mary's has been helping fund Romans (Lydia's father) and his extraordinary work establishing schools and a hospital in Uganda, so it was good to have a progress report from Dr. Lydia. We have been following the construction of the new Double Cure Hospital. It has 100 km radius catchment to reach patients living too far from hospital in Kampala. The road needs urgent repair as it's awful for pregnant mothers or patients with fractures. A longer report on OAC and the Ugandan project will follow in the next issue of the Messenger.

Korky and Anni Davey

0117 9235343

Bristolnorthwestfoodbank.org.uk

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Care Home Sunday

By the time you read this article, our new 'Care home Sunday' initiative will have been launched. A team of volunteers from church, with a passion for older folk, are helping me lead a communion service at a different care home in Stoke Bishop each month.

It's on a Sunday morning, when more people are around and able to volunteer. The residents get the chance to feel part of the local Christian community with many of us gathered in church but with them in spirit. Previously a small team of us have led communion services around the care homes during the week, but this initiative allows a larger volunteer response.

Our first visit, on Sunday 5 October, was at Saville Manor Care Home, where, equipped with service sheets, guitar and cello, we were greeted with great excitement as we poured into the dining room.

Our theme was harvest, and we nearly took the roof off with the swell of voices singing, 'We plough the fields and scatter'. Songs with actions were embraced, and a loud applause for one of our younger members who gave the Bible reading was gratefully received. Individual prayers and blessings were offered, and bread and wine taken in remembrance and thanks for all that our Lord Jesus Christ had done in dying on the cross for us.

We even had time to give a hearty rendition of happy birthday to one of the residents who was celebrating their birthday that day. It was a very special time for all of us, and we look forward to next month when we will visit another care home on a Sunday within our local community.

The next Care Home Sundays will be

Sunday 2 November, Waltham House

Sunday 7 December, Druid Stoke Nursing Home


If you would like to help, please have a word with me.


Revd Julie Summers



explore

life
faith
meaning





Alpha Course

Starting in January 2026

Have you got questions about the Christian faith?
Find out more on our website: stmarysb.org.uk

Church Rooms Update

November

Exciting news! After years of waiting, the building project is due to start this month! We'll share more about the plans and photos of progress so far in the next issue of The Messenger.

If you're coming to the church, please be aware that Mariners Drive could be busier than usual due to construction vehicles. Thanks for your understanding.

We do, of course, still need funding, so our appeal is still open.

Jema Ball



Angela Cattell, now retired and living in Bournemouth enjoying the long hot summer on her swing seat, bought with her leaving-gift from St Mary's.

Photo by Chris Thomas.

Language Barrier?

Do you have a flair for languages? Two people in my family do DuoLingo every day, and two of us don't. I'm one of the 'don'ts'. Learning other languages has never been my forte, yet, I think I can read body language pretty well, and I can definitely understand what my cat is trying to tell me! You may have come across the idea of 'love languages' – ways in which we each feel and express love. Or perhaps you're fluent in the language of current culture (although I hope I'm not the only one who is bewildered by many of the new words which pop up every year!)

Being able to speak more than one language is becoming increasingly common. At Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School 28% of children have English as an additional language, and in many schools across the city, this figure is much higher.

I was chatting recently with someone who was new to St Mary's and reminded that in churches the language informally known as "Christian-ese" is often spoken, without due care being given to translate this for newcomers and guests. If you've ever been to a church wedding, baptism or funeral, you may well have heard words that made no sense to you or seemed to be used out of context.

If that is the case, whether your experience was at St Mary's, or elsewhere, allow me to offer you an apology. I'm sorry if you felt 'othered' or confused by anything you heard or experienced in church. Christians have a long way to go to ensure that church is accessible and engaging for everyone. We try hard, but don't always succeed.

I truly believe that the Christian faith can be understood by everyone. It might seem confusing, but Jesus said that actually it's little children who have grasped it the best. So much so, He urged adults to become like them!

'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.' – **Matthew 18:3**

Perhaps you've had a difficult experience of church in the past, where you felt confused or bewildered by what you saw and heard. Or perhaps it all seems too mysterious and it's put you off coming through the doors. If that's you, can I urge you to give it another try? You might be pleasantly surprised by what you encounter. There are plenty of opportunities around Christmas to come to a special service, but we're there on Sundays, week in week out, always ready to welcome guests and visitors, and doing our best to ensure everyone can understand and take part in what is offered.

Jema

Revd Jema Ball
Vicar of St Mary's



This stunning photo of St Mary's spire was taken by Paul Morey, who lives at the top of Church Road, and has a view of the church and over to Wales from his balcony. It was taken on his iphone at 20h05 on 9th August, about 15 minutes before sunset. Paul has lived there for 13 years and says he's never witnessed this before. However, research has shown that the sun should be in the same position on 20 April and 9 August next year, so the dates are now marked in Paul's diary.

From the CHURCH REGISTERS August-October 2025

Weddings

2 August	Cameron Campbell and Emma Wood
9 August	Stuart Cornfield and Abigail Armstrong
11 October	Keiran Katwala and Siena Dexter

Funeral

3 September	Peter Oliver Walsh
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Interment of Ashes

5 August	Albert Pearson
25 October	David Baker

Mary's Memories

By Anni Davey

That day – how could I ever forget?

*We had come all that way, finding nowhere to stay.
The guest rooms all full, we had searched all the day –
But time was now short, the pains were so strong,
It was urgent to find somewhere safe before long.
"Nothing for it" they said – "In the hay make a bed!"
And that's where my baby was born.*

*Dear Joseph was ushered out into the night
With the menfolk, to chat, news would come before light.
There was I with the women, reassuring and kind -
And quiet, munching oxen – but I didn't mind!
Soft lamplight aglow, drenched with sweat on my brow,
At last! Here 's my darling! Hear the cry: "It's a boy!"
My heart's full of wonder and brimming with joy.*

*Exhausted and shattered – such a struggle – and yet
When I see him, my new baby boy,
Full of wonder, and brimming with joy.
Nine months of anxiety, trepidation and fear -
But deep in my heart knowing God was so near.
Rubbed with salt, wrapped in cloths, cuddled close to my breast
And all I want now is to sleep and to rest.*

*In the street hear the shout! And then footsteps in haste –
Why – it's shepherds! In awe, gazing down at the manger,
With Jesus tucked safely away from all danger.
They told of night skies full of angels and light
And singing, which brought them to witness this sight.
This little one's life – will it change the whole earth?
Is he truly Messiah, Emmanuel, now, at his birth?
Our Saviour, our Master, our Lord and our King?*

*All I can reply is – to me – Everything!
My job's done. Promise kept. Prophecy now come true:
But there must be a sequel, for me and for you.
We'll love and protect him, teach him all we can:
That God is his Father, and yet he, a Man.
This surely will not be the end of my story:
Watch his life unfold – and to God be the Glory!*

*He will change our lives now if we have faith to choose.
If we dare to believe, what have we to lose?
Delay only serves to make doubts go on longer.
Faith, put into practice, will grow ever stronger.*



hope
joy
peace
love



Hap

Why not join us at St Mary's,

Sunday 30 Nov

Explore@4

An interactive Christmas

Friday 5 Decem

Beer and

Join us and get into the Christmas
carols, a curry supper (chicken)
BYO wine! Cost £

Sunday 21 Dec

Traditional C

Favourite carols and Bible

Christmas Eve - Wed

Crib Servi

A short family-friendly service
Children might like to come draw
Christmas

Midnight Communi

A traditional Midnight Communion
Jesus, 'Go

Christmas Day Ce

Family-friendly Christmas Comr

Sunday 28 Decem

Holy Communion at St Mary's
service at St Ed
There will be **no service** at St M



William Dyce, c 1830



py Christmas

Stoke Bishop this Christmas?

November at 4pm

Christingle

Single Service for all ages.

November at 7.00pm

and Carols

Christmas spirit with some well known (veg) while tasting beer or £22 or BYO £17.

December at 6pm

Carol Service

Readings by candlelight

Wednesday 24 December

Service at 4pm

Telling the story of Jesus' birth. Jesus as a character from the Christmas story.

Service at 11pm

Service to celebrate the birth of Jesus and with us'.

Celebration at 10am

Communion, with well-known carols.

November at 10.30am

Shirehampton and an informal service at St Mary's, Sea Mills. St Mary's Stoke Bishop on this date.

Emmanuel: God With Us

By Hazel Trapnell

The Bible tells us to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (Romans 12: 15). In other words, to be with one another in all our moods, so that no-one either rejoices or weeps alone. We become lonely if we cannot find anyone who understands how we feel.

In a convent on the Solomon Isles, novices from many different islands, often speaking different languages, sometimes felt lonely and isolated. How could they form community unless they understood one another? It was a problem until one of them came up with the bright idea of a colour scheme of moods; each sister was asked to colour in a little strip of paper each day according to her mood and to display it. This made it easier for the new sisters to connect to one another, to rejoice with those who had good news to share or to come alongside the depressed, to be with them for a while in their sorrow.

It is a problem when we are not in step with the mood around us. When we are bereaved, we can't celebrate without very mixed feelings. What if everyone else seems to be having a wonderful time and we are not? It is so lonely. Christmas is a time set aside for celebration, but what if we can't join in with any kind of sincerity? Many mixed feelings surround Christmas. It may be full of joyful memories for those whose childhood Christmases were magical – as mine certainly were. Those feelings may have lingered well into adulthood with the giving of presents and cards with messages of love, and with the lit tree shining in the darkness. However, others may struggle to celebrate at Christmas; perhaps unhappy memories accompany the festival – bereavements, memories of family squabbles, over-consumption, boredom even – and above all loneliness. The difficulty is even greater if the real reason for Christmas has receded well into the background.

There are no easy answers. But Christians can dig down to the real meaning of Christmas and we can celebrate that; God came to be with us – Emmanuel (God with us). God sent his only son to share our human lot, our joys and sorrows, to rejoice with us and to weep with us, so that we need never be alone. Jesus knew our pains and sorrows – he could and did understand us – and when he died he promised to send us his spirit so that we would not be orphans. So let us share our joys, our sorrows, our pains, and loneliness with the one who has promised to never leave us or forsake us – especially this Christmas.



Christmas Music

By Richard Powell



Richard Powell, one of our organists at our 9 am service, writes: no Christmas is complete for me without enjoying two musical events, one local, one further afield.

Messiaen in Bristol Cathedral

On Monday 15 December at 7pm, Paul Walton (assistant organist of Bristol Cathedral) will give his annual performance of Messiaen's organ work, '*La Nativité du Seigneur*' in Bristol Cathedral.

Messiaen's music can sound strange and other-worldly on first hearing. It made little sense to me (and had little appeal) when I first heard it. But like all great art, it rewards patience, and a return visit. As I have attended these performances each Christmas, it has become steadily more familiar and accessible, and it is now my favourite organ work (in a strong field with stiff competition!).

Among the nine pieces that make up the work, Messiaen paints vivid, evocative scenes: you hear the ecstatic joy of the angels as they swoop down over the crib (*Les Anges*), the devastating dialogue between Father and Son (*Jésus Accepte La Souffrance*), the undulating plod of the camels in the desert bringing the wise men to the crib (*Les Mages*), and the triumphant verdict of the concluding toccata (*Dieu Parmi Nous – God with us*).

The work lasts just over an hour. Give it a try!

King's College Nine Lessons and Carols

For nearly 35 years, as dusk has fallen on Christmas Eve, I have listened to the live radio broadcast of the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols from King's College Cambridge.

For many years, Helen (my wife) and I attended this service in person, queuing in the grounds of King's from as early as 4:30am to get a good seat in the chapel. Chilled to the bone after nine hours, we would be admitted from 1:30pm to the warm embrace of a candlelit chapel, to be treated to more than an hour of organ music before the service began at 3:00pm.

Imagine our distress one year when we travelled up from London on the earliest possible train only to be stranded, agonisingly, 100 yards outside Cambridge station, waiting for a platform to become clear. We were delayed for over 30-minutes, late to the queue, and demoted to the ante-chapel!

These days, the queue is ticketed, and the degree of stoicism required has diminished. With that, it has lost some of its romance. The music, however, remains as fine as ever. The current director of music Daniel Hyde has the choir in excellent shape, and they are expertly accompanied on the organ by the undergraduate organ scholar.

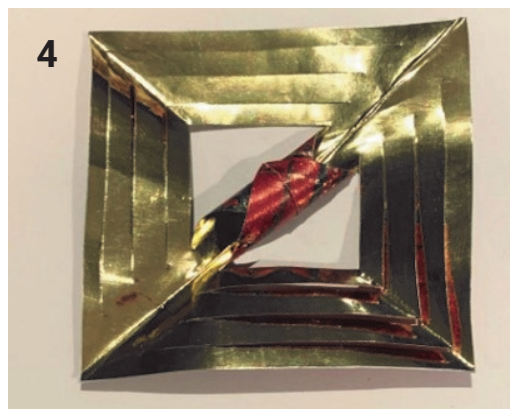
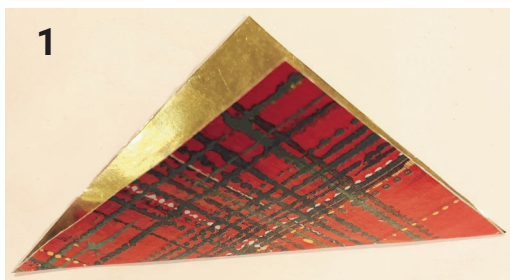
Shortly after 3:00pm a lone chorister will step forward to sing the first verse of 'Once in Royal David's City'. None of the boys know which of them it will be until, in that very moment, the director of music points to them. No time to get nervous – just sing, boy!

Make Simple Decorations

With Sarah Harris and Lucia

These are very easy. All you need is some wrapping paper, one patterned piece and one shiny piece which you stick together.

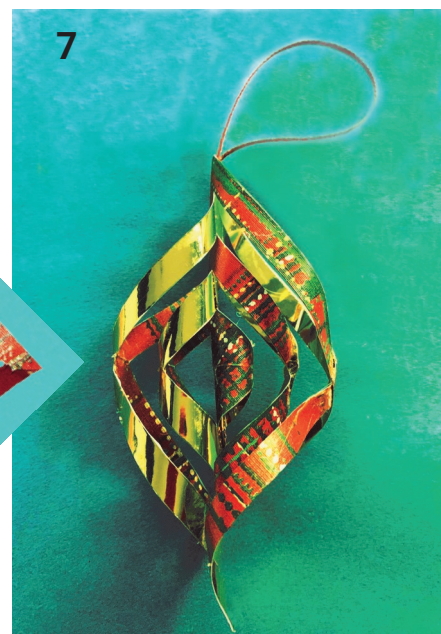
Find scissors, glue (eg Uhu), pencil, ruler and thread and off you go!



1. We cut two 10cm squares of wrapping paper, stuck them back to back and folded in half diagonally.
2. Lucia carefully folded in half again and pressed the folds firmly.
3. Next with sharp scissors we made four cuts parallel with the longest side towards the double fold, stopping about 1cm from the fold. (You might want to rule the lines first.)
4. Next Lucia opened the shape out flat, gold side up and found the right-angled cuts, which we called the *corners*. She carefully curled the innermost two free corners round a pencil and stuck them. We used strong glue to stop them uncurling.
5. Then we turned over to the red side and curled the next two free corners round Lucia's finger and stuck it. We turned back to the gold side again and repeated the curling and sticking each time we turned over to the other side.
6. Finally we turned over to the red side for the last time. Lucia stopped here and added a thread to hang her decoration so it twirled, catching the light.
7. We made another, and this time we carried on, turning over to the gold side, curling and sticking the last two corners together. This gave us a completely different look. You can see it here with its hanging loop attached ready to go on the tree.

You might like to experiment by starting with bigger or smaller squares.

Have fun!





STOKE BISHOP
Fish Bar

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

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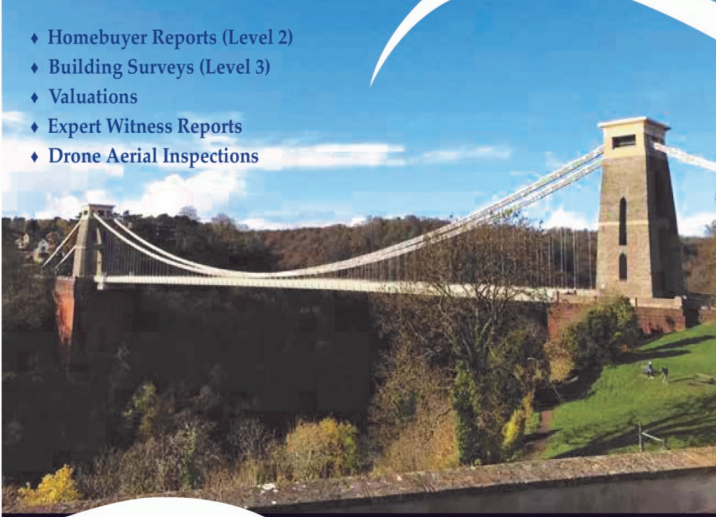
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If you would like to contribute to the production costs of *The Messenger*, or to the work of St Mary's, please use this QR code.

We are grateful for all donations.

Community Diary Winter 2025-26

Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

Saturday 13 Dec, 10 am - noon: Working party
Access from Glenavon Park entrance. No experience needed but please bring gloves and secateurs, loppers etc. Hot drinks and cake or biscuits provided.

For further details please see our website

www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org

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

Stoke Bishop Local History Group

Friday 5 Dec – Seasonal refreshments and short AGM followed by **Harry Dolman**; the millionaire inventor who became 'Mr Bristol City', by Clive Burton.

All talks in Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Visitors welcome, £3 per meeting.

Membership £6 pa. For enquiries, please email sblocalhistory@gmail.com, or phone 0117 9686010

University Botanic Garden

Nov–Feb open weekdays 10am-dusk.

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

See website for up-to-date information on events

www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden

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Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Ward Forum

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in St Mary's Church

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or Angela 968 6473



A Month of Accompanied Prayer

By Hazel Trapnell

During June, at St Mary's we organised a month of accompanied prayer (MAP). It nestled in the middle of our year of going deeper with God.

Different stages of faith, different ages, different hopes and fears. Different personalities, different propensities for prayer: that's us. That is why we chose seven people with different Christian experiences to come alongside those who chose this adventure. We had eight participants so that for each 'guide' the burden was light.

It can seem a big step for some to share their lives and to open themselves up to God in a new way and to carve out the necessary time and commitment. A bit like shivering on the side of a swimming pool or on the top diving board, before taking the plunge. But we prayerfully and carefully placed our participants with our navigators and this worked well.

We explained it as like going on a car journey. The participant is in the driving seat, but a navigator sits beside them with a map and is able to help with directions. Both participant and guide try to be open to God and what He might be saying, depending throughout on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discern the way ahead.

The participants have all been very positive about the experience. Where possible they met with their guide once a week for four weeks, following an introductory session. Here are some of their comments.

Tim: it has been helpful in moving me along the road in my journey of prayer and connection with God. My guide was very understanding of my situation in life. In particular I am becoming more familiar with the psalms as a means of expression.

Kate, one of our church wardens, found that it came at just the right time for her in taking on new



responsibilities while living with uncertainty in her paid job. 'It was a precious time and easier than I had expected to make the time for the weekly meetings with my 'navigator'. It gave me the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God, gain insights from a wise and compassionate Christian and allowed space to process thoughts and feelings in relation to what was coming up in prayer'.

Kim: 'Thank you for organising the month of accompanied prayer. It was lovely to meet with others and learn from them. I wasn't really sure what to expect when I signed up, but I was hoping it would be beneficial to my faith and prayer journey. I found it really helpful and I would recommend it for anyone who is seeking

to deepen their faith or just to learn tools for prayer and being still. My guide was very wise, patient, intuitive and non-judgmental'.

Jackie learned that 'prayer is not only about putting aside a period of quiet time, but also being thankful and present in the moment in the little things throughout the day'.

Ruth, our most senior participant at 90+, says 'in advancing old age I need a prayer life more than ever before, because my physical strength is waning. Having a prayer guide was very helpful and helped me focus'. She wishes there was more of this kind of support! We are never too old to learn – or to pray!

Most continue in their relationship with their prayer guide (or wish they could!), but meet less frequently. We began with a sprint, but now we are on the long haul.

We hope to run a new series of the Month of Accompanied Prayer in February/March 2026. Might this be for you as you observe Lent this coming year? Do consider it and sign up in the New Year.



William Canynges, the Younger (c1402–1474)

By Bob Mathers

Part 1

William Canynges' name is familiar to most Bristolians under several headings - merchant trader, religious observer, refurbisher of St Mary Redcliffe. In this introduction, let's establish what we know of his life.

In the second half of the 14th century, Bristol's cloth production mushroomed providing employment and the odd fortune for producers and merchants, including William's father and grandfather. It is probable that he himself was never a producer, but started out as a merchant, eventually specialising in building, owning and operating ships.

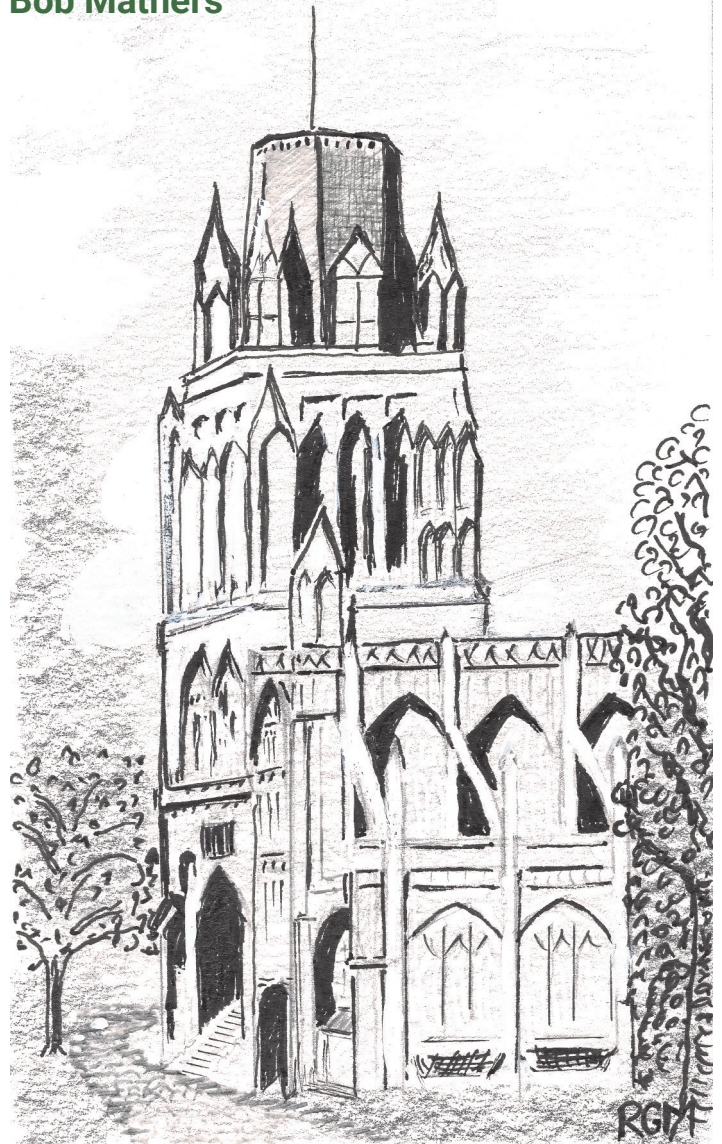
Family life was important to him. His father died young in 1405, leaving his widowed mother, Joan, with six children. She then married Thomas Young, a merchant, described as 'able and sympathetic' and they had two further sons together. All were well brought up and educated in an extensive and opulent household. Of the eight children, the four brothers/half-brothers all became high achievers.

The elder, Thomas Canynges, and John Young both became merchants and Lord Mayors of London. The young Thomas (Young) trained as a lawyer at Middle Temple in London, later joining the household of Richard, Duke of York in 1447 as steward of his Easton-in-Gordano manor, an important indicator of the family's political allegiance. William remained in Bristol learning the merchant trade, working hard, and establishing a personal reputation for integrity and leadership.

His stepfather, Thomas Young, died in 1427 at which point he was able to inherit not only his share of his stepfather's estate, but that of his own father, now that he was twenty-five. This capital injection was likely the start of his launch into international trade. Two years later he married Joan Burton, daughter of a neighbouring, prominent Bristol merchant family. They had two sons.

Bristol's cloth export trade peaked well before William was born, so he must have been a confident young man to take the plunge when he did but he stuck at it and his best trading years were the decade 1440–1450 during which, with a mixture of luck, patience and an ability to read the market, he made good profits. However, after England's loss of its market in Aquitaine at the end of the Hundred Years' War in 1453, Bristol's wine imports slumped again.

William now decided to stop trading on his own account and made the bold move to specialise in carrying other merchants' goods. He became one of the port's greatest shipping magnates, certainly pre-eminent in this period, controlling roughly a quarter of all shipping at Bristol. He was reputed one of the



richest men in England. In his spare time, he was elected Mayor of Bristol five times working conscientiously to ensure he fulfilled the duties required.

He and Thomas Young also represented Bristol in Parliament and were part of a closely-knit West Country circle of influential men. As the war of words between the ruling Lancastrians and their Yorkist rivals heated up, they were open supporters of the Duke of York, such that at the Parliamentary sittings of 1451, after Thomas moved for Richard, Duke of York, to be recognised as the heir apparent to the childless king, Henry VI, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. William retreated quickly to Bristol while the country moved slowly but inexorably towards Civil War.

In our next issue, part 2: War begins; Canynges is caught between the houses of York & Lancaster . . .

You can contact Bob about this extract from his book, on bristohisto@gmail.com*

*[*Mediaeval Bristol: A Short History (1066-1497); due to be published next year]*



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Ice—the Key to Understanding Climate Change

By Eileen Stonebridge

You may have seen in the national press in July, that the longest-ever ice core had been brought from Antarctica. This 2,800 metre core has within it a record of the climate over the last 1.2 million years. The drilling was an international effort, and the analysis will be done at the Scott Polar Institute of the British Antarctic Survey. The contents of the melted core are now being kept safe for detailed analysis.

The use of ice cores for reconstructing past environments has been developed since the 1950s and they give the clue to changing climate. The key which unlocks the history of climate lies within the ice. Air is trapped in the ice as it forms, encapsulating the atmosphere at that time. Volcanic ash and other material such as dust is also trapped. Among the most significant is oxygen. Oxygen has 3 isotopes O^{16} , O^{17} and O^{18} which simply means atoms in the same family have different mass or weight.

Oxygen is trapped as water turned into snow then ice and it reflects the temperature when the snow fell. When it is colder there is a greater ratio of O^{18} to O^{16} than when the air is warmer. Ice cores can be dated, either by counting the layers within the ice-core, each one representing a year with different seasons, or by dating minerals in volcanic ash trapped in the different parts of the core.

This variation forms a pattern through time showing ice ages (glacials) and non ice ages (interglacials). Currently we are living in an interglacial and the most recent ice age ended about 15,000 years ago. There was another cold period when the ice from North America melted and cooled the North Atlantic, causing a mini ice-age in North West Europe when valley glaciers formed in areas like the mountains of Wales. This ended about 12,000 years ago. Since then, we have been in the present interglacial period.

According to the patterns of changes in the shape of the earth's orbit, the tilt of the Earth's axis and the way it wobbles round the poles, we should be entering the next ice-age. So, what has gone wrong? The answer lies in the increasing amounts of carbon dioxide which have collected in the Earth's atmosphere, which began when humans started burning fossil fuels, first wood, then charcoal but most of all coal and oil.

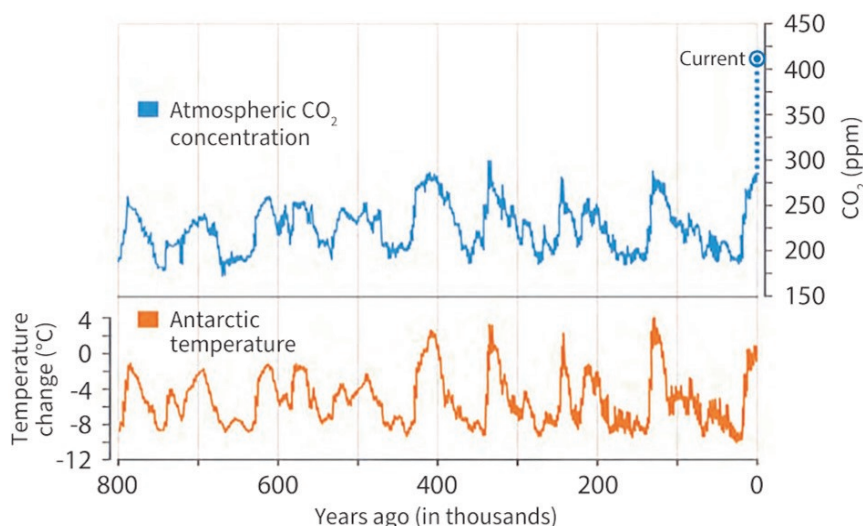
Analysis of past atmospheres shows that the more CO_2 in the atmosphere the warmer it becomes. Currently levels of atmospheric CO_2 are around 426.24 parts per million, whereas pre-industrial levels were around 280 parts per million. There is a lag between CO_2 levels and the temperature catching up.

Eventually the temperature will be too warm for human existence, or people will have to migrate to the cooler parts of the planet. Sea-levels will rise and many major cities will be submerged, so there will be more migrations and wars.

It is hoped that measures will be taken to stop this happening. These depend on international co-

operation and a dramatic move from fossil fuels. Corroboration of evidence also comes from the analysis of the oxygen locked in the calcium carbonate shells of microscopic creatures (foraminifera) in ocean sediments and are able to provide a longer history than ice-cores. These foraminifera reflect the colder and warmer periods through earth's history.

The evidence for the patterns of climate history is very strong and is agreed by most scientists, so we would expect urgent action. It is about 60 years since this science was developed. The vested interests of fossil fuel companies and the beliefs of some politicians, not based on science, prevent action; meanwhile as the atmosphere warms it cause glaciers to melt, sea level to rise, more turbulence in the atmosphere with more storms, hurricanes, tornadoes and landslides. The outlook is gloomy, but if there were more action now, we are told it is not too late.



Graph from Royal Society teaching materials

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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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Cover picture:
Caroline and Julian Rivers
with their Advent Calendar
window in Kewstoke Road.
See Page 5.

Picture by Keith Sheather

