



stMary's
STOKE BISHOP

Spring 2026

Messenger



Holy Week and Easter Services p11

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 through the church office.

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9th Brownies	Wendy Hughes	962 4580

Sundays at St Mary's

10 am Holy Communion

Week A: with band-led worship

Week B: with organ and choir-led hymns

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

Explore@4

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

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
Paused during building works

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 week B Sunday services
Rehearsals alternate Tuesday evenings - see our website What's On calendar**

Bellringing

Contact the church office for more information

Small Groups

**Bible study and informal support
Daytime and evening groups**

Alpha

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



**St Mary Magdalene Church
(@StMarySB)**

A Farewell Message

From Hazel Trapnell



Downsizing and on the move.

I am writing this as a couple of guys are packing my stuff ready to move to Exeter tomorrow. I think the best thing I can do at the moment is to keep out of the way. It is the golden opportunity to write to you.

For me, it is the end of an era, an end of enjoying the lovely area of Stoke Bishop/Sneyd Park for the past 32 years; an end of being the Editor of the Messenger and the previous parish magazine for about 25 of those years. I have really enjoyed being part of the Messenger team and I hope you have enjoyed the Messenger and continue to enjoy it, as Gillian Baxter takes over as Editor.

I officially retired from my role as Associate Minister at St Mary's on Sunday 21 December, 2025 just after having taken my last funeral in this area on the 17th. That was the funeral of Eileen Stonebridge who has faithfully written her Green Matters page for the Messenger for as long as I can remember. She died on 4 December aged 90, planning her next article. (See obituary page 6)

We already have a new member of the team to champion environmental matters, Nicky Woodfield. She is well qualified with a Ph.D on the subject of pollution. Sustainability is one of her passions. She is a Mum with three maturing children, has worked at QE in the science department, has led the choir, and heads up the Scouts in this area.

But let me say something about moving. It has been a long process of letting go and finding a suitable alternative for my advancing years. I am moving to sheltered accommodation for retired clergy in the village of Broadclyst, near Killerton House, just five miles from Exeter. It has involved much questioning, prayer and listening over quite a long period. Now, I can hardly believe it, I am on my way tomorrow, having made several visits to the Avonmouth recycling centre, flooded several charity shops, taken trolley loads of

theological tomes down to church. I know that there is more to relinquish – it is quite a job!

We read in the Bible a rather precious promise from God – do check – it's from Isaiah 46.4 and it goes like this 'Even to your old age, I will be the same, and I will bear you up when you turn grey. I have made you and I will carry you'. Well I have certainly turned grey and I can vouch for the fact that I have been carried through this whole process. It is amazing – but perhaps it shouldn't be. But I can testify that it is true. Decision made on 18 November, it is now 5 January. The doors have swung open and every day there have been words of confirmation and reassurance when I have been tempted to doubt.

There has also been support – mostly from members of the church family at St Mary's...offers of help just at the right time. It has been so good to be supported and to have folk to talk to. Every day I have started the day by journaling and giving thanks for the previous day, while making my requests and fears and uncertainties known to God. It has been a question of keeping calm and carrying on, trusting in God at all times. It has been an exciting – and a wonderful - journey.

For my final sermon I was asked to talk about Love as part of an Advent series on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The Bible passage was 1 John 4:7-21, about God's love and ours. As Jesus prepared to die and leave his disciples, he reminded his bewildered followers to stay connected to him as their source of energy (abide in me, he said) – and that's what I've tried to do and what has made all this possible. Love was his final theme (Love one another as I have loved you, he said). And that is what I have experienced especially over the past weeks, God's love channelled through his followers, my fellow Christians and friends. Thank you for hospitality and sad/sweet leave taking, thank you Vivienne for selling my surplus stuff on line, thank you Helen for doing my shredding, thank you Jason for helping me prune my books, thank you for help with decluttering ... and more. It has been church at its best. It has been as Jesus hoped and requested. I have so appreciated it.

Thank you and adieu!



New Beginnings

As I take over as editor, I look back over the past 14 years, since I first offered 'editorial skills' and was given desk-top publishing on the Messenger. New to the parish, and never having used any software more complicated than Word, I was on a steep learning curve.

The Messenger aims to be a bridge between church and community, so please keep your contributions coming! Constructive feedback is also always welcome.

We shall all miss Hazel's wisdom, her fund of ideas and her lively writing as well as Eileen's thoughtful suggestions and regular articles.

Judith Sheather, Sarah Harris, Peter Weeks and Nicky Woodfield are an impressive team, so we hope we shall be able to keep up the Messenger up to the standard you expect. Let us know how we are doing!

Gradually I got to grips with Publisher, got to know the editorial team and began to look after the production process. It's been a great job to have, steering through the pandemic and more recently very encouraging as we have had increasing offers of articles and photos from the wider community.

Gillian Baxter



As a Church of England school, there is an expectation that the vision and values arise from its Christian foundation. To ensure that this is taken seriously, Church of England schools are routinely inspected under the SIAMS framework, as well as by OFSTED. Towards the end of last year Stoke Bishop Primary was visited by a SIAMS Inspector, who spent the day in school talking with children and adults. The full report can be found on the school website; the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.*

Stoke Bishop Primary School is an inclusive community, in which children and adults flourish together. The school is made up of people from all the major world religions and those with no faith background. The school vision '**Believing it's Possible**' encourages everyone, individually and together, to achieve the things they set out to do. The four core values of **Passion, Grace, Integrity and Courage** help children and adults act in ways that enrich the community as a whole, making the school a safe and exciting place for everyone.

When you walk into the school foyer, large letters on the wall remind you that '*Flourishing Happens Here!*' The big overall aim is that everyone who is part of the school community will flourish in all aspects of learning and life. This was noted by the inspector who said:

'Stoke Bishop Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.'

In a world where so many people are surviving rather than thriving, we should be very encouraged to hear that our local school is a place where everyone is being helped to flourish.

All members of the school community are expected to grow spiritually, regardless of whether they have a religious worldview. Children are taught that Spirituality has four dimensions: **Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond**. Daily Collective Worship (formerly known as 'assemblies') cultivate spiritual growth for children and adults, inspiring everyone to think deeply and work well together.

The inspector noticed that the '*strong partnership with the local church significantly enriches the quality of Collective Worship and Religious Education. These connections help pupils feel a genuine sense of belonging and deepen their engagement.*'

Advocacy is another important part of the school's foundations. The SIAMS report highlighted that '*pupils actively champion others. The vision encourages them to take responsibility within the school, sustaining a culture of care, collaboration and shared purpose.*'

Far from being scary or intimidating, the day with the SIAMS Inspector felt like a real celebration of all the hard work that happens in the school day by day, year by year. It has further strengthened the partnership between the church, the school and local families, and fuelled ongoing work to ensure that the culture of inclusion and flourishing continues to thrive.

Jema Ball and Senior Leadership Team

* *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)*

Photo: In December the Reception Children made Christingles and had a time of Collective Worship themed around how Christians understand Jesus to be the Light of the World.

Meet Luna Stevens - Fundraiser

By Peter Weeks

Bristol North West Foodbank is one of a network of over 400 foodbanks across the UK. Since it opened in 2011 it has helped more than 74,000 people in crisis by providing emergency food parcels. The Foodbank is a Christian charity supported by local businesses, schools and churches through volunteering, fundraising and food donations. Recently I met one of their youngest fundraisers, Luna Stevens, who lives in Stoke Bishop.

Luna is 12 years old and a member of St Mary's 'Fuel', a Friday evening group for young people. After learning about the Foodbank during a Harvest Assembly when she was in Primary School, she decided to give up her birthday presents and ask for food donations instead from family and friends (she has been doing this for the past 5 years). She was invited for a volunteering day at the Foodbank to see how they operate and really enjoyed it. Next thing, she wanted to raise money by setting herself some challenging activities and asking for sponsorship. So far, she has:

- **skipped 1,000 skips every day for a month in a kangaroo outfit**
- **walked between the five Bristol North West Foodbank outlets in a Buzz Lightyear outfit**
- **rowed 2,000 metres every day for a month**
- **turned into a 'Jumping Bean' doing 1,000 jumps on a pogo stick every day for a month**
- **cycled the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats on a static bike**
- **swum the width of the English Channel in a swimming pool.**

Not content with these achievements, as I write, she is climbing the height of the highest peak on each of the seven continents on an inclined treadmill to raise yet more money. And in addition, she also volunteers at the Foodbank during her holidays, helping with anything that needs doing in the warehouse. She enjoys talking with the other volunteers, especially about history which is one of her interests. She says she would like to become a curator as a career.

So far Luna has raised an impressive £17,000 via sponsorship, showing her to be a prolific fundraiser and helper.

There is still time to donate to her latest fundraiser; to find her page, go to the GoFundMe website and search for "Luna Stevens Bristol".

I asked Luna what it was about the Foodbank that captured her attention and made her so fired up to make a difference for other people. In reply she said "I have a vision of the world where there is food for everyone and no-one goes hungry".

Luna is a remarkable young person who I imagine one day is going to be a leader in some shape or form!





Eileen Joy Stonebridge (1936 – 2025)

Eileen Stonebridge is a name familiar to many in Stoke Bishop. She was perhaps best known for her role in establishing the Sneyd Park

Nature Reserve as a precious refuge for both people and creatures, and for her quarterly, well researched, contributions to the Messenger.

Middle name Joy, she was a lover of life in all its fullness as testified by members of her family on 17 December 2025 at her thanksgiving service at St Mary's Church. Good and faithful servant describes Eileen well. She died shortly before her 91st birthday.

Eileen had been living on borrowed time, having been diagnosed with leukaemia some 20 years ago. She made full use of her extended time, never wasting a moment to further the cause of sustainability. Essentially joyful, her life was nevertheless not without its trials and she was certainly 'acquainted with grief'.

She did not shine particularly at school, being too interested in the youth group at church. But later, her intellect came to the fore. Eileen was a geographer and geologist, and after some years teaching she became a teacher trainer and academic at UWE.

Caring for her elderly mother precluded Eileen's early marriage and ability to have children. It was later in life that she met and married Brian, a mathematician - the love of her life whose death she grieved deeply. Sad at not having children of her own, it was clear to others that she loved children and came to life in their presence, whether showing the Brownies round the Nature Reserve or enjoying young relatives.

Family remember Eileen in a mini skirt and dashing around in a red mini. I don't think we have seen her quite like that in Stoke Bishop recently but she loved her home in Glenavon Park and resisted all attempts to get her to downsize. Reluctantly she did move into Druid Stoke Nursing Home on the Thursday before she died on the Saturday. So, she lived out her days in Stoneycroft almost to the end and still loved to entertain with tea and cake. Eileen was a people person and kept in touch with friends and family right to the end making full use of What's App.

Becoming a Christian in her teens in Dartford, Kent, her faith was an integral part of Eileen. It was her mainspring, her stay, her motivation and source of inspiration. Had we had another hymn at her funeral, *For the Beauty of the Earth* would have been a good choice – she loved God's world and creatures, and she loved the people with whom she was connected.

A Yorkshire lass to the end, Eileen chose 'On Ikley Moor Bah'tat' to close her thanksgiving service. She wanted to leave people with a smile and end on a joyful note. Eileen, you have left us a goodly heritage and many good memories – thank you.

Hazel Trapnell

Stoke Lodge - the latest twists and turns

We start 2026 with the news that the Planning Inspectorate has rejected an application by Cotham School to erect eight CCTV towers around Stoke Lodge parkland. The decision was based partly on heritage grounds; the Inspector found that 'the vast openness of the playing fields and its mature trees continue to provide an open and verdant surrounding to the listed building' and noted 'the value of the playing fields as historic parkland'. We continue to believe that a compromise solution that respects the heritage status of the parkland and its decades-long open access to the public, can be achieved. We continue to work towards that goal.

Bristol City Council found in November 2024 that there was 'overwhelming evidence' for four public rights of way across Stoke Lodge. These paths have not yet been added to the Definitive Map of public footpaths and a public inquiry on this is scheduled for October 2026. This delays the paths being recorded but does not affect their status in the meantime - they are available for you to walk, as you may have been doing for decades already!

Helen Powell

From the CHURCH REGISTERS

November 2025 - January 2026

Baptism

18 January Mabel Adeline Taylor

Funerals

26 November	Jill Stevenson
17 December	Eileen Stonebridge
18 December	Martin Bryan-Brown
26 January	Dorothy Christine White

"Fasting" doesn't mean eating fast food!



History of the Church Rooms

By Jema Ball

Just over 100 years after the first service at St Mary's Church was held in 1860, the new Vicar at that time, Canon Leslie Williams, began making plans for an extension to the church on the north side of the building. An impressively short time later, in 1963, work started to create the Church Rooms, and they were formally opened by the Bishop of Bristol on 1 October 1964.

Funded largely by the sacrificial giving of church members at the time, the Church Rooms have served the wider community of Stoke Bishop, and beyond, for the last sixty years.

Long-standing residents in the parish will probably remember the renovations to the church building, under the leadership of Revd David Ritchie. These were completed in 2011, giving us the warm, welcoming, versatile space that is used by the church community and many other groups every day of the week. This project, named 'Beyond 150' was always intended to have two phases – redevelopment of the main church, and then the Church Rooms. Plans for phase 2 picked up pace in 2015, under the leadership of Canon Mat Ineson. When I became Vicar at the end of 2019, the initial permissions had been granted and we 'just' needed to raise the necessary funds.

We launched this appeal in March 2020, only to find that two weeks later the world was in lockdown. This put the brakes on the project, and once we emerged from the pandemic, we discovered that the costs of building materials had increased substantially. Undeterred, we put a property owned by the church on the market to release additional funds, and we considerably scaled back the plans, so much so that we had to go through the dual permission process again, with Bristol City Council and Bristol Diocese.

Despite a great deal of hard work, it took a further two years to sell the property and to reach a consensus regarding the plans that would bring the project in at a manageable cost. There was much celebration when, towards the end of 2025, we were able to appoint K P Wilton to complete the project, and the builders moved onto the site getting the work underway!

Turn over to pages 8 - 9 to read about the fundraising and how you can help us to achieve this transformation.



From this...



...via this...



...to this!

Modernisation of a vital community building:

Are we nearly there yet? Yes we are!

Will you help with the last push to reach the target needed to complete the work on the Church Rooms which is now underway?



A space for everyone

We are inviting all readers of The Messenger to contribute to the expansion, upgrades and repairs of this shared community space in Stoke Bishop.

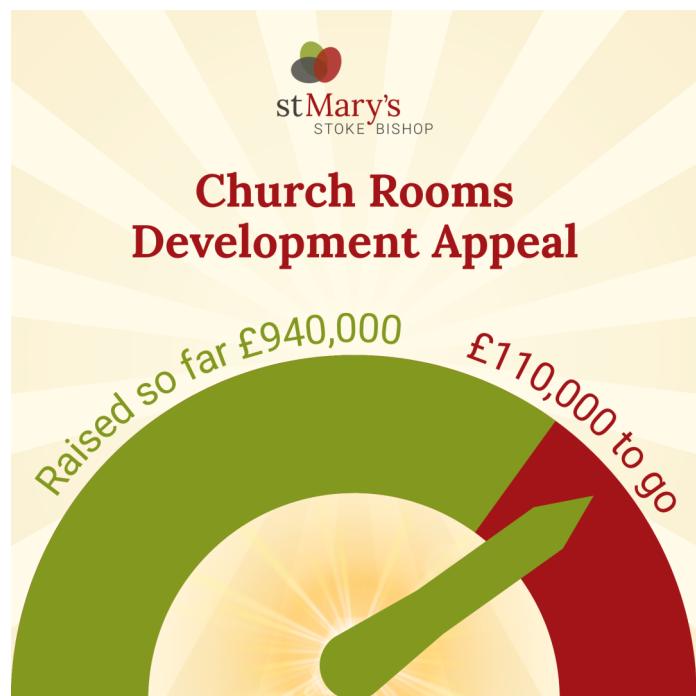
The Church Rooms have been at the heart of the Stoke Bishop community since the 1960's. They are used by people of all ages every day of the week. The Rooms have hosted, and still host, many community groups including baby and toddler groups, dance classes, Pilates, keep fit, Guides, Rainbows, Brownies, youth groups, art and language classes, wakes, children's parties, large gatherings, history talks, film nights and much, much more. You may well have come along to an activity here.

So that this building is safe, warm and fit-for-purpose for decades to come, we need to raise a further £110,000.

If every household receiving The Messenger gave £50, we could easily reach this total.

A gift from the church to the community

The members of St Mary's Church have given generously towards this project, digging deep to fund a third of the total needed, in addition to their giving which keeps the church running, covering salaries, utilities and much more besides.

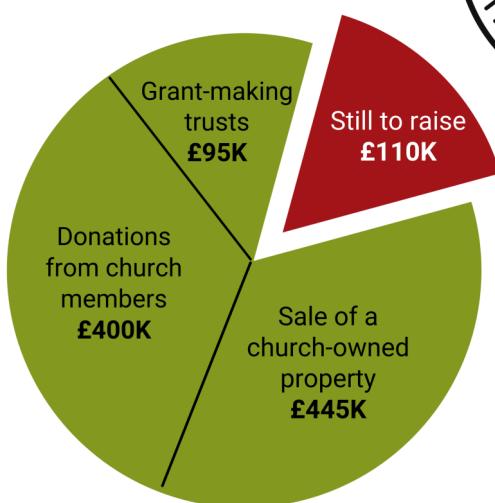


Everything that routinely happens at St Mary's is financed by the people who worship here week by week.

As a church we love to be able to share our buildings with others. The church is open every day, and available to hire, along with the Church Rooms, by a wide variety of people. The newly improved space will be a fantastic, versatile venue for everyone to enjoy.

Please help with the final push to fund this project!

Scan the QR code to donate via our GoFundMe page, or follow the link on the church website.



the Church Rooms development is under way!

Here are some of the things that your donation will make possible:

- *Installation of a lift between the church and the hall, connecting the two spaces so that no one is excluded.*
- *Two sets of well-equipped, accessible toilets at different ends of the building.*
- *An expanded and modernised kitchen able to prepare and serve hot meals with ease.*
- *Improved insulation through external rendering, new windows and roofing material.*
- *Upgraded aesthetics with all the rooms being decorated, new doors, better storage, AV improvements, new flooring and soft furnishings.*

Church Rooms Development Project

Expansion, upgrades and repairs to a community space in Stoke Bishop



Accessible for everyone
Improved community facilities
Future-proof for years to come



Whatever you can give, be it

£50, £150, £500 or £5000,

your donation will help complete this important work, enabling the Church Rooms to fling wide the doors once again to all in the community.

Want to find out more?

Visit www.stmarysb.org.uk/building_project for a video tour of the work in progress, which explains what to expect once the project is complete!

The church is open most days during daylight hours so do pop in and have a look at the plans, which are on display. If you would like a longer conversation and a tour, please get in touch vicar@stmarysb.org.uk and I would be glad to meet with you.

Once we have a date for the official opening of the completed building, we look forward to welcoming you to come and see the improved space. Perhaps a group or club that you are part of would like to hire one of the rooms for your activity – it could be the perfect venue for your next event!

As the church is a registered charity there could be other ways that local business owners could offer to help with this final push to get the project finished. I'd love to explore this further with you.

Please help us reach the target so that we can get back on track welcoming all kinds of different community groups into the building every day. Thank you!

If you would prefer to donate via BACS transfer you can do so using the details below, or you could send a cheque to the church office if you prefer. If you are able to Gift Aid your donation please complete the form on the 'Donate' page of the church website.

St Mary Mag PCC
Acc No: 92604889
Sortcode: 60-23-23
Ref: Building Project

Jema

**Revd Jema Ball,
Vicar of St Mary's**



Decorate Eggs for Easter

With Sarah Harris, Lucia and Annie

Eggs are a symbol of new life and have been decorated by Christians at Easter since the 3rd or 4th century in Mesopotamia. Chocolate eggs are much more recent, first appearing in the 19th century.

For Easter this year, we are painting and decorating hard boiled eggs.

We boiled the eggs for half an hour to make quite sure they were hard, then ran them under cold water and left them to cool right down before we started work.

Next, we rubbed the shells gently with our hands to remove the loose chalk dust that had accumulated on the shell during cooking. This makes the shell smooth and shiny and easier to paint.

Then we started painting. We used children's face paints as they are very safe.



Lucia painted a chick just emerging from its white shell. She stuck on a few bits of chicken feather to suggest wings and a tail.



Annie painted a baby rabbit in a brown basket on her egg and she gave him a white fluffy tail. When she had finished we added his bunny rabbit ears cut from brown paper.



Sarah painted her egg blue and decorated it with designs cut from a gold paper doily. She stuck on face paint 'jewels', to make it a bit like a Fabergé egg.

Enjoy being creative!

Favourite Hymns for Easter

By Richard Powell, Organist at St Mary's

I am sometimes asked to name my favourite hymn. It's a hard question to answer. I have many favourites! Asked that same question, Francis Jackson, long-time organist of York Minster, wisely used to reply, "The one I'm playing now!" But as we approach Easter, here are three I would not want to be without in this season:

The first is Isaac Watts' famous hymn, 'When I survey the wondrous cross'. It is sung to the tune 'Rockingham'. While in Doncaster Minster with some fellow organists last April, I was pleased to spot a plaque '*In memory of Edward Miller, Mus. Doc, and in gratitude for the tune 'Rockingham' which he composed while organist of this church, 1757-1807.*' Watts reflects on the significance of Christ's sacrifice, and how everything he holds dear pales in comparison:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

The second is Samuel Crossman's hymn 'My song is love unknown'. I love how it speaks of the transforming effect of Christ's work ('*love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be*'), how it narrates the story ('*Sometimes they strew his way, and his sweet praises sing; resounding all the day hosannas to their King; then 'Crucify!' is all their breath, and for his death they thirst and cry.*') and its beautiful tune by John Ireland. Crossman speaks for many in his final verse:

*Here might I stay and sing:
no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.*

The third is Edmond Budry's hymn 'Thine be the glory', set to a tune written by G F Handel for the chorus 'See the conquering hero comes!' from his oratorio Judas Maccabaeus. It is traditionally sung on Easter Sunday morning. Whenever I play it, I like to imagine the empty tomb in the blazing sunlight of that first Easter morning:

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay.*

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won!*

Join us on Good Friday and Easter Sunday to sing these and more.

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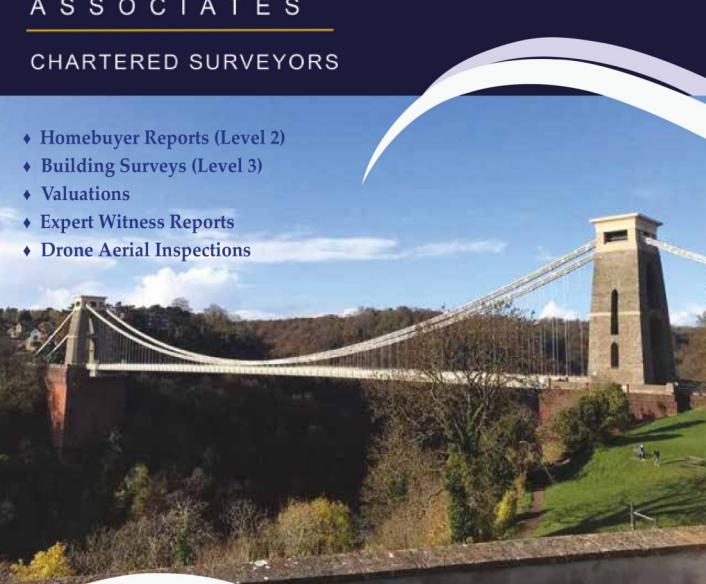
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UPCOMING WORKING PARTIES SPRING 2026

Bring gloves (and tools if you prefer your own)

17th January
14th February
14th March
11th April
9th May

All working party sessions are held between 10am-12 noon on a Saturday.

FOSPNR@gmail.com
oldsneedparknaturereserve.org

Bristol Chamber Orchestra Concert
Saturday 28 March at 7.30 pm
St Mary Magdalene Church

A varied programme of music for strings ranging in date from the 17th century to the 20th, to include well-loved pieces....

J S Bach: Brandenburg Concerto no. 3,
Albinoni: Adagio
Peter Warlock: Capriol Suite
Elgar: Elegy

...plus a delightfully tuneful string serenade by an little-known 19c Hungarian composer, Julius Beliczay, an exciting discovery for us all.

Admission by pre-paid ticket from orchestra members, or simply on the door. For further details see our website: bristolchamberorchestra.org.uk

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 Spring 2026

Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

See left for dates of working parties.

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.oldsnedparknaturereserve.org

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

Stoke Bishop & Sneyd Park Local History Group

Friday 20 March – Shirehampton Remount Depot (1914-27): the major supply base of horses for the front – by Richard Coates

Friday 15 May: Ladies Mile: the story of the book by Victoria Hughes'loo lady' - by Kerris Harrop

All talks in Village Hall at 7.30 pm.
Visitors welcome, £3 per meeting.

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

University Botanic Garden

From March open every days 10 am-4.30 pm
'Friends', children, students, Staff & alumni free.

Adults £9.

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

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

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project

The Conservation Education Centre on Guthrie Road (venue accessible to wheelchair users) remains open for courses & talks.

For further information contact the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project on 0117 903 0609 or e-mail avongorgewildlife@bzsociety.org.uk.

For full details of events and courses, and booking arrangements visit
www.avongorge.org.uk/whatson
phone 0117 428 5600

Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Ward Forum

Public meeting with Local Councillors tba.
Everyone welcome.

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

Stoke Bishop Townswomen's Guild

1st Thursday of each month 2.15 pm
in St Mary's Church

Friendly tea, chat and social outings.

For details, contact Sheila 914 7159
or Angela 968 6473

Update from Uganda: St Mary's Mission Partners Can...

By Anni and



Revd. Canon David Serunjogi (a.k.a. Romans 8:1) writes about his work in Kampala. He was Director of Open Air Campaigners Uganda before retiring a couple of years ago...

Trinity Children's Centre, Kabowa, Kampala celebrates its 40th anniversary since Romans and Sarah started a little school to educate a growing family of their own and many adopted children. It is in one of the poorest areas of Kampala. (Left, Romans addressing Trinity CC.)

Last month they had a Thanksgiving Service led by a friend of Romans, to mark the achievement of being the 6th best Primary school in Kampala, and 82nd out of more than 12,000 Primary Schools in the whole of Uganda.

The City Council threatened to close the school if the original classrooms Romans had built were not demolished and rebuilt, so he undertook an ambitious three - storey new building (pictured left) which only needs the corrugated iron roof sheets to be completed! St Mary's funds have helped achieve this, but a further £3,000 is needed.

The number of students fluctuates between 1250 and 1350 at the beginning of the year, but drops over the year to about 1100 due to financial constraints. Most of the parents are single mothers. Men appear not bothered about the education of their children, and many of them are addicted to marijuana, alcohol, and betting. At Centenary High School the enrolment has been stable at about 900 over the last six years and the boys there work hard during the holidays to earn their fees.

The Double Cure Medical Centre has been recognised as a Hospital by the Government, and a Nurses' Training School has been constructed at the same site to provide the necessary staff. By the end of December, 87 student nurses had been enrolled, 18 of whom were finalists. Sixty-nine previous students are expected back at the end of January, but funds are needed to advertise the courses. TV adverts cost £2,000 per month, and other types of advertising £1,200.

The head of the Hospital is Romans' daughter Dr. Lydia Nakitende who came to visit us last October with her husband Brian after attending her graduation Ceremony for her Masters in Business Management in London. Several of her siblings are also Doctors or studying at University in Russia.

The access road is in a very poor state, and the catchment area is wide – painful travel if someone is in labour or has a fracture.

Clevedon Family Church provided funds for six rainwater tanks (60,000 litres) but lack of rain prompted Romans to have a well dug to provide 1500 litres daily from the reliable aquifer. The lower section collapsed so a second well is to be dug, and the first has been repaired, providing a reliable water supply, funded by St Mary's. A solar powered pump now replenishes the tanks whenever the sun shines. (See left)



Above: the new school building

Right: The new well

Below: Trinity CC forty years ago



on David Serunjogi (Romans) and Rev Tabitha Ddembe

Korky Davey

Korky and Anni Davey have known Tabitha since the 1980's. Her ministry is wide! She runs five Churches and has a lovely, big family. She also works in schools, prison, with the elderly, and in the parishes.

Tabitha recently ran a Youth and Children's Conference with a large number attending. Four school assemblies a week reach 300–800 children at a time.

She resources another sixty-eight school assembly workers. She sends us beautifully handwritten thank-you letters from them from time to time.

Tabitha provides care and food parcels for elderly destitute folk who love her visits and prayer, not just the rice and sugar packets! Some are living in very poor shacks which are probably about to fall down. One couple, Joyce and Teddy, whom Tabitha tries to help are in particular need as they are cold at night.

Transport is a continual worry for Tabitha. Her car packed up a couple of years ago and is too expensive to repair, probably needing a new engine due to the dusty roads and endless pot holes. She was knocked off a boda-boda taxi bike a while ago, but a taxi is prohibitively expensive, and her motorbike was stolen. She is naturally now apprehensive of boda-boda travel. They were hit by another driver in a car but thankfully soon recovered from the bruises and shock. The driver on that occasion has lost his livelihood with his bike - and Tabitha's amplifier was smashed, too.

Dr. Lydia Nakitende, Romans' daughter (see opposite page) took a replacement amplifier with her in October which she is delighted with. It's a rechargeable head-set and easy to carry, very effective and much appreciated.

Tabitha dreams of buying some land to grow food. She concludes: "There are many difficulties and challenges, but I am trying my best to serve the Lord... Philippians 4:13."



Tabitha at work!

Scouts and Community Centre Building Project



We hope to be ready to open soon and are planning the reintroduction of our café around Easter: look out for details!

With the outside structure of the building almost complete, we are now hard at work on the inside of our new Scout Community Centre.

As ever, progress is both pleasing and simultaneously frustrating as we get closer to opening and yet with still so much to do and source!

We now have an installed kitchen (which still needs painting, splashbacks, water connection etc) and our trustee and hut build team have spent a few days painting the bathrooms so these can be fitted out ready for use. A corporate team on a volunteering day are also coming in to help with more painting in the main hall, and so we plough on day by day; we will get there!

Accessibility is a key feature, and we are so looking forward to being open for all - for those that remember our old kitchen and bathrooms, it is such a pleasure to have modern facilities taking shape.

Cashflow and funding remains tight as we work towards opening, so we continue to seek the support of grant funders, businesses and the local community. Please use the QR code above or visit www.43rdbristolscouts.org.uk to make an online donation or take part in our Buy-a-Brick campaign.

Carolyn Jenkins

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William Canynges of Bristol (Part 2)

By Bob Mathers

In the mid-fifteenth century, wealthy Bristol merchants like William Canynges would usually act as financiers and power-brokers for the reigning monarch except that, in this case, Henry VI was widely regarded as bad news for business because of his frequent bouts of mental instability.

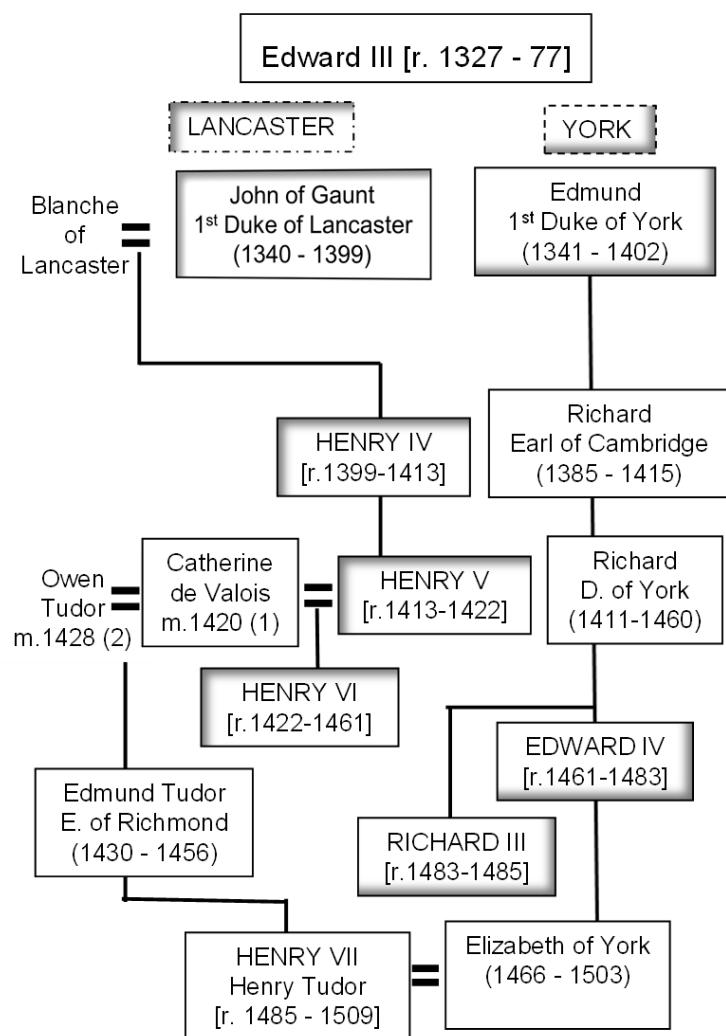
With the humiliating defeat at Castillon bringing the Hundred Years' War to a close, Bristol's captive market of Aquitaine disappeared overnight resulting in major losses of earnings from its two main trade staples, cloth exporting and wine importing.

A volatile atmosphere was developing throughout England as the competing dynastic families of York and Lancaster, manoeuvred to succeed Henry when the time came. People wanted a stronger king who would protect their interests abroad and bring peace and prosperity at home, not much different from what we look for today. These were dangerous times for Bristol's leaders ahead of an anticipated military struggle.

Canynges had strong ties with Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, known to us as Warwick the Kingmaker. Neville was a key Yorkist ally, Bristol landowner and probably the richest and most powerful English peer at that time. This relationship demonstrates more than any other just how astute and politically well-connected Canynges had become and how, in turn, he was able to influence many, but not all, local merchants to support the Yorkist cause.

Following the imprisonment of his half-brother, Thomas Young, in 1451 after calling for the recognition of the Duke of York as Henry VI's heir presumptive, Young petitioned Parliament for compensation in 1456, arguing that members "ought to have ... freedom to ... say in the House ... (what) to them is thought convenient or reasonable without any manner of challenge, charge, or punishment ..." It was an important step in Parliament becoming a sovereign institution with its own rights, demonstrating to all that it was not just a lowly assembly of courtiers subject to royal or judicial whim – a similar argument to that of the rebel barons who had forced King John to sign the Magna Carta in 1216 and which was reissued at Bristol Castle in 1217.

War broke out in 1455 and after York's death in battle in late 1460, his son Edward the Earl of March, Constable of Bristol Castle, took over the Yorkist cause. A nervous period followed for his Bristol-based supporters until, early in 1461, March deposed Henry VI and took the throne as Edward IV.



Canynges always had a policy of maintaining outwardly good relations with parties on both sides. He entertained Henry VI three times on his visits to Bristol between 1447 and 1452, and his queen, Margaret of Anjou, in 1456 at his palatial home in Redcliffe Street. In 1461, by duly hosting Edward IV at the same venue and lending him a large sum, he subtly emphasised Bristol merchants' general support for the new regime which would willingly provide ships, men and money to a king needing to reinforce his throne.

With a judicious mixture of foresight and planning, and a liberal but careful dispensation of his resources, Canynges survived the struggle with his fortune more or less intact until, in late 1467 his wife Joan died. Their two sons having predeceased them, it appears he now began to come to terms with what was of real value to him. Giving away his possessions, he was ordained a priest in 1468 and, in the summer of 1469, became Dean of the Collegiate Church of Westbury-on-Trym, where he died in 1474.

*This is an extract from
'Mediaeval Bristol: A Short History (1066-1497)'
to be published in 2027.*



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In Praise of Daffodils

By Nicky Woodfield

If, like me, you consider the humble daffodil to be a favourite at this time of year, then have you ever wondered about its symbolic and cultural significance? As they adorn our pavements, beautify our gardens and homes, it might surprise you to know that only one of the many thousands of UK varieties is actually native.

For our truly wild variety - *Narcissus Pseudonarcissus* – known as the ‘Lent Lily’, we need to head to the woodlands and damp meadows of South Devon and along the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire border between March and April to find them. (right)

It might also surprise you to know that Britain produces 90% of all the world’s daffodils, with over 26,000 cultivated varieties of the spring flower as bulbs and stems for us to buy. *Narcissus poeticus*, the ‘Poet’s Pheasant Eye daffodil’ is thought to have been the earliest cultivated daffodil back in the 4th Century BC. (below)



Today the most popular garden variety is arguably the *Narcissus ‘Tete-a-Tete’* with its early miniature blooms and often multiple heads. (below)



As symbols of hope and renewal, daffodils without doubt signify rejuvenation and new beginnings. For many they symbolise friendship and affection. In some cultures, these cheerful flowers symbolize good fortune, as in China for example. Here in the UK, daffodils are the flower for the month of March and the astrological flower of Pisces and they hold a particular sense of pride for the Welsh!

Daffodils only really became a popular ornamental garden flower in the Tudor and Elizabethan times. Between the early 1600s to 1800s, many varieties fell out of fashion, with plant breeding in the early 1800s focused on exotic plants from around the world, like orchids. There was little time for the humble daffodil, until late Victorian and Edwardian times, when they became fashionable once again with a rapid expansion of breeding different shapes and forms, reflected in their rich historical and cultural association today.

It is easy to see why daffodils have been inspirational to writers and artists alike, from Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Oscar Wilde to Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet and even Don McLean! Regarded as one of our favourite national poems is English Romantic poet William Wordsworth’s *I wandered lonely as a cloud* ...

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;*

It speaks of his encounter with a long stretch of daffodils he saw on the shores of Ullswater in the Lake District in 1802 when out on a walk. It neatly and simply describes the power nature has to be transformative and impactful on us all.

Useful pollinators?

Unfortunately, the vast majority of daffodils offer bees and other pollinators little in the way of nutritious pollen and sweet nectar. Like most flowers, those attractive to humans are rarely attractive to pollinators. So if you’d rather provide for our all-important pollinators then consider planting hellebores, snowdrops and grape hyacinths or an array of Lent Lilies.

Happy planting!

Helping Hand

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Care Direct 922 2700
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help for over 60s and young disabled
www.wecr.org.uk

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www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk

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Action for the Blind 934 1719
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Holidays for Carers: 0800 999 3365
www.carersholidays.org.uk

Growing Support 07419 825261
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Bristol After Stroke 964 7657
Support for those recovering from Stroke
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www.bristol-city.gov.uk

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

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

Portway Park & Ride

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

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

Cover picture:
building works in St Mary's church rooms: see pp7-9

Picture by Keith Sheather

