

The Stourton Caundler

December 2024-January 2025

Issue 187





Clubs and Committees in Stourton Caundle

Cycling Group Weekly, Mon & Fri	John Howes	01963251264
Garden Club 2nd Wednesday (Sep to Apr)	Christine Peters	362430
Events Committee	John Waltham	362890
Knit and Stitch Mondays Oct to May	Linda Walters	07805182477
League of Golfers Monthly, 3rd Sunday	Roger Paull	07970977404
Parish Council Monthly	Sue Harris	362864
Village Hall '100 Club'	Anna Oliver	362109
Sports Club Weekly Mon,Tues,Thurs	Neil Duke	07383866768
St Peter's Church Secretary	Jon-Paul Hughes	07779 287894
Village Hall Committee Chair Twice yearly plus AGM	Debbie Pritchett	362405
Welcome Club Chair 3rd Wednesday	Rob Page	363886

The Caundler Team

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Please use **“Word”** documents when sending contributions
by e-mail if possible to:

thecaundler@stourtoncaundle.org.uk

Message From the Editors

As we enter a new year, for many people, this is also a time for new opportunities, new adventures, new challenges. We are immensely fortunate in our little village to have a number of small businesses, being run by people who actually live, and even work, right here, in Stourton Caundle.

It would be really good to hear from you if you run your own business, or have plans for such a venture, or have ever dreamt of setting up on your own. We know we have jewellery makers, cake creators, glassblowers and physios here. We have garden designers, wood turners, knitters, seamstresses, musicians...the list goes on. Please share your stories. If you'd prefer just to chat to one of the Caundler team and let us do the writing for you and about you, please contact one of us (our details are listed at the front of the magazine). We could even arrange to meet on a Thursday morning over a coffee and a bacon bap at the Beehive café, in the village hall. Don't be shy. The Caundler is only going to maintain its relevance if people from the village contribute and keep it appealing to you, our readers.

We'd still like your articles on A Treasured Object, or Your Journey to Stourton Caundle. We'd also love your photos of Spring for our Feb/March issue, particularly if they're from local places.

Please send content submissions by January 19, 2025

Thank you!

We made this!

Join us for Christmas Carols Outside The Trooper Inn Saturday 21st December at 5:30 pm

There will be mulled wine and mince pies, everyone is welcome
Children meet in the village hall at 4:30 pm to make lanterns and have a
sausage sizzle and hot chocolate before processing
to the Trooper Inn to join the Carollers.

There is no charge, just a voluntary donation towards the air ambulance.
For more information call Rachel 363886



Village Hall '100 Club' Monthly Draw Results

Drawn at the Beehive Café on 17th October 2024

First Prize: £25.00	No. 28	Sue Simon
Second Prize: £20.00	No. 138	Claire Lewis
Third Prize: £15.00	No. 146	Nic Block

Drawn at the Beehive Café on 14th November 2024

First Prize: £25.00	No. 16	Stuart Walker
Second Prize: £20.00	No. 397	Kate Duke
Third Prize: £15.00	No. 349	Terry Taylor

Next Draws: 12th December and 16th January.

The annual collection is now complete, and November has seen the start of another year of monthly '100' Club Draws. Huge thanks to all those of you who have so kindly and generously continued to support it, especially members who were willing to take more numbers, so that the '100' Club could raise a larger sum than in previous years for Village Hall funds.

Just over £1000 has now been given for the Roof Fund (up from £720), and monthly prizes have been increased to £35, £30 and £25 (from £25, £20 and £15). This is a brilliant result. The monthly Draws now take place on a Thursday at the Beehive Cafe. The results and date of the next Draw are given in The Stourton Caundler and on the 3 village noticeboards.

If anyone would like to join the '100' Club, please contact me. It costs £6 per number, and members may have as many numbers as they wish.

Anna Oliver (01963 362109)

Christmas Craft Market at Manor Farm

The Christmas Craft Market, held between 2pm and 4pm on Sunday 10th November, was a resounding success. Villagers looking for early Christmas presents were able to choose from over a dozen stalls selling jewellery, fused glass, dried flower arrangements, intricate hand drawn maps, wood-turned items and a variety of other gifts. Visitors were serenaded by a quartet of the finest carol singers as they enjoyed tea and cakes, with the mulled wine proving particularly popular. Thank you to all who attended and gave so generously: we raised £690 pounds which has been donated to the Village Hall Raise The Roof fund. Special thanks to Ness for organising the market and inviting so many talented craftspeople and to Sue Simon for hosting the event in her barn and courtyard.

Sue Palmer-Simmons

(see photos page 24)



Village Harvest Supper

A huge thank you to each and everyone of you, for your support, work, generosity and amazing food. The evening had a great buzz, with 97 new and old friends meeting up. Together we raised £970.70 for the church, which is more than last year!

Thank you,

Wendy & Mike Taylor



Children's Toys

The lady at the charity shop today told me that she wishes people would clear out their children's old toys in the lead up to Christmas rather than after because she always sees a number of parents strapped for cash in the days before Christmas looking for toys for their little ones. She said there's very rarely anything in just before, but that they get inundated with toys in the days after.

And it really made me think about it in a way I never would have before.

If you know your child is going to get lots of presents this year, by clearing out your cupboards a few days early, you could make another child's Christmas a lot more special too.

Vinny Taylor



NDWR Thank You

The North Dorset Women's Refuge would like to thank the parishioners of Stourton Caundle for their kind and generous contributions and money from the Harvest Thanksgiving Service this Autumn.

Twilight Talk

On the night of October 25th a gaggle of villagers, some very spookily attired, gathered at the Village Hall to learn more about the Dark Arts. The setting was suitably eerie, the Hall transformed into a gloomy, bat and spider-ridden grotto. A glass of fortifying wine was what we needed, and what we got, and there we were – some nervous, some sceptical, some believers, to hear what our vicar, Revd Canon Richard had to say on the matter.

Straight away we knew we were in good, confident hands. To start; Richard told us he was approached to join the Church of England Deliverance Ministry because his Bishop reckoned he was a sceptic. Just the man for the job, he was told. You notice, the exercise is called Deliverance – not exorcism, which is an altogether different practice. Deliverance, as practised by the Church is the act of delivering a person, or a place, from the influence of evil or sin, by prayer – and is strictly carried out in accordance with the guidance of the Deliverance Ministry, often working with doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists.

So what does it mean in practice? Richard explained that the majority of cases he had been called to, after research and consultation, had an explanation. The footsteps overhead in the haunted pub was water going through new pipes, and there were other examples where occupants had convinced themselves of evil or ghostly presences.

But there were others for which there was no explanation. After research into a 'haunted house', Richard found the terms of the lease set by the deceased previous owners (whose portraits were on the wall) were not being met, and with some intervention on his part to restore the agreement, and suitable prayers, the house became calm and untroubled. On another occasion in another disturbed home, he witnessed pictures flying off the wall and other paranormal activities and realised the very troubled occupant needed advice and counselling, which, after prayers and blessing, restored peace.

Of course, we all loved the paranormal histories, and there were plenty of questions afterwards – and a show of hands revealed quite a large number of excited people who felt they had experienced the paranormal – me being one of them.

Thank you so much to Ness and Catherine and their team who set up the Hall and looked after us with wine and delicious snacks. Thank you very much to our vicar, Canon Richard splendidly attired and speaking with such wit and authority.

It was a diverting evening - and then we all turned out into the dark, dark night.....

Sarah Challis



A 2024 study found that 'traditional' religious and wiccan beliefs held by individuals led to higher levels of stress and greater difficulty in dealing with stress than average.

On the other hand, those people holding 'New Age' beliefs; psychic phenomena, spiritualism and precognition, do not suffer from higher levels of stress than average.

It is believed the higher levels of stress among 'Traditional' believers reflects anxiety over uncontrollable external forces in life.

Diary of a Country Parson

December 2024

In the Rectory study I have a weird and wonderful collection of eccentric objects I have collected over the years. One item is a crystal ball I found in a junk shop some years ago. I thought it would make an interesting prop for my photography and by placing it in front of a camera lens you can get some great effects as it bends light and images.

I wondered if it could be of help in answering the question “What will Christmas be like this year?” Kate and I are facing our first Christmas without our two boys Alex and Ben. Alex will be performing in a show on a cruise ship going around the Mediterranean and the Arabian Sea and Ben has just started a new teaching job in Japan for a year. We will miss them hugely. Though clergy aren’t supposed to dabble in this kind of thing I popped the aforementioned object on my desk and stared at it hard. I noticed that it was magnifying the text of a page on my desk and right bang in the middle was a large question mark. It seemed that either my crystal ball was faulty or just didn’t know the answer to this question.

I’m sure it will not just be Kate and I for whom Christmas will be different this year. Others will have loved ones who are away or are having their first Christmas following a family bereavement. Some will have new babies and grandchildren, which though joyful will be different and exhausting. We also seem to live in a world of uncertainty with conflicts in Europe and the Middle East. We can all feel a bit discombobulated by this when the familiar becomes the unknown. However, all is not lost, we just need to go back to the beginning. We have over the years and in our own lifetime developed a myth about Christmas, fed by stories and traditions of sugar plum fairies, tinsel and coloured lights and John Lewis adverts. If we open our Bibles to either the Gospel of Matthew or Luke and look at the real story we will find none of this but a world in flux and turmoil, with our key characters living in a state of huge uncertainty.

It begins with something sure and fixed; a proposed family wedding. A young girl Mary is betrothed to a local carpenter Joseph. The families would have been planning this for years. Mary is visited by an angel who tells her she is going to have a child, but not just any child, the son of the living God, the Messiah. When Mary tells this to Joseph the wedding is OFF! The disgrace this would bring on him and his family would be too much, so he plans to call it off quietly to avoid embarrassment to both families. However, he too, is visited by an angel and the enormity of the situation becomes clear, so he takes Mary for his wife.

The political situation in the area is tense to say the least. The Roman occupying army needs taxes to fund its expansion, so a census is ordered. Mary is heavily pregnant, and the baby is due at any time, but they are forced to travel to Joseph’s home town of Bethlehem. When they arrive the town is in chaos. All the inns are full and the long journey from Nazareth has induced Mary into labour. All that can be found is a cave or barn in which animals are kept but at least it is warm and dry.

Meanwhile back at Herod’s palace, rumours are circulating about the birth of a new King that will challenge his power base, (even though he is just a puppet king to the Roman Empire). Travelers from the East confirm this to Herod, and he wants the potential threat to his power base annihilated. He issues an horrific order, that all first born children are to be

Mary and Joseph's plan, to return to Nazareth and bring up their new baby quietly, are dashed. They have no other choice but to flee, and like all refugees, they leave with only what they can carry, making a perilous journey with an infant to Egypt.

When you read the Christmas story like this it is far removed from HO HO HO's and Christmas cheer. We know how the story ends, but if we didn't at this point we would be asking ourselves, did they make it? It conjures up images of refugees we see today fleeing war and looking for a safe place to bring up their families.

However as we read the Gospel we see signs that though chaos and calamity may seem to reign, God is actually in control. Amidst the mayhem, shepherds (often seen as outcasts at that time) receive a message from angels that God is in charge and not to lose heart. A new light is coming into the world which the darkness will never overcome.

So, though some of us may be facing a different Christmas that might even be worrying us deeply we can give thanks and have faith that, despite all the calamity in the world or the worries we are facing personally, God is there for us. Emmanuel "God with us". What's more is that we have a God who has lived the earthly life we have with its joys and heart ache. Even though towards the end of the story when it seems that the chaos and darkness has won the day as Jesus dies on the cross, God has actually won the victory because Jesus rises to establish a new Kingdom. What we need to do is to look beyond the media circus, the constant flow of negative messages, the haters and the evil and see the light and hope of that first Christmas traveling through time and eternity shedding its light on us. It's there if you look.

Happy Christmas and may God bless you all.

Canon Richard Hancock.



Parish Council Report

Parish Councillors have now held two meetings with a Dorset Council representative from Highways and the Flood Engineer, the second involving walking them round the village to discuss specific problem areas, particularly where flooding is caused by run-off from fields, pointing out damaged road-signs, blocked drains and culverts etc.

The play-area committee has recently held a meeting to discuss improvements to the equipment.

There were no objections to planning applications for The Old Forge and to build four dwellings at Rock Hill Farm.

Grass cutting around the village has been greatly improved with volunteer help followed by a short-term contract with Mr. Wavish. New quotes are being obtained for the new season starting in April 2025.

Welcome Club Report

The Club held its AGM on Wednesday 16th October at 14.30. The current Committee basically remained in place apart from Chas Williams who has joined the team to organise speakers. A big thanks goes out to Colin McKay who has stepped down as organiser of our speakers, musical entertainers and quizzes for several years. Colin has managed to ensure we have all been entertained at our meetings. Colin's final job was to hold the traditional post AGM quiz with hardly a horse racing question in sight.

Also, thanks to Colin Wood who stepped down as Trip Organiser. Colin has had the unenviable task of sorting our trips, making sure we all get on and off the coach safely and that no-one was left behind.

At our November meeting we had Brian Petit, wildlife photographer, to give a talk and show photographs of his trips through France and on to Spain. Brian has an enormous passion for wildlife demonstrated through his knowledge and incredible patience to achieve his fantastic photos. He is old fashioned when taking photos and offered the advice of one personally getting up as close to nature as possible. He was however not a great fan of drones scaring away his animal subjects.

Our next meeting will be held on the 15 January 2025.

We welcome all to our meetings and to join the club which is open to everyone. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month apart from August, for a talk followed by tea, sandwiches and cake and a good natter. We also aim to have two trips a year and a Christmas lunch, so do come and join us.

Looking forward to seeing you.

Rob Page

Chairman



Garden Club

October Meeting

The Garden Club's season of meetings began on Wednesday 9 October, when Paul Stickland, from Black Shed Flower Farm in Sherborne, talked about a year in flower farming. Describing firstly how the farm on the eastern edge of the town developed over recent years, then explaining in detail the work involved in producing its wonderful range of flowers for cutting, Paul entertained his audience for well over an hour with his lavishly illustrated lecture. It was certainly fascinating to find out the range of flowers that can be grown for this purpose, and Paul also offered several helpful tips on the varieties suitable for local gardens and the best way of growing at home.

November Meeting

On Wednesday 13 November a disappointingly small audience was in attendance for the Club's AGM. All existing committee members had offered to continue in position and, in the absence of any other names being put forward, all were voted in for the next year. On an almost unanimous vote, it was agreed by those in attendance that the annual membership

subscription would be raised to £15 with effect from September 2025.

Following the AGM Catherine Crouch, a regular lecturer now at the Garden Club, gave a talk on the subject of growing “food you can’t buy”. In practice, Catherine’s presentation extended beyond exotic, or at least hard to find, fruit and vegetables, to include advice on propagating, planting and growing more common crops; dealing with disease such as tomato blight; and even cooking tips. The photographs of her garden and allotment certainly offered encouragement to audience members who are already looking forward to next season’s vegetables.

Future Events

The next meeting of the Garden Club will be on Wednesday 11 December, when a speaker from Castle Gardens will talk on the subject of “Sweet Plants and Sugar Sources”. Tickets for this talk, and all the others during the season, are available for guests and other non-members at £5 per person from committee members or on the night. The presentation starts at 7:30 pm and doors open at 7:00 pm.

Looking forward to 2025, the Club is organising a plant fair on Saturday 3 May at the Village Hall. All donations of plants and garden equipment for sale will be welcome, and villagers are encouraged to sow seeds, split perennials and take cuttings in anticipation.

Broken Nails



A Childhood Family Christmas

My elder sister and I were both born at the dawn of the Second World War. We lived at Abbots Langley, near Watford in Herts before moving to the Peak District of Derbyshire in March 1945. The house lay on a hilltop overlooking the Hope Valley, some 12 miles across the moors from Sheffield, where our neurologist father kept his patient beds in one of the hospitals.

Every Christmas was looked forward to eagerly by us children. The highlight was Christmas Eve when the family always held an evening house party for over 50 of our parent’s local friends, their excited children and grandchildren and assorted dogs. We were immensely proud of the Christmas tree in the hall, on which we had carefully arranged the twinkling fairy lights and decorations to create an enchanting scene. Our many Christmas cards festooned the walls of the lounge dangling on red ribbons. The day before Christmas our parents worked tirelessly to produce a smorgasbord of appetising seasonal goodies and festive drinks, which we were told to pass around amidst the noisy conversation and laughter, culminating in our being allowed to show our young friends how to roast chestnuts on the open coal fires. And when everyone left, we crept upstairs to bed, tense with expectation that Santa Claus would see the mince pie and glass of sherry left by the fireplace, before finding his way upstairs to fill our stockings in the night, which he always did. At the crack of dawn these would invariably contain a tangerine, some walnuts, spangles, smarties and chocolates, with a few precious toys.

On Christmas Day morning, after church at St. John’s, Bamford, we were bundled into father’s Rover for the traditional visit to the hospital in Sheffield, where his patients were

arranged in large Florence Nightingale wards, each with 16 hooped metal beds. Despite the fact that those kept in hospital over Christmas were very poorly, father cheered them up by dressing as a chef in a tall white hat to carve the turkey in the middle of the ward. And whilst our parents were distracted, the kindly Matron, a real life Hattie Jacques character in her blue uniform and starched white cap with leg of mutton sleeves, would beckon us into her office to sample a small glass of illicit sherry with a mince pie. A secret we clung to for years.

Returning home over the moors we were finally free to open our longed for Christmas presents clustered underneath the tree, although we still had to wait until early evening for the traditional family turkey and plum pudding feast. I never remember having eaten anything else at Yuletide. And I still do.

Tom Eden

Sunray Cottage



Village Hall Update

Fundraising — Another busy and successful couple of months of fundraising for the new roof, with generous contributions from several individuals, plus over £1,000 raised by the 100 Club, and even more funds raised from the wonderful Tennis, Halloween and Craft Fair events. Many thanks to everyone involved in organising, attending and contributing. The total raised now is over **£60,000**.

Efforts continue on applying for grants to allow us to do the necessary work on the roof and quotes to complete the required work have now been requested from several contractors. We are seeking one contractor to do all of the elements of the work required.

CIO status — As you may have seen from previous articles, the hall trustees are changing the structure of its charitable status to bring it up to date and put it in a position to apply for more grants. I'm pleased to advise that the Charities Commission have now accepted our application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The plan is to change from the old charity to the new one on 1st January 2025.

Although this should be seamless and make very little difference to anyone using the hall, there has been a lot of hard work to get to this stage and many thanks should go to Frankie Watt and Pete Bull for trawling through a mass of paperwork.

Membership of the new charity — As well as having five trustees, the new village hall charity will have a group of members who will participate in meetings and vote on important decisions regarding the hall. Historically, the hall committee has been formed of representatives of the various organisations that regularly use the hall. These organisations will continue to have the right to be represented in this way but membership of the new charity will also be open to **any** individual who has an interest in the hall and is keen to support its work by participating in meetings.

So please do consider if you would like to become a member of the village hall charity and if you do please email the secretary Pete Bull on petebull14142@gmail.com who will be pleased to send out an application form to you.

CHRISTMAS SPIDER

By Margaret Waddingham

There's Joseph and Mary, Angels and kings
 shepherds, inn keeper and angels who sing,
 and of course there are a few other things
 who don't do much else but stand near the wings,
 but I've got a part written specially for me
 and when it comes to my time
 I'm the bestest, most perfect thing that you'll see.

Miss Watts says she thought of me when she wrote it
 'cos she knows how I like to pretend,
 but she says that I've got to be quiet as quiet
 as I'm on the stage from the start to the end.
 She says I can now and then wave one of my legs
 just to let people know that I'm there,
 but I have to be gentle 'cos they're held on with pegs
 and they might all fall off, so I have to take care.

When the baby is born and angels start singing
 and the kings and the shepherds their gifts they are bringing
 that's when I come with my eight stripy legs
 (and I'm very careful 'cos they're held on with pegs),
 I sort of bow and it's really not easy
 controlling these legs and it makes me feel queasy,
 then I hold up my present and you'll never guess what -
 you'll be quite amazed when you see what I've got.

It's the lightest of blankets, the finest you'll see
 that I've woven from webs that's all made by me,
 to tuck round the baby when he is first born,
 a fine silken blanket to keep him so warm.
 and everyone's clapping and shouting encore,
 I'm not sure what it means
 but I think they want more
 So we all sing some carols and they all join in
 and two angels start fighting - I think it's the twins
 and Miss Watts is nodding and smiling at me
 and she's clapping like mad and looks filled with glee
 'cos I tried especially right from the start
 to be really good in my special part.
 I'd given something that He hadn't got
 My cobwebby blanket to put in his cot.
 I gave Him a blanket of fine silken web
 So he's warm and cosy in his cold manger bed

A Big Thank You

St Peter's PCC would like to thank all our volunteers who give up their time to help run The Beehive Café. Everyone who lends a hand from toast and beans, washing up to putting toys, tables and chairs away, washing tablecloths and making cakes; it is all very much appreciated and makes it a true community project. Any profit made goes towards church funded projects such as: the Carol Singing outside the Trooper, the children's supper and lantern procession, JAM Club and other community events we plan in the future.

So, a BIG THANK YOU from us to you. And to all our customers,

HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!



Recycling, Rubbish, Food & Garden Waste

N.B. Rowden Mill Lane and Caundle Lane (Caundle Farm to Skylark) also have their collections on Fridays but the dates are swapped for Rubbish and Recycling, but Garden Waste collections are the same. (Please put your containers out by 6am)

December 2024	
Dec 6 - Friday	Rubbish & Food
Dec 13 - Friday	Recycling & Food
Dec 20 - Friday	Rubbish & Food
Dec 30 - Monday	Recycling & Food
January 2025	
Jan 6 - Monday	Rubbish & Food
Jan 11 - Saturday	Recycling & Food
Jan 17 - Friday	Rubbish & Food
Jan 24 - Friday	Recycling & Food
Jan 31 - Friday	Rubbish & Food

*Garden Waste pickup for most is on same day as Rubbish.

Cat Lane & Little Hayfield are the following Tuesday.

Village Questionnaire

In early September we distributed questionnaires to all houses in Stourton Caundle, Purse Caundle and Stalbridge Weston, with a few more handed out at the Pilates classes and the Beehive Café.

We have had returned 92 completed questionnaires. 79 are from Stourton Caundle residents, which is 44% of all homes in the village.

The statement on the questionnaire 'It is important that we continue to have a Village Hall' elicited 84 'Strongly Agree', and only one 'Strongly Disagree'. The response to the statement 'The Village Hall is of no real interest to me' elicited 71 'Strongly Disagrees' and only two 'Strongly Agree'. It is clear from this and the other comments on the returned questionnaires that there is very strong support for having the hall.

One of the principal drivers of this exercise was to demonstrate to the people who decide which organisations will receive grants, that we have consulted all villagers as to how they want the village hall to cater for their needs going forward. The exceptional response allows us to do that. Thank you to all who responded.

We are aware, however, that the vast majority of responses are from people who are already users and supporters of the hall. As the second major reason for this consultation process was to allow the Trustees to understand why many villagers do not currently use the hall, and what might attract them to do so, we have undertaken a series of discussions with villagers who did not return the questionnaires. The feedback from these and from comments on completed questionnaires, suggest the reasons are as follows:

- Some people simply can't afford it – the Halloween Party was cited as an example of this
- Some are too old or infirm to attend activities or events
- Those who are working are not around for, for example, Pilates, the Beehive Café or short mat bowls
- Most importantly, many people with younger families feel the activities and events are aimed at a much older demographic, with very few activities suitable to children and teenagers.

We take this feedback very seriously, and are in the process of determining:

- How to make the current sports facilities available more regularly, possibly on a drop-in basis, and at a time young people and people who work full time can use them.
- Events or activities specifically aimed at children and young teenagers. We have started discussions with villagers with young families to discuss what types of events would meet their preferences and the extent to which they are willing to be involved in organising such events.

As to what other activities and events current users would like to see, there were over 50 different ideas! A number were suggested by multiple people, for example film nights (suggested by 11 people); and various musical events (10 people).

It is important to note that it is only through the efforts of a very small number of individuals that the Beehive Café, the club activities, the Harvest Festival Supper, the Halloween parties,

quizzes and other events take place at all.

So, I'll end with a call to action. The hall is open to everyone. There is currently a lot of work going on to ensure that we can save the hall so that it continues to be a resource for the whole village, but its ability to operate sustainably for years to come will depend on us increasing its usage. Please let any of the Trustees know if you would be prepared to organise any of the activities mentioned above or indeed any other activities or events that you and your friends want to see taking place. Thank you in anticipation!



Garden Notes for December/January 2025

It's mid November and this morning we've had a hard frost, the sun is shining and everything looks beautiful. Up to a few days ago it's been very mild, overcast (gloomy!) and no wind.

What next I wonder?

So from that to jobs:

Starting with tender plants; either covering in situ with fleece or bringing pots into a greenhouse/coldframe. It's best to remove as much leaf-age as possible, they usually all fall off in the end and actually what you want is your plants to rest!

Remove most of the Hellebore leaves and mulch round each plant, preferably with leaf mould.

Bare root plants, if you've ordered, will start to arrive, so provided it's not freezing, get them in.

The pruning of Apple/Pear trees can start. The usual removal of dead, decaying/crossing branches, keeping an open shape etc.

Also Blackcurrants/Gooseberries can be pruned.

Grapevines need to be pruned back to their original frame.

Tulip bulbs!! You know how fond I am of these!! Well its general knowledge that due to our ever changing weather patterns, it's not been a good year for the growers and as a result the bulbs are not great. I have noticed that even from a good supplier they are poor quality! Mmm there's a lot more I'd like to say on this subject which makes me cross!! But not today!

Leaves. As you know by now, it's really about keeping paths and lawns clear. Otherwise leave them. Bag up what you do collect; preferably when they're wet, punch holes in bags and put behind the shed etc.

Cleaning slippery paths: Monty suggests using sharp sand, and brushing it in. I've done some of my stone slabs/bricks and it really works. Also it's a good work out!

House plants have now become the "in thing" and a bit like the Tulip bulb mania, the demand for them has gone berserk. Not Moi! a) there's no room at the Inn! b) they need a lot of attention. But also I question where they all come from, i.e. are they grown in this country? I know there are some nurseries that grow only indoor plants. But perhaps

we should be a little more cautious before we invest in these plants.

Well I can't think what to put next and this beautiful day (we've had so few of them) is drawing me out.

So let your garden naturally decay, and hopefully we'll have some good cold spells so that, like us, it can have a rest over the winter months

Your Garden Guru



Angling for Farthings Supports Roof Fund

Angling for what!? The name of the band comes from an old term for *busking*, and the wren, for all those old enough to remember the image seen in relief on that 1/4 penny coin, is their logo. Appropriate one might say, as some of the members of the band also hail from that time... John Bradshaw, band maestro (lead acoustic guitar), and John Wyllie (Dronist and Shantyman), hail from Southampton, as do the girls, Liz McCallum (percussion), and Lyn Brayshaw (Indian Harmonium). However, Lyn and Liz would be justifiably upset I think, if I put them in the same category as the other Old Farthings...

But Neil Gillard (Autoharp) and Alan Peters (guitar) certainly would have used the farthing piece in their time, and they of course also provide the link between this obscure little band of Hampshire singers and the Village Hall Roof Fund. Alan and John B have been playing together since April 1950 (childhood playmates folks; not in the band, silly!)...but that's another story. The event, due to take place in the Trooper on the night of Wednesday 23 October, needed at the very last moment to be moved to the wonderful old medieval barn at Manor Farm. As an unticketed event and relying on donations for the VHRF, no-one could predict the numbers that would be turning up, and ultimately we were very grateful to Sue Simon and Vanessa Boal for all their help in providing this most appropriate of venues.

Despite the cool temperatures that evening, and the risk to instrument tuning, there really was no way that the thirty odd people who turned up to the concert could have squeezed into the pub; the band themselves were concerned that all the instruments wouldn't easily fit, let alone allowing people to see and hear, whilst keeping access to the bar open.

The evening ran as two sets, separated by half an hour of music and movement from the village's own John and Mandy Waltham and Stella Woodward. John is known throughout the folk singing world for his encyclopaedic memory of traditional songs, not to mention his beautiful baritone voice, and he gave us two contrasting songs, whilst Mandy entertained us with delightful music on the psaltery and a song with clog dancing accompaniment, and Stella sang two songs to guitar accompaniment. All locally relevant and most entertaining.

The Southampton lot bashed on enthusiastically either side of these village performers with twelve songs, gleaned from many parts of the country, but principally from Hampshire and Dorset. They started with a version of a Waterson's song- *Country Life* (cannibalised in the time of Covid, and re-written by early members of the band with the notion of finding solace in the theme of the title), and ended with *Bold Reynolds the Fox*; the words of the song originally from an 18C New Forest traveller. Interestingly, though introduced on the night from a very contemporary attitude of fox-sympathy, the words are more nuanced in their implication. Fortunately perhaps there was no opportunity to debate this perspective, here

in rural hen-loving, and perhaps hunt-supporting Dorset!
And of course, there was wonderful William Barnes poetry, so effectively set to music by John Bradshaw, and so appropriate here in this place, with its cider press and faint echoes of 18th and 19C life all around. As Alan Peters said before Angling for Farthings' penultimate song *Zun-Zet* -

'I defy anyone not to be moved by these beautiful words, not merely because they are beautiful, but for me anyway, because in an elegiac way they speak of a long lost world, where despite the hardships of life, I believe we were a happier species, at peace with the land.'

*We, out in games and races,
Loud in laughter, wild in mirth,
With windblown hair, and sunbrowned-faces,
Leaping-o'er the high-sky'd earth,
Before the lights
Were trimmed o' nights,
While the light gossamer's netting
Sparkled to the sun a setting.*

Angling for Farthings were very grateful to all the folk who supported this event so generously, and particularly to Debbie and John in the Trooper for their helpful advice and sponsorship. The band are delighted that the evening raised £95, for the VHRF, and hope to return -next time perhaps on a warm summer's day.

(see photo page 26)

Alan Peters



NATURALLY THINKING December 2024-January 2025

My liking for starlings is limited to admiration of their wonderful mumerations, and there, I'm afraid, it ends. In my garden they descend on the window feeder and finish off the meal worms which are there for robins and a pair of blackbirds. The starlings dive in, sometimes trying to balance in the limited space in such numbers that the worms disappear in a matter of minutes, or worse, pulling the feeder off the window altogether. Sorry Starlings, but in spite of your beautiful oil-on-water coloured plumage, I'm put off by your greed, your gimlet beaks and the rather evil look in your eyes.

The Blackbirds have an interesting pattern of behaviour that I've not noticed before. Often the male arrives first, perches on the handrail of the ramp within a couple of feet or so of the window feeder, and clucks. Then he flutters onto it and begins to feed, whereupon the female dives in and he immediately flies off. Occasionally they do it in reverse and the female arrives first and clucks for a moment. I suspect that he clucks back but I can't hear through the double glazing. On one occasion she sat and clucked for a long time before he arrived. Does his near presence make her feel safer I wonder? The Robins, incidentally, are conspicuous by their absence.

The trees seem to have behaved very oddly this autumn - or is it that I have just never noticed it before? In spite of having no frosts to speak of, and no high winds, both of which

would normally help to strip the trees bare, leaves are fluttering down anyway. The large ash tree in my neighbours' garden lost them in a most orderly fashion, starting on one side and working its way through until the whole tree had become denuded, whilst a little tree in my own front garden suddenly released them almost overnight. The large acer in the front of another neighbours' garden took almost precisely three weeks to give its leaves up completely. Now at last we have some wind and brighter, cooler air has come in so the large cherry, also in my front garden, has decided to join in with this disrobing fray. The lawn is now carpeted in the rich colours of autumn - bronze, and gold and all shades of red.

If we had had a few high winds, plus some sunshine, it might have helped the farmers but after a record 18 months or more of rain, fields are saturated. Farmers have struggled to get in the last of the maize harvest, making the most of any breaks in the weather, but much of the ground is too saturated even to sow winter crops. As it was, we had been trapped beneath a gloomy blanket of cloud caused by high pressure for almost two weeks with no great change from day to day. This is unusual for this time of the year and it was a welcome relief to one and all when at last it lifted and turned a few degrees colder. We even saw some sun now and then - we had almost forgotten what it looked like. Maybe pests will be struck down soon as the forecast for the coming week is for much colder weather, and hedgehogs might at last have a chance to sleep.

I have recently been reading the diary of one of my daughters, written in the early 1970's whilst she was at primary school at the age of 10 and 11. Apart from all the things she and her sister and their friends got up to, she recorded snow, not only before and after Christmas but also in March and April. Snow now is almost a distant memory, although we did have some spectacularly thick frosts just two or three years ago when my other daughter took a video of a walk in some woods on Bulbarrow. This is accompanied by a musical tinkling of frost falling from the trees. It was a lovely sound and one I have never heard before.

In spite of everything though, both gardens and countryside are beginning to shut down. Ivy is in flower and there are berries on the holly if you know where to look. There are some spectacular fungus around and, both daughters assure me, leaves are at a satisfyingly shuffling stage as I write this.

Apart from these obvious sights of late autumn, I do love the scents of the season all around me, whether I am in the garden or further afield on Genevieve. Each season has its special smell and that of Autumn is of rotting leaves (much better than it sounds), damp earth and sometimes even wood smoke. Quite soon it will smell of winter, hopefully of the sharp scent of frost and clean, fresh air. And very soon, inside, there will be that very particular special one - that of spices, of puddings boiling and rich fruit cakes baking.

May I wish every one of you a very, very Happy Christmas.

Margaret Waddingham

'What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.'

Agnes Mae Pharo

Celebrating Village Life with a Village Calendar for 2025

With so much to see and celebrate in the village, it seemed like a good idea to produce a village calendar. Amongst the loveliest gardens in Dorset, came an opportunity to enjoy one of its finest, fulfilling the search for an eye-catching cover image. It's hard to tell it's raining, the raindrops bringing out the lushness of the garden.

Wandering round the village looking for prospects, who knew a traditional craftsperson was at work, 'spar yer liggers!' The warm, inviting hospitality of The Trooper Inn too tempting to resist. The popular Beehive Cafe sizzling with sausages and smiles also proved irresistible. Equally captivating the memorable tennis match with players smashing balls across the court on a beautiful sunny day. Sheep through the village what a grand sight! Even more special the village hall at Halloween, so stylishly transformed into an atmospheric, hauntingly bewitching place, where the good witches, monks and ghouls with axes and scythes were fittingly shot!

Loitering with intent, eyeing up the possibilities of the signpost at oaken cross, where, of all the places in all the world, an E-Type Jaguar appears. Cranking down the window, an accompanying voice shouted across the road, "you can take a picture of my car!" The probability of a snapping a splendid classic car in the village nothing short of serendipity.

On the home stretch, just the final image to go and a sunny autumn morning ahead. Dodging vehicles amidst lining up a shot of the telephone box, with the lovely ladies who look after the books so well. Coming into the frame, presenting an opportunity too good to miss, was the most superb example of a vintage car. The driver confronted by a person in the middle of the road, arms windmilling wildly, seemed to take it all in great part, resulting in the most opportune calendar image of all.



Producing a small print run as a not-for-profit venture, the calendar sold surprisingly well at the recent Christmas Market. More can be printed in time for Christmas and if you would like a calendar, the deadline for orders is Wednesday December 11th with calendars ready for collection from Saturday December 21st onwards. A minimum order of 20 keeps the price per calendar at £12. If you are interested, orders can be placed, details given of how to make the payment in advance, by emailing artemiscreative2009@gmail.com

Thank you to everyone who participated in creating the village calendar, willingly and by coincidence!

© Caroline Rowland



Pete Smith Tennis Tournament

Thanks to the kindness of Sue Simon, we were able to hold the second Pete Smith Tennis Tournament at Manor Farm in memory of my lovely husband Pete, on Saturday 5th October. We were blessed with a gorgeous sunny day, though not quite as warm as last year. It was played in the same format as last time. So at the beginning of the day, we had no idea who would reach the final.



There were 13 competitors, and the same amazing spirit as last year continued. It encompassed Pete's values of fairness, fun, inclusivity and friendship, but of course, with some competitive spirit as well.

Everyone was well supported by a large audience. Jessy Sherman (it really wasn't a fix), Alex Penny, Sam Sherman (that led to lots of competitiveness!) and Rob Page reached the final, with Jessy and Alex being victorious. Of course, Pete would have been very proud of his little girl!



and Rob Page reached the final, with Jessy and Alex being victorious. Of course, Pete would have been very proud of his little girl!

My thanks must go again to Sue for her hospitality, to Jessy and Nessa for organising the event, to Karen Riley for baking the most delicious tray bakes and to Rachel and Rob for their cake donations. The cakes naturally went down very well with the tea, coffee and of



A very sincere "thank you" from me to everyone who came to remember Pete; making this such a successful event. Pete would have loved it!

Ann Smith

FAMILY GOLF DAY SUNDAY 18TH AUGUST 2024

Eighteen mixed pairs attended this year's competition – probably our most diverse groupings so far! Teams comprised of a range of gender, experience, relationships and ability - but hopefully all enjoying a memorable morning, where the golf was largely an interlude between good conversation and much laughter and a prelude to a few lunchtime drinks. Our thanks must go to Pete Hallam for all of his organisation.

Having got over the initial shock of Dave's trousers, the rules were explained – the non-golfer was to tee off on the first and then as a team play alternate shots. The 'golfer' would tee off on the second and the round would continue in this way. Each pair's handicaps were determined by society handicaps plus a variable adjustment depending on the experience of the 'non-golfer'.

Pete Hallam's group got us started and as other groups followed a few splashes were heard.....not always from the non-golfer!



Champions Pete & Carol

Scoring was not easy and double figures were the criteria for being in the prizes! This year's champions with 13 points were Pete Blundell and Carole. Three points behind in joint second place were Terri and Mutley, Georgie and Tom Conduit. A couple of teams didn't disturb the scorers – but there's always next year.

Once again our thanks to Pete for all of his efforts, and to Terry for doing the

presentations.



Runners-up Georgie & Tom

Tommy Bolt (1919-2008) was an American golfer that did not join the PGA until in his thirties. Over his career he won 15 PGA Tour titles, including the US Open in 1958. He was much renowned on the Tour for his temper.

During one tournament, after lipping out on six straight putts, Bolt was seen defiantly shaking his fist at the skies shouting 'Why don't you come down here and fight like a man'.



**Harvest
Supper at the
Village Hall
and a surprise
November
Stourton
Caundle
snowfall**





**The annual Halloween Party held at the Village Hall on
October 26th**





Christmas Craft
Market held at
the Manor
Farm Barn on
November 10th
(see article page 5)

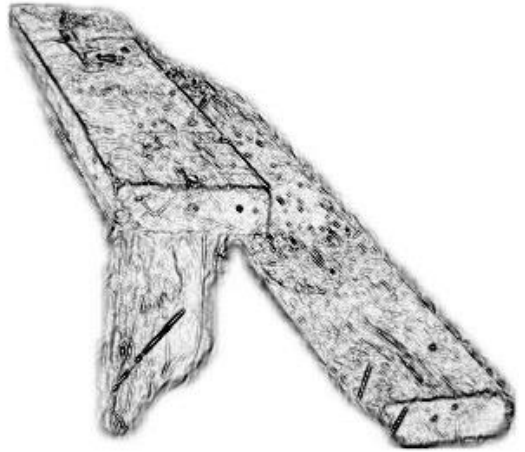


St Peter's Church
poppies for
Remembrance Day



The Stile Trail

Earlier this year, someone stupid (me) came up with the idea of a Stile Trail. This was influenced by Mike of Brimble Cottages who had just resurrected the stile on the footpath. Seeing it as a blank canvas, I thought we could make them all randomly pretty, a simple lick of paint maybe. These points of interest could attract guests to our village, our pub and, hopefully, raise some funds for the village hall. My thoughts later progressed to the stile trail possibly showing off local producers, craftsmen or rural skills, if people were up for taking part.



I put an appeal out for volunteers, and, quite rightly, got ripped apart by the Sturminster Newton Facebook group for having the audacity to ask people to do stuff for free. Nevertheless, I received an email from Simon Gudgeon, of Dorset Sculpture Park, asking if he could do one! This made me begin to think big. I gained the

confidence to be cheeky and personally ask businesses or organisations to be involved. Many, as you can expect, loved the idea but didn't have the time. But that's ok, there were only 9 stiles available.

That's not the case anymore! Sadly I have lost Simon, he has ghosted me, but he may just be busy. But, it was thanks to him I gained the cheek. However, I do have my fingers tightly crossed that he may return.

The two mile route (which includes two smaller one mile routes and/or a small all accessible route) starts from The Trooper and circles the village. The stiles are to be decorated and enhanced by the following: Stile 1 has been designed by Dean Harris of Marnhull Stone (check him out on Instagram).

He has completed it and we hope to install it asap.

Stile 2 is All Saints School, Bishop Caundle, their plans are in motion.



Stile 3 and 4 are either side of the bridge over the river. Still to be assigned.

Stile 5 is Dorset Forge and Fabrication.

Stile 6 is still to be assigned.

Stile 7 is Castle Gardens on a natural theme.

Stile 8 is the charity CountrysideMen UK who are carving images into an impressive installation.

Stile 9 at the top of the lakes, will be Vanessa Boal in the theme of Enid Blyton.

It is hoped that it will be completed by spring 2025, with a special open day in the village (maybe with a guest of honour!). A map of the trail, with info about the collaborators, will be for sale in the pub with the money going towards the village hall. BBC Radio Dorset Breakfast Show caught onto the project too and are following how it goes!

Rules and regulations have all been adhered to with the council backing the project and even the Ramblers Association. It is mandatory that the stiles still serve their main purpose of controlling stock but allowing access, but they will remain stiles – no gates have been proposed. A huge thanks also go out to Vanessa, Tanya and Alban, the landowners who are happy for this to occur.

We still have three (maybe two - talks are in progress with the Dorset Coppice Group, or maybe one - if Simon returns) stiles to confirm. If you, or if you know anyone who may like to be involved, please get in touch, it is on a first come first confirmed basis! Open to all ideas, more out of the box the better!

Happy to answer any questions or queries.

Catherine Speakman



Angling for Farthings at the Trooper Inn on October 23rd

(see article page 17)

Village Diary - Dec 2024				
Day	Date	Event	Venue	Time
Mon	2	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	3	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	4	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thurs	5	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	6	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Sun	8	Holy Communion	St Peters	11.00 am
Sun	8	Songbirds Christmas Concert	Stalbridge Church	3.00 pm
Mon	9	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	10	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	11	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Wed	11	Garden Club 'Sweet Plants and Sugar Sources'	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Thurs	12	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	13	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Mon	16	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	17	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	18	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thurs	19	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	20	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Sat	21	Lantern Parade	Village Hall	4.30 pm
Sat	21	Carol Sing	Trooper Inn	5.30 pm
Sun	22	Benefice Choir Carol Service	Stalbridge Church	6.00 pm
Mon	23	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	24	Crib Service	Stalbridge Church	4.00 pm
Tues	24	Carol Service	St Peters	6.30 pm
Tues	24	Christmas Eve Communion	Stalbridge Church	11.00 pm
Wed	25	 Holy Communion 	Stalbridge Church	9.30 am
Wed	25	 Holy Communion 	St Peters	11.00 am
Fri	27	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Mon	30	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm

Village Diary - Jan 2025				
Day	Date	Event	Venue	Time
Thurs	2	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	3	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Mon	6	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	7	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	8	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thu	8	Annual Supper	Village Hall	7.15 pm
Thurs	9	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	10	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Sun	12	Holy Communion	St Peter's	11.00 am
Mon	13	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	14	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	15	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thurs	16	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	17	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Mon	20	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	21	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	22	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thurs	23	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	24	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm
Sun	26	Breakfast Church	St Peter's	10.30 am
Mon	27	Snooker	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Tues	28	Badminton and Table Tennis	Village Hall	7.30 pm
Wed	29	Pilates / Pilates (Gentle) at 10.45am	Village Hall	9.25 am
Thurs	30	Beehive Café - Little Bees	Village Hall	9.30-12.30 am
Fri	31	Short Mat bowls	Village Hall	2.00 pm

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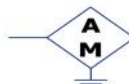
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