

DECEMBER '23 & JANUARY '24

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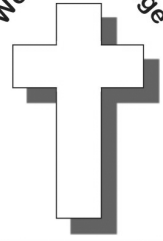
THE CHURCH PARISH MAGAZINE OF WOOTTON

The Bridge

Building Bridges in the Community

St Edmund's
& St Mark's

Wootton Bridge



"And the real meaning of Christmas is ...?"

The figurine in our picture this month was carved in a workshop near Bethlehem. It depicts the Holy Family in a stylised, almost anonymous, way, as though they are not one particular family, but any family and all families. At a time of turmoil, violence and misery in what we, at present somewhat wryly, call the Holy Land, this small carving made there reminds us that we share a common humanity and common concerns with everyone caught up in that tragedy, as well as in so many other tragic wars and conflicts throughout our world. What does this sad backdrop mean for the celebration of Christmas in this Year of Our Lord 2023?

We often hear the complaint that the frantic and excessive consumerism of our modern day Christmas obscures its real meaning. But we know from archaeological studies that, even in prehistory, people had winter solstice festivals in which they engaged in consumption which, in its own way, was as frantic and as excessive as our own Christmas festivities. We also know that the early Christians rather shrewdly latched on to the solstice festivals of their own time and rebranded them as a celebration of the birth of Jesus. This rebranding was much more than a case of, "if you can't beat them, join them". The solstice had long been understood as a time when humanity somehow connected with the power that rules all our lives. For Christians it was natural that the Light of the World should be made manifest at the very darkest time of the year. But how does this fit with the familiar Christmas story?

Only two of the four Gospels give any account of Jesus' birth. Those accounts show Jesus as part of a human family caught up in the social, political and economic realities of their time, and, in doing so, depict him as a vulnerable human being, even when he is at the same time the divine bringer of the Light. This continuity between the human and the divine is at the heart of why we celebrate Christmas. It both affirms our dignity as human beings and challenges each of us to shine our own light in the dark places of our own world.

This message is not just for people who think of themselves as Christians. As the carving in our picture suggests, the Holy Family is every family and all families. In a time of darkness, the light of Christmas is there to be celebrated and enjoyed by everyone. Here at *The Bridge*, we wish all our advertisers and readers a joyful and fulfilling festive season, and look forward to meeting you again through these pages in 2024.



David Bennison **tb**

Details of our Christmas Services are on Page 3



Working hard & building memories

This half-term in school is an absolute hive of activity with the end of term bringing many different Christmas delights! We work so hard to ensure that the hype and excitement of Christmas does not have a negative impact on children's learning, yet we want to ensure they also build wonderful memories of Christmas in Primary School. I wonder when you think back to your own school experiences of Christmas what it brings? Is it the cold turkey, or tea-towel worn on

your head whilst singing carols, or being cold playing carols outside? For us we have so many different events from our Christingle service, to our performances, to parties, to our fayre, with the hope of providing fun for the children yet squeezing it all into the end of term, to that learning which continues to the end!

Through a range of activities, we share the Christian story of Christmas as well as ensuring children are given the breadth of understanding of celebrating Christmas in different cultures. Staff work hard to provide a range of experiences enabling children to develop their own thoughts and understanding. Our Year 5 class had a wonderful workshop delivered by the great, great grandson of Charles Dickens. Mr Ian Dickens, came into school to share his family knowledge of Charles Dickens and inspire the children with their writing. I wonder what Charles Dickens would think about books written now?

As I end my article for this edition I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year from all the children and staff at Wootton Primary. I look forward to sharing our news with you in 2024!



Mrs Jane Wilford
Headteacher



tb

Cat in the Manger by Doreen Gazey

The little lost cat huddled against the rocks, too cold and hungry to even notice the starlight or the myriads of stars studding the sky like diamonds. Life had not been good for him. He was used to being kicked and having things thrown at him, or chased away when he was looking for something to eat. He was skinny, with matted fur and he was very unhappy. Presently, hearing voices he lifted his head, and as a group of people passed him, got up to follow. They sounded happy and friendly. Perhaps they might give him something. The party headed down into town talking excitedly, not noticing the little cat following them.

Through the streets they went apparently not needing to ask the way until they came to a small building with a shaft of light showing the outline of a rough door. A stable! The men pushed open the door and went in. There were quiet voices from inside and the sound of faint crying. Curious, little cat pushed his head around the open door and saw the men he had been following all kneeling on the ground. Beyond was a small group, a man and a woman, beside a manger from which came the crying he had heard. Working his way to the front to see, he found himself right next to the man and the woman. A gentle voice said "Oh poor thing, he looks starved, couldn't we find something for him, Joseph?"

Next thing, the little cat found a dish in front of him with some water and a few pieces of fish. He ate eagerly, the most he had eaten for a long time. He felt much better now.

So, what was it that was crying? He stretched up on his hind legs and peered over the edge of the manger to find a small baby. The woman was singing to him and rocking him gently. It looked comfortable in there. Cat took a jump and found himself lying on some lovely soft hay. He burrowed into it and curled up in a contented ball. Presently the sound of purring mingled with the singing and then hushed as he fell asleep right next the feet of the Christ Child.

Little lost cat was lost no more - just like us.



tb

For Your Diary ... What's On Extra ...

December 2023 (also see Page 5)

Come & Sing Evening - Saturday 2nd December 7pm-9pm at St Edmund's. Christmas Songs and Carols fund raiser for The Friends of St Edmund's with Wight Sax and friends. Retiring Collection and Refreshments.

Big Cooked Breakfast and Seasonal Stalls - Saturday 9th December 9.30am-12noon at St Mark's. Live music with Amy Jolliffe plus stalls, crafts, tombola, quality clothing, decorations, homemade cakes, books and a toy stall. There will also be a Save the Children stall and a RSPCA collection point for food, blankets, toys and towels. Offers of help would be gratefully received. Items required: good quality clothing (baby-adult), toys, puzzles, games, teddies and Christmas decorations. Collection can be arranged by phoning 078 660 59 422. All proceeds apart from Save the Children will go to Church Funds.

Mark's Brothers (Breakfast/Brunch Group) - Wednesday 13th December 10.30am-12noon in the coffee lounge at St Mark's. All welcome. You are invited to come along for a coffee even if you're not a fan of bacon!

Coffee Morning - Tuesday 19th December 9am-12noon at St Mark's. Coffee mornings are back so please do come along and bring anyone who would like some good company and delicious cake!

January 2024 (also see Page 5)

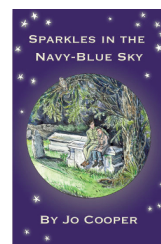
Mark's Brothers (Breakfast/Brunch Group) - Wednesday 10th January 10.30am-12noon in the coffee lounge at St Mark's. All welcome. You are invited to come along for a coffee even if you're not a fan of bacon!

Coffee Morning - Tuesday 23rd January 9am-12noon at St Mark's. Coffee mornings are back so please do come along and bring anyone who would like some good company and delicious cake!

BOOK REVIEW by Ann Capps SPARKLES IN THE NAVY-BLUE SKY (Jo Cooper)

For those of you who followed the adventures of World War 2 evacuees Lindy and Reggie in Jo Cooper's 'A Red Sky', you can now catch up with them in 1941. The book follows the ups and downs of the two children on the Isle of Wight as they deal with life during a war when little or no information is available. I won't spoil your reading but Reggie's dad goes from criminal to hero!

If you want to buy a copy of Sparkles in the Navy-Blue Sky contact Jo at:
jo@jocooperbooks.com or go to www.jocooperbooks.com



Church Services in Wootton during December 2023

(Please be aware that all services of Holy Communion are subject to a priest being available to take the service)

The relaxation of COVID regulations means that it is no longer necessary to book for services but you will be asked to sanitize your hands.
Please wear a mask if you would feel more comfortable with it.
We are now able to offer the Brunch service to everyone!

ST EDMUND'S

DECEMBER

Sun 3rd	0800 Holy Communion
Sun 10th	1700 Advent Carol Service with Cantus Vesperi
Wed 13th	0930 Holy Communion
Wed 20th	0930 Holy Communion

ST MARK'S

DECEMBER

Sun 3rd	0930 Brunch Service: Advent
Wed 6th	1115 Café Communion (*)
Sun 10th	0930 Holy Communion and Explorers
Sun 17th	0930 Christmas Crib and Carol Service
Sun 24th	0930 Holy Communion
	1600 Christingle Service
Mon 25th	1000 Christmas Day Holy Communion
Sun 31st	0930 Christmas Carols Songs of Praise

(*) If you would like to come to Café Communion, please leave us a message on the parish answerphone 301880 or email: stedmundsandstmarks@gmail.com.

tb

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Please wear a mask if you would feel more comfortable with it.
We are now able to offer the Brunch service to everyone!

ST EDMUND'S

JANUARY

Sun 7th	0800 Holy Communion
Wed 10th	0930 Holy Communion
Sun 14th	1700 Evensong (**)
Wed 17th	0930 Holy Communion
Wed 24th	0930 Holy Communion
Sun 28th	1700 Evensong (**)
Wed 31st	0930 Holy Communion

ST MARK'S

JANUARY

Wed 3rd	1115 Café Communion (*)
Sun 7th	0930 Brunch Service: Epiphany
Sun 14th	0930 Holy Communion and Explorers
Sun 21st	0930 Morning Worship followed by the Big Mac Talk
Sun 28th	0930 Holy Communion

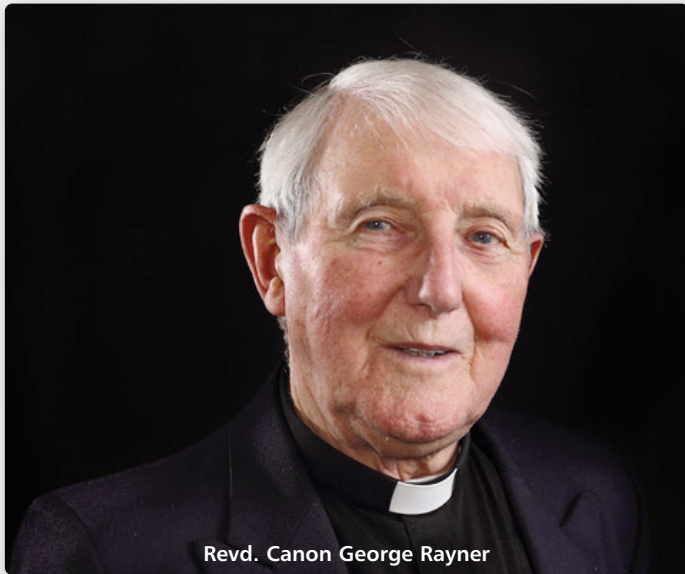
(*) If you would like to come to Café Communion, please leave us a message on the parish answerphone 301880 or email: stedmundsandstmarks@gmail.com.

(**) Please note revised winter start time

tb

George Rayner, Founder of *The Bridge*

This second instalment of George's own account of his life picks up the story after George has returned from being a "Bevin Boy" in the mines during World War II, and had started his own printing business in Ryde, but his printing career began to give way to a calling he had never expected.



Revd. Canon George Rayner

George had resumed his church life, and, in March 1949, was licensed as the youngest Reader in the Diocese.

He was encouraged by Archdeacon "Ted" Roberts and Canon Cory (Vicar of Ryde) to consider ordination, and was accepted for Training for the Ministry, but was not supported by the Diocese, meaning that without grants he had to finance his own theological training. Having thought that he was secure from the sale of the printing business, there was a default, meaning that George had to find some means of financing two years of the three year course. A small bursary from the College (Bishops' College, Cheshunt) was augmented by purchasing a sewing machine, and using skills taught him by his mother, (who had hoped to have a daughter) to make clerical robes for his fellow students.

"You need discipline, George!"

Archdeacon Roberts had suggested Bishops' College on the grounds that "You need discipline, George!", and it certainly taught that and he was grateful that the Principal accepted him. Normally they only had men with a University degree, but the Principal thought that 4 yrs. in the coalmines

and being brought up in a public house would be good preparation for the priesthood!

By this time, George had found a girlfriend, Hazel Russell, a trainee nurse at St. Mary's, and being given permission by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, they were married at All Saints' Ryde (where George had been a reader, server, choirman and bellringer) on September 27th, 1952, before moving to his curacy at St. Andrew's, Taunton, being ordained in Wells Cathedral as Deacon, at Advent, 1952.

St. Andrew's, led by an energetic and forward-thinking Vicar, gave George a good grounding; as Junior curate, responsible for Choir and Servers, he served there until September, 1956.

Holy Trinity, Taunton, a large parish comprising a number of re-housed slum-dwellers, plus new council houses, had been vacant for 6 months, having such a bad reputation among the clergy that the Bishop was finding it difficult to fill. Perhaps in desperation, the Bishop asked George to consider it.

Against the advice of his Vicar, after meeting the folk there, George decided to take it on, which for many reasons, proved more demanding than he had anticipated, so that at one stage he felt he couldn't cope with it. Eventually, life settled down and it became a very happy and progressive parish.

Inheriting an average congregation of less than 50 worshippers, after hard work and ground-breaking ideas, the numbers had more than tripled, and whilst George was there, the parish church was completely restored, the organ rebuilt, a new hall built, a ring of bells hung in the tower (with the parishioners' own labour) and the Church School saved from closure.

At the same time he was Chaplain of East Reach Hospital, Sub-warden of Readers, Local Secretary for SPG Missionary Society and Chapter Clerk. The traditional parish magazine was replaced by a tabloid style paper, entitled, "The New Look", which at times attracted the attention of the secular media.

In 1963, George thought he had done all he could for the parish and at his young age, needed to move on, although it would have been tempting to stay on and reap the benefits of so much hard work.

[to be continued] **15**

For Your Diary ... What's On ...

KEEP ACTIVE MOVE MORE CLASSES. BINSTAD COMMUNITY CENTRE ON TUESDAYS AT 11.20am AND WHIPPINGHAM VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAYS AT 9.45am, 11am, 12.15pm, 1.30pm, 4pm. AND FRIDAYS AT 10.10am at ARRETON VILLAGE HALL. Go at your own pace exercise program to help improve strength, stamina and balance. CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

KEEP ACTIVE RELAX MORE (K.A.R.M.) CLASSES. SANDOWN BROADWAY CENTRE ON MONDAYS AT 4.15pm AND WHIPPINGHAM VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAYS AT 2.45pm. A gentle movement program to calm and relax the body that is easy to learn and based on Tai Chi principles and can be done seated or standing. CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

BREATHE EASY ISLE OF WIGHT SUPPORT GROUP FOR ISLANDERS LIVING WITH CHRONIC LUNG CONDITIONS. MEETINGS HELD AT ARRETON VILLAGE HALL ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 2PM TO 4PM. FOR FURTHER INFO GO TO [HTTPS://BREATHEEASYIOW.ORG](https://breatheeasyiow.org) OR CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

PARKINSONS UK ISLE OF WIGHT HAVE REGULAR WEEKLY EXERCISE CLASSES AT ARRETON VILLAGE HALL ON FRIDAYS AT 11.15am, 12.25pm and 2pm SPECIFICALLY SUITED FOR ANYONE LIVING WITH PARKINSONS. FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

Elephant Club

A social group for people living with memory loss and for others just wanting an afternoon of good company.....and cake. If someone you care for has memory problems, the ELEPHANT CLUB will be meeting at St Mark's Church between 2-4pm second Thursday of each month. If you would like good company and laughter, and to exercise "the little grey cells" whilst eating cake, do come and join us. We would love to see you. Each month's programme is different so we hope there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Next sessions: December 14th & January 11th.

Stay & Play @ St Mark's Church

Looking for somewhere to take your young child on Thursday mornings? St Mark's is extending its former Little Lions club to all children (with their carers) eight years & under. The sessions will run from 9.15 – 11.30 and include some themed activities. There is no charge. (A small donation would be very welcome but is not expected). Next sessions: December 7th & 14th & January 11th, 18th & 25th. Free toast and a snack available to all, and free tea/coffee for adults. We hope to see you there! If you have any queries please email welcome.stmarks@gmail.com

WOOTTON BRIDGE METHODISTS

Every Monday Morning 10.am till 12 noon. Come and enjoy coffee and chat at Wootton Methodist Church from 10am-12 noon every Monday until further notice. Everyone welcome.

Whitgar Morris, meet in the coffee lounge at St Mark's on Tuesdays 7:30pm - 9:30pm. New members, dancers or musicians welcome. For further details ring 880118.

Marks Brothers Breakfast/Brunch Group (also see Page 3 What's On Extra)

This group now meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 10.30am - 12 noon in St Mark's coffee lounge. The opportunity for the men of the village who would like to sort the world to rights over just a coffee (if you're not a fan of bacon) or include the bacon butty too. Please let Harry Kirby know if you will be attending. A small, voluntary, contribution towards costs always appreciated. 07814809083 or harryskirby@btinternet.com The group is very friendly and welcoming.

The "Crafty Ladies"

We meet on Wednesday afternoons at St Mark's Church, Wootton, from 2pm 'till 4pm.

We would like to welcome new members to our friendly group, who get together to enjoy a variety of different crafts, no experience necessary. Come in and join us for a natter and a coffee/tea as well. Age is no barrier!

It's £4 a session, with the first one free.

Please call Jan on 882381 for more details

CREEKSIDE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (WI) - Everyone welcome at 7.15pm on the second Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Methodist Church, Station Road, Wootton Bridge, IW. Visitors and new members always welcome. Contact: Marlene Cassidy 01983 882718.

WI Activities for December 2023

December 5th - Christmas Lunch at IOW College

December 13th American Supper

WI Activities for January 2024

January 10th Getting to know you

January 24th Bingo

Don't forget our Book Club, Craft Club, Amble, Coffee and Chat. The Monday games and chat in the Zoomiverse sessions will be back when the weather closes in.

HOVER DAYS

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If you wish to join our band of volunteers, please contact David Bennison on 882783.

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ANNA CHAPLAIN
(Hilary Baldwin)

This is a person-centred ministry of spiritual care for older people of all faiths, cultures, spiritualities and contexts, and for their families and carers. The Anna Chaplain also offers advocacy for older people within church and community, they work with people living independently and within residential and nursing homes. The work of the Chaplain is defined by the wants and needs of their individual parish and is adapted accordingly.



For more information please contact Hilary by:

Tel: 07769588644

Email: annachaplain@cofeparishofwoottonbridge.org.ukWebsite: <http://www.cofeparishofwoottonbridge.org.uk/anna-chaplain/>**Military Whist Drives**

Teams of 4 are welcome to the drives held in the Methodist hall (parking in Station car park). The next meetings will be on December 1st & 15th & January 12th & 26th. £2.50 per person.

Contact Colin on 882588.

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even if you "can't write", we can help.If contributing to *The Bridge* is
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**Coffee and cakes are back!** (Steve Beynon)St Mark's coffee mornings will resume for the winter months so
that you can keep warm and enjoy refreshments while chatting to
friends. As well as the choice of tasty cakes, tea, coffee and hot
chocolate will be available.The sessions will be for an extended
time 9 - 11.30am on:
Tuesday 19 December
Tuesday 23 January
Tuesday 20 February.Feel free to drop in at any time. We would be especially pleased
to welcome parents and carers with young children after the
school drop off. Donations are welcome but not expected.**IWUFT Wootton Bridge History Group**Meets on the first Friday each month in the Scout
Hut, Wootton Rec.Doors open 2pm. Talk at 2:30pm. New members
welcome.£4 per person, £3 to IWUFT members, includes
refreshments after.JANUARY 5th. History group presents a talk on
"Roman Water Systems" by David Millar. A fascinat-
ing presentation on just how accomplished the
Romans were at engineering.
Not to be missed. All welcome.**WOOTTON SCOUT HALL
FOR HIRE.**Hall including modern
kitchen, central heating, rear
garden etc. Reasonable rates.Contact Peter on 883385 or
petefiow@uwclub.net for
bookings.

WOOTTON BRIDGE METHODIST CHURCH (Station Road)

Minister: Revd Frances Balham

Sunday Morning Service 10am

Evening Services as announced

Minister's Message

Dear friends.

Some are fortunate to have travelled to new and distant lands, others would say they are fortunate not to have travelled. As we approach this season of Christmas, we are reminded that whatever a persons' conviction, or not, there is still a great joy in celebrating Christ - Jesus' birth. Giving presents, sometimes eating different foods, maybe meeting with a friend or family, or just doing something different for ourselves, often marks this season.

All round the world people celebrate Christmas in different ways.

In Australia Christmas Day is celebrated on 25th December, in a similar fashion to us in the UK (except it may be enjoyed on the beach).

In the Philippines, they have their Christmas meal after midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. The traditional meal consists of cheese, hot chocolate and ham; and their gifts are opened in the early hours of 25 December.

In Mexico, gifts are exchanges on 6 January, which is traditionally believed to be the time when the wise men presented their gifts to baby Jesus.

In some French-speaking areas of Canada, Christmas is celebrated on 26 December. In Brazil, Christmas Eve is the more important day, especially around the time of midnight.

In various locations across Europe, such as the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary and

Germany, celebrations are also focused around Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day. They fast the day before then eat fish, soups and potatoes at their meal as well as give gifts.

The festival of Christmas is celebrated almost everywhere around the world, and almost everywhere the celebrations include a shared special meal, the company of friends and family and the exchange of gifts.

The celebrations often include giving of gifts, and meals, bringing people together and looking out for those who are on their own. As we move into 2024, wouldn't it be lovely if we could continue with all those things we enjoy and appreciate around Christmas.

Christmas blessings to you all

Frances Balham

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Preachers for December & January

3rd	December	Church Worship	
10th	December	Carols	F. Balham
17th	December	Sacrament	S. Whittingstall
24th	December	Church Worship	
31st	December		M. Steer
7th	January		S. Lanchester
14th	January	Short & Snappy	M. White
21st	January	Church Worship	
28th	January		S. Wiggans



**FOR FUN, FRIENDSHIP
AND FOOD.
COME ALONG AND JOIN US.**

WOOTTON BRIDGE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD

**WE HOLD OUR MEETINGS ON THE 3RD
FRIDAY OF THE MONTH. START 2PM
AT THE METHODIST CHURCH, STATION
ROAD.**

PARKING IN THE STEAM RAILWAY CAR PARK

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER WITH A
GROUP TO TRY NEW THINGS, FOR FRIENDSHIP AND
HAVE FUN.

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING.

OR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CALL KATH

ON 293589

Available now!

Wootton Calendar 2024

£6 each

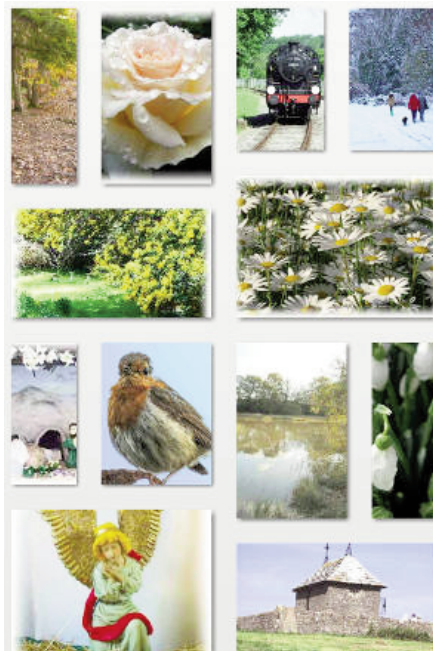
12 months
12 photos

Call Doreen on

883126

or

07954 488780



PARISH COUNCIL information

Meetings:

Meetings: usually third Tuesday in every month (except August) at 7pm in The Old School, New Road - details at HIC, on village noticeboards and on website.

Parish Councillors:

Barry Abraham
John Ward
Trish Evans
Dave Burley
Barrie Hailstone, *Chair*
Vacancy
Linda Pitcher, *V.Chair*
Lee Lemon
Terry O'Brien
Ian Yeo
Liz Kingston, *Clerk*
Lorna Morey, *Assistant Clerk*

All can be contacted at the HIC on 884555.

Office opening times:-

PARISH COUNCIL
Mon. 9.00am-2.00pm;
Tues. 9.00am-2.00pm;
Wed. 9.00am-2.00pm;
Thurs. 9.00am-2.00pm;
Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm

BEAT OFFICER

First Tuesday in month
10am-12 noon or messages can be left for the Police.

WOOTTON BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

5 Joanne's Walk, Brannon Way,
Wootton Bridge, Ryde, IW
PO33 4NX

tel: 884555

email: clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk

website:

www.woottonbridge.org.uk

Full details of all facilities available at the HIC can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or on the website.



Wootton Bridge
PARISH COUNCIL

Report from Liz Kingston, Clerk – Wootton Bridge Parish Council.
Telephone: 884555. Email clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk
Local IW Councillor for Wootton Bridge:
New Ward Councillor Sarah Redrup
Email sarah.redrup@iow.gov.uk

Wootton Bridge Parish Council has a Facebook page – please “like” – which displays all the latest information and you are welcome to comment on any topic.

Community Speed Watch

We are looking into setting up a Speed Watch in the village. We are now actively seeking people to help out and run this. If you are interested, please contact us by either email, clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk, by phone on 01983 884555, or pop into the office.

Post Office at Brannon Way and Parish Office

The Post Office in “Brannons”, Brannon Way (near the car park), is open on Wednesdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The office is open 9am to 2pm Monday to Friday. Please check the door and Facebook for Christmas & New Year opening times.

Party in the Park

Next year's Party in the Park will take place provisionally on Saturday 6th July 2024. If you would like a stall then please contact the Clerk on 01983 884555 or via the Wootton Bridge Parish Council Facebook page. To make the event a success we are still in need of volunteers so if you can help in any way, please let us know.

Wootton PCSO

Will be in the office on 4/12/23 from Noon to 1.30 pm for residents to voice any concerns.

Chair's Message – Cllr Barrie Hailstone


We have recently received correspondence from a very concerned resident regarding Community Speed Watch. The resident felt that the Parish Council had done little to get such an operation up and running. It concerned me greatly to receive such criticisms, for your Parish Council has been trying to get CSW up and running for the past several years. Unfortunately, we need a minimum of 6 people plus a coordinator. The resident who raised the matter, appearing very passionate, declined to be involved. So, will anyone step forward and form a group, with help from the Parish Council, to control the speed in our village? The police will provide training and the Isle of Wight Council can loan the equipment and the Parish Council will purchase the Hi viz jackets. If you do wish to volunteer, please contact our Clerks, Liz and Lorna.

Gravel Extraction at Palmers Farm.

It has come to our attention that the Chair of Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Health and Social Care at County Hall has raised serious concerns relating to health issues that could arise should this project go ahead. The Parish Council are also very concerned about the health issues this extraction will cause. The Parish Council will update as soon as we hear any further information.

Christmas is upon us.

Another year has almost gone. It is incredible how time flies. Never mind, we are all still here to celebrate the festive season with our loved ones. May I take this opportunity on behalf of the Parish Council – Councillors and staff, to wish you all a very Merry and Peaceful Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Liz Kingston – Clerk 

CHRISTMAS CAROLS by John Lea

(Organist 1968-1970)

Do you like singing Christmas Carols? Even those with limited voices enjoy having a go. Children will sing them around your front door but will expect some reward no doubt.

Strangely, Carols were never meant to be sung only at Christmas. They were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago and were pagan songs sung mainly for the Winter Solstice (Dec. 21st/22nd) and on the 1st of May (May Day). Today you would need to stand at the foot of the tower of Magdalen College, Oxford, to hear the choir sing a May Day carol at the break of the day. You would be one of thousands from around the world who come for that special moment.

Yet the word carol means a dance (Old Fr. Carole). In the 15th Century people would join hands in a circle and dance around a May-pole. Sometimes they would sing a bawdy song to help them keep time.

St. Frances of Assisi had started Nativity plays in Italy which sometimes included religious songs sung in Latin. Not many ordinary people understood Latin. Eventually they were changed to the audience's own language so that they could join in. That is why they have been linked to Christmas ever since. The only surviving fragment of that time was titled 'The Angel's Song'.

One of the earliest carols which is sung today is 'I saw

three ships' which with its repetition was easy to learn. When the Puritans came to power in the 1640s, the singing of carols was banned. However, some people kept them alive by singing them in secret. Another early Christmas hymn was 'While shepherds watched their flocks' but was sung to the tune that we now associate with 'On Ilkley Moor Bar 'tat'.

In 1739, Charles Wesley wrote 'A Hymn for Christmas Day'. The first line was 'Hark how all the Welkin Rins'.

Someone along the line changed it to 'Hark the Herald Angels'. The tune we sing it to today, was written by Mendelssohn. To begin with these were not called carols at all but Waits, because they were sung at waitnight or watchnight.

There was no electricity of course and so the groups singing in the streets or in church did so by lanthorns (candles in glass covers on sticks or candles in church).

In 1880, Archbishop Benson started the first carol service at Truro. One of my own enduring memories is when, in 1969, we had the first carol service for many years in St. Edmund's. The little church was packed with the congregation. Those early enough sat on the chairs with dozens of people sitting on the floor in the aisles, the chancel, the sanctuary and outside the main door, while candles flickered in those ancient stone walls. I was told afterwards that more than 200 villagers had attended that night. Nobody reported us to the Health and Safety Officers.



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Random Thoughts at Christmas - by Mary Boswell

Christmas means different things to different people. Perhaps because I am named for her, I have always felt a special connection with the Virgin Mary. I think about her particularly at this time of year, a tired and frightened young girl giving birth to her baby in difficult and primitive circumstances. As she struggled with the pangs of labour, she was also trying to come to terms with the overwhelming fact that she had been chosen by God to deliver a Saviour. Her mind must have been in turmoil. She was far from home and without her mother, there was no one there to help but Joseph, who was no expert in midwifery. He was probably still hurt and bewildered by the profound change in the girl he thought he knew. It must have taken a great deal of courage to simply stand by his betrothed as he struggled to understand what had happened to her. I have always felt that his steadfast devotion to be severely underrated.

In Advent calendars and Nativity scenes we see a calm kneeling Madonna and her protective spouse, both gazing in awe at the miracle that is Jesus. There is no sign of the anguish and fear that must have filled that unlikely birth chamber, in the preceding hours. To every mother, the birth of a baby is a miracle, a new life with all the attendant possibilities.

But this particular baby would change the world, with his message of love and hope for the future. So, after two thousand years, we still experience something of the awe that Mary must have felt as she gazed at her son - and her Lord.

**Merry Christmas**

fb

'The Bridge'
is delivered free
to over 1,750 homes and
businesses in Wootton

Note to 'Bridge Deliverers'
the February 2024 issue will be avail-
able to pick up from the Churches on
SATURDAY 27th January 2024

Solution - November Sudoku

7	1	4	5	6	2	8	9	3
3	6	2	8	1	9	7	4	5
8	9	5	3	7	4	1	2	6
6	2	8	4	5	7	9	3	1
4	5	7	1	9	3	6	8	2
9	3	1	2	8	6	4	5	7
1	8	9	7	3	5	2	6	4
2	7	3	6	4	8	5	1	9
5	4	6	9	2	1	3	7	8

If you have any particular
areas of concern, or want to
report any incidents, please
either visit the Parish Office
in Brannon Way, or contact
us by phone or email

Telephone:
01983 884555

Email:
clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk

FESTIVE WORDSEARCH

E	I	B	I	R	T	H	S	P	L	V	C	I	Z	G	M	J	G	B	B	MERRY
G	R	F	U	S	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	A	M	Y	K	F	C	N	L	FESTIVE
D	W	Y	U	L	E	T	I	D	E	U	U	T	R	T	L	G	C	H	H	ELVES
E	L	A	T	M	R	M	E	R	R	Y	E	X	M	O	W	I	W	P	M	JOLLY
L	V	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	Q	A	G	Y	L	Q	M	F	R	REINDEER
S	T	Q	C	S	G	N	I	D	I	T	E	C	H	O	C	S	Y	A	S	CAROLS
N	A	M	W	O	N	S	R	W	S	L	L	C	I	O	D	S	R	Y	F	MISTLETOE
Y	J	S	R	H	E	L	V	E	S	W	Y	W	I	U	L	Z	R	Q	Q	FRANKINCENSE
T	V	T	X	H	J	Y	T	I	V	I	T	A	N	O	R	L	H	U	L	MYRRH
E	S	N	E	C	N	I	K	N	A	R	F	H	C	T	J	O	Y	I	J	NATIVITY
H	E	E	O	U	P	Y	C	M	I	S	T	L	E	T	O	E	N	O	E	XMAS
M	T	M	M	X	S	G	I	D	R	U	D	O	L	P	H	J	R	L	K	YULETIDE
E	J	A	A	U	T	S	L	E	I	G	H	G	E	G	O	O	R	C	S	TINSEL
D	S	N	Z	N	O	Z	R	M	I	H	M	O	S	T	M	T	O	O	F	STOCKING
T	U	R	X	J	C	T	W	J	M	Q	S	T	I	N	S	E	L	E	H	PRESENTS
R	S	O	E	X	K	U	G	L	L	L	A	B	W	O	N	S	S	E	W	CHIMNEY
K	E	H	M	R	I	M	L	X	Y	K	H	P	B	O	D	T	T	Q	G	JESUS
F	J	A	Y	V	N	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	I	I	I	N	D	B	BIRTH
J	S	V	O	X	G	E	W	F	Y	L	L	O	J	V	M	W	I	U	V	FAMILY
S	O	D	R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	P	Q	E	F	H	D	V	L	X	TIDINGS

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Churchwardens: Ann Capps and Mary Peters

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stedmundsandstmarks@gmail.com or leave a message on 01983 301880

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