



South Brent and Rattery Messenger

Winter 2023/2024

Welcome to the Messenger Magazine produced on behalf of St Petroc's Church, South Brent and St Mary's Church, Rattery. We would love to feature your news or hear your suggestions. You can email us at messengereditor@outlook.com or leave a message for the editors at St Petroc's.

Dear Friends,

JESUS – GOD'S GIFT TO US

Christmas is all about God's Son coming down on earth, taking on our human nature so that we can have the dignity of being God's children. This is a love story – the mystery of love. This is why Christmas is so important. If we really want to understand people we must live among them, we must see what they see, hear what they hear, live what they live. This is what God has done. He has drawn near to us in the person of Jesus. By becoming a child, and completely dependent on human care, God took away the distance between us – the Divine and the human. He became one of us. He lived among us. God meets us where we are.

For many of us Christmas is a time of celebration, fun, family. But not for everyone. For some of us it will be a difficult time. Yet in Jesus, God meets us where we are in our joy, or grief, or loneliness or wherever we are and however our life's experiences.

This is why we celebrate Christmas, the Incarnation – the reason for this special season. This is the good news. This is the great joy which the angels announced to the shepherds. This is the real gift of Christmas – a gift that cannot be bought or sold, but only given and received through love.

We look forward to welcoming you to our services this Christmas – the details are in this edition, or our website at <https://stpetrocsandstmarys.org.uk/>

May the light of Jesus shine on you and your loved ones this Christmas and in the New Year, bringing you Love, Peace, Joy, and Hope.



Revd Prof Gina Radford, Team Rector, Dart and Avon Mission Community



Christmas services

All welcome



St Petroc's, South Brent

Sunday 17th Carol Service, 6.30pm; refreshments
Sunday 24th Christingle, 4pm
Sunday 24th Midnight Communion, 11pm
Christmas Day Family Communion, 11am
Sunday 31st Mission Community Service, 9.30am
Other services as usual

St. Mary's, Rattery

Sunday 10th Christingle, 11.15am
Sunday 10th Carol Service, 6pm
Sunday 24th No service
Christmas Day Family Communion, 10.30am

Compassionate Friends Café

10am—11.30am on 3rd and 4th Saturdays of the month at the Old School, South Brent. A welcome place for people with experience of bereavement, recent or otherwise, or those about to lose a loved one, to come together with others for a cuppa and a chat. Drop in or phone 01364 700282. A partnership between South Brent & District Caring, St Petroc's and local people.

All welcome for coffee, cake and a natter in the St Petroc's Church car park - 2nd Saturday of every month 10 am to 11.30.

Happy Christmas from your friends at South Brent Methodist Church

You are all warmly invited to our Carol service, which this year will take place on Sunday 10th December at 4pm, in place of our usual morning service that day. There will be no service at the chapel on Christmas morning – instead we will be happy to join our friends at St Petroc's.

Looking ahead to the New Year, we'll host the annual covenant service on Sunday, 28th January. Since the early days of Methodism in the eighteenth century, its people have taken the opportunity to renew their Christian commitment in the light of God's continuing presence and love – a kind of holy and collective New Year's resolution! As in past years, we hope that our friends from the other churches will join us, so that we can celebrate the togetherness of the Christian community in the village.

Also in 2024 we hope to carry out some redecorations in the chapel (I gather it hasn't been done for a number of years), and the other two aspects of our church life together we continue; our monthly Saturday coffee morning (the first Saturday of the month) and our twice monthly fellowship meeting on a Wednesday afternoon – the first of these in January will be on January 3rd when we will start to explore sharing and communicating faith. As with everything we do, all are welcome – though as the Wednesday afternoon group meets in different people's homes, please contact us to find out more.

Once again, our best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year,

Revd Kevin Hooke, 135 Churchfields Drive, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9QZ. 07772 571647 / hookekp@hotmail.com.
Baptism & Wedding enquiries welcome. **Hall Bookings** - Mrs Patsy Tidball. 01364 649448



News from St Mary's Rattery

Since the last edition of the Messenger the big news at St Mary's is that our 1550 West Door has been fully restored and re hung.

Our restorer, Daniel Stewart, did a remarkable job. The toughest part of his task was to rebuild the bottom of the door where the weather over the centuries had taken its toll on the ancient English oak timbers. The rotted sections were replaced by carefully crafted new pieces of wood and beautifully reassembled fully respecting the way in which the door was originally made.

Daniel believes the door was originally made of locally sourced oak of average quality, but it has survived the ravages of time because of the careful way in which the different parts of the door were secured together by the use of very strong cast clout nails.

This restoration, which cost over £10,000, was part funded by the very generous support of grants from three charitable sources; the Church of England "ChurchCare", the Benefact Trust and the Devon Historic Churches Trust. Without their support this work would not have been possible.

The project is a reminder of the rich history that is St Mary's Church and the need to fully involve our parish, over the next few years, in addressing the future conservation challenges especially with our very rare Sgraffito wall decoration which is now degrading very badly due to the ravages of damp and our inability to continuously heat the church throughout the winter months.

Music Comes to St Mary's.

September saw us host the wonderful Sunflowers String Quartet in a magnificent concert of both classical and Scandinavian folk music.

The evening began with wine and canapés, then we had the concert and finally around 40 people went to the Church House Inn for a concert goers supper. A great evening's entertainment!

We are now planning a spring and autumn series of concerts to further emphasise to our local community that St Mary's is a place for everyone to enjoy and value.



Michael Jack

St Dunstan's Catholic Church, South Brent – Very Rev Francis Straw

Christmas Services:

Midnight Mass, Buckfast Abbey (doors open at 11pm)

9am – St Dunstan's RC Church, South Brent

11am – Solemn Mass for Christmas Day, Buckfast Abbey

This year has passed very quickly, Fr Francis has been welcomed back as Parish Priest after spending two years away in Marnhull, Dorset. We said goodbye to Fr Dominic who kindly stood in as Parish Priest in his absence, we wish him well in his new post at Buckfast Abbey.

We have at St Dunstan's Church some very old Crib figures made, we believe by a Russian Lady, of papier-mâché and straw some 70 years ago for the Church. Shirley May, who lived in the village for many years sadly died this year, so her daughter who is a professional doll restorer has sympathetically restored them in her memory; thank you Frances.

St Dunstan's Church will host the World Day Of Prayer on 1st March, 2024 at 2pm, written by the women of Palestine.

The Service of light is at 7.30pm on Thursday 7th December.

We wish everyone a very happy Christmas.

Kevin & Mary Waterman



Welfare Grants

The South Brent Feoffees Charity (Charity No. 255283) has a small grant fund available for individuals and groups resident in South Brent parish to address specific welfare needs. Grants are not income related and are considered throughout the year on a case by case basis.

Application for grants is by letter to Tom Maynard, Clerk to the Trustees c/o Luscombe Maye, South Brent Office or email SBFeoffees@outlook.com.

Growing up in South Brent – a precis

I grew up in Brent in the 1950's and 1960's along with many others now in their 70's. My mother, her father, grandfather and great grandfather did too and the line goes back even further through the female line. My grandfather Alfred Scott Hard was 10 in 1888. What he saw and did might have been very similar in some ways to what I did.

Just as my grandfather had attended Brent School so did I and one of the highlights of our schooldays was Brent Fair Day. Whilst it was much bigger in his day, all over "Brent town", we would both have experienced seeing the animals being loaded onto cattle trucks on what is now the car park, watching from the wall opposite Balmoral Villas. The highlight in my childhood was being given the afternoon off school to be able to see and hear the spectacle.

Wednesday afternoon was something special. It was early closing day – everything closed even the Co-op department store (1927). Queenie and Gordon Wakeham who kept their shop in Fore Street would often go out to Shipley in their Ford Zephyr/ Zodiac and spend the afternoon in the sunshine. We often went to Newton Abbot on the 3.02pm from Brent station. Sometimes it was a green liveried Southern Region train harking back to the war years when the drivers had to get used to the GWR route as well as their own. After tea in Madge Mellor's we caught a train back which did not stop at Totnes. Now the trains fly through. I can remember Jack Garland, the porter, saw the last train out of Brent and closed the station down as the train left with a last whistle.

Wednesday afternoon also saw another Brent highlight - The Church Fete! It took place annually on alternate Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at the Vicarage.

All of you have reminiscences of living here. Just think of what I could have gleaned had I talked to Granfer's generation about their childhood – alas now gone into the aeons of time, so get writing!

Greg Wall



A Church Fete in the 1950's in the Vicarage grounds

Mothers' Union, South Brent group

We meet on the fourth Thursday for 10 months of the year (not August or December), usually in St Petroc's Church room. We start at 10am and finish at about 12 midday. Our membership is growing and included in our plans for 2024 is a visit to the Plymouth Synagogue and invitations to some interesting speakers. We start the year planning our activities for the next 12 months and finish the year with a very enjoyable Christmas lunch. We have the opportunity to share with other Mothers' Union (MU) members Devon-wide celebrating Church festivals and specific MU festivals.

We work to raise funds for Mothers' Union Projects worldwide, including self-help and literacy projects. MU has 4 million members in 84 countries. We support several MU projects in Devon; Prison Book share, knitted hats for local hospitals' premature baby units and sewing essentials for refugee centers.

Some of our members support PUFFs ("people with under 5's" group) at 9.15 in St Petroc's church room every Monday in term-time, and a team of us will be making up the bags for the Christingle Services at St Mary's, Rattery and St. Petroc's, South Brent in the next 3 weeks.

Currently we are involved in the United Nations 16 days of activism against gender-based violence with the charity Restored's "Red Chair" campaign and the Mothers Union "No more 1:3" campaign. We have a small display, with information, in the Lady Chapel at St Petroc's and a display in St. John's Chapel at Exeter Cathedral. These displays will be available for 16 days, from 25th November -10th December.

For further information about the MU please contact Sue Addy 01364 73069.



South Brent Bell Ringing

South Brent Bellringers have continued to be busy throughout the autumn with our two practice nights and Sunday mornings, including ringing the Bells half muffled for the Armistice service on November 12.

The previous weekend six of our ringers won an invitation competition at Combeinteignhead beating eight other teams to claim the top spot! Our young ringers continue to flourish and are now starting to ring on Sunday's. We recently held the 233rd Annual meeting of the South Brent Ringers where Suzanne Driscoll was re-elected as Lord Chief, a title which we think is unique to South Brent, otherwise known as the Tower Captain. We are looking forward to ringing over the festive season for the various Christmas services and of course ringing out the old year and ringing in the new! If you think you might be interested in coming along to see what we do and to have a go, please get in touch with Suzanne or Graham on 07792 125539.

Shekinah

Shekinah is a Devon based charity which for over 30 years has provided support and opportunities for people in recovery from homelessness, drug and alcohol issues, offending behaviours or mental ill health. In Plymouth there is a drop-in centre for homeless people where hot food, showers and clean clothes are offered. Clients can also be seen by a GP, dentist, podiatrist and other health professionals. Although homelessness is at the core of their work, Shekinah helps people address their health issues, find accommodation and supports them in their own home. Shekinah provides opportunities to learn new skills and helps in finding work, with the support of the local business community. As a charity, Shekinah receives no government support. The charity shop in Plymouth welcomes any donations - there is also a collection point at the back of St. Petroc's church for any of your unwanted items. Susan Jozsa 01364 73484 .



Floodlighting Sponsorship

From October to March St Petroc's Church tower is bathed in light every evening. The aim is for the lighting to be self-funding. Donations (£5 or more) are welcome, perhaps in memory of a special occasion, person, or anniversary. Please contact Shirley Eatwell on 01364 72836 who will be pleased to arrange this.

Contact details for St. Petroc's and St Mary's

Team Rector *Revd Prof Gina Radford:* 07903 400480 revginar@gmail.com
Wed, Fri, Sun. Otherwise please leave a message
SB Church Wardens *Rob Brighthouse:* 01364 716192 rbrighthouse@yahoo.com
Susan Jozsa 01364 73484 susanjozs4@gmail.com
Rattery Church Warden *Michael Jack* 07767496857 michaeljack17@gmail.com

For Baptisms, Marriages & Funerals please contact the Team Rector.

Services at St Petroc's

1st Sunday: Family Service 9.30
2nd and 4th: Communion 9.30
3rd Sunday: Communion 8.00
Morning Worship 9.30
5th Sunday: Morning Worship/special service

Services at St Mary's

2nd Sunday: Morning worship 11.15

THE HOLLY BEARS A BERRY, AS BLOOD IS IT RED

As I took Izzie for a walk on a crisp autumnal morning to both stretch her legs and have some well-deserved sniffs, I found myself at the foot of a magnificent holly; a tree bedecked with the familiar scarlet-red berries which were a perfect foil for the clear blue sky and the glossy green leaves. The holly is a tree with which we are all familiar, and one bound-up with myths and legends since time immemorial.

More recently, the well-known *Sans Day Carol's* 4th verse "Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red" shows how this tree has also become emblematic of the death and suffering of Christ, as well as a many-millennia-old pagan memory. The prickly leaves are seen as a representation of the crucifixion's crown of thorns, and the red berries as his blood. We now also make Christmastide holly wreaths to hang on our front doors and these are symbolic of the unbroken circle and life and death, yet holly is so much more.

If you look beyond the Christmas decoration and dig a little deeper, you will find a dioecious tree, or one that has both male and female varieties, which in the spring produce a lovely pale cream cruciform flower, of which only the fertilised female will go on to produce the distinctive red berries or, more accurately, drupes. As these mature into the autumn and winter they provide an excellent source of food for resident blackbirds and song thrushes, as well as the visiting fieldfares and redwings that spend the winter with us and away from their summer homes in the Scandinavian countries where they fly amongst polar bears and walrus.

Closer inspection of the tree will show that the well-known prickly leaves that are the bane of any dog walker's life are only likely to be found up to the height of the browse line of deer and cattle; above this they tend to be much less spiky and are a more rounded shape.



If you go foraging to make a Christmas wreath, do spend some time watching the birds first, and make sure you leave enough for them.

Seasonal tip: Before January is out, take down your bird boxes and thoroughly clean them. Do however watch out for over-wintering insects and let these go in the garden.

Nick Kendall

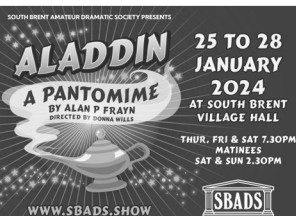
SKY WATCHING

On a clear dark night when a young moon has already set, or an old moon has yet to rise, then you might chance to see the bright streak of a shooting star flash across the sky. These meteorites are particles lost from comets and asteroids that are heated by friction as they enter the earth's atmosphere at great speed, typically over 7 miles per second. At certain times the earth passes through dense patches of this space debris giving rise to annual meteor showers such as the Perseids in August or the Geminids in December, both so named after the constellation of stars where they appear to come from.

Meteorites contain stone or iron or both. Occasionally they reach the surface of the earth and, in the Bronze age, they provided the only source of iron; the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun could have spoken of his dagger made from meteoric iron. Dangerously large meteorites striking the earth are a regular film storyline but are in fact very rare. The only known occurrence in recorded history happened at Tunguska in 1908 when a meteorite, around 50 metres in diameter, exploded at high altitude and the shock-wave flattened an estimated 80 million trees in eastern Siberia. Closer to home, a green fireball was seen over Gloucestershire in 2021 and meteor fragments were recovered from a driveway in Winchcombe. Whilst they are not now a valuable source of iron, they are of great value to the scientific community.

The Geminids meteor shower should be at its peak on 14th December and with a new moon on the 12th, the skies will be dark. Look to the east when Gemini rises at about 6pm.

David Smith



Oh yes they are – South Brent Amateur Dramatic Society are putting on another pantomime. Following the success of Tom Thumb in January 2023, by popular demand SBADS is staging another panto at the Village Hall. Aladdin with – spoiler alert – his magic lamp, will bring surprise, drama, music, dancing, comedy and, above all, entertainment for all ages.

A new script written by Somerset based author Alan P Frayn will be directed by Donna Wills, local legend of stage, screen and the Village Shop. Will the evil Abanazar get his scheming hands on a magical lamp? Can the glamorous Widow Twankey juggle the demands of running both a laundry and takeaway with the help of daft Wishee Washee and sensible So-Shy? Will Aladdin make his fortune and win the hand of the beautiful Princess Mandarin or will he be foiled by the potty policeman? Which South Brent stalwart is making only his second panto appearance in 48 years? And how on earth can SBADS make a carpet fly? All will be revealed thanks to a talented cast of both seasoned actors and newcomers to the Village Hall stage.

There will be three evening performances of Aladdin on Thursday 25, Friday 26 and Saturday 27 January at 7.30pm and two matinees on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 January at 2.30pm. Tickets are £10 for adults and £7 for children under 16. Tickets will be available online from www.sbads.show/aladdin from November, and from our pop-up village box office in January. The last SBADS panto sold out, so if you want to join in the magical fun book your tickets early to avoid disappointment. The panto promises fun for the whole family - oh, yes it does!

Guy Pannell