

# South Brent and Rattery Messenger

## Winter 2025/26

Dear Friends,

Christmas seems to come earlier and earlier – at least in the shops and in the media. The big brands are revealing their big budget adverts on TV, each trying to outdo the others. The supermarkets are stacked with Christmas goods. Yet we have quite a while to go until the much-anticipated day. A long period of waiting. In the church's year we mark this waiting in the period of Advent. But this is not a passive waiting, twiddling our thumbs until the great day. We wait in anticipation. The Gospels offer many images of such waiting - of watchful, active, faithful waiting. Of waiting in hope, rooted in trust and expectation.

We live in a culture of instant gratification, where waiting is often seen as a problem to solve or a void to fill. But for Christians, waiting is not wasted time, it is sacred time.

To wait is to live in the tension of the now and not yet of God's kingdom. It is to trust in God's promises without needing to know the outcome.

When we choose to wait with intention, we open ourselves to the slow, transformative work of the Spirit. We learn to listen more deeply, to notice more fully and to discover God in the longing itself. As St Augustine of Hippo said:

*"The entire life of a good Christian is in fact an exercise of holy desire. You do not see what you long for, but the very act of desiring prepares you, so that when He comes, you may see and be utterly satisfied."*

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas. Everyone is invited to our services.

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



New Birth see p3



### Christmas services

All welcome



### St. Mary's, Rattery

Traditional Carol Service, 6.00pm followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Christmas Day Family Communion, 10am

### St Petroc's, South Brent

Sunday 21st Carol Service, 6.00pm followed by mince pies and mulled wine  
Wed 24th Christingle, 4pm  
Wed 24th Midnight Communion, 11pm  
Christmas Day Family Communion, 11am

Sunday 14th

Christmas Day

### South Brent Mothers' Union

We invite you to join us in our activities this December

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December we are joining the Carol service at St George's Goodrington at 2.30pm hosted by Mothers' Union.

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December we are meeting in the Church room at 10.30am to make up the Christingle bags for the Christingle service on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm.  
Contact Sue Addy 01364 73069

### 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](mailto:SBFeoffees@outlook.com).

## Happy Christmas from your friends at South Brent Methodist Church

Everyone at South Brent Methodist Church wishes you all a peaceful and Happy Christmas, wherever you will be and whoever you spend it with. In such an uncertain world, may this season bring you love and hope, both through spending time with others and through the story of God's love which lies at its heart.

During December, we will have some carol singing at our monthly Saturday coffee morning on 6th, and will celebrate the story of Christmas at our annual Carol Service, which this year will be on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> at 4pm. You are, of course, welcome to join us on either of these occasions, whether you are a regular church-goer or not.

Looking ahead to the New Year, we will host the united Covenant service on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 11am.

With best wishes for a peaceful and joyful Christmas from all of us at the chapel.

God bless,

Kevin

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



## St Mary's Rattery

This year we are having a traditional service of nine lessons and carols at 6pm on Sunday 14th December followed by Mince Pies and Mulled wine.

We will be lighting up the Christmas tree on 1st December and then inviting people to decorate it with baubles dedicated to those who they wish to remember at Christmas.

On Christmas day everyone is invited to a service of Holy Communion at 10am.

*Michael Jack*

## St Dunstan's Catholic Church, South Brent

Christmas Mass at South Brent will be held at 9am, all are welcome.

There are also a number of services at Buckfast Abbey over the Christmas period and these can be found on the Buckfast Abbey website.

We at St Dunstan's Church wish everyone a very happy and holy Christmas

**Contact Details:** [parish@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:parish@buckfast.org.uk) Telephone Fr Francis Straw: 01364 645526

*Kerin & Mary Waterman*

## Island Trust Christmas Stall comes in out of the cold

After 30 years of braving cold, wind and rain the hardy members of the Brent Island Trust Committee will be inviting supporters to join them in the warmth of the Old School Centre when they hold their traditional Christmas stall and carol singing in the village on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December. The event runs from 9.30am until noon and is the organisation's main fundraising event of the year.

All are welcome to support the trust and get in the festive spirit. Father Christmas and the Village Crier will be on hand to greet visitors. Look out for presents and cakes, try your luck on the tombola and join in singing some favourite Christmas melodies. As an extra attraction for youngsters there will also be a children's tombola this year, with appropriate prizes.

Offers of help are welcome, especially with carol singing and in providing cakes and tombola prizes. Tombola prizes can be left in a special box in Hannah's charity shop in South Brent. Cakes can be delivered on the morning of the event, or to the Chairman's address at 2, Middle Green.

The trust cares for a three-acre area of meadow and woodland, surrounded by the River Avon and bought through a public appeal in 1994.

*Guy Pannell*

## The Old School



South Brent Community Library holds a wonderful range of books for all ages. Pop in, browse and borrow! There are no joining fees or late fees, and you can borrow books for as long as you need them. Our friendly Volunteer Librarians are always happy to help you find your next great read! The Library is located within the Old School Community Centre.

**Library opening:**  
**Mondays** 10am – 12pm  
**Wednesdays** 2pm – 4pm  
**Fridays** 10am – 12pm



## Could this be you?

The Corridor Gallery at the Old School Community Centre is a wonderful community resource. We welcome exhibitions of work by local artists and displays by local groups.

At just £10 to display your exhibition for one month, it's a great way to get your work / group noticed! We have vacancies in the coming months so get in touch with Michelle at the Old School today to book your slot.



## Need a space to work?

Make South Brent Old School Community Centre your home-from-home with Workspace Wednesdays. **Every Wednesday 9am – 2pm**, the Beacon Room is open and free. Bring your laptop, use our free wifi, and enjoy a quiet space to get work done. No need to book – just drop in.

For more information about the Old School contact Michelle at [info@theoldschool.org.uk](mailto:info@theoldschool.org.uk) or 07707 723637.

## St Petroc's Church East Window: "New Birth"

There are four coloured windows in St Petroc's Church. This window, over the altar, illuminates us as we come into the church—it celebrates the becoming-human of Jesus the Son of God. It was the first coloured window to be installed after the 1870 restoration of St. Petroc's.

The angel's banner reads "**Glory to God in the Highest**". Then come the four Gospel writers: **St. Matthew – St. Mark – St. Luke – St. John**.

The main scene is of Jesus's birth: the shepherds on the right, shown with the Wise Men on the left. These Magi were probably highly regarded and skilled astronomers. The second figure from the left is shown as being of African or Asian descent. When the glass was put in, some parishioners might well have remembered that George Baker, vicar of Brent in the early 1800s, married Anne Palk who was Anglo-Indian.

Across the foot of the whole window we read:

**†To the Glory of God and in honour of His House this window is dedicated by Emily Bradley Elliott widow**

**To the memory of her husband John Elliott Lord of this Manor who died on the 24th of Sept. 1874 at the early age of 24 †**

This John Elliott was the great-nephew of the John Elliott, a previous Lord of the Manor, whose memorial is in the 1856 window at the back of the church in the NW corner.

**Meditation Point:** "When we let light shine into our lives, what do we then see, new, about the world and about ourselves?"

*Peter Taylor*

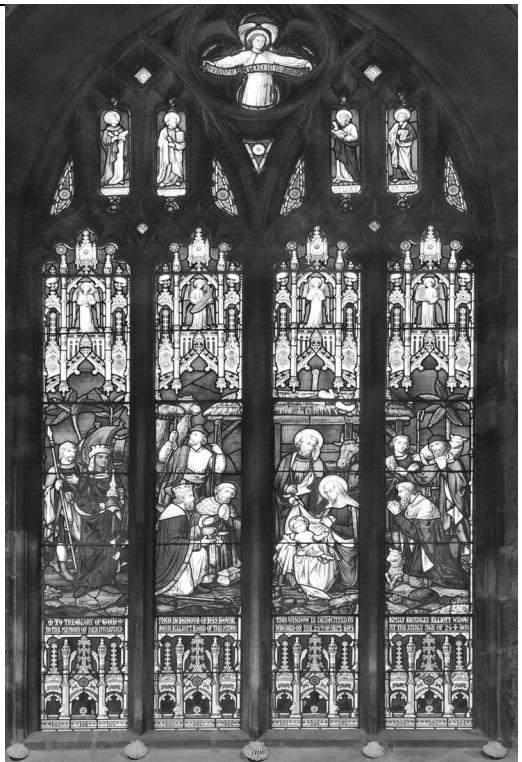


Photo courtesy of David A Stares 2020.

Detail on front page.

## St. Petroc's Church Bells

The steel girders that support the cast iron bell frame have a serious corrosion problem and need to be replaced if the bells are to continue to be rung at St Petroc's. The cost will be £67,000; any contributions toward this would be very welcome. Please contact the Vicar or churchwardens if you wish to make a donation.

### The problem

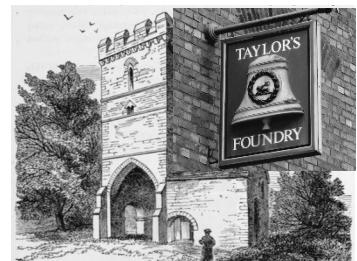
The bells were rehung in 1937 by John Taylor & Co, which is the only remaining bell foundry in the UK. A new cast iron bell frame supported by a steel grillage was fitted and has lasted well up to recent years when water ingress through the stonework has caused rusting in the supporting steel girders which has resulted in holes appearing. At present it is intact, but it is only a matter of time (2-3 years) before some sections become detached from each other and bell ringing will have to stop.

The bellringers have been looking after the bells, fittings and other parts and these are all in good order.

**The solution** is for Taylors to remove the bells and other equipment, and dismantle and lower the frame. The bells, their fittings and the bell frame will be taken to the Works in Loughborough where restoration will be carried out. Taylors will build a new galvanized steel grillage, sandblast and repaint the cast iron frame and then re-install the bells and frame back in the tower where the bells will be tried under their supervision.

There is a board at the back of the church with more information and photographs showing the damage.

*Graham Sharland*



## Floodlighting Sponsorship

From October to March St Petroc's Church tower is bathed in light every evening. Donations 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.

On December 24th Richard Stevens remembers his aunt and uncle Angie and Claudio Cappellini.

## WINTER WARMER - Harbottle & Jonas + Richard Trethewey

Come and join us for a rare evening of winter songs, harmonies, carols and smiles in the beautiful setting of St. Petroc's Church, South Brent, at 7.30pm on Saturday 20th December.

Partners in life and music, dynamic South Brent based folk duo Harbottle & Jonas, will be joined by Richard Trethewey, who grew up in Cornwall and developed a keen interest in the traditional music that tells the story of the remarkable history and people of this place. Tickets, at £12, available from Artworks in the village or online via Eventbrite.

## LINK TO HOPE SHOEBOXES FROM SOUTH BRENT

This year, people in the South Brent area have given a wonderful 139 Shoeboxes to the people in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, for those living in the poorest and deprived areas of those countries.

THANKYOU SO VERY MUCH for your generosity.

The charity Link to Hope supports nationals in Eastern Europe working with those in poverty, through education and social care. For more information about the charity please visit [www.linktohope.co.uk](http://www.linktohope.co.uk).



*Liz Rider*

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

### Team Rector

Revd Prof Gina Radford: 07903 400480 [revginar@gmail.com](mailto:revginar@gmail.com)

Wed, Fri, Sun. Otherwise please leave a message

Rob Brighouse: 01364 716192 [rbrighouse@yahoo.com](mailto:rbrighouse@yahoo.com)

Susan Jozsa 01364 73484 [susanjozsa4@gmail.com](mailto:susanjozsa4@gmail.com)

Michael Jack 07767496857 [michaeljack17@gmail.com](mailto:michaeljack17@gmail.com)

Sue Addy 01364 73069

[messengereditor@outlook.com](mailto:messengereditor@outlook.com)

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

## BIG HUGS

I hug trees. There, I've said it; I have told the world, and I am not ashamed. My reason is simple – if I stretch out my arms and reach around the trunk, I will be measuring it at about the correct height to assess its age from its girth. I know my arm span, and an adult's shoulder height is about 1.5m off the ground, the accepted height for doing this.

Studies have provided us with a table from which you can tell the approximate age depending on where the tree is growing – open moorland, churchyard or park, or some other area. All you need to know is the species of tree, the girth at 1.5m above the ground and you can gauge how long it has been standing to a reasonable degree of accuracy. I will admit that there is something rather comforting about the close physical proximity of any living thing, and trees, being by far the oldest of living things, have a special place in my heart.

There are more accurate ways of working this out, but most of us take our arms with us wherever we go, so we can use this anywhere and at any time. A simple piece of string marked with feet or metres and kept in a coat or jacket pocket may also help for larger trees, and it is important to take into account any ivy on the trunk, and measure just above or below any knobbly projections that may be in the way. However, for most of us, simply reaching round and measuring is accurate enough.

Find a clear piece of wall and measure your own arm span, then, when no one is looking, do try hugging a tree and working out its age. Many will be in to their hundreds, and even the most modest can be surprising.

If you are unsure of the species there are masses of books and even [and, being a known technophobe, I can't believe I am saying this] apps to help. If it is winter and there are no leaves on the boughs, look down at the ground below. You will nearly always find some old ones.

It is a little addictive, and once you start you may well find yourself wondering how old the trees you see around are, and it is difficult to resist the urge to hug one.

©Nick Kendell



## Sky Watching

A walk to Aish Common on a clear night is always rewarding, especially when the moon is past full and will not rise until late. A sky full of stars is a fine sight and has inspired the human race for millennia.

Groups of stars, or constellations, have conjured up images of mythical people and creatures from the earliest of days; there are descriptions over 3000 years old. Some of the best known constellations are the signs of the zodiac (a word rooted in the Greek for 'animal') and whose origins are linked to the stars in the band of sky against which the sun appears to move over the course of a year.

Whilst December is associated with the zodiac constellation of Sagittarius (the centaur archer), you will not catch even a glimpse until June. The constellation to look for in winter is the hour glass shape of Orion, the great hunter of Greek legend, son of Euryale and Poseidon and hero of many adventures. Look first to the South East for his distinctive belt of 3 stars in a row named Alnitak, Alnilam, and Mintaka. To the upper left there is the clearly red star of Betelgeuse and to the right Bellatrix; to the lower right there is the pale blue of

Rigel opposing Saiph. Other stars make up his shield, sword, and club. On a very clear night, you may be able to see the Great Nebula in the area below Orion's belt, a colossal cloud of dust and gas where stars are seen to be forming by the Hubble telescope. Following a line down from Orion's belt you will find Sirius (or the Dog Star), the brightest star in our sky and part of Canis Major and Orion's hunting companion.

However, for real amazement, some binoculars will reveal just how many more stars there are in the sky.

David Smith



## 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

4th Sunday: Communion 11.15

