

The WOODCHESTER Word

Issue 32 - December 2010



Memories and hopes

As the 2010th year of the Common Era draws to a close, what memories does the old year hold for each of us, and what are our aspirations for the New Year?

2010 has been a year of natural disasters: the Haiti earthquake in January, one of the deadliest on record; the Icelandic volcano eruptions that disrupted air travel across northern and western Europe; the devastating monsoons and flooding in Pakistan that displaced more than a million people; and the tsunami in Sumatra that left many dead and homeless.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a massive man-made disaster. And then we had the Copiapo mining accident in Chile which, in front of the world's media, turned into such an emotional and thrilling triumph of human spirit and ingenuity over adversity.

Will we remember the election that led to the first coalition government for decades, the austerity budget that will affect so many people, the World Cup being won by Spain, Gloucester beating Bath at the Recreation Ground, the reuniting of Robbie Williams with Take That, the snow of last winter, with schools closed and children out with their toboggans, or the wet summer which was not so great for the younger ones?

And what of our aspirations for the forthcoming year? The Archbishop of Canterbury said in his New Year message this year, "In a world where risk and suffering are everybody's problem, the needs of our neighbours are the needs of the whole human family. Let's respond just as we do when our immediate family is in need or trouble. We may be amazed by the difference we can make."

Whatever our memories of 2010, let's hope that 2011 brings more peace and less suffering in the world, and more joy and harmony to us all in our own Parish. Let's make it a year when neighbours in our Parish join together for the benefit of all.

Happy Christmas and a joyful and peaceful New Year to all our readers.



Drawing by Esme Barrett-Lamb

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Around the Village

Parish Council update

Members of the Parish Council were sorry to hear of the death of Stephen Glanfield, who was both our District and County Councillor. Until he became ill, he habitually attended Parish Council meetings and was always ready to offer advice and information, and to take up matters on Woodchester's behalf when necessary.

The Parish Council is waiting to see what impact the Government Spending Review will have on Woodchester, as the spending cuts Gloucester County Council will have to make, filters through to Stroud District Council and to local communities. The precept will accordingly be decided as late as possible, in early January 2011.

The new, larger notice board in South Woodchester has been welcomed and several residents have contacted the Parish Council to say how much they like it. The old notice board from the High Street should soon be erected in Convent Lane, to replace the make shift one that is currently there. The other brand new board should soon be put up in its new position nearer the North Woodchester shop and Post Office. A number of residents of Rooksmoor have indicated that they would prefer to keep the board they already have in its current position. The board that has been in North Woodchester, will therefore be moved to a site near the entrance to the cycle track in The Garden, so that everyone who lives in The Garden, Paul's Rise and Mill Pond End will have the opportunity to keep themselves informed without going out of their way.

Gloucestershire Highways have indicated that the work to improve safety when crossing the A46 to Frogmarsh Lane will take place sometime during this financial year.

The draft Village Design Statement is with Stroud District Council, awaiting feedback.

There has been no response to the appeal for help to give Woodchester a children's playground. This is very unusual for our village and somewhat puzzling. There is a member of the South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust who originally raised the idea with the Parish Council and a Parish Councillor who offered to help, so although the project needs a team, no one should fear they would be on their own. If you would like a playground, please contact the clerk (see below).

The 90th Anniversary of the War Memorial took place on 11th November, Armistice Day, with a special Service of Remembrance at the newly refurbished War Memorial. It was a very moving occasion, well supported by the whole community. As always, thank you to everyone who helped to make the day memorable, including everyone who attended despite the wind and rain.

The Parish Council have published a booklet about everyone whose name appears on the War Memorial as part of the 90th Anniversary commemoration. A copy is being distributed to every household in the Parish. If you have not received a copy please contact the clerk: clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk, tel. 01453 8733313

Over-hanging vegetation- a plea from your Parish Council

The Council has had representations recently about the difficulty pedestrians in particular, but also motorists, face from overgrown and untrimmed vegetation on public rights of way and roads.

It is a landowner's responsibility to keep public rights of way across their land open and unobstructed for pedestrian and equestrian use. Owners of trees and hedges on or next to footpaths, bridleways and public roads must also ensure that such hedges and trees do not grow onto, or overhang, the highway.

It would be really appreciated if everyone could look at their trees and hedges and cut them back once they grow beyond the boundary of their own property.

If the problem is tackled this winter the Parish will look much better in the spring. However, this is not just a matter of appearance; overgrown, overhanging vegetation is, legally, a public nuisance and can be dangerous.

(Cllr Penny Brown)

Inishfree – your local Charity

We would like to thank North and South Woodchester for all their support in buying firewood from us – we had over 50 customers in the first month! - and it was full on to buy a pickup truck and get the wood cut up ready to deliver.

It has been so exciting meeting all the many local people who have been so patient in the first couple of weeks while we got things in place.

We also did very well at the Woodchester Fete, the cream teas were especially successful and we sold a lot of chutney and jam, taking home just over £300!

The income from firewood is already providing therapeutic support for Trainees – and the £300 will support the garden costs, so a big, big thank you from all of us at Inishfree and keep the orders coming for firewood – **£75 for a metre bag of kiln dried oak!**

Please ring to re-order or place your first by speaking or leaving a message for Lyn 07881692486 or 01453 873624 and for more info see www.inishfree.org.uk

Around the Village

The Roman Pavement

The last edition of 'Woodchester Word' raised the possibility of opening the Roman pavement. Whilst it would be good for people to be able to see the pavement again, especially those who have never had the opportunity, it is important to consider how practical such an opening would be.

The pavement is a nationally important scheduled monument with statutory protection. This means that for the pavement to be opened, statutory permission has to be obtained from two bodies. The first is the Gloucester *Diocesan Advisory Committee*. This is made up of a group of experts who would examine every aspect of such a proposal and what is known as a Faculty application has to be made to this body by our Parochial Church Council (PCC) which I chair. The second is the *Department of Culture, Media and Sport*, acting on the advice of English Heritage. Due to the fragile nature of Roman mosaic pavements, many attendant issues would have to be addressed before permission was granted by either of these bodies.

One important factor is that archaeology has moved on considerably since the last re-opening in the Seventies. One of the Heritage Archaeology companies would have to be employed to do tests to ascertain whether the pavement is in a good enough condition to be opened. We know that the monument is fragile and already heavily damaged. Much expense could be incurred with no guarantee that permission would be granted for a re-opening.

Most important is the potential impact on the community. At the last opening, 140,000 people visited Woodchester. There would be huge public interest, locally and nationally, so we could anticipate at least 0.5 million people visiting Woodchester over a six week period, with as many as 25,000 in a day. Given the development in Woodchester since the last opening, the increased traffic through the village, and the problem of access and parking, it is doubtful if the village could cope with such an influx. For this reason, a full and independent, professional feasibility study would have to be conducted.

An alternative might be to consider opening the pavement so that it was on permanent display. However, the same trials would have to be made as in a temporary opening, again with no guarantee of permission being granted, and if successful, the pavement would have to be housed in an environmentally controlled shelter. This raises the issue of who becomes responsible for this and the associated costs in the long term. The National Trust, interestingly, have launched a £3m appeal for such a shelter at Chedworth, but they of course already have access to the site and parking. So it's clear that any comparable scheme at Woodchester would be a multi-million pound project.

I am sorry if this sounds disappointing, but it is important to be clear at the outset that a re-opening would be very complex, very expensive and a very lengthy process running into several years. Costs have increased enormously since the last opening, and there are no clear sources of funding at a time when heritage bodies are facing funding cuts.

At its October meeting, the PCC discussed the factors involved in opening up the pavement for public viewing, either on a temporary or a permanent basis. It was resolved that the costs and practicalities are such that the PCC will not embark upon such a project now and cannot envisage any circumstances in which it might decide to do so in the future. (Reverend Canon Stephen Bowen. Rector, St Mary's Church, Woodchester)

Down to Earth Co-operative – 'Growing Together'

Down to Earth (DtE) was set up earlier this year to support local people who want to grow fruit and vegetables in their own gardens, but perhaps are short of time or knowledge to get going, or need someone to do the digging or build raised beds for them! A few months on and our co-operative has a growing number of members who share in taking the direction of the co-op forward, and subscribers who are literally reaping the benefits of food grown in their own gardens. On our website (www.downtoearth.coop) you can see photos of some of the work we've undertaken, and find out more about what we can do for you.

This is the time of year when most people think that you enjoy your produce, and then everything slides into autumn and winter when there's nothing much to do in the garden. Well how wrong they are! The winter can be a very busy time clearing the veg patch, storing and cropping winter veg, digging in compost or manure, transplanting those fruit bushes that have grown too big for the space they're in, and most importantly, planning for next year. Have you got your rotation scheme sorted out? Is the veg patch big enough now that you've had a go and want to try more? Do you need to add another raised bed or some containers? Did you lose all your carrots to the badgers this year and want to make sure it doesn't happen again (that's me!!)? Your courgettes, tomatoes and salads were great, but what about veg in the winter? Keep in mind that it's important to plan for winter crops first and that you can be sowing seeds as early as January and February.

And now on to the exciting bit (well it's all exciting but this is new!). DtE would like to develop some community led schemes. To do this we need to find out more about what you as a community and individually would like to see happen, or would like to be able to access locally, in relation to growing fruit and vegetables. What do you think should be happening locally, or what would get you growing or help you grow more? What stops you from having a go at growing? Any ideas at all, no matter how bizarre they may seem, we would like to know about them. You can contact us via our website, or ring us on 01453 700011.

Around the Village

Woodchester Endowed School

Our pupils at Woodchester Endowed are, as always, enjoying a rich variety of activities and approach all that they do with true enthusiasm. We have recently worked on another of our very successful 'focus fortnight' themes; this time choosing to study the work of *Camille Saint-Saëns* and his '*Carnival of the Animals*'. A huge amount of creativity is always seen during these themes and the work the children produce really reflects the enjoyment they are having.

Music has been quite a feature of the school year so far. All our junior children had the opportunity to learn to play a brass instrument during the course of another very special week provided by the Gloucestershire music service. At the end of just one week the children performed in an extremely impressive concert to showcase their efforts. Many of our children learn to play an instrument in school, whether it is brass, violin, guitar, piano or flute. The school choir will also be travelling to Birmingham later this month to take part in a huge concert at the NEC as part of '*Young Voices 2010*'.

We were very pleased to be invited to join many members of our village community to take part in the service to mark the 90th anniversary of our war memorial on November 11th. As well as being involved in the actual service our year 6 children produced their own assembly for parents in school having researched the 27 men commemorated on the memorial. A real sense of connection was created and I am sure that all the children now have a greater understanding of the impact that these conflicts have had on our own community.

We are now beginning to look towards Christmas, a special time in any school calendar. Amongst all the festivities at school we would love to see members of the community at our Christmas fair being held between 5:30 and 8:00pm on Friday 10th December. I look forward to seeing some of you then.

(Gordon Soutar, Headteacher)

St Dominic's School

The big event of this term is the choir taking part in 'Young Voices' in Birmingham later this month. It was decided last year that we would 'give it a try' but little did we know the obstacles that lay ahead! Our very gifted music teacher is still away on long term sick, hence the teaching of about 20 songs has fallen upon others within the school community and I am extremely grateful to the teachers and parents who have come to the rescue and of course the children for working so hard with them. By the time you read this report the event will have taken place and hopefully we will look back and think it was all worthwhile!

It was a great privilege to be involved in the Act of Remembrance at the war memorial in South Woodchester. Like everyone who was there, one could not fail to be moved by the children reading out the names of those who had died. Later in the term pupils will be researching further into their lives using the resource produced by Woodchester parish.

(continued)

The reception children have settled in very well and we are looking forward to seeing them perform their Christmas play at the beginning of December – anyone wishing to attend a performance will be very welcome – the dress rehearsal will take place on Friday 10th December 1:45 pm followed by two performances on Monday 13th Dec starting at 9:30 am and 6:30pm.

Other exciting events for Christmas will be a performance of Cinderella in the school hall on 14th Dec, the Christmas lunch on 15th and school will end with the Christingle service in Church on Friday 17th Dec.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to anyone wishing to come along to the Christmas Bazaar on Dec 4th starting at 12:30 pm with light lunches.

As we leave autumn behind I would like to end with an Acrostic poem written by Alex Walker and as we look forward I would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas from all at St Dominic's School.
(Margaret Smith, Headteacher)

Autumn

Autumn gives a spell of joy.

Unknown happiness comes out to play,

Trees give colour to leaves above.

Under trees live leaves of death.

Most birds fly south to see better things.

November is the time that we have to say goodbye.

Sir William Romney's School

On a miserably damp November evening, Sir William Romney's School welcomed former students back to celebrate their exam success and receive well deserved prizes. Students and guests were entertained by The Smurfs - no, not the funny blue Smurfs you may remember from TV - but one of our school student bands!

This year saw the best ever GCSE results for the school, with the headline 5+ A*-C pass rate at 75% and the 5+ A*-C including English and Mathematics pass rate at 54%.

There were some outstanding individual performances from students of all abilities and 12 students achieved eight or more A* and A grades. The highest achieving student was Jasper Bird with 6A* and 5A grades. As a result Jasper received the overall GCSE Performance Prize. Jasper also managed to score 100% in his AS Level Mathematics - a remarkable achievement.

There were also prizes for former pupils of Woodchester Endowed CofE Primary School:

- Lauren Hall for Progress in German
- Isabel Lomas for Attainment in Geography, gaining an A*, Isabel also received The Service to School Prize
- Hannah Street for Attainment in Dance, gaining an A*. Hannah also gained an A* in Science

And Lucy Davis, a former pupil at St Dominic's Catholic Primary School received a prize for Progress in DT Graphics and gained nine A grades and three B grades in her GCSE exams.

Presentations were made by Stephen Hirst, Tetbury Town Councillor and School Governor.

Around the Village

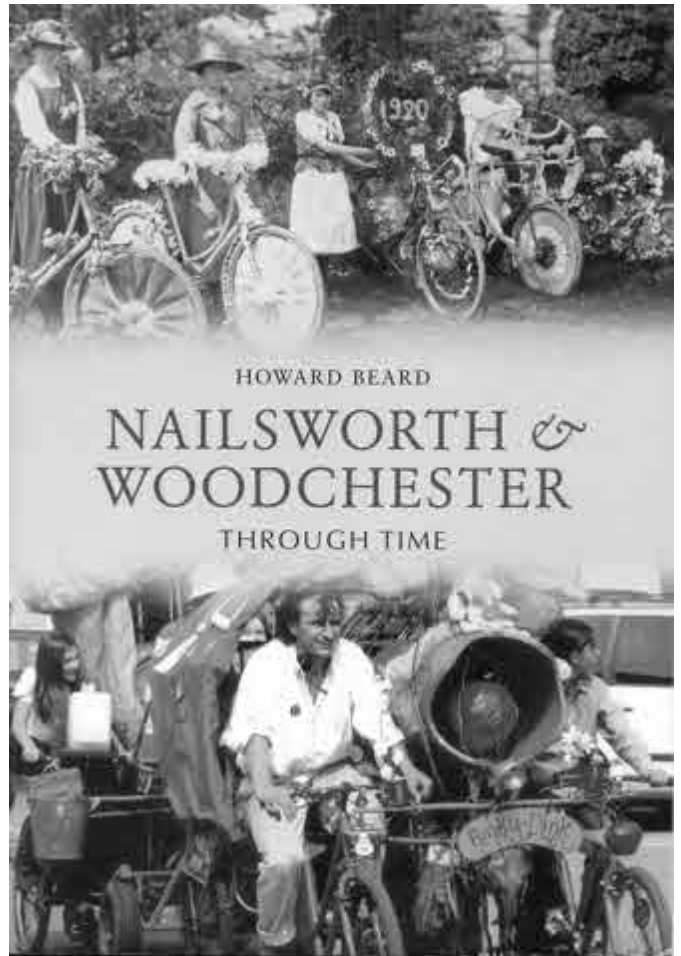
Nailsworth and Woodchester Through Time

Local historian Howard Beard has assembled an amazing collection of photographs of Nailsworth and Woodchester, comparing old and current views of various parts of both villages and recounting some of the history and changes that have occurred over the last century or so.

Some of the images show buildings that no longer exist, others show views which have changed almost beyond recognition as the area has been developed. It's a fascinating insight into past events in the area, as well as to some of the dramatic changes that have occurred, as well as a reminder that in some cases, little has changed in the last 100 years or more!



The Dominican Priory in snow, January 1910. Courtesy of Howard Beard.



Woodchester Station, Woodchester Sawmill, the old church, parts of the Dominican Priory, and Arthur's Press all are structures which disappeared long ago, but are brought back to life and placed within the context of the village.

Howard Beard's excellent book, published by Amberley Publishing, is available in the Post Office.

Stairway to Heaven?

You may have noticed ladders fixed onto the Parish Church spire in North Woodchester. I am sure they may have some symbolic meaning but in fact they are there to enable steeplejacks to survey, and in due course repair, the decayed stonework and the iron anchorage for the weathervane at the top of the spire. Over the years the weather has taken its toll (there's a bellringing joke here that escapes me) and we need to spend in the order of £25,000 on repairs to stone and metal on the spire.

Besides this, we have a further programme of stonework repairs to undertake elsewhere on the building, and in time we will need a costly project to maintain the roof. So we have created a separate fund and bank account for Church Building Repair. The church community is most grateful for the donations and pledges received to date and we are continuing our fund-raising to enable all this work to carry on. Please visit the display inside the church to learn more - more news of our progress in future editions of Woodchester Word. (Andrew Pemberton, Churchwarden)

Woodchester Photography

The Woodchester Photography Group has been photographing in the area for 4 years. The group of 9 is run by Margaret Lister who taught photography for 20 years at Stroud College but now works independently.

The Group has had two highly successful exhibitions - "The Secret Severn" in 2008 and "From the Towpath" (The Stroudwater Canal) in 2009 at The Painswick Centre during Painswick Arts Weeks.

The group has now turned its attention to something a little closer to home - Woodchester. We would love to photograph anyone or anything that is of interest. Please contact Margaret Lister on 01453 832492 or by email m.lister.t21@btinternet.com if you would be happy to be photographed by one or several members of the group.

The photographs are to be exhibited in July 2011 at The Painswick Arts Centre.

We look forward to your response!

Christmas Message

God With Us

I have a Christmas card with a pretty picture of a shepherd on a hillside with his sheep. However, I do know a real shepherd and the reality is quite different. He has a hard life. He works outside in all weathers. He has to chase off foxes and sometimes pull his sheep out of ditches. And yet it was to shepherds - before all the big important people of the day- that God broke the news about the birth of his Son. Jesus could have come as a conquering hero or a splendid king, but the striking truth at the heart of the Christmas story is that God comes into the world in dependency and weakness, as a vulnerable baby. It took a long time for people to see that it was in the crib and on the cross, both pictures of ultimate vulnerability, that God was most powerfully at work for our salvation.

We live in times when there is much talk of vulnerability, especially the vulnerability of people to spending cuts and of nations to economic instability. But vulnerability goes much deeper than just our financial needs. When we get a glimpse beyond the spin into the lives of our leaders, our celebrities, our sporting heroes, we see deep down just how vulnerable they are. And when we look into our own lives we know that we too share the weakness common to all humanity.

We all shy away from the experience of vulnerability. So it is good to know, in these uncertain times, that Jesus was born not into a pretty Christmas card scene but into the real, tough world, where he identified with the homeless and helpless. The miracle of Christmas is that God descends to us. That is why Jesus is called 'Emmanuel, God with us'.

Human history has seen many great figures, but only one Saviour,

May his birth bring you joy this Christmas.

Stephen Bowen

Our Family Christmas

Christmas for my Mum is....
staggering with Christmas shopping,
wrestling with Christmas presents
and sweltering over Christmas cooking
until she begins to resemble the Christmas turkey.
Red, hot and bothered.

Christmas for my Dad is....
struggling with the Christmas tree,
muddling with the Christmas lights
and falling off the ladder twice
until eventually he can be found
resting his eyes on the sofa.
We don't know which to plug in,
Dad or the lights!

Christmas for my sister is....
excitement crackling in her eyes
as she waits for presents to arrive.
helping Dad with the decorations,
some of which are made of chocolate.
Every time she turns around
somehow another one just disappears!

Christmas for our dog is....
Simple!
She can't believe her luck.
There's a tree in the front room!
And the odd pink bauble hanging from it
which she loves to crunch.

Christmas for our family is....
Christmas Day finally arriving
along with grandma and grandad.
One great big parcel of excitement, fun and warmth,
which we all enjoy unwrapping in our own way.
(Ian Souter, from Maidenhead Christmas Exchange)

Ho Ho Ho.....

Q: What did Santa say to his wife when he heard the weather forecast?

A. Its going to reindeer! (From Rory Dunbar)

Father Christmas' sledge broke down on Christmas Eve. He flagged down a passing motorist and asked 'Can you help me fix my sledge?' 'Sorry', the motorist replied, 'I'm not a mechanic - I'm a chiropodist'. 'OK', said Father Christmas, 'in that case can you give me a toe?'

Father Christmas asked his chief elf to go out and clear the snow ready to load up his sledge. "I'm on my way, Father Christmas" said the elf. "But you only have one welly on!" said Father Christmas. "That's all right!" said the elf, "there's only one foot of snow!"

The elves were all waiting when Father Christmas got back from his sleigh-driving test. 'Have you passed?' they all shouted. Father Christmas pointed proudly to the front of the sleigh. 'See for yourself!' he said. 'Noel plates!'



What is Christmas?

We asked children from the two village schools to tell us what Christmas means to them. We couldn't use all the wonderful work they produced, but here are a few examples of why they think this time of year is special.....

Christmas for me is about when I wake up in the morning and I feel a tingle of excitement around my body and I really want to open my presents. I try and get my mum to wake up and she says "five more minutes" and I get bored but eventually my mum gets up and I can open my presents. Merry Christmas!!
(Miranda Rose Dhonau)



Christmas for me is exciting. When it's the night before Christmas I feel very excited. It's fun when the presents arrive. You can smell dinner cooking. You can taste the lovely Christmas pudding coming from the oven. I can touch the lovely presents. I can hear the reindeer bells coming from the sky. (Alisha Boulton)

Christmas is a special day to me and it is a very lovely day too. I got a Snow White dolly from Santa Claus and I gave him a muffin. When I made the Christmas tree and put the baubles on it, it looked lovely. When I switched the light on the baubles glowed and I loved opening the other presents. (Laura Mathieson)

Christmas is about decorating the Christmas tree with blue flashing lights. I feel so excited when I see the colourful presents under the tree. (Ollie Hayward)

Christmas for me is about being happy and excited. At Christmas you get roast dinner and decorating the Christmas tree is fun. Christmas is a magic time. At Christmas you get presents. (Alice)

I like Christmas because we always have a Father Christmas and when you pull the string a toy comes out. (Huw Syrett)

Christmas is about friends and family, joy and love. I always have a roast dinner. Caring. My favourite thing is when I open my presents. I put out a drink for Santa. I feel happy and excited. Santa is so lovely to us that it feels like it is my birthday. (Amber Tunny)

Drawing by Esme Barrett-Lamb



What is Christmas?



It's a time when you spend time with your friends and family and when you celebrate Jesus. It's a time when you give and receive and it's fun to play in. It's a time when presents come and when roast dinners arrive on your table and when the trees shine and the stars shine and glitter for a reason and that's the star that led Mary to Bethlehem. (Sophie Wathen)

Christmas means Jesus's birthday. And it is about celebrating other people's life and feeling by going to church. And it is about giving presents. And Christmas is about spending time with your family. Jesus is the most important person at Christmas time. Sometime you can get candles which you burn each day. Christmas is fun because you get to make Christmas cards. (Isabel Rose Kelleh May)

Christmas is when Christians celebrate and sometimes nativity plays are on at different schools. I love Christmas because you get presents and roast turkey and the pudding. I love Christingles and I love choosing a Christmas tree and decorating the tree and I love snowmen. You need to wrap up warm. (Joel Finch)

Christmas is when people give you presents and you might go and see your Grandma and Grampy. You might make a snowman and also you might have roast chicken and crunchy roast potatoes. You might go to church. If you are very good Santa might come. You even might put some food out for Santa and his reindeers. (Flossie Ellen)

I remember Christmas when I was five because I got a pink singing dressing table. I gave my Grandma a big hug. (Bonnie-Jewel Sheridan)

Christmas for me is about putting the star on top of the tree. I put some carrots and a pork pie out for Santa and his reindeer. (Matthew Clark)

Christmas is a time you can spend with your family and have a yummy roast dinner and you can give something and maybe if you're lucky you might get some back. Christmas is also a time to think about Jesus. Christmas is really all about Jesus being born. The presents you get are like little pieces of love from your family. Christmas is fun when you get to sprinkle the food for the reindeer on Christmas Eve and leave a carrot for them which they eat. I love Christmas. (Emily Johnson)



Christmas is all about Jesus being born. When I have presents it reminds me of when Mary had Jesus. Jesus is very special, he is specialer than everybody. At Christmas I always think about Jesus. (Aimee Read)



Christmas is a time that your family get together to have a Christmas roast and see each other. Christmas is called Christmas because the Christ is part of the word Christian which is the name of people who go to church to worship Jesus on a Sunday and that is what Christmas is all about. (William Michael Workman)

Christmas is a time to think about others. And you spend time with your family. You can make mince pies and you can decorate the Christmas tree. It's a time for love and a time for the adults to drink wine and for all of us to have fun! It's not actually about getting presents it's also about giving presents and being generous to others. (Brendan Ind)

Big fat turkeys, massive pine trees in the house and a warm fire to toast your toes by - remind you of anything? That's right, Christmas! The best time of the year, snowballs flying and men made of ice. Best of all, waking up and seeing big bulges in your stocking! (Meredith Adams)

What is Christmas?

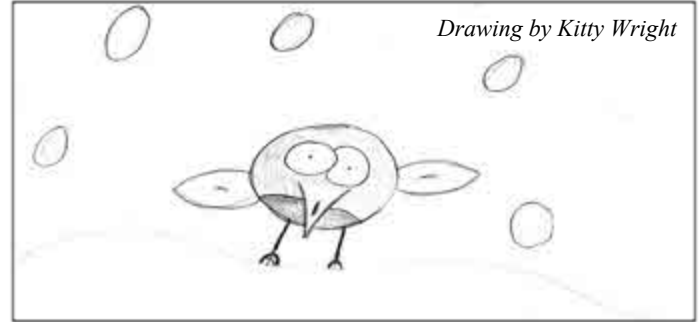
I like Christmas because you are thinking of others not just yourself. It also brings joy to people and their families because they are together. I love opening the presents in the morning and seeing the sparkling Christmas tree. After a scrummy dinner we watch Elf on the telly. (Freya)

Christmas is a chance to celebrate the birth of Christ. It is a very important time because it is a time when families get together, have fun and enjoy themselves. I love the glistening frost, cosy fires and lights that welcome Christmas. There is so much excitement and anticipation before Christmas, it is so sad it has to end. (Billy)

I like Christmas because everyone can enjoy it in their own special way so nobody feels left out. Christmas means to me that you can get together with your family and friends. (Rafael Sangster)

The most unusual Christmas I have had was my Christmas in India. My mum's sister and her family came over and we stayed in a hotel in Mahabalipuram. The most wonderful and strange thing was that it was baking hot and we spent most of the day in the swimming pool. (Xavier)

At Christmas time I love getting presents and opening them. It makes me feel great and everyone smiles. I love giving presents as well. Christmas is a time for rejoicing where everyone shares the happiness of the little baby Jesus like Mary and Joseph did all those years ago. (Polly Jones)



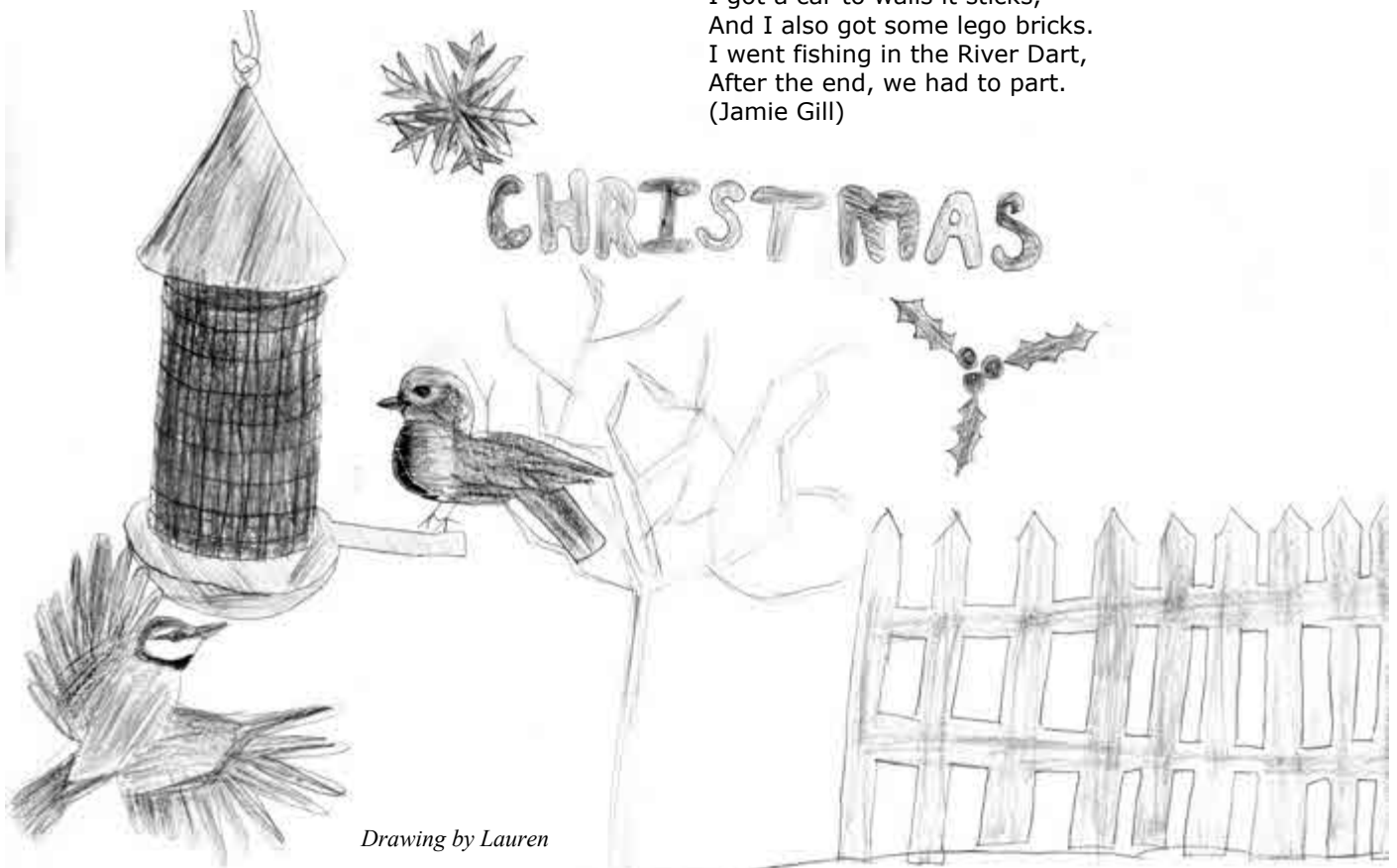
I like Christmas, the care and effort put into the Christmas dinner and the decorations that sparkle on our festive tree. I love spending time with my family and enjoying happy faces spreading around the room. Christmas means time to reflect on the nativity and to share happiness with all.

I like Christmas because it is a special time of year where everyone in the world celebrates it. It's great fun when we get to see our family and pull crackers. My favourite bit of Christmas is the food and the thought of Jesus being born today. I love Christmas. (Anne Naybour)

I like Christmas because I love spending time with my family and I rarely see my big brother and sister. I love opening my presents as it's a big surprise! I give presents to my best friends and everyone close to me. I love giving presents as Christmas is a happy time. (Jemma Powell)

My special Christmas with my Grandparents

My special Christmas was when I was nine,
And we went to the pantomime.
I got a car to walls it sticks,
And I also got some lego bricks.
I went fishing in the River Dart,
After the end, we had to part.
(Jamie Gill)



Other News

Find a local home for your garden surplus!

Stroudco, Stroud's new community local food enterprise, is offering an ingenious new way of making the most of allotment and back garden fruit and veg surpluses. So if you have a mountain of marrows or a ton of tomatoes you can't get through, Stroudco gives you a new opportunity to sell on your surplus produce.

Local people can offer their produce online for Stroudco members to buy, alongside food from local farms. The suppliers set their own prices and Stroudco can accept very small quantities. So even if you have a bumper crop of plums or apples in your garden and just have a few bags extra, then this new local project could be the answer. Stroudco also accepts home made chutneys, jam and preserves - so if you've already transformed your garden surplus into a year's supply of jam, you could still sell it on through Stroudco.

Stroudco customer Jade Bashford says "This is great for Stroud - some of the best quality fruit and veg is home-grown. There's been a huge rise in people growing their own veg over the last few years. Sales of vegetable seeds have overtaken sales of flower seeds for the first time. But at this time of year, everyone can end up with too much of something. We are starting to get some unusual and very fresh items that we can't buy anywhere else".

The call to fund a home for local home-grown produce was initiated after seeing fruit rotting on trees, while at the same time supermarkets in the town are selling imported and expensive fruit.

As well as being able to list your own produce alongside that of local farmers, Stroudco is also encouraging home growers to bring and swap their produce with others as part of the Stroud Food Festival 2010. For example, to coincide with the traditional glut in home-grown produce, Stroudco had a bring-and-swap local produce table at Parliament School in September where people brought allotment surpluses, seeds and plants to the school and were able to swap with others.

Stroudco is a new not-for-profit scheme that aims to connect local people with the producers of food grown in and around the town - including in back gardens and allotments. It already offers local meat, milk, cream, beer, bread, cheeses, cakes and butter - all produced by local farmers and food producers.

Consumers order local food online and collect from Parliament School every other Saturday. Home delivery is also available. For more information please see www.stroudco.org.uk

Woodchester Produce Show

The 2010 Woodchester Produce Show was held on Saturday 11th September. There were 58 adult entrants and 43 children with a total of 278 entries and thanks to a combination of sponsorship by The Little People Company and Wyevale Garden Centre, generous donations in the auction and kind weather, made a profit of £95.92 that will go into the village events fund. The winners of each category were: Adult Best in Show, Josephine Peach; second, Richard Butler; third, Kate Barnard. Child Best in Show, Oliver Turner; second, Lauren Turner; third, Holly Dannemann-Scott and James Mathieson.

Citizens Advice Bureau

You may have read about the Citizens Advice Bureau's fundraising appeal recently in the Stroud News and Journal. The CAB is a charity which gives free confidential advice, and is open to all residents throughout the Stroud area, including Woodchester. The Bureau in Stroud deals with many different kinds of enquiries, including Debt problems, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Employment issues, Relationship matters, and Legal issues.

At a time when demand for its services is increasing Stroud CAB currently has a shortfall of £20,000 in funding, and unless it gets sufficient funds by the end of the year it will have to reduce the service it can provide to the community. Any contributions would be gratefully received to help the Bureau continue its vital service. If you would like to contribute by giving a donation or by standing order please either go to the Bureau's website www.strouddistrictcab.org.uk and click on donation, or write to the Appeals Co-ordinator, Stroud CAB, Unit 8, 1st Floor, Brunel Mall, London Road, Stroud, GL5 2BP and ask for a form, or pick one up at the Bureau.

Stroke Association commissioned to provide new countywide service by Gloucestershire PCT

Looking to improve the Long Term Support available to Stroke Survivors and their Carers the Stroke Association has been commissioned to facilitate the set up of Stroke Clubs across the county as well as providing support for existing clubs, which are located in Gloucester, Cirencester, Lydney and Stroud.

The Stroke Association will be working with volunteers, who themselves may have been directly affected by stroke, to assist with the long-term sustainable support of the groups. The Stroke Association will be working closely with organisations across Gloucestershire in order for patients to access the service.

Other funding has also been secured to enable the Stroke Association to monitor and evaluate the service and its effect on patients over the next three years.

To find out more about the service please contact the Gloucestershire Stroke Association Stroke Club Coordinator, Caroline Seguro on 01452 520723 or email caroline.seguro@stroke.org.uk

It's your Word.....

The next Woodchester Word will be the Easter issue, due for publication at the end of March 2011. The copy deadline for material to be included in that issue is the second week of March.

We are always seeking new contributors for articles or short reports about the village. If you would like to send a contribution, or a letter to be published in the Word, please contact the Editor at iaindunbar@btconnect.com, or on 872185. If you would like to advertise, please contact Peter Lead on 832383 for information and rates.

Around the Village

From the archives.....

Taken in 1939, this photograph shows a fire engine belonging to the Nailsworth and Woodchester Volunteer Fire Brigade arriving at its last fire before being withdrawn from service. The 25-year-old fire engine with a pump was originally horse drawn.



Woodchester Events

Village Carols

Carol singing around the Village has become a regular Christmas fixture due to your tremendous support and enthusiasm over the last few years.

This year it will take place on Tuesday 21st December. The exact route and start times around the Village are yet to be fixed and will be published on notices nearer the time, but, as before, we will all meet on the Church Green for mulled wine and mince pies at 7.30pm.

We are looking for volunteers to take on the roles so familiar to us all but without which there would be no Nativity scene. Please volunteer if you would like to take part; no acting is involved - just a willingness to play the part naturally. Especially we need a Mary, preferably with a baby(!) but Kings, shepherds and angels are also wanted, as are volunteers to help with the organisation and refreshments. It's fun to be involved.

Events for 2011

Would you like another Produce Show, Open Gardens, Fete or Street Party? If so, please contact me, Penny Brown, (details below), before 15th December, so that I can arrange a meeting to start the planning early in January. A regular group of people have worked very hard over the last few years to stage these events but we cannot continue to rely on the same people and volunteers with fresh ideas and enthusiasms are most welcome. Please, don't leave it to other people - get in touch; it's not a huge commitment if there are enough of us.

Finally, thank you very much to all who did help with or participate in the Produce Show in September.

(Penny Brown, davidbrown140@btinternet.co or 01453 873431)

Woodchester Priory Church

Fellow readers I have to start this edition with an apology for the rubbish I wrote in the last sentence of the Summer edition from the Priory. Having lived in this Parish all my life and having grown up with stories, handed down through the family from ancestors who knew the Rev. Dominic Barberi, I am mortified. I can only say my skills in cutting and pasting require a lot of practice.

The wording should have been as follows:

"You may be interested to know that our first Parish Priest, Dominic Barberi, received John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church. Cardinal Newman is being honoured by The Holy Father, Pope Benedict when he comes to England, at a special Mass when John Henry will be recognised as being Blessed."

Am I forgiven?

A number of our Parishioners went to this Mass and were spiritually uplifted by the event. Another group went to London where Pope Benedict met thousands of young people. From both occasions our youngsters enjoyed the experience so much they have been heard to say 'this has been the best day of my life'.

It seems we are all on a high as we prepare for our Christmas Bazaar - Saturday December 4th starting at 12.30pm with a light lunch, stalls, game, afternoon teas, Father Christmas, and finishing with the Grand Draw at 3pm. The venue is St Dominic's School Hall, St Mary's Hill. An invitation is extended to all who live in Woodchester. (Jo Heffernan)

Woodchester Endowed School Christmas Fair

Lots of stalls for adults and children, children's craft & activity area, Winter Wonderland with Father Christmas, mulled wine and hot dogs.



Friday 10th December
5:30-8:00 pm

Around the Village

Stroud Beekeepers Association

With the impending sad departure of the nuns from the Convent the apiary will have to be re-located. Investigations are underway to find a new site. Hopefully, one of the proposed locations will keep the apiary in the Parish, but only time will tell. During the summer the bees produced some 150lb of honey some of which was given to the Nuns and the rest sold.

We have already moved the hives to another site some 3-4 miles away. Bees can be moved either a few feet at a time or over three miles. This is due to the fact that a bee orientates itself around the front of the hive and learns to return to the same hive after each foraging trip. Moving the hive only a few feet allows the bee to still recognize its hive but more than that and they will get confused. However, move them three miles or more and they seem to know to re-orientate themselves to their new position.

During the winter the bees spend most of their time in the hive, huddling around the queen keeping warm and eating their stores. On sunny days they may emerge to defecate and drink. It is important that for this time the bees have enough food so we have replaced the honey that we took by giving them sugar syrup to store away. Generally one hive needs some 35 pounds of stores to see the bees through an average winter, however if spring comes late then they may need some extra food.

During very cold spells of weather the Green Woodpecker is a threat to the bees. Normally it would feed on insects in the ground but when the ground freezes they may turn to drilling through the sides of the hive and feasting on the bees. To prevent this we net the hives.

St. Loe's Trust

St Loe's Trust has awarded nine exhibition grants to local undergraduates this academic year. A further two students have received help with their music studies and as usual the Trust has supported Woodchester Endowed and Amberley Schools with library grants as well as a leavers' prize to those children going on to secondary education.

Mr Geoffrey Yates has stood down as Honorary Treasurer after 25 years and Malcolm Swait has been appointed in his place. Mrs Vera Naumann has also resigned after 30 years as Governor during which time she was also Honorary Secretary for many years. Both Governors will be missed for the experience and wisdom that they have given to the Trust for such a long period. A new Governor, Mike Tucker, representing Amberley has been appointed but we are looking to appoint another Governor to represent Woodchester. If this important, but not time consuming, appointment is of interest to you please contact the Honorary Chairman George Bastin on 872516.

If any reader knows of a student leaving school for University whose parents are in financial need of support they should contact the Trust's Honorary Secretary Mrs Jennie Varley at Newton Cottage, Watledge, Nailsworth GL6 0AY. (George Bastin)

Woodchester FC

After our last article in the "word" the club was contacted by Noel Clift, the grandson of Frank Clift who lived in Woodchester and played for the club in the 1930's. Noel has generously provided photographs, one of which you can see here. This has prompted us to start researching the history of our club so that hopefully we can chart and log every year from 1905 until present day. Therefore we would like to appeal to all readers for any further information, photographs etc - who knows there might be a few surprises but probably no premier league stars.

This season so far has been excellent - we are through to the quarter finals of two cups and currently third in the league battling for promotion. Spectators and new players are very welcome. Our next home game is on 4th December and for more details about our fixtures etc. please see: <http://full-time.thefa.com>

We would also like to thank Noel Clift for his very kind donation to the club. It is so important that we keep attracting donations no matter what size as without the generosity of the Woodchester locals, Woodchester Businesses and our chairman - there would be no club.



Woodchester WI

Our produce stall at the Village Fete was well supported and the challenge of participating at the Church Flower Festival the same week-end was fulfilled and received much admiration by everyone attending.

Our small but friendly WI continues to thrive but we would like to welcome new members. If anyone is interested in joining us please contact - Muriel McTiffin on 873314 or Fleur Vallender on 766038.

Local Business Directory

The Parish Council is currently looking at the possibility of producing a directory of local businesses which would be made available on the village website to the entire community to encourage local people to use local businesses.

If this is produced in a printed format, a small charge may be made to cover printing costs. If any local business are interested in being included in this new venture, please contact the editor, Iain Dunbar, on 01453 872185 or at iaindunbar@btconnect.com

Around the Village

Woodchester Girlguiding

Although the Girlguiding Centenary year has now drawn to a close, it doesn't mean that Woodchester Brownies and Guides are any less active. The Brownies are currently working towards their road safety badge and hope to complete this in a couple of weeks time. The Guides meanwhile, over the next few weeks, are working towards their confectioners badge. By the time you read this, Remembrance Day will be in the past, but Woodchester Girlguiding will be well represented at the Parade and Church service in Nailsworth, with the rest of the Nailsworth Valley District Brownie and Guide Units. Both Woodchester Units will also be involved in Nailsworth Goodwill Evening; the Brownies will be in the procession and the Guides will be helping to run the tombola stall. We also hope to have both Brownies and Guides take part in the Woodchester W.I. Christmas concert. If you require anymore information about Brownies and/or Guides in Woodchester, please contact Jackie on 01453 821258 or email jackiehayes@fsmail.net

Woodchester Historical Society

The November meeting held early in the month was 'Woodchester in World War II'. We had a large attendance to hear an interview with Ron Bowley, who as a child lived in the village during the war. He shared his memories of a variety of troops being billeted at Woodchester Lodge and in the YMCA hut. The troops were followed in Woodchester Lodge by Italian and German Prisoners of War. One of the Germans is famous for playing in goal for the Woodchester football team. The film shows put on by Mr Gegg who was living and working at Tower House were fondly remembered by Ron and did a great deal to raise morale. There was information on rationing and the Home Guard available for people to read – some of it borrowed from Woodchester Archives. Home made biscuits (made to wartime recipes) were served with coffee. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 1 March at 7.30pm in the Undercroft. Howard Beard will speak on 'E P Conway – Nailsworth's Edwardian Photographer'.

Village Design Statement

The final draft of the village design statement has now been prepared and will be available for reading on the village website between 15th December and the end of January. During this time you are invited to submit your comments and thoughts so that they can be incorporated into the production of the final document. At this stage we have not attached all the photographs and drawings that will appear in the final document due to lack of time. For anyone unable to access the village website, please contact Peter Lead 832383 for a paper copy.

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tenders are invited for the substantial refurbishment of Woodchester Playgroup building.

If you would like to tender please contact

Sarah Tunney for further information:

Tel: 01453 873588 or

email: sarahtunney@dslpipex.com

Closing date for tenders: 10th December 2010



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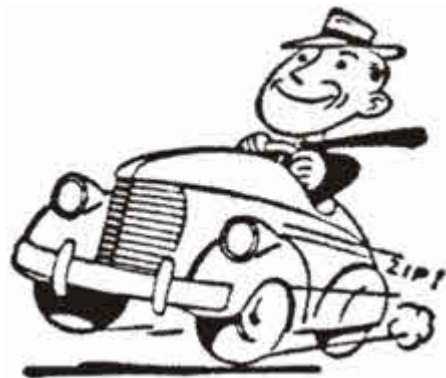
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Village Christmas Concert

The 22nd Village Christmas Concert will be held on Friday 17th December at 7.30 p.m. in Woodchester Village Hall. Do you have a talent you wish to share with an enthusiastic audience? We welcome our regular and any new performers to participate in a fun and worthwhile evening, no audition necessary! Your contribution does not have to be based on a Christmas theme. All monies raised go to charity. Contact Muriel on 873314 or Kath on 873348 for more information.

St Dominic's School & Parish Church Christmas Bazaar

Father Christmas will be taking a break from making toys and paying a special visit to St Dominic's School on Saturday 4th December from 12.30pm to see the children, listen to what they want for Christmas, find out if they've been good and give them a present if they have! There will also be craft and play activities to keep the children amused and lots of stalls selling cakes, children's cards, toys and gifts, including wreaths and homemade soap, candles, purses and Christmas Stockings. Classic stalls like tombolas and shove ha'penny will also be there and there will be face painting for the children. Lunches including delicious homemade soups, cakes and drinks will be served and there will be entertainment from the school choir. There will be a Grand Draw with a cash prize of £100 which will take place at 3pm.

Woodchester Playgroup Xmas Market

Woodchester Playgroup is holding their annual Christmas Fair in the village hall in North Woodchester on Wednesday 8th December between 10am - 12noon. This is a chance to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, a delicious slice of homemade cake as well as to buy from a variety of local stall holders including jewellery, toys, Christmas cards, books, delicious deli food, gifts and lovely homemade cakes. The draw for the Christmas Raffle will take place at 12pm with amazing prizes including dinner for two at The Chef's Table, a hamper from The Little People Company, £10 gift vouchers from Clobber, Hobbs Bakery, Leonard Walker Butchers and Country Quality Meat, a wash and blow dry from Debonhair, tea for two at The Olive Tree, bottles of wine and gifts from some of Nailsworth's delightful shops. Raffle tickets are available from Playgroup and North Woodchester Post Office. Our youngsters (aged 2-4) will also be there to sing some of their favourite songs. Please support us, money raised will go towards the vital refurbishment of the building.

Woodchester Playgroup Building Appeal

Woodchester Playgroup has been providing childcare to the children of Woodchester and neighbouring villages over the age of 2 years and nine months since 1987. In fact, we are still using the same pre-fabricated building 23 years later but time and the weather have taken their toll and the building is in dire need of substantial refurbishment – insulation, new windows and a new roof. We are trying to apply for a grant to help with the cost but wonder if there is anyone in the village who might be interested in helping us, either to raise funds or with the repairs themselves. If you are, please call Sarah Tunney on 01453 873588.



Dates for your diary

Saturday 4th December

Woodchester Priory Church Christmas Bazaar, St Dominic's School Hall from 12:30

Friday 10th December

Endowed School Christmas Fair, 5:30 - 8:00pm

Friday 17th December

Village Carol Concert in the Village Hall, 7:30pm

Sunday 19th December

Christingle Service at St Mary's Church, 11:00 am

Tuesday 21st December

Village Carols, various locations and times - see notices

Friday 24th December

Crib Service at St Mary's Church, 3:00pm

Carol Service at St Mary's Church, 6:00pm

Midnight Communion at St Mary's Church, 11:00pm

Saturday 25th December

Christmas Service at St Mary's Church, 10:00am



Village Hall Programme

Monday

1000-1200 Short Mat Bowls (01453 872340)

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Tuesday

1000-1200 Art Group (01453 873689)

1400-1630 Friendly Circle - alternate weeks (873566)

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Wednesday

1000-1600 Calligraphy- alternate weeks (387768)

1830-1930 Movement to Music. New members are welcome to this very friendly group, come along and have fun and keep fit. Tel: Clare Bader 01453 886953.

Thursday

1000-1200 Healthy Lifestyles (01453 885766)

1615-1715 Adult Ballet (0788 767 1956)

1830-2130 Parish Council (1st in month)

1930-2130 Women's Institute (3rd in month 873314)

1930-2130 Morris Dancing (2nd, 4th, 5th, 759150)

Friday

1000-1200 Art Class U3A (01453 872044)

1500-1700 Ballet (01453 834356)

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

For all bookings, including weekend bookings, please contact Mrs Kath Gay on 01453 873348.