

# BISHOP'S HULL PARISH MAGAZINE DECEMBER 2025



**A THRIVING VILLAGE  
COMMUNITY IN THE  
HEART OF SOMERSET**

Monday to Friday  
4.45pm

A letter collection is made at 4.45pm  
from the postbox at  
Bishop's Hull  
on Monday  
day

**EDITOR**

Bob Coombs  
2 Waterfield Close  
Bishop's Hull  
Taunton,  
TA1 5HB  
01823-253697  
Email: robertcoombs@talktalk.net

**MAGAZINE SUPPORT TEAM**

Proof reader - Margaret Coombs

**Magazine Cover:**

Photographs by  
Bob & Penny Coombs & Bob Winn

Articles relating to all aspects of our village and community  
are always welcome.

**Final date for acceptance: Mid-day on 12th of the month.**

Please help to make the magazine interesting by contributing material.

**When reading your free online copy or one of the the hard copies  
available in church please remember to support the few remaining  
advertisers whenever possible**

*It is emphasised that the views expressed in this magazine are not  
necessarily those of the magazine editorial team, unless attributed,  
or those sent in by identifiable contributors.*

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**IDENTIFYING OUR LOCAL BIRDS photo by Penny Coombs**



Bottoms Up - two swans snorkelling

**Cover - Post Early For Christmas**



**AWARD WINNING  
FAMILY RUN BUSINESS**

**Shop and Post Office**

**Open Monday – Friday 6.45am – 6pm**

**Saturday 8am – 6pm**

**Sunday 8am – 12pm**

**Tel – 01823 279168**

**Butchers**

**Open Tuesday – Friday 8.00am – 3pm**

**Saturday 7.00am – 2pm**

**Sunday and Monday Closed**

**Tel – 01823 337497**



<b>Vicar:</b>	
Reverend Philip Hughes , The Vicarage, Bishop's Hull Hill, Bishop's Hull, TA1 5EB 01823-336102	Tim Venn (Church Warden )  John Perry (Church Warden)



With Christmas just around the corner, and some fairly low morning temperatures mid November, it has made me wonder if we will get some snow before the year is out. Not being a 'local', (we have only been living here since 1968), my boyhood memories of really deep snow all come from when I lived in Kent in a village situated six miles east of Canterbury. Some years the snow reached the top of the road signs and, where the roads had been cleared, buses often slid sideways down the hills. Everyone had ice inside their windows and often there was no coal. My mother used to light the gas oven to warm the kitchen in the morning.

So, what was the weather like hereabouts when you were growing up?

Here are some extracts from the Somerset County Gazette

*"On Friday, January 15, 1982, areas around Somerset which include Taunton, Bridgwater, Langport, Minehead, and more, were seeing snowfall in large amounts.*

*According to the County Gazette archives, level snow lay 60cm (24in) deep in places with drifts about six metres (19ft) high in Exmoor and the Mendip Hills.*

*One article published in the Somerset County Gazette from 1982 was headlined 'Really! Haven't we had snow before?' in response to the reaction people in Taunton gave to the snowfall.*

*The archive reads: "Hands up all those young stalwarts in Taunton who woke to see snow on the ground last Friday - and went back to bed.*

*"People were being warned not to go out in any circumstances, while busses still running were being listed.*

*"Roll on next snowfall time - they could offer a prize for the person who rings in citing the largest number of empty double-deckers slithering past their front door."*

*Somerset snow was at its heaviest back in 1982 and 1978 - with 1978's snow blizzard being one that many can also remember lasting 36 hours.*

*Here is an excerpt from the Friday, February 17 1978 front page article: "The blizzards that have hit Somerset this week brought up to nine inches of snow - the heaviest fall since the winter of 1962-63.*

I suspect we should always be careful what we wish for.

A Happy Christmas to all our readers.

# The Vicar Writes .....

Dear Friends,

As the days get shorter and the temperature drops, we all know what's ahead: December. It's a busy month, full of planning, shopping, and maybe a little bit of stress. But right in the middle of all the busyness, the core message of Christmas remains beautifully simple:

## **God is with us.**

That's what the name Emmanuel means, and that's the reality the Christmas story brings. It's not about a distant God, but one who chose to step right into the messy, ordinary, and often challenging reality of human life. He wasn't born in a palace but in a humble stable. That down-to-earth beginning tells us something vital: God understands our lives. He meets us where we are.

For us at St. Peter and St Paul, December is also a time to celebrate this truth together. We have a lot going on, and I want to personally invite you to every single event. Whether you find festive fun at the outdoor **Carol Singing** and refreshments (15<sup>th</sup>), or comfort in the Readings and Carols of our **Carol Service (21<sup>st</sup>)**, enjoy the fun and tradition of the **Crib Service (24<sup>th</sup>)**, or want to start Christmas Day with us at the **Family Celebration Communion Service (25<sup>th</sup>)**, please come. These services are listed in full later in the magazine, but they are all opportunities to pause, breathe, and remember that powerful, simple promise: **God is with us.**

Christmas is for everyone. It doesn't matter if you come to church every Sunday or haven't been in years. You are welcome. You are included. Let's keep the focus simple this year: on the light, the hope, and the presence of God among us.

Wishing you a peaceful and truly blessed Christmas.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Phil Hughes  
Vicar, Chaplain and very excited about Jesus!



## **The Frank Bond Centre**

**84 Mountway Road, Bishop's Hull.**

### **A place for the over 50s to meet new friends**

**Contact Carolyn 01823 283941 /Nadia 07958 246046**

**Come along to FBC Coffee morning on a Friday morning  
10:00-12:00 and discover what activities could lie in store  
for you.**

**The cafe is open to members and non-members.**

**The centre is centrally heated and open 10:00-16:00**

**Monday-Friday**

### **Weekly Activities:**

**Monday - The Painting Group 10:00-12:00,**

**Whist Club 1:30-4:00**

**Bridge Club 1.30-4:00**

**Wednesday – Flexercise & Tai Chi 10:00-12:00**

**Thursday - Bridge club 10:00-12:00-Beginners welcome,**

**Croquet 2:00-4:00**

**Friday - Pétanque 10:00-12:00,**

**Friday - The FBC Coffee morning 10:00-12:00**

### **Monthly Activities:**

**1st Monday in month Family History 2:00-4:00**

**2nd Tuesday in month Parchment 10:00-3:30**

**3rd Wednesday in month Games 2.00-4.00**

**4th Wednesday in month Music Appreciation 2.00-4.00**

**2nd & 4th Thursday in month Mahjong 2:00-4:00**

**NO MONTHLY LUNCHES**

**Annual membership £25 Find us on Facebook (& 'Like' us)**

**A 'Date for your diary':**

**The FBC Christmas lunch will be Thursday 18th December at Oake  
Manor. Tickets available from Frank's café from mid October.**

**Many thanks**

### **Prescription Time Frame**

**T**o help us provide an efficient, safe and effective service to our patients, we ask that you follow the guidance below:



**- Use the table below to work out when your prescription will be ready for collection,**

- Order early for bank holidays, or if you are going on holiday,
- Let us know in advance, if you require our prescription delivery service

Due to permanent closures of some pharmacies in the area we are experiencing high volumes of prescriptions. We offer text message and a phone call service to let our patients know when their medications are ready. Please ask a member of staff about details.

We are a small but very busy pharmacy, so be prepared to queue. Please sign the back of your green paper prescription on arrival and tick the exemption box if it applies to you (there are pens available on the counter). Our waiting time for a walk-in prescription is usually up to 20 minutes, but it can reach to one hour depending on how busy we are. We are always extremely busy before bank holidays, so please order your prescriptions earlier and be prepared to queue.

Prescription Ordered	We normally receive	Ready for collection
Monday	Thursday	Monday
Tuesday	Friday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Monday	Wednesday
Thursday	Tuesday	Thursday
Friday	Wednesday	Friday
Weekend	Thursday	Monday

When you enter the pharmacy please turn right in order to join a queue or otherwise feel free to browse the shop. Whilst waiting for your prescription to be prepared please wait in the pharmacy, if you leave at any point, please queue again on arrival and ask the member of staff if your medications are ready. We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

These are the expected days when your prescription will be ready, however sometimes delays occur due to medication queries, items out of stock and increased workload. Please be aware that this guidance is for regular repeat medication. Please collect your medications after receiving your text message or phone call. Prescriptions that are urgent from the GP surgery can be dispensed when needed.

Opening hours: Monday- Friday: 9:00- Saturday: 9:00-13:00

Sunday: Closed. Bank Holiday: Closed Tel. 01823 256 056

**Address: 2 The Comeytrowe Centre, Pitts Close, Taunton, TA1 4TN**

### **St Peter's & St Paul's Church Bridge Coffee**

#### **Mornings**

**The Bridge** is what we have called the Welcome Area.

The Church has opened **the Bridge** for the return of the Monthly Coffee Mornings to be held on the last Saturday of each month and the next one is in January 2026.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all at the next coffee morning on **Saturday 31 January**

**2026**

Come along to have a Coffee/Tea and cakes, with a friendly chat and SWAP a book.  
From 10am till 12noon.



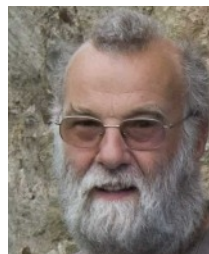
### **Bell Ringing**

**W**e are very proud of our Bell Ringing team and our bells! There are 6 bells in the tower and ringing is done from ground level. The Bell Tower is accessed on the North Side of the church.

Ringling happens for the main service on Sunday (usually ringling starts at 09.15am and rings until the service starts at 10am). Practice night is Wednesday at 7.30pm.

Quarter peals ( 50 minutes) may be attempted up to twice a month at 11.30am, usually on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Our Tower Captain is Giles Morley and he can be contacted on 01823 430710







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Editor Bob

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *A Christmas Message from Safe Families and Home for Good...*

*"Dear Phil, and all our friends at St Peter and St Paul church.*

*As we approach the Christmas season – a time of hope and joy – we want to thank you for the incredible way your church continues to embody the love of Christ in your community. This year, we've seen churches like yours step into the lives of families facing isolation, crisis and uncertainty. Through your partnership with Safe Families and Home for Good, your church has become a beacon of light and connection. THANK YOU!*



### **Bishop's Hull Parish Council News**

Please find below an update from the October Parish Council meeting, full minutes can be found on the website <https://bishopshullparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

**Kinglake** - The Parish Council approved the revised map for transfer following a small parcel of land transferring to a resident. The PC are still awaiting the tree report and completion of play equipment repairs.

**Play Park** (next to the playing fields) - The Parish Council are awaiting written confirmation that all old/damaged equipment has been removed and properly disposed of and all outstanding repairs have been completed.

**Bishops Mead** - The revised quote for a new bench was approved. A quote was approved to reseed the new mound and deadwood one tree.

**Poppy Wreath** - The purchase of a poppy wreath was approved for Remembrance Day and Cllr. Taylor will place the wreath on the War memorial

**Highways volunteers** - It was agreed to set a budget of £500 to purchase PPE and equipment for highways volunteers .

**Meeting dates for 2026** - The following dates were agreed, 22nd January, 5th March, 2nd April, 7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 3rd September, 1st October, 12th November and 3rd December.

**Emergency plan** - The draft emergency plan was approved and details can be found in the insert to the Community News.

**Next proposed meeting date** was scheduled for Thursday 6th November, 7pm at the HUB, all welcome to attend.

**Councillor vacancies:** The PC has two vacancies available for new Councillors. if you are interested in making a difference to your local community, helping decide how funds are spent and can give a little time, please contact the Clerk for more information  
[clerk@bishopshullparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopshullparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### **Bulb Planting**

**T**he Parish Council purchased bulbs and planting equipment. All volunteers carried out the Somerset Highways training to enable them to carry out the



planting safely. The bulbs have now been planted along Silk Mills and Mountway Road underneath the "Bishop's Hull" signs and on the verges. We look forward to seeing the bulbs appear in the Spring. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with this project.

### **Bishop's Hull Hub 100 Club - October 2025 winners**

1st Sheena Bown-Porter - £36, 2nd Janet & Grant Reed - £18 & 3rd Chris & Marie Phillips - £9

The next draw will take place at the Hub café on the 8th November.

Tickets are £2 per month, Please email [bhhub100club@gmail.com](mailto:bhhub100club@gmail.com) for further details

Join our 100 club today and you could be our next winner! You must be 16 years or older to purchase a ticket.

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### **Community News - advertisements**

**Adverts available** - The box adverts around the edge of the monthly newsletter fund the production of the Community News each month. Some spaces have become available, so if you would like to support your local community and advertise your business at the same time, please get in touch. Adverts are only £60 for the year; a copy of the newsletter is delivered to every home in the parish by our wonderful team of volunteers and electronic copies are added to the Website and Facebook page every month.

Please contact the Clerk for details - [clerk@bishopshullparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopshullparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### **Bishop's Hull HUB**

**Youth Hub** - every third Saturday of the month 7:15pm -9:15pm. £1 entry. Age 11-16. All welcome, email [claire.plumbly@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:claire.plumbly@hotmail.co.uk) for info.

**Sat 13th December** - Christmas Hub Cafe 10am - 12noon. Tickets for Santa open on 01/11/215 via [www.bhhub.co.uk](http://www.bhhub.co.uk). Due to rising costs at the North Pole, tickets for Santa are £2 per child this year.

### **Somerset Skills and Learning further courses running:**

All the following will be held on a Thursday afternoon at Bishop's Hull Hub 1.00pm - 4.00 pm.

**Drawing & Painting Enhancer** - 6th November- 27th November .

**Christmas Card Taster** — (making festive watercolour wreath cards) — 4th December

**Christmas Card Taster** - (making festive watercolour wreath cards) - 11th December

How to book - Visit [sslcourses.co.uk](http://sslcourses.co.uk)

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### **Bishop's Hull Belles WI**

Next meeting at The HUB - Thursday 27th November at 7.30

Guest Speaker - Neil Smart - Medical Detection Dogs.

## **Fireworks? Please Think About Your Neighbours**

***B**onfire Night, also known as Guy Fawkes or Firework night, will soon be upon us. This is a time when many celebrate the failed plot by Guy Fawkes to blow up London's Houses of Parliament in 1605.*

*Fireworks can be fun and festive; however they can also cause distress to others in our community.*

*As Bonfire Night approaches, let's please try to be kind and celebrate considerately.*

*Be a Good Neighbour: Let people know: Inform neighbours in advance if you're planning a display. Especially those with pets, young children, or elderly family members.*

*Stick to traditional dates: Fireworks are expected around Bonfire Night (5th November). Avoid random dates.*

*Keep it early: Legally, fireworks must stop by 11pm (midnight on Bonfire Night). Personally, I think 11pm is more than late enough and would suggest an earlier finish as possible, in the interest of retaining good neighbourly relations.*

*Choose low-noise fireworks: They're just as beautiful and far less stressful for animals and people.*

*Attend public displays: These are safer, more spectacular, and reduce disruption in residential areas.*

*Think of Animals: Most household pets are negatively affected by fireworks. Horses, livestock, and wildlife can easily be startled or injured. If you have pets, try to keep them indoors and comfort them during displays. I've read that soft music can assist in keeping them calm.*

*Start the Conversation: Many people feel awkward talking about fireworks. However, if you're proposing to let off fireworks at home, please talk to your neighbours and warn them. If you're unable to speak with your neighbours, please consider popping a simple note or message through their letterbox, giving them ample notice. This can go a long way in building understanding and reducing stress. Please also read the Firework safety guidelines before deciding to hold your event. They can be found online here: [ROSPA.com/home-safety/fireworks-safety](https://www.ROSPA.com/home-safety/fireworks-safety).*



*Please stay safe, take care and be considerate.  
John Hunt*



### **Our Council Tax**

**A**s we are just over halfway through the 25-26 Council Tax year I thought you may be interested in rereading Cllr. Bill Revans letter which accompanied your Council Tax information earlier this year.

We continue to wish him well in his mission of responsible local government.

#### **Message from the Leader of Somerset Council**

*When I wrote to you last year, I referred to the financial emergency facing councils due to soaring costs and demand for services.*

*The Government has now acknowledged this national problem and promised reform and additional funds in key areas like social care by 2028. Welcome news, but in Somerset we cannot wait until 2028.*

*We've taken lots of difficult decisions to find savings, including reducing the number of staff and managers we employ to save £34m.*

*Regrettably, we've also had to increase our share of Council Tax by £2.49 a week (for a Band D property) with special permission from the Government. Your bill will still be below the national average.*

*I've said before that Council Tax is not the right way to fund social care.*

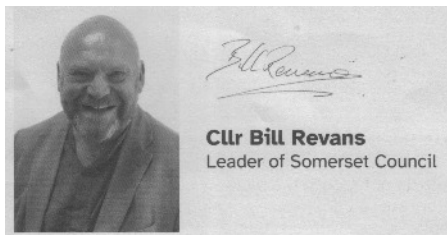
*People rightly expect their Council Tax to pay for services for everyone, like recycling, road maintenance, and leisure services.*

***We do all. those things and more.***

*But many people do not realise the majority of Council Tax is now spent on statutory social care. These are vital services looking after older people, people with disabilities, and children in care.*

*Your Council Tax is paying to help the growing number of our friends, families and neighbours with significant needs here in Somerset, and the cost of this support is increasing. For example, with a shortage of placements nationally, the cost of residential care for a child with complex needs can be up to £25,000 a week.*

*You will see an advert with this letter - we desperately need to recruit more foster carers. This will help us reduce costs, but more. importantly, it's also much better for the children themselves.*



*When you pay Council Tax you are helping support people with significant need. I'm sorry we've had to increase your bill, but I'm determined we deliver a financially sustainable council and do everything we can to care for the most vulnerable people in our communities.*

**Note:** Out of our Council Tax 66% of the budget is spent on children and adults who need care.

**BISHOPS HULL NEIGHBOURHOOD BEAT TEAM (from village WEB site)**

**PCSO Tony Wearmouth 8413 - 07889 655312**  
**tony.wearmouth@avonandsomerset.police.uk**

**PCSO Catharine Richards - 07710 026191**  
**catherine.richards@avonandsomerset.police.uk**  
**PCSO Catharine Richards - 07710 026191**

**Men jailed for heroin and cocaine supply**

Clockwise from top left:  
Joe Hatherall, Ben Bicknell, Stefan  
Dann and Dean Chick\_

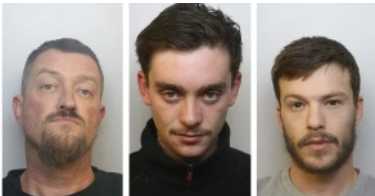
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**Three jailed over burglary series**

Custody images of: left,

Andrew Sharman; centre, Ethan  
Sharman, and right, Joshua Heal



\*

Three men have been jailed for their roles in a series of burglaries of homes and other buildings during a period of more than three months in 2024.

Investigating officers linked more than 30 burglaries across Somerset and into Devon between August and November 2024.

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**Strong local partnerships key to tackling business and retail crime**



• Avon and Somerset neighbourhood policing teams will be:

- Carrying out visible patrols in high streets, retail parks and shopping centres
- Delivering training to security staff
- Arranging walk & talks with BID members, security teams and town centre street marshals to understand and address the main issues they are facing
- Engaging with local businesses about the importance of reporting and providing high-quality CCTV, while offering crime prevention and security advice to those that have experienced high volumes of theft and/or theft of high-value items.

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**Good News**

**A** new police enquiry office opened in Frome's Police Station in Wessex Fields retail park. The new front office will better serve local

residents and provide a welcoming public access point into the station. The new enquiry office will be open Monday to Friday, 10am-1.30pm, 2.15-6pm.

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### Contractor appointed for Yeovil Police Station refurbishment.

**T**Ci (GB) Ltd has been appointed as the contractor to complete a multi-million pound refurbishment of Yeovil Police Station in Horsey Lane. Officers moved out of the building in 2019 and relocated to Somerset Council's Brympton Way offices. An outline business case for investment was approved in 2024 with a final business case approved in August this year, following a procurement process to secure our contractor.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Inspector attends National Police Bravery Awards 2025

**I**nspector James McKenna, known to his colleagues as Paddy, was in London yesterday (Thursday 10 July) for the ceremony at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, having been nominated earlier this year. Insp McKenna, who is a Force Incident Manager within the Force Control room, was nominated after risking his life to save passengers of a serious collision on the M4 on 26 March last year.

Insp McKenna, received a Royal Humane Society Bronze Medal of Bravery for his actions in March last year, was off-duty when he saw a collision had just happened. With traffic building up and emergency services not yet on the scene, Insp McKenna pulled up and jumped into action.

The collision had occurred between a car and a lorry, with the driver and front seat passenger of the car being able to escape. However, as he approached the car, he saw two backseat passengers trapped. Insp McKenna jumped into action and was able to pull the two children from the car.

Despite the efforts of Insp McKenna, other officers and paramedics, the young boy sadly died.

The teenage girl was discharged from hospital a few days after the incident to recover at home.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Police awards celebrate inspiring young people across Avon and Somerset



**T**he Children and Young People Awards returned for a second year on Wednesday 9 July at Weston-super-Mare's iconic Grand Pier.

Launched by Avon and Somerset Police in 2024, the annual event recognises the exceptional actions of some of our youngest community members. From impressive fundraising and volunteering efforts to help and support others, to showing resilience in frightening situations and driving meaningful change through inclusive actions, all nominees were worthy contenders.

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## **BISHOP'S HULL IN TIMES PAST**



100 years ago

There was an excellent attendance at the Constitutional Club, when a whist drive was arranged by the local Conservative Association. The winners were: Ladies 1. Miss M Balman; 2. Miss M Lythall; 3. Mrs A Voysey and Mrs Bodger. Gentlemen 1. Miss A Lythall (playing a gent); 2. Mr J Grant; 3. Mr HS Tate. A guessing competition, arranged by Mr CH Payne, attracted a great deal of attention and produced a nice amount for the funds. Mr GU Farrant acted as MC. At the conclusion of the drive, Mrs C Lesley Fox presented the prizes to the successful competitors and on behalf of the committee arranging the drive, Mr Farrant expressed its thanks to her. Mrs JH Watts acted as secretary of the committee arranging the gathering.

50 years ago

There was a good attendance at the meeting of the Good Companions. Miss Newcombe presided. The original committee agreed to continue for the coming year. Miss Newcombe was re-elected president, Mrs Grant vice-president, Mrs Hearn treasurer, and Mrs Channing secretary. Mrs Morris was elected to serve as the Silver Queen. Miss Waterfield gave a very interesting talk and was thanked by Miss Newcombe. Tea and a raffle concluded the meeting.

Mrs Mabel Olive Hartland, of Smithy Cottages, died at East Reach Hospital at the age of 70. The funeral service, which was largely attended by neighbours and other friends, was held at Taunton Deane crematorium chapel and conducted by the vicar of Bishops Hull, the Rev EG Mullins. Cremation followed. In addition to family mourners, also present were representatives of the Taunton Women's Whist League and other organisations. The Co-operative Funeral Service made the funeral arrangements.

It was with regret that at their last meeting, the Parish Council received the resignation of their Clerk, Mr T Hodge. Members expressed their thanks to Mr Hodge for the high quality of service which he had provided to the Council. The Council gave further consideration to the proposals to construct a roadway which would link the A38 road with the existing carriageway at Silk Mills crossing. In view of the considerable reservations which members retain about the proposals, the Council was resolved to seek certain assurances from the highway authority: that the proposed roadway



would be completed along its total length before any part of it is opened; that adequate crossing facilities would be provided for pedestrians, with particular reference to elderly persons and young children; and that further consideration would be given to the effects of traffic congestion when the level crossing gates at Silk Mills are in operation. This roadway is what is now Silk Mills Road.

Married at St James's church, Taunton, were Mr Paul Michael Western, youngest son of Mr and Mrs C Western of Smithy Cottages, and Miss Lesley Elizabeth McConachie of Cleveland Street, Taunton. The bride, who was given away by her father at a service conducted by the Rev David Saville, wore a gown and train of satin trimmed with pearls, with a three-tier veil. She held a bouquet of orange carnations and fern. In attendance, Jackie Liscombe and Lynnette Parks wore purple satin dresses trimmed with white daisies. They held Victorian posies of yellow carnations and green fern and had matching head-dresses. The best man was Mr Peter Thompson. After a reception for 90 guests at Priory Social Club, the couple left for a honeymoon in Scotland, the bride wearing a blue trouser suit with matching accessories.

The Good Companions Club met at the United Reformed church schoolroom, when Miss Newcombe presided. Several members gave in their names for the visit to Sheppey's cider factory. A Christmas table decoration was given by Mrs Rose and Mrs Bellamy. Following this, a similar display was on sale and after expenses £1 was given back to the club. Grateful thanks were expressed to the demonstrators for a very pleasant afternoon. The flower competition was won by Mrs Farmer and Mrs House. Tea and a raffle concluded the meeting.

Mr and Mrs Edward du Cann were guests of honour at a wine and cheese party at Meryan House Hotel. Over 50 guests helped to make the evening an enjoyable occasion. The party was presided over by Mrs McGheel and Mrs Eils. Raffle prize winners were Mrs Vernon, Miss Farrant, Mr F Matthews and Mr F Biffen.

After being involved in a collision with a milk float on Wellington Road, an articulated lorry loaded with seven tons of frozen meat ended up in a garden at Stonegallows, but neither driver was seriously hurt. When the accident happened the milkman, Mr Mike Rowlands of Rockwell Green, was on his way to Wellington to begin his round for Hunts Dairies. The float was a complete write-off and £100-worth of milk and broken bottles were strewn over the road. The lorry, which belonged to British Oxygen (Transhields) of Bristol went up the bank and overturned. Wellington Road was completely blocked for two hours and traffic diverted onto the motorway.

John Hamer

# TAUNTON

## Tinsel Trot

Sunday 7 December

### Time:

10am - Junior Race

10.30am - Full Race

### Start/finish line:

Castle Green, Taunton

FREE festive hat with every sign up!  
(Elf for under 11s, Santa for 11+)



Sign up now at:

[st-margarets-hospice.org.uk/  
event/taunton-tinsel-trot](https://st-margarets-hospice.org.uk/event/taunton-tinsel-trot)

Registered charity number: 279421



St Margaret's  
Hospice Care



*David Pickup, a solicitor, considers the legal hazards of daily life in winter.*

### **The legal hazards of life in winter**

We are promised a hard Winter this year. The abundance of nuts and berries is supposed to be a sign of bad weather. Whether that is true or not is another question. Supposing we do get ice, snow and more frost. Early one cold morning you get up and go outside to clear a path of snow on your driveway and salt the doorstep. You playfully pick up a handful of snow and throw it carelessly. The car is covered in ice, so you start the engine and leave it running to defrost. You then go inside to warm up.

On your return outside the mail deliverer has fallen over. The car is missing because you had left the keys inside. The snowball you threw broke a neighbour's window because it had a stone inside. The front door slams shut, and you are outside in your pyjamas, then fall over on the ice which had thawed in the road and then re-frozen. Sounds a Winter nightmare!



### **What are legal issues?**

The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 requires occupiers to take reasonable care to ensure visitors are reasonably safe. 'Reasonable' is the important word there. You are unlikely to be sued if you clear a pathway through the snow. Visitors and pedestrians are expected to look where they are going, dress appropriately and be careful. If you melted snow and it froze again causing a patch of ice, there might be blame, but even then it is doubtful. If a householder knew about a problem and did nothing this also might lead to a claim. For example, if the postie complained to you the day before that your path is treacherous, and you did not do anything, then possibly you could be held to account for any accident to the post person.

It is different on public roads, as under the Highways Act 1980, the council must ensure that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Councils are required to ensure the public can have safe passage "so far as is reasonably practicable" on roads and pavements. In addition to using gritting vehicles and snow-ploughs to keep roads and pavements free of ice and snow, most councils also provide grit bins, usually located on steep gradients or near sharp bends, so that members of the public can spread grit to reduce the slipping hazard. Not all roads are salted or gritted, and sometimes the weather takes an unexpected turn.

### **Snowball fights**

**C**ourt cases involving snowball fights are rare. You must not deliberately add Cocks or stones to snowball. Do not throw snowballs randomly. If you take part in a snowball fight, you are consenting and would expect to be hit and wet with snow.

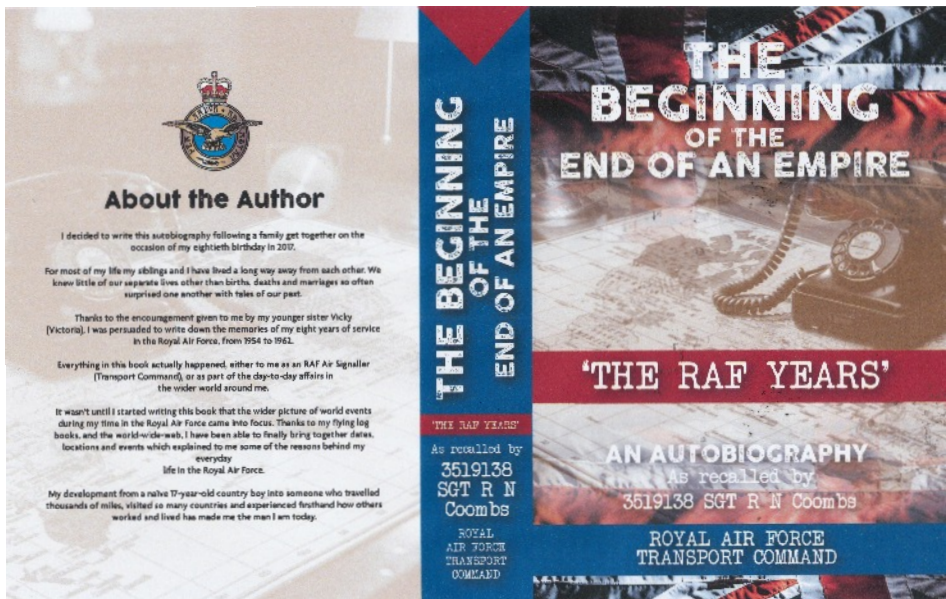
There was a case in America that involved a snowball. After the New York Jets football game on Seattle Seahawks' home ground in December 2008, as the Jets left the field, they were pelted by snowballs from the stands. One fan waved a sign at the departing players. A player, Sean Ellis picked up some snow and threw it at the fan, apparently hitting him in the head or body. Two years later the fan sued the player. You can watch the video on the internet but I have not found out what happened in court. Ellis was fined \$10,000 by the NFL for the incident.

What about your car? Arguably an insurance company could refuse a claim on the basis the insurer did not take reasonable care to protect their property. And a neighbour could complain if you are outdoors in your nightwear, depending on whether it is decent or not.

This is a light-hearted item and always take care and get proper advice if needed. Look after yourselves and neighbours, particularly in bad weather.

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**T**he picture below is a copy of the front and back cover of the Editor's Royal Air Force Autobiography published at the beginning of October 2025. Over 500 pages in total it took him over five years of patient research to complete. As they say, *"Everyone has at least one book in them."*





### **Where did Christmas cards come from?**

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways.

Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534.

In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son.

Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible.

Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!'

The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.

Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By 1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe. The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms.

Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created



Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card. Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America. Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period. ##

## EAT WELL FOR LESS DURING DECEMBER

### A NICE MEAT PIE TO BE EATEN COLD



1 lb. of steak  
1 boiled egg  
1 rasher of bacon  
Pepper, salt and flour

**M**ake a short crust, roll out and line a cake tin, cut up steak, season with pepper, salt and flour. Put layer of bacon, cut in pieces at bottom of tin, then the egg cut in quarters, then layers of steak, until the cake tin is full ; cover with crust, make a hole in top, brush the top over with milk, and bake about 2 hours. Line the cake tin with paper so that the pie can be left in the tin until cold. When nearly cold pour into the hole in the pie some good gravy, in which one or two leaves of gelatine have been dissolved.

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### BEEF AND SPAGHETTI PIE

**C**hop and fry some onions in a little butter or dripping. Boil half a pound of spaghetti, have ready half a pound of tomatoes. Sprinkle some breadcrumbs at the bottom of a greased pie-dish, then a layer of spaghetti, pepper and salt to taste, then a layer of fried onions, one of minced meat, then tomatoes cut small. Repeat until the dish is full. Cover top with breadcrumbs and butter. Bake until nicely brown. A little grated cheese is a great improvement.

### DRY CURRY



**C**ut a large onion into small dice, put into saucepan with 1 oz. of butter, cover with lid, and fry a light brown. Mince 2 large apples, add them to the onion and allow to cook in their own steam until done. Add a dessertspoonful of curry powder, 1 of paste and 1 of chutney, replace the lid and stand on a warm part of the stove for 20 minutes. Mix prepared ground meat with the curry, add a little cream, milk or stock, replace lid and allow to get quite hot.

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### POTTED RABBIT



**C**ut rabbit in joints and nice pieces. Season with salt, pepper and a little grated lemon rind, and a little cayenne. Small dice some lean ham or bacon, about 1 to 2 oz. Put rabbit in a casserole and sprinkle ham and bacon over in layers. Cover with water, and steam 2 to 3 hours, till the bones will come out easily. Bone (if liked), and put in a wetted basin, dish or mould. Leave till cold and turn out.

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### OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PUDDING



¾ lb of self-raising flour  
¼ lb of sweet almonds, chopped fine  
1½ lb of breadcrumbs  
1 lb of shredded beef suet  
2 lb of prepared raisins  
1½ lb of currants  
½ lb Demerara sugar  
3 oz. of grated mixed peel  
½ lb sultanas  
3 eggs well-beaten  
Half a nutmeg  
A little powdered cinnamon  
A pinch of salt  
A little milk

**S**ift the flour into the breadcrumbs, add the salt, cinnamon and nutmeg, and thoroughly mix together. Then add all the other ingredients, mix, make a hole in the centre of the mixture, pour in the eggs and milk to make a moist mixture. Pour mixture into three medium-sized basins, well greased. Cover with a greased paper and pudding cloth, and boil for 8 hours.



### LOCH LOMOND PUDDING

4 oz. of dripping  
4 oz. of flour  
2 oz. of Demerara sugar  
1 egg  
¼ teaspoonful of carbonate of soda  
2 tablespoonfuls of raspberry jam



**B**eat the dripping to a cream, then stir into this the jam and sugar. Now add the flour, soda and egg. Put into a buttered pie-dish and bake in moderate oven for about half an hour.

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### APRICOT CREAM



2 eggs  
1 pint of milk  
Tin of apricots  
1 oz. of sheet gelatine

1 oz. of caster sugar  
Almond essence  
A little cream

**B**eat up the eggs with the castor sugar, then bring the milk to the boil and pour it on to the eggs. Beating well all the time. Stir over gentle heat till it thickens. Melt the gelatine in the syrup of the apricots. Put the apricots through a sieve, reserving three or four for decoration. Mix puree with the custard when nearly cold, add a few drops of almond essence, and then strain in the melted gelatine, etc. When almost cold, mix in a little whipped cream and pour into a wetted mould. Decorate with cream and apricots. ##

## **25th December - The history of Christmas**

**T**he Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers. In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute. ##

### **Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!**

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society. ##



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### **Who is 'Santa Claus'?**

On the whole British people are happy with the title 'Father Christmas', a suitably neutral name for the central character in children's Christmases, writes David Winter.

In America, however, and by a process of cultural indoctrination increasingly in other English-speaking countries, the same red-coated and bearded fellow with his sack of presents is known as 'Santa Claus'. They are, of course, one and the same person, distantly related to a bishop in Turkey in the fourth century (hence the red coat and hat – a cope and mitre originally). His name was Nicholas, and he was known as a patron of children, who would from time to time distribute gifts to them. From that comes the practice of giving presents at Christmas. We can't give them to Jesus on His birthday, so we give them to someone else, in love and gratitude. That, at least, is the theory. Quite how the massive commercialisation of such giving developed probably owes more to smart marketing than Christian generosity.

It's not Nicholas's fault, of course, nor of the Dutch Christians who took the practice to America as migrants 300 years ago. In any case, his feast day, 6th December, is when 'Christmas' presents are handed over in Holland.



## Gardening in December

As we approach the shortest day of the year in December you will need work to keep you warm outside, such as digging and tree pruning. Check your winter protection and if you have a greenhouse make sure the heater is working. Hopefully there are not too many jobs left to do this year so you will have time for some fireside garden planning.

### **Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place**

Cold, wet, windy winter weather can damage trees, shrubs and garden structures such as trellis. Improving shelter, staking plants, mulching, wrapping pots and careful matching of plants to places will help to prevent this kind of damage.

### **Check that greenhouse heaters are working**

The high cost of fuel and the desire to garden sustainability are concentrating gardeners' attention on operating greenhouses with the minimum energy usage. Here is our practical advice on heating greenhouses efficiently.

### **Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing**

If your pond is stocked with fish and it does freeze over, melt the ice by placing a hot pan on the surface, or install a pond heater or water feature to prevent freezing occurring.

### **More jobs for this month**

- Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- Trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- Take hardwood cuttings
- Keep mice away from stored produce
- Reduce watering of houseplants

### **Grow your own**

December is a surprisingly busy time in the fruit and vegetable garden. Your brassicas will need a bit of extra attention this month and you'll find plenty of veggies to harvest, which is just as well if you're planning to host

any large seasonal dinners! Over in the fruit patch, it's the ideal time of year to plant fruit trees and bushes, so make sure you keep an eye out for some good deals.

### **Vegetables**

If you're wondering what vegetables to grow in December, then there are a few you can plant out in the vegetable garden, but it's generally a good time of year to focus on growing some seeds indoors. If you can't quite keep away from your vegetable patch, then don't worry – there's plenty of maintenance to be done when it comes to your brassicas.

### **What vegetables to plant in December**

If you're looking to get a last-minute crop of seeds and bulbs into the earth before the new year arrives, then you can still just about get some broad beans and garlic in the ground. Your

kitchen windowsill may provide a more fertile bed for growing veggies at this time of year, though. The following can all be sprouted on the kitchen windowsill in a jar:

Aduki beans  
Alfalfa  
Chickpeas  
Fenugreek  
Lentils  
Mung beans  
Radish

Check the instructions on individual seed packets and use a purpose-built seed sprouter to keep them fresh. The sprouted seeds can be added to salads as a great source of protein. You can also try growing lettuce, herbs and cress on a windowsill.

For best results, plant your seeds in a mixture of soil and an organic, peat-free compost. Ensure the compost lines the bottom of the container to encourage strong root growth. If you're short on space, you can even consider planting your beans in a grow bag.

### **Vegetable plant maintenance in December**

There are just a few small jobs to do in the vegetable patch in December.

Most of these are concerned with the brassica family of plants such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflowers, kale, swede, and turnips.

Firstly, check that all of your plants are firmly in the ground. Any plants that can be easily moved around – Brussels sprouts in particular – will often have a shortened lifespan, so gently firm the soil around the plant if you find any looseness. While you're doing this, you should also check your plants for yellowing leaves. Remove

them to prevent any diseases from spreading.

If you have any netting covering your vegetables, check that it's secure enough to prevent hungry birds from damaging the plants. The netting should be held up with supports that clear the tops of the plants so that birds are unable to perch on them or peck through the netting.

Finally, if you're overwintering rhubarb, now is a good time to divide it to produce stronger plants, and more of them.

### **What vegetables to harvest in December**

December is the month for roast dinner feasts so it's just as well that the following vegetables will be cropping in your garden vegetable patch:

Brussels sprouts  
Carrots  
Celeriac  
Chard  
Jerusalem artichokes  
Kale  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Parsnips  
Swede  
Turnips

Once you've harvested your veg, consider mulching your veggie patch with a peat-free composted bark. This will help to improve your soil quality and lock in moisture for your next crop of produce.

Recommendation: If very cold weather is forecast, cover or harvest any vegetables you need to see you through the icy snap while you can still get a garden fork into the ground.

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**G M TREVELYAN's - English Social History -**  
**A SURVEY OF SIX CENTURIES** Chaucer to Queen Victoria

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The first year of Elizabeth saw a crisis in the social life of every parish. Cranmer's bequest to posterity, the English Prayer Book, was again ordered to be read in place of the Latin mass. But this change of religion was not accompanied by a corresponding change in the person of the parish priest. Out of some 8,000 beneficed clergy not more than 200 were deprived. The parson obeyed the law as a matter of course, and his neighbours, themselves equally obedient, thought none the worse of him for that. If he was a middle-aged man he was well accustomed to altering his religious practice at the behest of the powers that be. In some cases he was an ex-monk or friar who had known a good many 'varieties of religious experience'. In the year when Queen Mary was succeeded by her sister, the average parson was seldom a convinced Protestant; but he had no respect for the authority of the Pope; the idea of consulting his own 'private judgement' was alien to his thought; and if he sincerely wished to obey 'the Church', where was he to hear her voice? It issued, he had been taught to believe, from the mouth of the Prince, and in 1559 it came to him from no other quarter. To accept religious services and doctrines because they were ordained by Crown, Parliament, and Privy Council, seemed to clergy and people not only expedient but positively right. Such was the Erastian attitude to religion that carried Englishmen through that dangerous century of change. It is repugnant to our modern ideas of denominational and personal freedom, but it was at that time a doctrine sincerely held by the majority of conscientious men. Bishop Jewel, the best exponent of the ideas of the early Elizabethan settlement, declared: *This is our doctrine, that every soul, of what calling soever he be — be he monk, be he preacher, be he prophet, be he apostle — ought to be subject to King and magistrates.*

The sphere of King and magistrates covered religion. All were agreed that there could be only one religion in the State, and all except Romanists and very rigorous Puritans were agreed that the State must decide what that religion should be.

This doctrine, equally opposed to medieval and modern conceptions, suited Elizabeth's England. It was the political corollary of the social revolt of the laity against the clergy in the time of the Queen's father. The Tudor English were riot irreligious, but they were anti-clerical, and therefore they were Erastian. This attitude of mind affected the clergy themselves who had not been brought up in seminaries as a priestly caste, but were themselves an integral part of English society.

The clergy as a whole were therefore obedient and supine in the first years of Elizabeth. But there was an active and proselytising minority among them of zealous Protestants, who had escaped the Smithfield fires by the accident of Queen Mary's death, or had returned from exile abroad full of Calvinist zeal imbibed at the Genevan fountain-head. Such men were not Erastian at heart.

They would have disobeyed a popish prince, but they knew that Elizabeth alone stood between England and a papal restoration so they accepted her Church compromise, intending to reform it as time and occasion should permit. As against Rome and Spain they were the strongest defence of the new settlement, but from another point of view they were its most dangerous enemies.

The majority of the parish priests of 1559, who were prepared to take their religion ready-made from a parliamentary statute, were lacking in any definite tradition that could give enthusiasm and authority to their ministrations. But the extreme Protestants had a living faith that made them for some decades the most influential section of the clergy, at a time when the average parson was deficient both in learning and in zeal.

Since the anti-clerical revolution of King Henry's day, priests were no longer envied or hated, but they were often despised and ill-used. Elizabeth herself continued to filch Church lands and property, and sometimes to keep bishoprics vacant in order that the Crown should enjoy the rents of the manors. Her archbishops constantly sought the advice of her Secretary, William Cecil, on purely religious matters, while complaining to him unceasingly of the petty oppressions of powerful laymen. The Church was treated very much as an arm of the Civil Service, a dignified but pleasantly helpless prey of an impecunious sovereign and a rapacious court. In the smaller sphere of parish politics, the squire was equally dominant over the parson. The young author of *Love's Labour's Lost* had seen much of the half kindly, half contemptuous attitude of the laity towards the parish priest, 'a foolish, mild man, an honest man look you and soon dashed. A marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler.

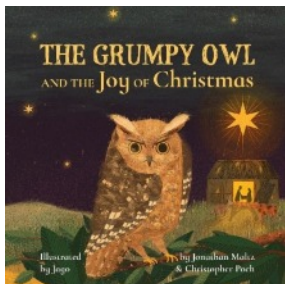
All this betokened that the ground-swell caused by the great anti-clerical earthquake of Henry's reign was subsiding only by degrees. Nevertheless it was subsiding. By the end of the Queen's reign the Anglican clergy were already in a better position, more respected by their neighbours, more sure of themselves and of their message. When the Stuart kings took the Church by the hand in an honourable partnership, the laity were soon complaining once more 'of the 'pride of the clergy', Laud encouraged the parson to look the squire in the face.

It was an important change in social life that the clergy under Elizabeth were again, and this time finally, authorized to take unto themselves wives. Many parsons, who had been ready to accept the restoration of Roman Catholicism in 1553, had been deprived of their livings under "Mary for no reason except that they had been legally married by the laws of Edward VI. Under Elizabeth their connubial liberty was restored. It has been shrewdly suggested that as the distribution of monastic property created among certain classes a vested interest in the future of the Reformation, so the removal of restrictions on the marriage of the clergy created what we may call a family interest in its progress among sections of the clergy not sufficiently enlightened to grasp the higher issues, an interest which was not without importance in guaranteeing its ultimate success'

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas**

By Jonathan Maltz,  
Christopher Poch,



Something wonderful is about to happen in the old, lonely, empty barn. A very special baby is going to be born. But the grumpy owl who lives there just wants to be left alone. Can any of the other animals help him change his mind? Or will he miss out on the amazing joy of the first Christmas?

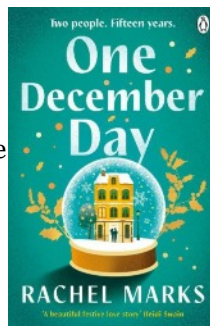
The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of an owl who seems determined to miss all the excitement. This charming re-telling of the nativity story by Jonathan Maltz and Christopher Poch has been beautifully illustrated by Jago, award-winning illustrator of The Jesus Storybook Bible which has sold over six million copies.

Destined to become a family favourite for many years to come, The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas will be a major focus for the Church of England's 2025 Christmas campaign, with a range of digital resources to support schools, churches and households in sharing the joy of Christmas this year. ##

### **One December Day**

Rachel Marks

Luke loves Christmas. He loves the woolly scarves, the mulled wine, the music, the snow. But he's beginning to ask: what good is it, if you have no one to share it with?



Laura doesn't think there's anything magical about December. She'd never normally be seen dead with a man in a Christmas jumper. But, at a crowded gig this winter's evening, has she found her soulmate in handsome, funny frontman, Luke?

Under the lights, something magical begins. But will Luke and Laura still feel the same on this day next December? And the one after that? Finding love at Christmas is special. But is staying in love - year after year, through the joy and heartbreak - the real miracle?

Luke and Laura are about to find out. One December day at a time...

Praise for Rachel Marks:

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Department Q  
**Locked In**

Jussi Adler-Olsen,  
Caroline Waight

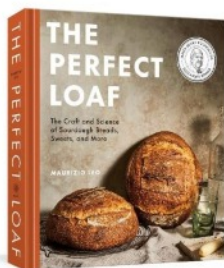
On the day after Christmas, head of Department Q, Detective Carl Mørck, finds



himself handcuffed in a police car headed for Copenhagen's Vestre prison. After fifteen years, a violent case from his past has caught up with him. Charges of drug trafficking and murder threaten to destroy his life and career. But he is being framed. Someone has a million-dollar bounty on his head to make sure he doesn't talk, putting him in grave danger among the prison's incarcerated criminals and corrupt officers. The question that remains is, Why?

Carl's colleagues at the Copenhagen Police Department instantly turn their backs on him, leaving the ever-loyal Department Q team as his only hope. In search of answers, Rose, Assad, and Gordon must disobey direct orders from way up the chain to try to unravel case. With only one another to trust and Carl's battle against the unknown mastermind's henchmen worsening by the day, they must work faster than ever before if they are to clear his name—and save his life.

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pizza to doughnuts, by the beloved blogger and resident bread baker at Food52.

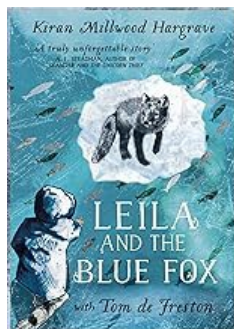
A dynamic, authoritative sourdough baking bible for those looking to build confidence in the craft with a wide range of foolproof recipes, from pan loaves to

“Maurizio Leo has given all bread-heads, whether newbies or experienced bakers, the ideal gift.”

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### **Leila and the Blue Fox**

By Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Tom de Freston

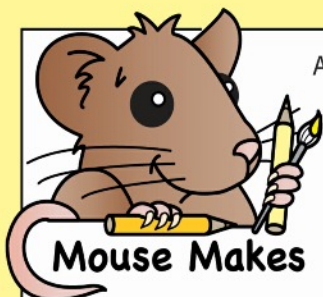


Come with an Arctic fox on a breathtaking journey ... An enthralling story from the bestselling, award-winning creators of *Julia and the Shark*.

She was very tired. She lay down, her soft head on her soft paws. The sunset licked her face. The snow covered her like a blanket. Fox wakes, and begins to walk. She crosses ice and snow, over mountains and across frozen oceans, encountering bears and birds beneath the endless daylight of an Arctic summer, navigating a world that is vast, wild and wondrous.

Meanwhile, Leila embarks on a journey of her own – finding her way to the mother who left her. On a breathtaking journey across the sea, Leila rediscovers herself and the mother she thought she'd lost, with help from a determined little fox. Based on the true story of an Arctic fox who walked from Norway to Canada in seventy six days, a distance of two thousand miles, this compelling, emotional and beautifully illustrated story is the perfect gift for 9+ readers.

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At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,  
God's Son and our Saviour  
coming into the world as a baby,  
and we look forward to the time  
when Jesus will come again,  
not as a baby but as the  
King of kings and Lord of lords!

**read**

John 14:3

A baby needs clothes  
to keep warm like  
a snuggly sleep suit  
or a vest and nappy.

*What were you dressed in?*

Jesus was wrapped in

**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere  
to be born like at home  
or in a hospital.

*Where were you born?*

Jesus was born  
in a stable in

**read** Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs  
somewhere  
to sleep like  
a crib or a cot.

*What did you  
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs  
a name.

*What name were  
you called?*

Jesus was given  
a special name  
that had a  
special meaning.

**read**

Matthew 1:21-23

# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRIDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA  
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN



**Christmas joy for all people – by Bishop Michael**

**W**e fear that we live in a world of increasing polarisation. Conflicts between and within nations play their part. The amplification of division and hostility by social media algorithms doesn't help. Culture wars exacerbate matters further. Sometimes it feels like common ground is disappearing from underneath our feet like a sandbar being overwhelmed by the tide.

*In such a climate, it's good to return to the message that heralded the arrival of Jesus. 'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people' says that angel who announces the saviour's birth (Luke 2:10). Jesus' story quickly includes all types and sorts of humanity. From local shepherds to exotic visitors from afar. I wonder what the conversation was like as they all crammed into the stable to see the newborn child?*

*Jesus's story quickly shows that not only is he for all people but that he needs all people. His family must have needed assistance when they fled as refugees to Egypt. Jesus must have needed help when his parents left him behind on a family outing to Jerusalem aged twelve. Jesus was constantly calling on and engaging with others as he went about his teaching and ministry.*

*What might counter the polarisation of our day? Amongst our greatest resource is to seek out the emotion that accompanied the news of the saviour's birth – joy. When we encounter joy – from that cup winning goal to the marriage of much loved friends – such moments are never the time for division and enmity. We're all far too busy shouting and hugging each other! The invitation of Christmas is to experience such joy afresh. Often, we see joy most obviously in children's experience of the season. Might we seek it for ourselves too? For joy breaks down divisions, overcomes barriers, reminds us that we are one.*

*'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people' says the angel. A very merry and joyful Christmas to you all.*

*Michael Beasley  
Bishop of Bath and Wells*

### **Why is the vicar wearing white today?**

**Y**ou may have noticed that the Minister who officiates at Church Services may wear a long, thin scarf which is called a stole. This can be white, purple, red or green.

White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. Red at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. Green, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year.



So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth.

You will also spot the same changing colours for items on the Altar-Table at the beginning and end of the Service of Holy Communion. The Burse is a flat, square case holding a linen cloth called the corporal, on which the vessels used in Holy Communion are placed. The Veil covers them until they are used.

The vessels are called Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A bowl, called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine represent the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care.

The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

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### **How to care for your real Christmas tree**

If you want your tree to last as long as possible this year, the following should help:

Cut off about half an inch from the bottom of the trunk. This opens the pores of the tree. Then place it outside in a cool shaded place, standing in water until required.



Once you have brought it in, place it in a water-holding stand, well away from direct heat such as radiators. Top up the container every day – you will be amazed how much water the tree drinks. These ideas come from the British Christmas Tree Growers Association (BCTGA)

\*\*

### **Safe driving this winter**



The temperatures are dropping now, and it is a good idea to nurture your car battery. Cold, damp weather can make it as reluctant as you are to get going in the morning. The RAC recommends the following to take best care of your battery: Before you switch off your engine at the end of a journey, turn off the lights, wipers and heaters. This prevents any unnecessary drain on

the battery next time you start the car.

Check that everything is switched off before your turn on the ignition. Avoid using the heater longer than necessary, as it puts high demands on the vehicle's battery.

Check that you don't leave interior lights, satnavs or phone chargers connected.

If possible, park in a garage.

\*\*

### **Men's curious reluctance to ask where they are going**



If you are travelling far this Christmas, pray that your satnav works, or that there is a woman in the car. Research has found that men are so reluctant to ask directions that they waste hours and miles every year. Over a lifetime of travel, it can work out to a wasted journey from Land's End to John O' Groats.

Very few men will ask for help or check a map to avoid unnecessary travel. They prefer to wander hopefully until they find their route on their own, regardless of how long it takes them.

Which of course has inspired the joke: Why did the Children of Israel wander in the wilderness for 40 years? Because Moses was a man and wouldn't ask directions...

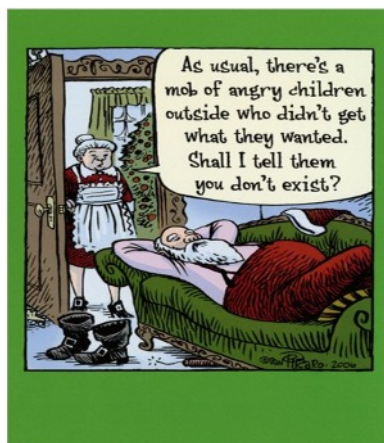
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# SERVICES AT ST PETER & ST PAUL

## DECEMBER 2025

<b>Wednesday 3 December</b>	Holy Communion	<b>10.00 a.m</b>		
<b>Sunday 7 December Advent 2</b>	Holy Communion Holy Communion <b>CHRISTINGLE</b>	<b>08:00 a.m. 10.00 a.m.</b>	Romans 15:4-13 (1141); Matthew 3:1-12 (967)	Sally Adams
<b>Wednesday 10 December</b>	Holy Communion	<b>10.00 a.m.</b>		
<b>Sunday 14 December Advent 3</b>	Holy Communion	<b>8.00 a.m. 10.00 a.m.</b>	James 5:7-10 (1216); Matthew 11:2-11 (976)	Paul Curry
<b>Monday 15 December</b>	<b>Community Carol Singing outside the church</b>	<b>6.30 p.m.</b>		
<b>Wednesday 17 December</b>	Holy Communion	<b>10.00 a.m.</b>		
<b>Sunday 21 December Advent 4</b>	Holy Communion Holy Communion <b>VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 a.m. 10.00 a.m. 6.30 P.M.</b>	Romans 1:1-7 (1128); Matthew 1:18-25 (965)	Tim Venn
<b>Wednesday 24 December</b>	<b>CRIB SERVICE MIDNIGHT COMMUNION</b>	<b>4.00 P.M. 11.30 p.m..</b>		
<b>Thursday 25 December</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS FAMILY CELEBRATION</b>	<b>10.00 a.m.</b>		
<b>Sunday 28 December Christmas 1</b>	Holy Communion Holy Communion	<b>8:00 a.m. 10.00 a.m</b>	Isaiah 63:7-9 (751); Matthew 2:13-23 (966)	Bob Coombs



## SMILE LINES

### True story

The nativity play was going as planned and Joseph and Mary were going from 'house' to 'house' knocking on the doors and asking it there was any room for them. As they continued to get 'no room' answers, a little voice called from the back of the church: "You should have booked!"

\*\*

### Who was the Real Virgin?

A ten-year-old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which virgin was the mother of Jesus? The virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"

\*\*

### What Are the Three Gifts?

While participating in a church Christmas pageant many years ago, I was delighted to be chosen as the narrator. Each rehearsal went off well and then on the night of the show, I announced, in a loud and penetrating voice, the gifts of the Magi as being "gold, Frankenstein and myrrh."

\*\*

### Well known pilot

At Sunday school, the younger children were drawing pictures to illustrate a biblical story. The teacher was startled to see one little boy was drawing an airplane. "This is the Flight into Egypt," the little boy explained. "See, here is Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. And this," he said, pointing to the figure in the front of the plane, "is Pontius. He's the Pilot."

### The Wrong Gift

A young couple began to assemble a special Christmas gift they had bought for their children. They had bought a kit for a tree house, but it didn't make sense. Then they realised that the materials were for a sailboat, so they wrote to the company to complain. The company's reply was brief: "While we regret the inconvenience this mistake must have caused you, we are more concerned about the man who is out on a lake somewhere, trying to sail your tree house."

\*\*

### Know what?

As we were putting out cookies for Father Christmas one Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. I picked it up and dusted it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. But I assured him that Father Christmas would never know. He shot me a dubious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good all year, but he doesn't know if you dropped his cookie on the floor?"

\*\*

### Keep it a surprise

Three-year-old Lily was helping her mother wrap a present for her father. While wrapping, her mother told Lily about keeping the present a secret so it would be a surprise. After the present was wrapped, Lily proudly put it under the tree. When her father asked her if he could shake it and guess what's inside, she said very seriously, "No, that's not possible. T-shirts don't rattle."

\*\*

### Santa's sleigh

Father Christmas nervously went for his sleigh-driving test. He came rushing back in a thunder of reindeer and pulled up in front of the toy factory. "At last!" he shouted, "No-elf plates!"

\*\*

### Big part

A little boy rushed home from school: "I got a part in the Christmas play!" His mother asked which part it was. "I'm going to be one of the three wise guys!"

\*\*

### Stronger

Statistics show we're getting stronger. 50 years ago, you needed an estate car to hold £50 worth of Christmas presents. 20 years ago, it took two people to carry £20 worth of groceries. Now a five-year-old can do it.

\*\*

### Weird Christmas

Christmas is weird – at what other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat sweets out of your socks?

\*\*

### The Lonely Child

A blonde gets a job as a physical education teacher of 14-year-olds. On her first day, she comes to watch the kids playing soccer. She watches as they all get together and start playing. However, she quickly notices a boy at the end of the field standing alone, while all the other kids are running around having fun. She takes pity on him and decides to speak to him. "You ok?" she says kindly. "Yes," he says. "You can go and play with the other kids you know," she says encouragingly. "It's best I stay here."

he says. "Why's that sweetie?" asks the compassionate teacher. The boy gives her a weird look and says, "Because I'm the Goalie."

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Good Samaritan

As Mrs. Jones went to the market, she realized upon arriving that she had lost her purse somewhere along the way. Feeling very upset, she started to walk back in the scant hope that it will still be where she dropped it. However, after 2 minutes, a boy comes running at her, holding her purse in his hands. "Is this yours, lady?" He cries at her "Yes it is!" She cried in joy. She was so happy she hugged the boy and opened the purse to see everything was there. Looking in her purse, she commented, "Hmm, that's funny. When I lost my bag there was a \$20 note in it. Now there are 20 \$1 coins." The boy replied, "Well, the last time I found a lady's purse, she didn't have any change for a reward..."

\*\*\*\*\*

### How to Start a Sentence...

Teacher asks their class of children to come up with a sentence beginning with "I" After a few children come to the front with predictable statements about having a cat or a certain toy, a child steps up and says "I is-" and is immediately interrupted by the teacher, "I am!" She side-eyes the teacher, frowns and ignores her teacher, starting again "I is-" again, the teacher interrupts her, this time a little more snappily "It's I am! Use the proper word!" The girl turns to look at her this time, eyelids drooped with exasperation. "Fine," she sighs "I AM the ninth letter of the alphabet." ###

### **St James the Least of All**

The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'... If you would like a copy of our published booklet of Uncle Eustace's letters, please email us at: [enquiries@parishpump.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@parishpump.co.uk)

#### **Your first parish**

The Rectory  
St James the Least

*My dear Nephew Darren,*

**A**nd so, the old year draws to a close, and you are packing to move to your own first parish in January. Let me give you some final words of advice.

*Curates, you will have noticed, are forgiven everything. I hope you have appreciated this period of grace, because come 1st January, all that will change. You will then become responsible for everything that goes wrong in your church. You must be able to mend leaking taps, shovel snow, arrange flowers, mow the churchyard and run jumble sales. You will be expected to know the moment someone falls ill – preferably the day before. In addition, they will expect you to preach profound sermons - in seven minutes flat, and to lead a life of prayerful solitude while being the life and soul of the parish. From the day your predecessor left, he will have turned into a saint. You will be their new disappointment. Be assured that whatever you do, you will always disappoint someone.*

*Be prepared for phone calls at 3.00 a.m. telling you that someone has left a light on in church, and shouldn't you go and turn off? You will be asked about car parking arrangements for the October Harvest Service by mid-January, while hymns for the 9 Lessons and Carols will be required by early summer. I suggest you buy in extra pullovers, overcoats and scarves for life in your vicarage. A good number of mousetraps may well come in useful too.*

*Welcome to your new life as an incumbent.*

*Expect that each Sunday morning, as you prepare for the service, there will be a straggling queue of people who want to tell you an astonishing variety of things: there is a large cobweb 30 feet up over the pulpit, they don't like the second hymn on the board, the flowers look rough this week, there may be a bat in the vestry, some child has left a shoe in the back porch, and the car park has broken glass in it.*

*You may find this a distraction as you prepare for a worship service. But remember that at least they have bothered to come to church at all. In my experience, congregations are always irritating, but at least they do take up a lot of space, and that looks good in the pews. The church would look empty without them.*

*Your loving uncle,  
Eustace*



## Regular weekly events

### MONDAYS

10.00-11am Nia (Dance fitness) HUB  
10.00-12noon Painting Group FBC  
1.30-4.00pm Whist Club FBC  
2.00-4.00pm Bridge (except 1st  
Monday) FBC  
6.15-7.15pm Zumba HUB  
7.30pm Tone Big Band (1st & 3rd  
Mon) HUB

### TUESDAYS

6.15-7.00am Group Fitness Training  
HUB  
10.30-11.30am Qigong HUB  
1.30-2.30pm Tai Chi HUB  
10.00-4.00pm Board Games FBC  
7.00-8.00pm Yoga HUB

### WEDNESDAYS

10.00-11.00am Pilates for Everyone  
HUB  
10.00- 11.00am Flexercise FBC  
11.00-12noon Mum and Baby Pilates  
HUB  
2.00- 4.30pm Short Mat Bowls HUB  
6.00- 7.00pm Tae Kwon Do HUB

### THURS DAYS

6.15-7.00am Group Fitness Training  
HUB  
10.00-12noon Baby Badgers HUB  
10.00-12noon Bridge Club FBC  
2.00-4.00pm Croquet FBC

### FRIDAYS

8.30-1.00 pm Star Bubs HUB  
10.00-12noon Pétanque FBC  
10.00-12noon Frank's Café FBC  
4.45-8.15pm Martial Arts HUB

### SATURDAYS

6.30-7.15am Group Fitness Training  
HUB  
9.30-11.30am Hub Gardening Club  
HUB  
9.00pm Bingo Con Club

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### YOUR SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

John Hunt (Independent)  
07880 794554  
john.hunt@somerset.gov.uk  
Cllr Caroline Ellis 07473 119425  
cjellis1968@googlemail.com

### Your Member of Parliament

Gideon John Amos Lib/Dem

### SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS

Taunton Citizens advice - 0808 278  
7842

Village Agent - 01823 331 222

Mindline, a 24/7 phoneline available  
to support people of all ages offering  
a listening and advice service for  
wellbeing. You can call Mindline on  
01823 27689. Information about  
childcare [http://www.  
childcarechoices.gov.uk/](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)

Taunton Foodbank  
[https://taunton.foodbank.org.uk/get-  
help/](https://taunton.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/)

Free support and advice about:  
Money, food, home, health and  
wellbeing, domestic abuse, problems  
with drugs and alcohol and  
parenting visit:  
[www.connectsomerset.org.uk/help4  
all](http://www.connectsomerset.org.uk/help4all)

### BISHOP'S HULL FACILITIES

BH Parish Council - Helen  
McGladdery 07518144614  
clerk@bishopshullparishcouncil.go  
v.uk

BH Pre School - 07928 950230  
BH Primary School - 331624  
Castle School - 274073  
Spring Nursery - 793506

**Community Room & School Hall**  
**Rick Moon 354908**

Frank Bond Centre - Nadia 07958  
246046

Neighbourhood Beat Team

PCSO Lyndsay Smith & PCSO  
Marshall Bernhardt  
Call 101 or 999 in emergency  
lyndsay.smith@avonandsomerset.police.uk  
marshall.bernhardt@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Robin Close Hall - 356389

St Peter & St Paul Parish Church  
Rev. Phil Hughes 336102

BISHOP'S HULL ORGANISATIONS

BH Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show  
- Amanda Gallacher 337720

Bishop's Hull HUB -  
booking: bhhubbookings@gmail.com  
General enquiries and events:  
bishopshullhub@gmail.com  
Bishops Hull Hub cafe -  
bishopshullhubcafe@gmail.com

BH Short Mat Bowls - Alan Chapman  
01823 630641  
bhsmbc@yahoo.com

BHVH & Playing Fields Trust -  
Paul Bulbeck 283941

BH WI — Sue Hazelwood 01823  
323986

British Martial Arts and Boxing  
Association Tae Kwon Do  
alecmhay@aol.com

Brownies - Sheena Grinter 331184

Community Woodland Volunteer -  
David 272415

Nia (Dance Fitness) - Jackie  
07949735139

FBC Activities - Carolyn 283941

Infinity Martial Academy - Jon 07736  
714370  
jonakkc@hotmail.co.uk  
Pilates - Larissa  
lapilates7@gmail.com / larissa@la-pilates.com

Somerset Hills Chorus - Brenda  
Palfrey 07857 244272

Tae Kwon Do - Sebastian Morey-  
Weale 07900 517767

Tai Chi - Bev Fernandes 07880  
555984

Zumba - Felicity 07939 580327

**REFUSE / RECYCLING**  
**/GARDEN COLLECTIONS**

Dates below taken from Somerset  
Council Website.

Please note new day for recycling and  
refuse collections.

**Recycling: Every Thursday - all  
areas**

**BISHOP'S HULL, SHUTEWATER,**  
**UPCOTT & BARR**

Refuse: Thursday

Garden: Monday

**RUMWELL**

Refuse: Thursday

Garden: Wednesday

**STONEGALLOWS**

Refuse: Thursday

Garden: Monday

**BH COUNCIL PRIVACY**  
**STATEMENT AND POLICY**

[http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/  
Parish/BHPCprivacyNotice.pdf](http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/Parish/BHPCprivacyNotice.pdf)

[http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/  
parish/BHPCprivacyPolicy.pdf](http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/parish/BHPCprivacyPolicy.pdf)

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### GRASS CUTTING



## **CHURCH DIRECTORY (01823)**

**Church web site:** [www.stpeterandstpaul.org.uk](http://www.stpeterandstpaul.org.uk)

**Vicar:**

**Rev. Philip Hughes**

**336102**

**(Usual day off - Friday)**

**[phil2overflowing@gmail.com](mailto:phil2overflowing@gmail.com)**



Rev Philip Hughes

**Church Wardens:** Tim Venn John Perry

**Treasurer**

**Electoral Roll Officer**

**Safeguarding Officer:** Beverley Keitch

**Other PCC Members - Rachel Horder. Mark Dakin**  
**Sue Martin Hilary Harper . Lillian Priest**

## **St Peter and St Paul's PCC 2025-2026**

1. Rev Phil Hughes (Vicar)
2. Tim Venn (Church Warden)
3. John Perry (Church Warden)
4. Rachel Horder
5. Beverley Keitch (Parish Safeguarding Officer),
6. Mark Dakin
7. Sue Martin
8. Hilary Harper
9. Lillian Priest



10 And you? The PCC is a great team to belong to and is there to assist the Vicar in the Mission and function of the church. If you think God may be calling you to serve in this way there are lots of opportunities, so do have a chat with one of the fab team!