

CLYST VALLEY NEWS



December 2023



Wishing all our readers a
very Happy Christmas!



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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello and welcome to this festive December edition of the CVN. The magnificent painting on our cover is entitled 'Adoration of the Shepherds' by the Italian Baroque artist Mattia Pretti (1613-1699). It was thought to have been painted in 1678 and is in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool.

As we fast approach the time of celebration for many of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, and its message of peace on earth, the Holy Land is convulsed in the most obscene agonies of violence and brutality, tearing apart families, leaving them to grieve the loss of so many loved ones and driving the deepest divisions in the communities in that region that could take generations to heal. It seems we haven't learnt very much from that story of over 2,000 years ago.

A short personal anecdote: In the 1990s I was working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It was a time of optimism after the White House Lawn handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO. On Christmas Eve in, I think, 1994, I went with a group from the Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem for a late-night service at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. We gathered in a small, dark side chapel and were about to start when I walked Yasser Arafat, wearing his customary military fatigue and kaffiyeh (headdress). Although, as a Muslim, he did not participate in the service directly, he stayed for the entire duration, wishing to show his respect for Christians at their special time. Despite his (unwarranted, in my view) reputation as a militant, I think he demonstrated with that gesture his desire for reconciliation and peace. It's a great pity that those in power in the Holy Land today find it impossible to emulate that moment of hope.

I wish all readers a very Happy Christmas! Do have a go at our Christmas Trivia Quiz; and enjoy the many festive events advertised in the magazine. Peter Skelton

Contributions, photos and letters to the editor for the January 2024 issue of the Clyst Valley News should be sent by email, to the editor, Peter Skelton, at clystvalleynews@gmail.com by the earlier date of Friday 8th December 2023 at the latest, please. Please note that contributions may be edited.

If you experience any difficulty in receiving your copy of the CVN, please contact your local distributor, as follows:

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THE CLYST VALLEY NEWS IS STILL SEEKING TO RECRUIT A TREASURER OR SECRETARY

As we transition into Small Charity status, we need to set up a Board of (voluntary) Trustees – if you think you might be interested in getting involved with our magazine as a Trustee, please do get in touch with me (clystvalleynews@gmail.com) and I can explain what the responsibilities/duties are. They're not at all onerous, rest assured!

We will need to appoint one of the Trustees to be our Treasurer, and another to be Secretary – a statutory requirement of our new charitable status. Without people in these posts, we cannot proceed. If either of these voluntary positions might be of interest, again please contact me and I will run through the duties with you. I would love to hear from anyone who might have a few hours to spare each month and would like to support us in this way. Thank you. Peter Skelton, Editor.

VOLUNTEER CVN DELIVERER NEEDED

We are short of someone to deliver the Clyst Valley News in the north-west area of the Cat and Fiddle. This has been done recently by Dan and Bev Maher and we would like to thank them for the help they have given us but unfortunately they are unable to carry on. If anyone would like to volunteer to do this job, please let me know and it would be greatly appreciated. Ivor Spriggs (01392 874382)

WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN THE CLYST VALLEY NEWS?

If you'd like to advertise your business or organisation in the Clyst Valley News, please get in touch - with no obligation. Our rates are very competitive! Contact the Editor, Peter Skelton, at clystvalleynews@gmail.com.

YOUR PHOTOS ALWAYS NEEDED FOR THE COVER OF THE CVN!



Photographers: Why not share your photos with our readers? Most months we aim to put one nice pic on the magazine cover and we need yours! So please do send in your efforts to the editor, Peter Skelton, who'll choose one most months. Try to use relatively high-definition settings but that's not a must. Just email them to clystvalleynews@gmail.com and we'll do the rest. Simple!

CLYST ST MARY



Clyst St Mary Church Christmas Services

The Family Service will be held on 3rd December, starting at 9.30 am. This is a very informal gathering for parents and children, lasting no more than an hour so that you have the rest of the day for other family activities. On Sunday 17th December, there will be a Family Communion Service at 9.30 am as usual and a Christingle and Crib Service at 3 pm led by the Archdeacon. Families and children are warmly invited to both services. Refreshments are served afterwards at all services and we encourage people to stay and enjoy some fellowship. There will be a Family Communion Service at 11.15 am on Christmas Day which will be followed by sherry/soft drinks and mince pies. The Carol Service will be held on Friday 22nd December at 7 pm. All are welcome to this festival of lessons and carols to get into the true spirit of Christmas. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service.



[See the posters in this section with details of all church Christmas activities.]

St David's Singers Christmas Concert



There will be a Christmas Concert in Clyst St Mary Church on Monday 4th December, starting at 7.30 pm. This will be a festive concert with music from St David's Singers and readings to celebrate the Christmas season. Refreshments will be served in the interval. Tickets are £6, payable on the door. To reserve a seat call Pat on 01392 877708 or Rob on 01392 874305.

Clyst St Mary Church: Financial Crisis



Our thanks to all those who have supported our appeal for funds for the new oil tank at the church and to Bishops Clyst Parish Council and Devon Historic Churches Trust for their grants towards the work. The new oil tank is now installed and services can continue. However, we are still facing a serious financial crisis at Clyst St Mary Church. Like everyone else, the church is not immune to rising costs. We need to increase our income to keep pace with inflation and we have had to carry out a number of major repairs in the last two years. We have just been advised that we must replace our oil tank at a cost of around £3000. We have very little money in the account and our annual budget is showing a deficit. Without a significant increase in our income we may not be able to keep the church open.

If you value the church and, like us, want it to continue as part of our community life, would you be willing to support the church by regular giving as part of our Stewardship scheme? The regular giving, which others have undertaken to make as part of this scheme, covers a large part of the cost of maintenance of the church. If you are a taxpayer, we can benefit by 25 per cent on your payments from the taxman. If you would like to become a regular giver, or if you would like to make a one-off donation towards the cost of the oil tank, please contact our Treasurer, Gill Fenwick, on 01395 239802. If you have any questions on stewardship or the finances of Clyst St Mary Church, contact Pat Cusa, Churchwarden, on 01392 877907.

Village Hall

Hiring the Hall. Our website <https://www.clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk/> gives details of hiring availability and prices but if there's anything else you'd like to know, please drop Ali West an email on: bookings@clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Christmas at St Mary Church

December and Christmas are the busiest time of year in the Church. We have some really exciting events coming up, that we hope will encourage you to come down Church Lane to St Marys Church and see for yourself what we have to offer. It's always a friendly, warm and cosy atmosphere.

Saturday 2nd at 3:00pm - Home baked Christmas tea and activities. Tickets are £5 per adult and FREE for children 11 and under.

Sunday 3rd at 9:30am - First day of Advent during the Family Service with refreshments.

Monday 4th at 7:30pm - St Davids Singers will be giving a concert of eclectic singing and music, with a hint of Christmas. Tickets are £10 per adult.

Saturday 9th at 4:00pm - Christmas Carols and Christmas Poems with Mulled Wine and Mince Pies.

Sunday 17th at 9:30am - Holy Communion with refreshments at 3pm in the afternoon. We will be welcoming the Archdeacon who will be leading the Christingle and our Crib service, which will really feel like Christmas is coming! Our collections will be going as usual to The Childrens Society. Please email pat@cusa.org.uk so we can have an idea of how many oranges your family will need.

Friday 22nd at 7pm - Get into the Christmas spirit with our Carol Service. Everyone welcome.

Monday 25th at 11:15am - Christmas Day Holy Communion.

Bishops Clyst Parish Council



Hedge Trimming. A gentle reminder to keep your hedges, shrubs and trees trimmed if they impact on public footpaths and highways.

Bishops Clyst Parish Council Vacancies. There are still vacancies for Parish Councillors which we need to fill urgently. If you would like to be involved, you can be co-opted on to the Council. Just email your details to the Clerk (bishopsclyst@gmail.com) or drop a letter in to the Village Hall.

Community Grants. Community grants are available to groups, clubs and voluntary organisations based in the parish for non-commercial activities which benefit residents of the parish. Please see further details on our website (www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/community-grants/).

Parish Council Meetings. Council meetings take place on the second Monday of the month and dates, agendas and minutes are posted on our website (www.bishopsclyst.org.uk) and on noticeboards in Clyst St Mary, Cat and Fiddle Park and Sowton Village.

Season's Greetings. The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

Contact the Parish Council. Karan Bennett, PC Clerk, working from the PC office in Clyst St Mary Village Hall on Monday to Wednesday, 9 am to 12.30 pm. Call 01392 874405 or email bishopsclyst@gmail.com. *You are very welcome to drop in, but we recommend making an appointment to ensure someone is available to see you.*

Clyst St Mary Primary School



The festive season is almost upon us, and we've been gearing up for it for weeks – in fact, as soon as Halloween was out the way it seemed we were straight into organising Christmas!



Right before we broke for half term (which seems like a long time ago now), our Reception class went on their first school trip to the wonderful World of Country Life in Exmouth. Children from our federated school, Stoke Canon, also joined us for a lovely day walking goats and handling guinea pigs, gerbils, rabbits and ferrets. We 'older' chaperones took a fascinating trip down Memory Lane, looking at bygone equipment – from typewriters, record players and hoovers to China dolls, corsets and



QUIZ NIGHT

at the CAT & FIDDLE

Depending on interest, we are looking at organising a pub quiz in the New Year once a month on a Thursday evening at 7pm.

If you are interested, please contact,
Dave Moore on 07971 843621
Email: dave.marg.moore@gmail.com

We would like to think we could get at least 5 teams of 4 to make it worth while

COME AND SING YOUR FAVOURITE
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
AND READ YOUR FAVOURITE
CHRISTMAS POEMS
ON
SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER - 4:00PM
AT
CLYST ST MARY CHURCH
MULLED WINE | SOFT DRINKS | MINCE PIES



antique farming machinery – while attempting to explain these ancient contraptions to the younger generation! The children all behaved beautifully and enjoyed the day immensely.

As soon as we returned from half term, Classes 5 and 6 left for their Residential trip to the Isle of Wight. The children (and



Little wall

adults) Canada climbing, fencing and very muddy obstacle courses! They even managed to escape the worst of Storm Ciaran! A very successful visit.

Our ever-popular PTFA-run Christmas Fayre was held on Saturday 18th November, which is always a good way to entertain the children on a rainy day and support the school while doing so. Thank you to all the parents for their generous contributions to the raffle prizes.



At the end of November, our Class 5 will be taking the train to town for a tour of the historic Exeter Cathedral. Hopefully they'll have time for a mooch around the Christmas market while there! The beginning of

December is jam-packed with Christmas festivities, from concerts and Christingle (for KS2) to Christmas lunch, jumper day and Christmas wrapping. Our KS1 Nativity performances will take place on Wednesday 13th December at 2.30 pm and 6.30 pm at the Village Hall, then the following morning at the Clyst St Mary Church at 10 am. I have no doubt they will herald the start of the festive season and delight all the parents once again.

School breaks up for the Christmas holidays on Friday 15th December and reopens on Wednesday 3rd January 2024. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful New Year.

A Future Feature



Many of us who regularly walk across our historic Clyst St Mary bridge, the scene of two great battles, will remember how, about two years ago, the Environment Agency planted a large number and variety of willow trees on the swampy southside of the bridge. Sadly, only approximately fifteen have survived but they are doing well.

The majority are White Willows (*Salix Alba*) and one straight line of five of these will rapidly grow up to 25 metres and create an impressive feature on what has until now been a large empty space. These may spread seed and, in the fullness of time, Clyst St Mary will literally have a small forest of varied willows where once there was nothing. Such is the joy and reward of planting trees. Tony Rule

Clyst Valley Preschool: Christmas Market



Sunday 3rd December, 7.30 – 9.30 pm, Clyst St Mary Village Hall
Join us for an evening of festivity, fun and gift shopping, with over 20 local business stalls. Early bird tickets, at £4, are available from Clyst Valley Preschool and include entry, a drink and a mince pie! This is raising funds for the Preschool.



In the meantime our Christmas preparations will be in full swing and we will be busy rehearsing for our Nativity, always a very special event for all of our families.

If you are looking for a nurturing and fun Early Years setting for your child with dedicated, enthusiastic, very experienced and highly qualified staff, please check out our Instagram

account and our website www.clystvalleypreschool.org. We have spaces available for an immediate start, and our waiting list for next year is filling fast, especially for two year-olds when many will be funded for 15 hours a week from April 2024. Please call us to arrange a visit on 01392 876615 or email admin@clystvalleypreschool.org.

Walking Group



The December village walk will be on Tuesday 19th. We meet at the Village Hall at 10 am. It will be a local walk, around four miles, with a bring and share Christmas lunch afterwards. We walk at our own risk. For information, please ring Janice 01392 876858.

Table Tennis Club



Please come and join us! New members always welcome. We play at the Village Hall every Thursday, 4 - 6 pm. The minimal fee of £20 for a 10-week session includes use of all equipment and refreshments. Alternatively, fees may be paid on a weekly basis if preferred. For further details please contact Pam Gardner on 07714 097220 or by email to pamelamgardner@gmail.com.

Anyone for Tennis?

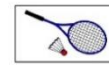


Some of us play tennis in Clyst St Mary on Friday mornings. Why not join us for some fresh air, exercise and good fun? Call Janice on 01392 876858



Badminton Club

Clyst St Mary Village Hall



The club, which plays on Tuesday evenings in the Village Hall will re-start after the summer break on:
Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 8 pm.
ALL are welcome (young and not so young!!) so come and join us. It is good exercise and a sociable evening.
For more information please contact either:
Hilary 0139 2874722 or Anne (annecurryer@gmail.com)
Thank you.



CLYST ST GEORGE AND EBFORD



Clyst St George Parish Council Chairman's Notes: December 2023

The November meeting was a relatively quiet one. We are still working on the planning application for the land behind the Hall, and also the repair of the bus stop glass in Ebford. Hopefully, all done soon. Also started looking at our precept for the 23/24 financial year. Ours is fairly small but costs of grass cutting have gone up so I think a small increase will be needed.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and hope you are looking forward to 2024. All the best.

John Manser JEManser@outlook.com

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[This section continued on page 10]

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City & Guilds

[Continued from page 8]

Clyst St George Parish Hall



Quiz Night. The Quiz Night on Saturday 11th November raised £235 for Parish Hall funds which was a fabulous result and a testament to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Parish Hall committee. Sadly the Model Citizens did not retain their title and our new parish brainiacs are the Ebford Cortinas who impressed us with their comprehensive knowledge of alloys, film posters and tropical fruit. Many congratulations to Anna and her team!



Autumn Clean. In October the trustees spent several hours cleaning and tidying up in the Hall. Thanks to their hard work, the storage area is now spider-free and the cupboard has taken on a Tardis-like quality and feels rather spacious.



Christmas Prosecco Party. The Christmas Prosecco Party will take place at the Parish Hall from 12 noon until 2 pm on Sunday 10th December. Tickets are on sale at £10 each and are available from Isobel, Claire, Paul and John. With free-flowing Prosecco and delicious canapés this is a wonderful start to the festive season.

Get Involved. If you would like to get involved in any of our community events, please contact Isobel Stubbs (chair) on 07826 806919.

Lady Seaward's C of E Primary School



Season's greetings! Lady Seaward's children shared a lovely Remembrance Service with their parents last month and raised a fantastic £172.51 for the RBL. We also raised £555 for Children in Need by taking apart in the 'Bearpee' Challenge. Thank you to everyone who supported these worthy causes! We are exploring how different faiths practise and celebrate their beliefs. Some of our Year groups will have the opportunity to visit the Exeter Mosque before the end of term.

Christmas is fast approaching with dynamic Nativity rehearsals mixed in between our class learning sessions and we look forward to celebrating Christmas at our Carol Service and at the PTFA School Christmas Fayre towards the end of term. The whole school is looking forward to our trip to Northcott Theatre to see *Dick Whittington* to really kick off the festive spirit. It is a busy term indeed at Lady Seaward's and if you would like to learn more about the school, if you are considering sending your child here, please contact the school office on email: admin@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk or call 01392 873629.

Nature Garden

Clyst St George has a delightful nature garden by the side of the parish church. The aim of the garden is to grow local Devon indigenous plants and trees and to encourage a Devon meadow with local wild flowers. Should you wish to help develop this 'green' facility, you can come along on the first Saturday of every month from 9.30 to 11 am.

Norman's Weather Report



The lasting memory of October is of a very wet month, total rainfall 135 mm (5.3 inches). However, the first ten days were warm and sunny, summer again but with shorter days. Rain arrived in the second week, 1.1 inches; in the third week 1 inch; and finally a further 3.1 inches to the end of the month here at Ebford. Over the years four inches of

rain in October is quite common, possibly due to warmer sea temperatures at this time of the year. In fact the average amount here over the last five years is 129 mm (5.1 inches). November seems to be starting in much the same vein! Norman Cann

Cards for Sale in the Church

Recycled cards are available in the church. They can be used for any occasion, eg notelets, birthday, get well, sympathy, anniversary, new home, new baby, etc. You are welcome to visit the church at any time and spend time looking through the boxes of cards. The church is open every day between 9 am and dusk. I'd also welcome any cards you may wish to recycle, except for Christmas cards. These can be left in the church for collection. Many thanks. Linda Wilkerson (01392 873699)



Little Dragons Pre-School



Little Dragons is in the process of being taken over by the First Federation. This has enabled them to look at their class structures for the future resulting in Little Dragons and Reception children being together to make a foundation stage unit. Little Dragons' provision will work alongside the Reception class; the children follow the same early years curriculum. Although the legal change can't happen immediately, we have started working closely together from September. We will also work towards extending Little Dragons' provision to be five days a week. Although there is risk the transfer could take time, we are passionate about ensuring the provision can stay open and continue to flourish. Any questions, please let us know at littledragons@live.com. Thank you. Elly, Sam, Emma, Emily and Codie

WOODBURY SALTERTON



Christmas Services and Carol Singing

Candlelit Carol Service. The Candlelit Carol Service will take place in church on Sunday 17th December at 6 pm and will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Carol Singing Round the Village. This will take place on Thursday

21st December, keeping the ancient tradition of singing carols outdoors and making a collection for The Children's Society. We welcome anyone who would like to join in for this – and you may bring your dog if you wish. Meet outside The Digger's Rest at 6 pm.

Midnight Mass. Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve will begin at 11.30 pm.



Remembrance



Graham Gerdes led the Act of Remembrance at the lychgate on Remembrance Sunday. The poppy wreath was laid on behalf of the Parish Council by Councillor Ben Girvin. A short service followed, taken by Mark Lovett and Debbie Jung led prayers. A large number of people attended, standing in the road outside the lychgate. The rain fortunately held off until later.

Local History Uncovered

During a second tidy up of the churchyard, several graves, hidden for a long time by a large rhododendron bush, have come to light. Mark Lovett, Phil Dent and Debbie Jung were giving it and the accompanying brambles a severe prune when they discovered some of the earliest

graves in the churchyard, dating from the 1850s. One is of a man, his wife and their 20 month-old child but the names are hard to read. The church was consecrated on 28th September 1844 but may not have been completely finished by then as the earliest grave in the churchyard (near the main door) is that of J G Hallett who died in May 1845 aged 12. He was killed when building materials fell from the roof.

Quiz

Thank you to everyone who has bought and sold quizzes. I have already received five completed entries! The closing date is not until 14th January. Katharine Wheeler

Woodbury Salterton Bangers and Mash Evening



The Bangers and Mash Evening on 18th November was enjoyed by 46 people of the village; we were especially pleased to see new faces. Sausages cooked – potatoes mashed – mushy peas mushed – beans heated – all topped with onion gravy. What's not to like! Lovely puddings: crumbles – gateaux – apple turnovers – millionaire's shortbread – trifle – profiteroles – coffee and walnut cake – ice cream – custard. Sincere thanks to everyone who helped in setting up and serving and to everyone who attended, making the evening a success and raising £479 towards our new kitchen. Gill Bricknell

POETRY CORNER

'The more inclement the weather, the better the exercise.' (old military maxim)

By John Smith of Clyst St Mary

Winter sidles in
Surreptitiously,
Tempting comfort streak
Perniciously.
Fireside beckons so
Seductively.
And yet,
Country walking will
Undoubtedly
Refresh mental life
Invigoratingly,
Bringing peaceful mind
©John Smith



WHITE CROSS MISSION COMMUNITY: OBITUARY



Daphne (Daff) Lemmey 4th July 1945 – 27th September 2023

Although, as her next-door-neighbour, I only knew Daff since her arrival in Woodbury, I feel honoured to have been a good friend of hers and will miss her a lot. I am grateful to her husband Rev'd Bill, to her sons Saxon and Justin (sadly Dane died just over a year ago) and to Rev'd Ann Gibbs for providing these highlights from Daff's life. Sue Bury



Born in Birmingham, Daff went to Australia as a Ten Pound Pom, where she met lots of new friends and had her three sons. Sadly her marriage to Roger did not last, and after living together in Birmingham and then Bournemouth, Roger and Saxon returned to Australia. Whilst in Bournemouth with her other two young sons, Daff gained a degree in geography and became a committed Christian and her strong faith remained with her for the rest of her life. Daff became a residential project worker, working with troublesome, homeless adolescents with the Children's Society and there met Bill, then an assistant youth worker. One thing led to another, and they married some six months later on 12th December 1987.

They moved to Yeovil when Daff got a new job with Stonham Housing, and they both worked as unpaid youth workers for a local free evangelical church, and then ended up housing various younger and older people in their home. Daff also ran a drop-in centre, not without its difficulties, in Yeovil. While Bill trained for the ministry in Cambridge, Daff lived in Lyme Regis. When Bill became licensed, they moved first to New Milton, then to Porlock, where Daff was involved in many church activities, particularly a drop-in coffee morning.

Daff was a keen walker, and with a group of friends walked half of the coast-to-coast walk, and part of the West Highland Way in Scotland. She is remembered as a strong, unsentimental and feisty person, who knew her own mind. She loved the beauty of nature, particularly the sea, and when younger, spent many happy occasions at the beach, body-surfing the waves. She encouraged her sons to get involved in activities such as walking, sports, music, dancing and singing amongst many others. Daff believed in the concept of 'get involved, or you miss out'.

Daff's friends describe her as being kind, compassionate and thoughtful, a person who would come to their aid when they were struggling – there was no fuss, but she would be there when needed. She didn't care what other people might think or say – she spoke and acted true to herself at all times. She was inspirational because those who knew her well knew that she had faced challenges herself and therefore when she gave anyone 'tough love' her honesty really upheld and encouraged the recipient. One thing about Daff was that once she decided on something, she did not change her mind.

Rev'd Ann recalls: 'Daff sometimes reminded me of a tigress in her attitude towards Bill; she was fiercely protective of him and hugely supportive – although I also know that she could despair over his ability to lose things! Indeed when he left Porlock, the card that a local artist created for him showed Daff following after Bill collecting the various things he left as he went on his way.'

Daff had a fall just before Easter this year, recovered well over a six-week period, but then, very suddenly, was diagnosed with a fast-growing brain tumour (she had previously been diagnosed with a rare blood disorder, and then with a low-grade leukaemia). She deteriorated very quickly over less than a month, and died peacefully at home on 27th September. The family are indebted to superb healthcare from the emergency response team, from Marie Curie and from Hospiscare.

FESTIVE FUNNIES



Mum, can I please have a dog for Christmas? No, you will have turkey like everyone else!

Father: Did you see Father Christmas this year, son?

Son: No, it was too dark to see him, but I heard what he said when he stubbed his toes on the edge of my bed.

[Continued on page 16]

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Kids' Corner

What's happening this month?

Christmas!

When you think of Christmas, you probably think of a Christmas tree, covered in twinkly lights and decorations.

Many people think the tradition of Christmas trees started in Victorian Britain which was from 1837 until 1901. Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert really loved Christmas. However, it is believed that the tradition actually dates back much further than that.



The tradition originally came from Germany, where Prince Albert was born, and was introduced to England during the Georgian period, when King George III was on the throne. His wife Charlotte was German and she was thought to decorate a tree for her family in the 1790s. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are thought to be the ones who made it extremely popular and fashionable to decorate a tree at Christmas like this.

Get involved...

Have a go at solving the riddle below. Send your answers in via email to clystvalleynews@gmail.com and you could be featured in the next issue.

Riddle: What goes in a birdbath but never gets wet?

We would love to have some children writing for the Clyst Valley News. If you would like to get involved, please email clystvalleynews@gmail.com

Last month's answer: What goes up but never comes back down? Your age!

[Festive Funnies continued from page 13]



John: Would you like a little Christmas cheer?

George: Yes, that would be very welcome.

John: Ok. Hip, hip hooray!

What happens if you eat Christmas decorations? You get tinselitis.



Gary hands his girlfriend a small package on Christmas morning, the size of a jewellery box. She gets incredibly excited and rips the package open to find just a pack of playing cards. 'What on earth is this?' she yells and throws the pack of cards at Gary. 'Why did you do that?'

Gary responds. "You said all you wanted for Christmas was something with diamonds in it!"

What make of motorbike does Father Christmas ride around on? A Holly Davidson!

What do you get if you cross Father Christmas and a flying saucer? A UF ho ho ho!

Answers to the Christmas Trivia Quiz on page 20 – NO CHEATING!

1. Four – Jacob Marley, spirits of Christmas Past, Present & Future
2. 364
3. 1994
4. The Polar Express
5. 3-Dancer, Dasher, Donner
6. A coin
7. Capricorn
8. Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas'
9. 3 pm
10. White
11. Green
12. Bells
13. 'Snow is falling, all around'
14. Christmas Day
15. 5th January
16. A 50 pence piece
17. Nordmann fir
18. Germany
19. Nine
20. The Nutcracker
21. Clockwise
22. Poinsettia
23. Coconut oil, dried fruit, desiccated coconut, rice bubbles
24. Babbo Natale
25. Tinsel

~~~~~  
**AND FINALLY...**

### The Sky Tonight: December



During the year the Earth has been following its orbit around the Sun, bringing new constellations into view each month. Now, as we move into December, we have completed our tour of the heavens – almost.

*If you stand out under the night sky at about 9 pm mid-month you will notice a bright yellow star almost directly overhead. This is where we will start our tour this month.*

This star, its yellow colour showing that it is in middle-age, like our Sun (but it's much, much larger) is in the constellation of Auriga, the Charioteer. The bright star is named Capella, meaning she-goat (the charioteer being depicted as having a goat on one shoulder and three kids on his arm!). *Look to the right and slightly down from Capella and you will find a triangle of three fainter stars.* These are the kids in their stall. The top star of the triangle is an eclipsing binary, like Algol in the constellation of Perseus that we met in October, except that the main star is a supergiant so that when its smaller companion moves in front, it makes little difference to the overall brightness. The pair also share a very large orbit so one complete cycle takes 27 years, with the slightly dimmer phase lasting a whole year! *The main stars of the constellation form a kite-shape with Capella at the right end of the cross bar. If you sweep*



the sky with binoculars about halfway down the line between the left end of the cross bar and the star forming the lower point of the kite you will find a line of three-star clusters. That to the left, M37, looking like a misty patch the size of the full moon is an open cluster, one of the finest in the sky. To the right of it is M36, a bright open cluster of about 60 stars and to the right again is M38, another small cluster.

To complete our journey around the zodiac there are two constellations we have yet to find – the first and the last. Look due south and about half way up the sky you will see the bright planet Jupiter. Just above and on a line between the Square of Pegasus and the Pleiades you will find the line of three main stars that make up the constellation of Aries, the Ram. There is little more to say about this constellation except that it is against these stars the apparent path of the Sun crosses from the southern to the northern half of the sky at the spring equinox. As a result this point was chosen as the datum for celestial longitude (just as the Greenwich meridian was chosen as the point of zero terrestrial longitude). It is called the First Point of Aries because it was in this constellation when chosen – but it's not there any more. You'll remember that the Earth wobbles on its axis and this has caused the crossing point to recess back into the neighbouring and last constellation of the zodiac, Pisces, the Fish.

Finding our final constellation, Pisces, is not difficult even if the stars making it up are quite faint. Look for a line of stars between Aries and Pegasus and another under the Square. They converge just below where Jupiter is at the moment. That's the constellation! Pisces has no features of note but it is worth finding even if only to know that over the year you have seen all the constellations of the zodiac.

Turning now to the planets. On the 4<sup>th</sup> (and for the following week or so) Mercury is furthest from Sun in the evening sky so this is your best chance of spotting it. Soon after sunset (BUT STILL TAKE CARE!) look for the planet with binoculars low down in the south-west. Saturn is still quite bright and is due south at 4.30 pm. The crescent moon is below it on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Jupiter, in the southern sky, is still by far the most obvious of the planets, with the faint Uranus and Neptune in much the same positions as last month – not surprising really as it takes them about 84 and 164 years respectively to circle the sky once!

With regard to other celestial events, on the night of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> we may be in for a rare display of the Andromedid meteors. They don't often perform – it's a bit hit and miss, but if they do you can see one every minute! In contrast, on the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> the Geminid meteors usually give the best annual show of celestial fireworks. They are bright and move slowly across the sky and originate, unusually, not from a comet trail but from an asteroid, Phaethon. Just one further note. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3.27 am the Sun will be at its most southerly latitude giving us our shortest day.

The Eastern sky heralds the return of the stars of winter with Orion, his belt pointing up to Aldebaran, the Eye of the Bull and to Sirius, the Dog Star, low on the horizon.

The celestial sphere has turned and another year has passed. I hope you have enjoyed our monthly wanderings through the ever-changing night sky – but there is still much to see... Clyde Bish

### Christmas in Topsham – It's Only Just Begun...



If you think Love Topsham's Christmas 2023 celebrations ended with late November's spectacular switch-on music and dance events in the town, and the ever-popular festive market...well, please think again! There's plenty of activity in December too.

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December Love Topsham will be judging the *Best Dressed Shop Windows* and the *Best Dressed Homes*. The results (and modest prizes) for First, Second and Third will be revealed on our social media and on [lovetopsham.co.uk](http://lovetopsham.co.uk) on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December. This year there's no need to enter -- please rest

assured that the Love Topsham team will be patrolling the streets to check out every display on a house, flat or shop!

Then on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December there is the annual *Love Topsham Kids Christmas Trail* -- after just a few years this is a much-loved event which always brings a lot of laughter, joy and costumes to the town! Children and their parent/guardian should register at the Love Topsham stall outside Nancy Potter House between 3 and 5 pm on 13<sup>th</sup> December. Then you can pick up a trail map and bag before heading through the town stopping at the participating shops and businesses for festive treats. And then, once again, we finish at Topsham Museum where there will be more treats...including a few adult ones for the grown-ups too!

Before we go, a big THANK YOU to lots of people who have helped make Christmas 2023 special in Topsham. The Love Topsham volunteers who helped put up trees and lights, marshalled our events and organised participants for the trail and window competitions. Thanks too to the shops and businesses who participated across a range of our activities. And a special thank you to the town's outgoing (in every sense!) Town Crier Rogan, who has been such a big part of Love Topsham events for several years.

All that remains is for us to thank you, dear readers, for your support for the town and to send every good wish for Christmas. We'll be back in the New Year on the hunt for ideas for more events for 2024. Until then please check out [lovetopsham.co.uk](http://lovetopsham.co.uk) for the latest that's going on in the town and...have a great one! From your Love Topsham team.

### The Exeter Forum Talks Programme: December 2023



The Wednesday weekly talks take place at the Mint Methodist Church in Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT. Coffee and socialising from 10.15 am; the talk starts usually at around 10.45 am. All welcome to attend these meetings. There is a small admission charge for non-members. More information at [www.exeterforum.org/talks](http://www.exeterforum.org/talks).

| Date               | Speaker                                       | Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 December         | Prof Pereira Gray and Dr Kate Sidaway-Lee PhD | <i>Seeing the Same Doctor: Does It Make a Difference?</i><br>Continuity of doctor care can be defined as repeated consultations, over time, between a patient and a particular doctor. This talk, postponed from 2020, will cover the potential benefits of continuity of care, to patients, doctors and the NHS as a whole. Potential adverse effects and whether continuity is possible in modern general practice will also be discussed.<br>Professor Sir Denis Pereira Gray OBE HonDSc FRCP FRCGP HonFFPH FmedSci was the first Professor of General Practice at the University of Exeter and the Chairman and later President of the Royal College of General Practitioners. He was the first GP Chairman of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and Ireland. His citation for his knighthood in 1999 was for quality assurance in general practice. He is currently Patron of the National Association for Patient Participation.<br>Dr Kate Sidaway-Lee PhD did her BSc and PhD in Biosciences and now works as a Research Fellow at the St Leonard's Research Practice. She has co-authored various academic articles on the subject of continuity and on other general practice-related topics. |
| 13 December        | Young Musicians from Exeter                   | <i>A Celebration of Christmas Music and Songs</i><br>Young singers from a local school will present a programme of seasonal music.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 20 and 27 December | No meetings                                   | <i>Christmas break</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



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## Christmas Trivia Quiz [Answers after Festive Funnies]

1. How many ghosts show up in 'A Christmas Carol'?
2. How many gifts were given in total in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song?
3. What year did Mariah Carey's 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' come out?
4. In which Christmas movie does Tom Hanks play six of the characters?
5. How many of Rudolph's fellow reindeers' names start with 'D'?
6. What is traditionally hidden inside a Christmas pudding?
7. If you're born on Christmas Day, what's your star sign?
8. What is the best-selling Christmas single of all time?
9. At what time is the King's Speech traditionally broadcast on Christmas Day?
10. What colour are mistletoe berries?
11. What colour suit did Santa wear until Coca Cola rebranded him in red?
12. What decoration do elves traditionally have on their shoes?
13. What is the opening line to Shakin' Stevens' 'Merry Christmas Everyone'?
14. When do the twelve days of Christmas start?
15. According to tradition, when should your Christmas decorations come down by?
16. What gift did Harry Potter receive from the Dursleys during his first Christmas at Hogwarts?
17. What type of tree is most commonly used for Christmas trees?
18. Stollen is a traditional seasonal fruit cake in which country?
19. How many reindeer drive Santa's sleigh (including Rudolph)?
20. What is the name of the ballet that takes place at Christmas?
21. When making mince pies which way should you stir your mincemeat for good luck?
22. What plant is sometimes known as the 'Christmas flower'?
23. Australia has a dessert called 'White Christmas'. What is it made of?
24. What is Santa known as in Italian?
25. Which Christmas decoration do the Royal Family not have on their trees?



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# WCMC SERVICES DECEMBER 2023

## Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

09-30 WST Holy Communion  
 09-30 CSM Family Service  
 11-15 AYL Holy Communion  
 11-15 WBY Holy Communion  
 18-00 EXT Evening Worship

## Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December

09-30 EXT Holy Communion  
 09-30 CSG Breakfast Family Service and Baptism  
 11-15 FAR Holy Communion  
 11-15 WBY Holy Communion

## Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December

TBA WBY Carol Service

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December

09-30 CSM Holy Communion  
 15-00 CSM Christingle and Crib Service  
 16-00 AYL Christingle  
 18-00 WST Carol service  
 19-00 WBY Carols on the Green

## Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December

19-00 EXT Carol Service

## Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

19-00 CSM Carol Service

## Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Eve

18-00 FAR Carol Service  
 18-00 AYL Carol Service  
 18-00 CSG Carol Service  
 23-30 WST Midnight Mass  
 23-30 WBY Midnight Mass

## Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Day

09-30 EXT Holy Communion  
 09-30 FAR Holy Communion  
 10-30 WBY Morning Worship  
 11-15 CSM Holy Communion

## Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December

11-15 WBY Whole Mission Community Service to say farewell to Rev'd Bill

## Week 1

Archdeacon Andrew Beane  
 Rev'd Tony  
 Rev'd Margaret  
 Rev'd Sid  
 Rev'd Roz

## Week 2

Rev'd Margaret  
 Rev'd Karen  
 Rev'd Peter  
 Rev'd Nigel

Rev'd Margaret

## Week 3

Rev'd Peter  
 Archdeacon Andrew Beane  
 Rev'd Margaret  
 Lay led  
 Lay led

Lay led

Lay led

## Week 4

Lay led  
 Lay led  
 Lay led  
 Rev'd Nigel  
 Rev'd Tim

Rev'd Nigel

Rev'd Canon John Philpott

Christine Grist

Rev'd Peter

## Week 5

Rev'd Bill and Rev'd Sid

AYL Aylesbeare FAR Farringdon EXT Exton WST Woodbury Salterton WBY Woodbury

CSG Clyst St George CSM Clyst St Mary

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