



Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Shepton Montague Wyke Champflower Bratton Seymour



Mothering Sunday Tulips

This month's newsletter is the 50th issue. I would like to take this moment to thank Sarah for her patience, creativity and very high presentational standards in pulling together the newsletter each month. I know that it takes a lot of work, and I hope all our

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readers agree that the final product is something that repays to the full her many hours of work. Thank you Sarah!

The very first issue in June 2021 posed and sought to answer the question: what is the point of the newsletter? You may feel after nearly five years that the answer is now self-evident. Or perhaps you don't, and you still wonder whether it is worth the effort. I have been surprised recently to discover that among people who are either regular members of our congregations or people who, although they do not attend church very often, are nonetheless supporters of our churches, many of them were unaware of the existence of the newsletter. Moreover, when informed about it, they could not see why we should bother producing a church newsletter when we already have *The Dove* magazine and, in Brewham and Pitcombe, another parish magazine as well.

To that, I would respond that if people read the newsletter, they will hopefully quickly understand what it is for and why it fulfils an important function in the life of our church communities. In my view, there is a strong rationale for our newsletter, and it is twofold.

First, it is a vehicle for content that is specific to the life of the Church and which may therefore be of no interest to most readers of the other local magazines. Whether it is reports about diocesan strategy, Church finance, the proceedings of General Synod, dates of church events and meetings, or information about books and courses that might challenge and deepen our faith, there is much that belongs in the newsletter that would not belong in a local

magazine that is not intended for a church readership.

Second, the newsletter is an important way of strengthening relationships across the Benefice, for the greater benefit of all. Many rural Benefices are spectacularly bad at this, with the individual parishes operating in isolation, often struggling and failing to do things on their own which could be much better done together. Of all the possible ways in which the rural Church might evolve over the next (say) ten years, by far the most likely is that we will start to co-operate and collaborate more across parish boundaries within our Benefices. Some of this will be as a matter of necessity – sharing resources that we cannot provide at parish level, such as clergy, ministry to children, organists, choirs, PCC officers. Some of it may be by choice, combining to do things either more efficiently, better or both. Discipleship courses and discussion groups, for example, will work better at Benefice level than at parish level, where numbers would make them unviable and we might struggle to find enough facilitators to lead multiple courses. The same might be said for our celebration of Feast days throughout the year, which at present are largely ignored because we can't manage it in all the parish churches.

In this benefice, we already do a little bit of this co-operation and collaboration. But there are no doubt many more ways in which we could benefit from growing closer together in our shared life under God, and the newsletter is a forum for sharing and encouraging one another as we do so.

If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, please send it to the Rector at the benefice office address.

Easy-to-follow details of how to receive this newsletter by email can be found on the St Mary's website (www.stmarysbruton.org), or email benefice@stmarysbruton.org. If you are aware of someone who might like to receive it but does not use email, please consider printing a copy yourself and delivering it to them.

News from our Parishes

St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour

We have now received some advice about the ceiling repair work that is required at St Nicholas. It is perhaps not as bad as it might have been, but it is still a major project for a small church with very little money in the bank. We hope that we will be able to gather enough support from the local community and through grant applications to be able to complete this urgent work.

St John's, Brewham

At St John Baptist, we are now able to enjoy the results of the re-wiring project, with wonderful new lighting and heaters and cabling, switches and sockets that are safe to use – an unaccustomed joy!

St Mary's, Bruton

At St Mary's, we are still investigating how best to repair the section of roof from which lead was recently stolen. A like-for-like replacement is the simplest, but might invite a return visit from our light-fingered friends, so we are looking into the possibility of less tempting roofing materials.

St Peters, Shepton Montague

The venerable churchwarden of St Peter's excelled himself recently by setting questions for the quiz night at the Montague Inn which struck the perfect balance between being possible and impossible to answer. It was a highly enjoyable evening and raised a good amount of money for St Peter's. The most reliable outcome of such quiz nights is that they reveal the paucity of the Rector's useful knowledge...

St Peters, Redlynch

We recently held a concert at St Peter's, Redlynch – a song recital by Tarisha. It was a perfect setting for an intimate evening centred on our wonderful native trees.

Spring Cleaning

Both St Leonard's and St Mary's had Spring clean days in readiness for Holy Week and we are very grateful to all who helped out in any way.



As the sap rises, ideas are beginning to flow for fundraising events around the Benefice later in the year. If you are planning an event, please do be sure to notify the benefice office in advance of fixing the date, so that we can try to avoid date clashes, either with other Church events in the Benefice or with other known events in the local area.

Two people from the Benefice recently attended a day conference about ministry with children, young people and families. The specific focus was how we can offer this ministry to younger people in churches like ours, as opposed to large urban churches. Anyone who is interested in exploring this in more depth is invited to get in touch with the Rector.

We are just about to enter the season of our Annual Meetings, at which we present reports and elect wardens and PCC members. Some wardens and long-serving PCC members will be standing down this year, notably Gloria and Geoffrey Barber and David Cowie. The Annual Meeting is a good time to survey the landscape and consider whether there may be members of our worshipping communities with things to offer to our PCCs. If you can think of someone who you think would make a good addition to one of our PCCs, do encourage them to consider it, and to contact the Rector if they would like to find out more about what is involved.



Kimberley Snapshot

They walk like Emus!

At Lombadina we had dormitories for both the girls and the boys who were sent from pastoral holdings for Primary education. This, at times, produced much mirth as most of these children had never been away from home, let alone gone to school!

We had on the team of the missionaries teachers and nurses who were prepared to look after these children. We also arranged – from within the Aboriginal Community – for them to be mentored by Elders in ‘the Law’, which meant the law of their people.



Emu Dromaius novaehollandiae, with chicks. Image: Ernst Weiher

We had a number of girls come to us from Amanbidji, formerly known as Auvergne Station, This had been owned by the Vestey's prior to purchase by the Commonwealth (for the community). We were amazed by them: they were incredibly non-worldly, and had virtually no understanding of the world in which they were living, but could these girls ever run, and they could run very, VERY, fast! In many ways they reminded us of those Kenyan long distance runners. Indeed, when we went to the East Kimberley Inter-Schools Sports Day, they literally won every race, but especially the long distance races where they lapped the other runners, male and female!

One day I was in the laundry when a couple of them came in, and we got talking about what was happening in the community. Every question started with 'Miss Clare...?', and I was quizzed on all types of things. Then came the question 'Miss Clare... Is Mr John your wife?' Obviously they had not understood the terminology regarding male and female in the European World, so I had a long session in the laundry with these delightful young women.

I have never understood why we have never seen Olympic long distance runners from this area of Australia – these girls were simply *AMAZING!*



Aurin Girls' Choir (Hungary)

We are very excited to be welcoming back the amazing Aurin Girls' Choir for a concert on Monday 29 June, 7.30pm, at St Mary's Church, Bruton. From the Kodály Music School in Kecskemét, these girls and the younger Miraculum Children's Choir have visited Bruton many times in the past and delighted us with their performances.

Ticket details will be available in May. In the meantime please save the date. We are also hoping to include a number of local children in a workshop with this inspirational choir.

There are 48 girls in the Aurin choir this time, aged 13–19. If anyone might be able to help with hosting the girls or staff for two nights 28–29 June, please email Barbara as soon as possible:

bjenkinson708@btinternet.com



Redlynch Chapel

If you have a care or concern for St Peter's, Redlynch, then please come along to a meeting on Saturday 18 April. This will be an open meeting for anyone interested in the future of the chapel. The purpose of the meeting is to try to work out together whether the chapel has a future and if so what that might be. The context is that, on current forecasts, the chapel will run out of money early in 2027 such that it will not be able to pay its insurance premium or electricity standing charges and will therefore have to close and probably be sold. That would be a sad loss to the community.

As readers of this newsletter hopefully know, every Church of England parish has to be financially self-sufficient: we do not receive any financial support from the state nor from the central Church of England. Every local church has to pay its own way. St Peter's has no regular income at all. And it does have unavoidable running costs. Its funds will run out in early 2027. So this is decision time: is there a viable rescue plan or will we have to close? If this is something that you care about, please come and be part of the discussion.

The meeting will be held at St Peter's Chapel, Sat 18 April, 10.30am.



Save it or sell it?



Please come to an open public meeting
to discuss the future of
St Peter's Chapel, Redlynch.

Saturday 18 April at 10.30 am,
Redlynch Chapel.

All are welcome.

The Coat of Hopes

The Coat of Hopes is a precious patchwork garment on a long-term pilgrimage through the UK, made by, and worn and walked by, hundreds of people over a distance of over 2000 miles so far. This coat carries their hopes in the face of climate and ecological breakdown.

The Coat of Hopes and the pilgrims that accompany it will sleep in Bruton on Thursday 16 April on their way from Hilfield Friary near Cerne Abbas to Frome, a four day walk as part of the current route from Britain's most easterly to most westerly point – Lowestoft to Land's



End. The pilgrims have reached this point only through the kind hospitality of many, many communities who have sheltered and very often fed them. Their usual accommodation is the floor of a local community centre or most often church, as the pilgrims carry sleeping bags and mats.

St Mary's, Bruton, will accommodate between five and seven pilgrims on 16 April, and host a talk in the church at 7.30pm.

The Coat's work in this ongoing pilgrimage is to offer everyone the invitation to stop, and in wearing it meet in our bodies both this climate and ecological emergency, and our connection to all those others who face it with us. It also carries in its fabric the stories of people and places encountered throughout this land. Our offering is to hold an open event on each evening of arrival, to share the Coat, its song and stories, and to hear from local people, so as to carry their stories forward.



The Coat of Hopes climbing Beachy Head

Joint Choral Concert in St Mary's



The combined forces of King's Bruton Chapel Choir, Bruton Choral Society, and St Mary's Church and Children's Choirs, came together for a magnificent Joint Choral Concert in St Mary's Church on Sunday 22 March. The choirs created an impressively full and balanced choral sound, rising confidently to the energy and brilliance of Vivaldi's well-known Gloria, while the accompaniment was provided by the professional Stringendo Ensemble, whose stylish and assured playing brought clarity, momentum and colour to the performance.



The solo contributions were a particular highlight, with all soloists having connections with King's. Pupils Felicity, Lucy, Nella, Max and Tilly performed

with confidence and musicality well beyond their years, each bringing a distinct character to their movements. The alto aria *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris* was beautifully delivered by Hannah, a member of the St Mary's Church Choir and a Wellesley House Matron.

The performance captured a real sense of shared purpose and enjoyment and was a fitting showcase of the rich musical life in Bruton. Well done to all the performers and soloists, with special thanks to conductor Ashley Marshfield (Director of Music at King's Bruton), and to Barbara Jenkinson (Musical Director of Bruton Choral Society). Keep your eyes and ears peeled for a recording of Vivaldi's Gloria from this concert – coming soon and well worth the wait!



Caring for God's Acre

Love your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature 2026

Registrations are open on the Caring for God's Acre website for Love Your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature, our annual initiative to celebrate and monitor the wildlife to be found in churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries across the UK. The date this year are Saturday 6–Sunday 14 June.



It is promoted by Caring for God's Acre in partnership with the Church of England, the Church in Wales, and A Rocha UK. It coincides with National Cemeteries Week, hosted by the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, as well as with the Great Big Green Week run by the Climate Coalition.

Burial ground managers, PCCs and Friends groups are encouraged to get together with congregations and local residents to run events observing and recording wildlife, whether hosted by a local expert, as a fun activity for families, or any number of options in between.

Feedback from 2025 was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of participating groups giving either a 4-star or 5-star rating. A fantastic 58% said that attendees included people from outside their usual community, indicating that running an event helped to bring in new people to appreciate the wildlife treasures to be

found. When asked to describe the highlight, quotes sent in by participating groups included “Finding hedgehog poo in our city centre churchyard!” and “A lovely evening looking for nature at its best.”

Records can be submitted to CfGA via the iNaturalist app, an enjoyable and straightforward way to document findings that also assists in species identification, enhancing wildlife encounters. Simply visit the CfGA website to find out how to join the Beautiful Burial Grounds Project within the app and start submitting your records.

In 2026 we are specifically focusing on swifts, and the first 500 to sign up can request a booklet supplied by Action on Swifts, as well as the option to request copies of our *Starter Guide to Burial Ground Heritage and Wildlife*, plus a *Guide to the Wildlife of Burial Grounds* specially produced for us by the Field Studies Council.



Bitham Wells Meadows April 4 Cut and Rake

Please join us from 10am at the field gate on Cole Road opposite the Sexey's School layby, just above Cole Mead:

what3words ///nuance.improves.witty

Local ecologist Angus Davies has been tending the lesser known meadow of Bitham Wells, across the road from Sexey's School, for over 30 years. Once part of Lusty Hill Farm, it was donated to the school by David Stroud on his death for £1. From 1840 to the present it has been semi-natural calcareous grassland, which indicates that it has likely been grassland for a very long time. The part that hasn't been ruined post-war is the scarp, for obvious reasons.

Bitham Wells is one of the few areas of species rich grassland surviving around Bruton. Angus has been monitoring its ecology since 1994, earning his PhD in the process, and managing it since 2000. It has not been grazed since 2000, and he has been able to save a quarter of the scarp slope through management to prevent succession.

On the morning of Saturday 4 April, Angus will be leading the annual mow and rake of the slope (weather permitting as always), to encourage wildflowers, and the pollinators that feed upon their nectar.

We have also sourced some Wildflower seeds, which we will distribute along the recently cleared sides of the top Abbey Pond, after also raking these.

Please bring hand tools, dress appropriately for the weather, and a wheelbarrow would also be helpful. See you on 4 April!



East Somerset Federation



Bruton
Primary School



Upton Noble
C of E VC Primary
School

Governor Recruitment

We are currently looking for new co-opted governors to join our friendly governing body. Our governors come from a range of different backgrounds, skills and experience but all share a common interest of wanting the best possible education for the children in our Federation. Governors are essential for the effectiveness and success of the federation and it is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling role. All governors serve a 4 year term. They act as a 'critical friend', working voluntarily to strategically oversee the running of the Federation. We would welcome applications from people with experience in:

- Finance
- Health and Safety
- Christian Distinctiveness

If you are interested in becoming a governor for the East Somerset Federation please send a letter of application to: clerk@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk by 31st May 2026

Bell Sunday

17th May is 'Bell Sunday'. It is the closest Sunday to St. Dunstan's Day, the Patron Saint of Bellringers.

To mark the event this year, the Cary Branch Change Ringers are organising 'The Great Cary Branch Ring'. Cary Branch is our sub-division of the Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers (bath-wells.org).

Given that many churches in the Branch/Deanery no longer have weekly services and that many towers no longer have ringers, it has been quite some time since all the bells in the branch have rung on the same Sunday. So, 'The Great Cary Branch Ring' is an attempt to ring the bells in all 44 towers/churches that are part of the Association and celebrate our communities.

We are dividing the branch into eight geographical areas. For each area, we're trying to muster a team of at least six 'roving ringers' who will cover the towers. For the Bruton Group we are likely to cover Bruton, Shepton Montague, Pitcombe, Castle Cary, Ansford, and Yarlinton.

Our Bruton team has also discussed making a day of it so that we can also cover the additional chiming towers in the Bruton Benefice: Wyke Champflower, Redlynch, Brewham, and Bratton Seymour.



St Faithful's, Havnot: Review



Sitting somewhere between *The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass* and *The Vicar of Dibley*, the fictional world of St Faithful's, Havnot, is a series of stand-alone stories about parish life that is posted on Facebook and is written by Canon Tom Kennar. The characters 're-tell' anecdotes from the fictional church community, and the life of their parish church within it. There is a warm gentle humour throughout, and also thought-provoking messages intertwined, exploring how the church community serves God, and how the people within the community play their part, often without realising it.

The Facebook posts make clear that 'AI may assist' but that 'the drafting and publishing is entirely human'. There are some fictional books written about St Faithful's too, and also some merchandise, although neither has been explored for this review.

Occasionally issues that church communities find difficult to discuss are also tackled, but in the gentlest of ways (with the tea urn at the ready), and from a variety of perspectives. Take a look and see what you think!

<https://www.facebook.com/stfaithfulshavnot>

Prayer Ministry

The prayer for April is a personal prayer:

O Lord, give us more charity, more self-denial, more likeness to thee. Teach us to sacrifice our comforts to others, and our likings for the sake of doing good. Make us kindly in thought, gentle in word, generous in deed. Teach us that it is better to give than to receive, better to forget ourselves than to put ourselves forward, better to minister than to be ministered unto. And to thee the God of love, be all glory and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

(Henry Alford 1810-1871)

Wednesday Prayer Meeting

There is a prayer meeting every Wednesday morning in St Mary's where some of us meet to pray for our community. Anyone is welcome to join us. If you have any requests for prayer, please send them to the Rector and he will let us know.



EVENTS AT ST MARY'S



**Join
our
mailing
list**



SHEPTON MONTAGUE PCC

in association with

SOMERSET MOVIOLA

proudly presents



THE CHORAL

2025/113 minutes/15

in St Peter's Church, Shepton Montague

Thursday 9th April at 7.30pm

Doors open 7.00pm for drinks & snacks

Tickets: £7.00 (£3.50 for under 15)

pay on the door with card

or at the bar with cash

All proceeds go to St Peter's Church

For more information please contact Sarah Maude 01749 812 149

Visit our website at: www.moviola.org



Charity No 1107649

The Coat of Hopes
St Mary's Church, Bruton,
16 April, 7.30pm



THE BUDAPEST CAFE ORCHESTRA

ST MARY'S CHURCH,
BRUTON, 6 MAY 7.30PM

TICKETS TBC

An Eclectic, 4-piece, acoustically electrifying orchestra playing gypsy & folk-flavoured music from all around the world, the BCO deliver traditional Balkan, Russian, Hungarian and Romanian traditional gypsy and folk music in their own fresh and surprising way.

Established by award-winning British composer, violinist and teacher Christian Garrick in 2009, BCO are specialists of the 'distilled concerto', e.g. the Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky and Greig Squeezebox Concertos, and admired for their artful re-workings of masterpieces by the greats of the Romantic era.





Aldhelm
Gatherings

Aldhelm Gatherings
and Events

Aldhelm Pilgrimage Day 2026

Saturday 23rd May 2026
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

at

Milton Abbey

DT11 0BZ

(Near Blandford, Dorset)

***Day of welcome, encounter,
reflection, activities and fun!***

Pilgrims' Festival Eucharist
to commemorate St Aldhelm
with the Bishop of Sherborne

Open to all.
Good access

Beautiful setting!

*Throughout the day – a
chance to talk, to pray, to
wander and wonder, to
listen to each other and to
make new friends. All in
the spirit of St Aldhelm.*

Booking in

Expressions of
interest NOW

aldhelm2023@gmail.com



Holy Week

at St Mary's

30 March – 5 April

29 March – Palm Sunday, 11am

HOLY WEEK

1 April – Compline, Sexey's Hospital Chapel, 7pm

2 April – Maundy Thursday, Eucharist of the Last Supper & Watch, 6pm

3 April – Good Friday, An Hour at the Cross, 2pm

4 April – Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, 8.30pm (2 Plox Green – email to pre-book at benefice@stmarysbruton.org)

5 April – Easter Sunday:

Service of Light, 6.30am, followed by breakfast

Sung Eucharist, 11am

www.stmarysbruton.org

Benefice Services: April

Season Lent (Purple)	Thursday 2 April Maundy Thursday	Friday 3 April Good Friday	Saturday 4 April Holy Saturday*
St John the Baptist, Brewham			
St Mary's, Bruton	6pm Eucharist of the Last Supper and Watch	2pm An hour at the Cross	8.30pm Easter Vigil*
St Leonard's, Pitcombe			
St Peter's, Redlynch			
St Peter's, Shepton Montague			
Holy Trinity, Wyke			
St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour			

*The Easter Vigil will be at 2 Plox Green unless numbers are large. Please pre-book by emailing benefice@stmarysbruton.org

Benefice Services: April

Season (Various)	Sunday 5 April Easter Sunday	Sunday 12 April Easter 2
St John the Baptist, Brewham	9.30am Eucharist (CW)	
St Mary's, Bruton	6am Service of Light 8am Holy Communion (BCP) 11am Easter Eucharist (CW1)	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 11am Sung Eucharist (CW1)
St Leonard's, Pitcombe	11am Holy Communion (BCP)	9.30am Matins (BCP)
St Peter's, Redlynch	11am Easter Eucharist	
St Peter's, Shepton Montague	9.30am Easter Eucharist	No service
Holy Trinity, Wyke	9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)	
St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour	9.30am Easter Eucharist	

Benefice Services: April

Season Lent (Purple)	Sunday 19 April Easter 3	Sunday 26 April Easter 4
St John the Baptist, Brewham	9.30am Morning Prayer	
St Mary's, Bruton	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 11am All Age Worship	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 9am Breakfast Service 11am Eucharist (CW1)
St Leonard's, Pitcombe	11am Holy Communion (BCP)	6pm Evensong (BCP)
St Peter's, Redlynch		
St Peter's, Shepton Montague		9.30am Eucharist (CW1)
Holy Trinity, Wyke		
St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour		

Diary Dates

April

- 2 • Maundy Thursday Eucharist, St Mary's, 6pm
- 3 • Good Friday, an Hour at the Foot of the Cross, St Mary's, 2pm
- 4 • *Easter Vigil, 2 Plox Green, 8.30pm
- 5 • Easter Sunday, Service of Light, St Mary's, 6am
- 5 • Eucharist, St John's, Brewham, 9.30am
- 5 • Easter Eucharist, St Peter's, Shepton Montague, 9.30am
- 5 • Holy Communion, Holy Trinity, Wyke, 9.30am
- 5 • Easter Eucharist, St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour, 9.30am
- 5 • Easter Sunday Eucharist, St Mary's, 11am
- 5 • Easter Eucharist, St Peter's, Redlynch, 11am
- 5 • Holy Communion, St Leonard's, Pitcombe, 11am
- 9 • **EVENT:** Shepton Film Night
- 10 • Pitcombe APCM, 6pm
- 14 • Shepton Montague APCM, Village Hall, 6pm
- 16 • The Coat of Hopes in St Mary's, Bruton, 7.30pm
- 17 • Shepton Spring Supper, 6pm
- 22 • Bruton APCM, 5.30pm
- 23 • *Wilder Bruton*, a talk by Urquart & Hunt, St Mary's, 7.30pm
- 27 • Brewham APCM, 7pm, Colinshayes

*Easter Vigil: please pre-book at benefice@stmarysbruton.org

Diary Dates

May

- 1 • Pitcombe APCM & PCC, 6pm
- 2 • Sophie Sherwood Cyanotypes, St Mary's, 10am–4.30pm TBC
- 4 • Bank Holiday
- 6 • **EVENT:** Budapest Cafe Orchestra, ST Mary's, 7.30pm
- 10 • Evensong at Wells Cathedral (farewell to Archdeacon Anne Gell), time to be confirmed
- 14 • **EVENT:** Shepton Film Night
- 14 • Deanery Ascension Day Eucharist, St Mary's, 7pm
- 15 • Pitcombe PCC, 2.30pm
- 20 • Bruton PCC, 5.30pm
- 23 • Shepton Plant Sale, 2pm
- 23 • King's School Commemoration Service, St Mary's
- 25 • Spring Bank Holiday
- 31 • Wyke Patronal Festival, 6.30pm

Contact

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