

MERRIOTT MESSENGER

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The information and views in the Merriott Messenger are those provided by the named individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by the Editorial Team. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the information given is accurate, the Merriott Messenger cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Copy date for the February issue is 12th January.



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That's Christmas lunch all stitched up!



*A Christmas display seen at Castle Garden Centre, Sherborne.
Sent in by Mo Frampton*



Top Marks for Merriott Village Hall

Hallmark Standards

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) each year offers Village Halls the opportunity to be assessed for 3 Hallmark standards, which are promoted nationwide. Hallmark 1 is for Charity administration and management; Hallmark 2 is for Health, safety, security and licences; and Hallmark 3 is for Community/social awareness, forward planning and development.

Earlier in June, 2 assessors visited Merriott Village Hall for about five hours, met with 4 Trustees and had a close look at the Hall, its policies and practices. As a result the Hall has been awarded Hallmark standards 1, 2 and 3. Not only does this give the Trustees some confidence that Hall management is deemed satisfactory, but it also has some benefits for example in the form of lower insurance costs.

In the picture the Hall Chairman, Steve Bateman, is receiving the Hallmark certificates at the Annual General Meeting of CCS held in Long Sutton Village Hall in October.

Quiz Night

On 26th October 70 eager contestants took part in a quiz. Supper of a posh ploughman's and choice of desserts was provided by My Kitchen which is opening a new café at the Farm Shop in Bower Hinton. The evening was much enjoyed and raised £375 for Hall funds.

Co-op support for the Hall

The Hall will be one of three charities for the next year which will benefit from Co-op charity support.

If you have a Co-op Membership and would like to support the Hall please nominate it as your preferred charity by either going on line to www.coop.co.uk or telephoning 0800 0234708.



John Bowman



The Merriott Messenger Team is very grateful to the Co-op for their support over the last year. In total we have received £1,209.24 which will enable us to produce several larger editions in the coming months. Further details of this support will appear in the February Messenger.

John Bowman

News from the Merriott Heritage Trust—Part 1—Our Benefactor



As I depart from my direct involvement in the Merriott Heritage Trust, my thoughts return to friend and neighbour, Cathy Herriman and how she might have viewed the Trustees' efforts in the four and a half years since her premature death and the launch of the Trust she had wished to see established.

When Cathy came to live in Merriott in 2002, she quickly became aware of the loss to the village heritage from the major "slum clearances" initiated by post-war governmental attitudes to old buildings. Here, in Merriott, a modest Somerset village, a whole swathe of historic property was swept away along Broadway for road widening. The last two cottages were demolished in 1984 and, despite initial planting by SSDC, the site quickly became unmanaged. Some twenty years later it was taken in hand by a group of local volunteers and became an attractive feature of the village, now maintained by the Trust. The two small cottages between Nos 6 and 10 Lower Street were demolished in 1968 and Nos 18 and 20 Lower Street were also largely demolished in 1972/73 and rebuilt on their original footprint with only the original gable wall surviving. Nos 6, 31/33 and 41/43 Lower Street

were listed as unfit for human habitation and required extensive modernisation if they were to survive. It is little wonder that Civic Societies dedicated to preserving and enhancing our historic fabric were spawned during the late 1950s and 1960s.

Cathy spent her first 2 years in Merriott sympathetically restoring No 6 Lower Street, doing much of the non-specialist work herself. Subsequently, she became interested in the physical and social history of the village, founded and ran the Local History Group and, together with Paul Fisher, organised a very successful Finds Day in the Tythe Barn. She was adept at seeking out and acquiring village artefacts and historic documents, and these now form part of the Trust's collection together with her books on history.

One of the Trust's treasures, which Cathy found on Ebay, is a notebook compiled in 1838 by William Fitchett Cuff (1805 - 1876) of Moorlands, which records the ownership and tenancies of all the land holdings in the Parish, presumably as a contribution to the Tythe Assessment. William Fitchett Cuff was Chairman of the Local Poor Law Institution for some 13 years in the later part of his life and

presumably supervised the construction of the new Workhouse for the area in Chard, which is now the site of Chard Hospital. It was in this capacity that he may have co-operated with, or at least met, George Gilbert Scott, who was renowned for his work on Workhouses at this time. Whether this possible connection was or was not responsible for the widespread supposition that Gilbert Scott designed Moorlands House is purely speculative. What is not in dispute is that Mr Cuff introduced modern farming methods to Merriott, and Cathy's last act was to rescue the Winnower and Scratter from his "Model Farm" at Moorlands before its development as housing.

At her own expense, Cathy made copies of the Poor Law Map of 1830, found at the Rectory. It is Merriott's earliest comprehensive map so far discovered and, according to the Somerset Record Office in Taunton, the only survivor of the Somerset survey of that time.

However, the final proof of Cathy's deep interest in the history of Merriott and her love of the village came after her death with a substantial endowment for the purposes of preserving Merriott's natural and built environment.



The Merriott Messenger editorial team would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

As usual, there will be no January issue of the Merriott Messenger. Copy date for the February issue is 12th January.

How many of these little Santa's can you find (excluding this one). Answer on page 11.



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December will be a busy and exciting time at All Saints Church as usual, with varied seasonal services and events to suit all ages and tastes.

Advent Sunday is on the **1st December**. We will gather at St George's Church, Hinton St George with the 'Sixteen Bells Choir' for an **Advent Communion Service**. The ever popular **Christingle Service** takes place at Merriott the following day, the **2nd December**, and is a great way to discover the meaning of God's special gift of his Son to the world. The rest of the world might think Christmas starts in September, but for the Church, most of December is traditionally a time of preparing our hearts and minds for the greatest gift of all – the birth of Jesus the Christ. To help make some time for this, there will be an **Advent Quiet Morning** in Lopen on **Saturday 7th December** (take some time out of the busy-ness for quiet prayer and reflection).

News from All Saints

The **All Age Carol Service** will this year be in the early evening of Sunday the **15th December**, again with the 'Sixteen Bells Choir' in support. We will have a Christmas-themed **Café Church** in the Tithe Barn on **Sunday 22nd December**. The **Crib Service** is as usual in the church on Christmas Eve. So, after quite a build-up, we finally welcome the good news of Christ's birth with a Benefice **Christmas Eve Communion** (midnight mass) and our **Christmas Day Communion**. Looking towards January, there are special services for **Epiphany** (in Lopen). You can find more details in the January Church Link magazine. We would be delighted to see you. Have a most blessed, happy and peaceful Advent and Christmas.

Rev Bob Hicks

All Services at All Saints, Merriott
(unless otherwise stated)

December

Sun 1st Advent Sunday - 10.30am
Benefice Advent Carol Service, Hinton St George Church (with the 'Sixteen Bells Choir') [no services in Merriott]

Mon 2nd 7pm Christingle Service
(Christingle making from 6.30pm)

Sat 7th 10am-12pm Advent Quiet Morning, Lopen Church

Sun 8th 10.30am Parish Communion

Sun 15th 6pm All Age Carol Service (with the 'Sixteen Bells Choir')

Sun 22nd 9am Holy Communion, 4pm Café Church, Tithe Barn, Church Street, Merriott

Tues 24th Christmas Eve - 4pm **Crib Service**, 11.30pm **Benefice Christmas Eve Communion**

Wed 25th Christmas Day - 10.30am **Christmas Communion**

Sun 29th 10.30am Benefice Communion

January

Sun 5th The Epiphany - 10.30am **Benefice Communion for Epiphany**, Lopen Church [no services in Merriott]

Sun 12th 10.30am Parish Communion

Sun 19th 10.30am Family Service

Sun 26th 9am Holy Communion, 4pm Café Church, Hinton St George Church

CPR and Defibrillation Training

Early November saw 18 Merriott residents attend a CPR & Defibrillator Course in the Rec Pavilion. This valuable course was arranged by the Parish Council and run by Simon, a community responder based in a neighbouring village.



Information flowed with plenty of time for questions, as well as providing an opportunity to try out CPR and the use of the defibrillator (AED) on both adult and child-size dummies.

The value of instruction in basic CPR techniques

was very clear, reinforced by the awareness that immediate action is required if the casualty is to stand a chance of recovery. Immediate use of CPR and the Defibrillator can improve the chances of casualty survival from around 5% to closer to 75%, and can maintain life until the emergency services arrive.

The Defibrillator is a simple machine to use, actively talking to the user with very clear step by step instructions. It is checked monthly and is something that has been tried and tested with all groups from age 6 years and up. It should not present a challenge for any first on scene responder.

There is currently just one Defibrillator located in Merriott, sited on the rear wall of the Village Hall. Surprisingly these machines are not funded by the NHS and can only be sourced if sufficient funding can be raised through private means. The overall cost of an installation is in the region of

£2,000 (for both the Defib and the supporting cabinet) and consideration will now be focussed on activities to raise the money for another unit. These activities will be advertised around the village in due course, but as food for thought, the £2,000 needed amounts to less than £1 per head, and it may be just the thing that you later rely on to save your life.

Paula Bateman

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New Sponsor

Anytime Fitness is Yeovil's only 24-hour fitness club in the heart of Yeovil. We're literally open 24/7 365 days a year, meaning we really are the most convenient club in town. Plus, we offer free car parking, free group exercise classes, free kick start program, free members app and an amazing club culture with access to over 4,500 clubs worldwide. Our 2-hours free car parking at the Quedam Car Park is quick and easy too, when you join you'll receive a key fob which will allow you access to the club. The carpark is a few seconds walk from our front door and with 24-hour security you'll always feel safe with us.

Our state-of-the-art Life Fitness treadmills let you watch Netflix while you run, and our Concept 2 rowing machines have games you can play while you row. We're all about finding the fun in working out and keeping you motivated even on your off days.

Our friendly team are passionate about our members reaching their goals and are on hand seven days a week for support. Whether your goals are big or small, we can help you get to a healthier place.

If you have any questions or you would like to come and see the club, you can call us on 01935 350247 to book a club tour and have a free 3-day trial or email us yeovil@anytimefitness.co.uk www.anytimefitness.co.uk

Hinton St. George 'Flix in the Stix'

presents
'Singing In the Rain' (PG),
on **Saturday 14th December**



in Hinton Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Tickets £5 in advance from the Village Shop and Dorothy's Tea Room, or £5.50 on the door. Doors open 7.00pm. To reserve tickets please contact Bob Kefford on 01460 72563.

Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Jean Hagen and Donald O'Connor star in one of the greatest and most successful musicals ever filmed - filled with memorable songs, lavish routines and Kelly's fabulous song-and-dance number performed in the rain.

Set during the advent of the "talkies" 'this famous 1952 film is a wonderful parody of the birth of talkies that has great wit, an intelligent script, terrific music and dancing that can't be beat.' The San Francisco Chronicle. As this is our Christmas film there will be refreshments provided for all.

Andrew Overhill

Service of Remembrance in Merriott

The Service on Sunday 10th Nov. was well supported by uniformed representatives from the local Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. The weather held out and whilst it was cold it remained dry. One of the names on the WW1 Plaque recognised Archibald Sweet of Shiremoor Hill, whose great grandson carried the Beavers standard on the day.

It may be of interest to learn that, on November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme. None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why. Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random. The other three were reburied. A French Honour Guard was selected and stood by the coffin overnight of the chosen soldier. It was his intention that all of the relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the Unknown Warrior could very well be their lost husband, father, brother or son. The red poppy was the



flower that was first to appear on the battle fields, spurred on by the upheaval in the soil and the nutrients that resulted from the cordite content of the shells. This is the reason we wear the poppy as a mark of remembrance.

Steve Bateman



At Art Club we decided to create our own Remembrance poppy display - this can be seen on the main gate and along part of the railings



The poppies are made by recycling plastic bottles which were painted and moulded.

The red poppies represent the 33 men who died in the First World War and the 10 who died in the Second World War, as on the memorial in the Churchyard.

We also made some purple poppies to remember the animals that died serving during the wars.

Wendy Abbott

Gardening quote of the month

Sent in by
Mo Frampton



"At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;
But like of each thing that in season grows."
- William Shakespeare



Advice from the NHS



Winter can be an especially difficult time for people, especially for those living with long term conditions, the elderly and people living with disabilities. It is therefore important that those who are able to help those who are less capable do so.

There are some simple things we can all do to help everyone stay well this winter. For example, make sure that your elderly or vulnerable friends and relatives are keeping their home warm (at least 18 degrees), have enough food in the house and are wearing appropriate clothing for the weather.

For those living alone, the risk is higher still. If you have an elderly neighbour who lives alone, please check in on them every now and then to make sure they are OK – just a quick chat is all that's needed.

At the first sign of a winter illness, whether it be a cough, cold or a sore throat, don't suffer in silence – make sure you go to your local pharmacist for advice. Your local pharmacist is clinically trained and can offer you expert advice and recommend a range of over the counter treatments and remedies. And if they think you need to see a nurse or doctor, they'll tell you.

Merriott Social Venue

Well, what a 'Cider Festival' we had with the 'Ship of Fools' and 'The Twerzles', both giving us such fantastic entertainment, we nearly ran out of booze but not quite!! November was very busy with lots of bingos, childrens parties and football on Sky Sports. Our Market was a bit quiet, but the weather that day didn't help, so we hope everyone will come to our Christmas Market on **Sunday 8th December** 10am until 1pm. This will be the last one until March 2020.

Tickets for the children's Christmas party, New Years Eve, Quiz & Cocktails Night and Polar Express Cinema are all available from the venue during opening hours. Here's what's on :

Sat 30th November - Christmas Bingo in aid of Merriott Rovers, 6.30pm

Sat 7th December - Christmas Quiz & Cocktails 7.30pm start

Sun 8th December - Christmas Market - 10am-1pm free mince pie

Sun 8th December - Polar Express Cinema - 2pm. £6.50 inc film, snack, drink & pressie.

Sat 14th December - Christmas Bingo in aid of Merriott Majorettes open 6.30pm

Sun 15th December - Pamper Night 6pm

Sun 22nd December - Childrens Christmas Party. £3 per child includes food & present 2pm - 4pm

Sun 22nd December - Christmas Bingo & adult party Early eyes down 6pm !!

Closed Christmas Day

Boxing Day open at 12pm

New Year's Eve - Music of the Decades - A fancy dress disco for all the family to enjoy, £5 per adult, children free ! Includes light buffet & party items.

From all the staff and committee members at Merriott Social Venue, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Lola Dry

Your Village Hall needs



You will already be aware of just how valuable the Merriott Village

Hall is to the life of the village. It's heavily utilised by indoor sports teams, keep fit classes, family parties, meetings and a variety of other social events.

A small team of Trustees manage the hall and its activities and they're now in need of a few new volunteers to join the committee in order to help keep the facility running.

The task is far from onerous and asks for just a very few hours of your time each month. Without the support of volunteers, the hall would no longer be able to run; thus, this is a plea for those in the village who have a little spare time to engage, get involved and support the management team.

Point of contact:

Steve Bateman - m: 07856 559 467

OPEN GROUP

December 12th -

Christmas Gathering with mince pies and mulled wine.

Secret Santa, bring a

recycled gift or a charity shop buy to the value of £3.

January 9th - Coffee evening. Bring along an obscure object

January 23rd - Ann and Clive Barker's latest travels in Eastern Europe.

Contact - Marion Biggs 74170 or email: marionbiggs169@btinternet.com

Marion Biggs

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Footpath Walk



Merriott to Haselbury Plucknett, via Haselbury Mill



Distance from Social Venue, Merriott to Haselbury Mill – 1.5 miles (35 mins). Red and yellow lines afford a minor route option.

Distance from Haselbury Mill on to the White Horse pub in Haselbury Plucknett – 1.2 miles (20 mins)



Starting at the Merriott Social Venue (built in 1844 by the Sail Cloth Mill owner) head down Tail Mill lane, passing the relatively new Bat House that sits on the site of the water holding pond and the early 19th Century flax storage warehouse (now

converted to private dwellings), both sitting on a site that dates back to around the 13th Century.

Tail Mill began life as a spinning mill and originally comprised of a boiler house, steam engine house, spinning machinery and ultimately the waterwheel and machinery. The weaving shed was built around 1850 and was used for weaving sail cloth.

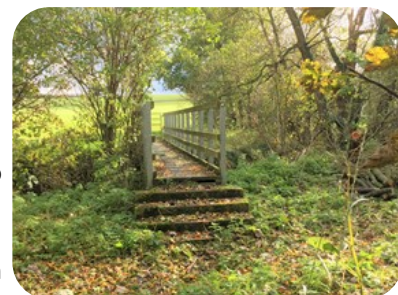
From the Mill site, continue along the road towards the main highway, and once there look left and cross over to go through the stile that is signed as the Parrot Trail. This path is well established, well-marked and keeping the hedge line to your left it takes you over some 5 fields as it wends its way towards the restored Mill at Haselbury. Time of year will determine the exact terrain to be traversed, but whatever the month the 'big



sky' view out to the left is stunning in bright sunshine. Summer 2019 saw a mix of grass field, head high corn and brightly coloured low-level crops, whilst the autumn reflected the fields having been harvested and prepared for the next crop.

Once across the fields the path enters woodland and quickly encounters a stream with a well-maintained footbridge.

Here there are 2 options to get to Haselbury Mill; 1 - cross over the foot bridge and keep the hedge line on the right, offering tantalising views of the Mill, but only achieving access once you've gone past it and turning right on the road to the main entrance; 2 - bear right without crossing the footbridge and walk



along the stream to the left on a rarely used track. The path enters a field where an easy walk up the slope to the road brings the trail over a somewhat rickety stile. 100 yards to the left lies the back entrance to the Mill where lunch is an option if timings permit.



There is an option to continue on for around a further mile to the village of Haselbury Plucknett, where a swift half is awaiting at the White Horse pub.

Leave the Mill area via the main entrance and turn left, going over the main road at the top of the slope. This extension to the walk is predominantly alongside the roadway, with around 500 yards without pavement. From there on there is a roadside path which takes the route through the village to a T-junction where a left turn points you to the watering hole.



The return to Merriott uses the reverse of this route, affording some delightful long-distance views from a different aspect. On return to Merriott at Lower Street it's well worth heading right, up Shiremoor Hill, turning left into Church Street and a celebratory 'second half' at the King's Head pub. Enjoy!



Steve Bateman

My name is Kevin Self and I started my company two and a half years ago after working in the electrics and security business for 20 years. I am a fully qualified electrician and a member of NICEIC who inspects my work each year to ensure that I adhere to their high standards. I only use high quality products for my jobs. You can see many of the jobs I have completed on Instagram or Facebook. I can provide CCTV that can be viewed remotely over the internet from your mobile phone and control systems for your heating and lighting that can be switched on or off remotely, using your phone if required.

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For free no obligation quote contact Kevin on - 0800 5677 610 or 07733 228 367 or email: sales@kseletricalandsecurity.co.uk



In the meantime, we are still making progress, with the goat shed (almost built) and the drive and parking now in place; the entrance will be finalised once we get a break in the weather.



ARK at Egwood

We are very sorry that we had to postpone our Open Day, due to the appalling weather; we really do appreciate all of the messages of support that we have received and hope to be able to re-organise another Open Day very soon.



Our therapy and counselling service is proving to be very much in demand and we have our first day service users starting in January, so we are finally making some real progress as we approach 2020.

Amanda Bell

Merriott Parish Council would welcome your opinions

Over the last few months we have been busy at the Recreation Ground, including routine maintenance of the play equipment, clearer signage, installing the ramped access to the pavilion and building "dug outs" for the pitch.

We are now starting to look at further improvements for the Recreation Ground and would like to hear your ideas.

We are considering purchasing some items of outdoor gym equipment for children, so have listed a few examples of what is available below.

Tai Chi Spinners



Double air walker



Hip twister



There are other items available, or we could go for something completely different.

We would welcome your suggestions and ideas; some things we may be able to do fairly quickly, others may need to wait until we have secured the funds, but we do need to hear from you.

Please contact the Clerk at merriott-clerk@hotmail.co.uk with your ideas for the Recreation Ground, or indeed other areas in the village.

Thank you.

Julie Chant

If you have any ideas of what you would like to see in future issues of your Merriott Messenger, do email us: merriottmessenger@gmail.com

FilmCrew's 4th screening of the season will take place on **Friday 13th December** - 'The Divine Order' (2017) (12A). In German and set in Switzerland in 1971, a young housewife organises the women of her town to petition for the right to vote.

Our first screening of the New Year will be on **Friday 10th January** - 'Nae Pasaran' (2018). In a Scottish town in 1974, factory workers refuse to carry out repairs on warplane engines in an act of solidarity against the violent military coup in Chile. Four years pass before the engines, left to rust in factory yard, mysteriously disappear in the middle of the night.

All screenings are at Wadham School, Crewkerne. Doors open at 7pm with the film starting at 7:30. Visitors can pay at the door, £6 per ticket. Tea/coffee and cake available plus cushioned, tiered seating.

A further date for your diaries - Sun 26th sees our International Day. This year the theme is 'Africa'. We'll show two films relating to, set in, or made on the Continent (TBC). Tickets will be £8 in advance or £10 on the door and can be purchased at our 10th January screening. The event will include a quiz, music and African themed food.

Contact FilmCrew via filmcrewCC@gmail.com or 07749614048.

Film Crew

Lots going on at Haselbury Mill



Christmas Wreath Workshop

Create a masterpiece for your front door this Christmas under the guidance of expert florist Julia Moore. A wide variety of materials will be available for you to create your own unique design. You'll meet Julia and your fellow students for a Sunday Roast in the Tithe Barn before starting the workshop on Sunday 1st December. All for just £50. Contact Julia for tickets and more information on flowers@juliamoorefloraldesigns.co.uk or call 07538 072279.

Children's Christmas Party

The Tithe Barn is a great venue for Santa to visit and host our annual Children's Christmas Party. He's coming this year on Tuesday 17th December and the party starts at 4pm. There are games and

great party food, plus a gift from Santa. All for just £8.50.

New Year's Eve

If you're still looking for a party to celebrate the New Year, why not welcome 2020 in style in the Great Tithe Barn at Haselbury Mill. The wonderful menu is packed with delicious treats for all tastes and entertainment from the talented Jessica & the Rabbits guarantees a spectacular end to the year.

New Year's Day

On New Year's Day the grounds of Haselbury Mill will fill with classic cars, we welcome enthusiasts bringing their precious motors from all over the South West. Entry is free to all, so pop on down and enjoy the classics; a walk round our beautiful venue is perfect to clear the head. Refreshments will be available in the barn or lunch in the Lakeside Restaurant.

Veganuary

January brings resolutions and fresh starts. Healthy eating is on everybody's mind so we are embracing Veganuary with a wider range of vegan choices on our everyday menus. Also we'll be hosting some Vegan Tapas evenings this winter. So if you're already a convert or fancy trying some new, keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for dates.

Burns Supper

Join us in tribute to Scotland's celebrated poet with a traditional Burns Supper on 25th January. The Lakeside will echo to the sound of the pipes and the haggis address, come in your tartan and enjoy a lively evening with great food and good company for just £35 per head.

Call 01460 77095, email info@haselburymill.co.uk or visit www.haselburymill.co.uk to find out more.

Julie Rideout

Allington Strings
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Beethoven Egmont Overture
Mozart Piano Concerto
No. 26 in D Major 'Coronation'
Jonathan Delbridge Piano

Including music from
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Bruch & Webern

Mark Westwood-Gould Conductor & Barbara Dale Leader

3pm Sunday 26th January 2020
All Saints Church, Merriott
Tickets: £10* Adults / under-18s free

*includes drink and nibbles. Available from 7th December from The Feed Station, Merriott and on the door. Reservations via Allingtonstrings@outlook.com

Poem - Map Reading

An overnight surprise of thin snow left us a map on the lawn, of all the activity in our garden when it is not our garden, while we are not looking. Little angular tracks, criss-crossing....

Variously sized birds have hopped or paced here.. Mice (or rats?) have trailed their tails; A rabbit, probably. A fox, or badger – hard to tell, though we know they're often around.

Molehills have split the snow, pushed up huge dark-centred flowers with snow-petals folded down their earthy mounds. But by noon the imperceptible sun has wiped the grass clean, green.

The map of my childhood, has melted, rubbed faint by the friction of living. Criss-crossing tracks of memories fade in the daylight of today.

By Janet Lailey



Children of Merriott First School modelling their new sports kit

Your Photographs around Merriott



My grey basking in the sunset, with house roof-tops in the background. Sent in by Mr R M Candy



Devon air ambulance at the Recreational Ground where a young boy was injured.

Photo taken by Chandler Candy



Fun-seeking volunteers wanted

Merriott Table Tennis Club is looking for a couple of people who could help organise a fun, informal table tennis session once a month, probably on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon around 5pm-7pm at Merriott Social Venue.

The club now has two teams playing in the Yeovil league and a coach visiting on Sunday evenings who is also running a session for juniors, which attracts up to eight children a night.

The club's organiser Michael Fox says: "It's great to see people improving their skills, but our Sunday sessions are often quite busy and the children in particular would benefit from a more relaxed setting so they get time to enjoy

playing the game. You don't need to know much about table tennis; the club needs someone willing to set up the tables and nets, take session fees to cover the hall hire and make sure everyone is ok. Of course you're also welcome to join in if you like - all standards of player would be welcome."

The club hopes the sessions would also prove of interest to adults who would like to try the game. It already has a couple of people willing to do it, and is trying to find a couple more so it would only be a monthly commitment for each person.

If you are interested in volunteering please ring Michael on 07515 483994.

Michael Fox

Message to dog owners

Two additional dog litter bins have recently been installed by Merriott Parish Council, including one on private land at the bottom of Manor Drive. The location is clearly right as it is full most weeks.

Unfortunately it was not emptied on Wednesday 6th November and dog owners have piled the mess on and around it.

Clearly no consideration has been given to the operative who has to clear up the mess.

There are eight other bins around the village, or the dog mess could be taken home and placed in the owners black refuse bin, so there is no excuse.

The landowner has contacted us to advise that if it happens again the bin will have to be removed.

Sadly, two other dog litter bins are also regularly overfilled with dogs mess - the one in Broadway at the end of Hitchen and the one by the phone box.

We recognise that a great majority of dog owners are very responsible, but the less considerate owners are creating a problem within the village.

Merriott Parish Council will be considering the removal of the litter bins at our next meeting.

Julie Chant

Clerk to Merriott Parish Council

Merriott-clerk@hotmail.co.uk



Merriott First School cross country and football teams are looking very smart in

their new kits. It is so important that children feel comfortable and confident when competing in sports.

Local businesses supported the school by donating funds for the new sports attire. Merriott Youth Football Club and Wessex Water were our main sponsors plus The Feed Station also contributed to the cost of our kits. Our children compete against other schools in the area and since wearing their new sporting outfits they have been achieving very well. One of our pupils came third in a recent cross country challenge in Yeovil.

We are incredibly thankful to **Merriott Youth Football Club**, **The Feed Station** and **Wessex Water** for supporting our extra curricular sports activities. See photo on page 8.

Miss A. Higginbotham
Executive Headteacher

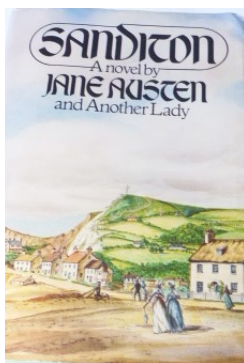
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Book Review - 'Sanditon'



My mother gave me a copy of this book in 1975 when it was published: "A Novel by Jane Austen and Another Lady." Jane Austen needs no introduction; the other lady remains anonymous by choice. The sea-

side town is thought to be based on Sidmouth, but transferred to Sussex.

The first eleven chapters were written early in the year, 1817, in which Austin died. The subsequent nineteen were added by the second writer, building her narrative on that foundation. In these early pages we are introduced to the heroine, Charlotte Heywood, a naive but self-sufficient young lady, and coincidence supplies her link to the Parker family. Mr Parker is determined to build up the small coastal town of Sanditon into a fashionable watering-place, and the novel's plot revolves around this expensive undertaking. "Every neighbourhood should have a great lady." - in this case Lady Denham - very rich, and twice a widow, who "knew about money." She provides the financial backing for Parker's enterprise, but he is obliged to admit to Charlotte that there is, now and then, 'a littleness' - to put it bluntly

she is used to having her own way and wary of trusting her money to any dodgy scheme. We meet Sidney Parker, elegant and worldly, clearly destined for Charlotte, after many twists and turns. Arthur, the youngest of the brothers, is a timid soul whom his bossy sisters have influenced into becoming a fussy hypochondriac. It is all sketched out ready for development.

What made me pick up the book again is the recent TV series: an adaptation by Andrew Davies, which is built on the same few chapters of the original, and thus invites comparison. The same characters, the same setting and purpose originally, but a much more dramatic story to follow on. More *Poldark* than *Mansfield Park*. Not quite a bodice ripper - no actual ripping - but incest, a haughty young, wealthy widow with her eye on Sidney, a handsome up-and-coming builder who has his eye on Charlotte. Sir Edward Denham, hoping to inherit the Denham thousands, in the twentieth century novel merely becomes a rather silly man, embroidering every sentence he speaks with extremes of poetic language. In the twenty-first century TV version he is revealed as a decadent manipulative schemer, out to get his hands on the money, and on any available female, especially his half-sister. In the book Mr Thomas Parker is preoccupied with the number of people

subscribing to the lending library (too few) and in getting more customers into the tearooms. On TV he endures a nearly wrecked marriage, bankruptcy, fire and barely survives his own ambitious Regatta and Grand Ball. The book has gardening and goodness; The TV has abduction and despair and betrayal.

Although Jane Austen only mentions the seamier side of life indirectly there is no doubt of its existence in the background of her books. Of course we have learnt to expect direct depictions of all sorts of evil deeds in our day, and Davies' extension of *Sanditon* is in keeping with those expectations, and beautifully got-up: costumes, countryside and acting are all first class. What I cannot forgive is the device, now all too familiar, of deliberately leaving loose ends of plot in the final episode, which signal that there is going to be another series along soon. Why not let the girl get the man she deserves there and then? Why not leave the villain slinking off into the sunset? Why no real End? Then we can all muse on their subsequent lives for ourselves, instead of being left dangling over an anti-climax.

I would finally add that the one thing proved beyond doubt by both 'Another Lady' and the TV promotion by Andrew Davies, is that Jane Austen did it better - what a surprise!

Janet Lailey

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17th Dec.



The Old Vicarage, Church Street

Erection of single storey extension, internal alterations. Four new light wells

to basement, new window on first floor south elevation.

19/02712/HOU - Status withdrawn.

Erection of 39 dwellings off Shiremoor Hill 18/01917/FUL

This application was considered by the Area West Planning Committee on 20th March 2019. The members resolved to refer the application to the Regulation Committee "minded to refuse the application".

The Regulation Committee met on 15th October 2019. Go to the website (SSDC regulation committee) to read the full minutes of this meeting and their recommendation.

Merriott Parish Council discuss planning applications and make recommendations. For the Council minutes go to the village website www.merriottvillage.btck.co.uk or look at the notice board outside the Co-op.

Marion Biggs



Starting School 2020 - Open Day in Golden Class

Dear Parents/Carers

Golden Class would like to invite the children who are starting school in September 2020 with their parents, to an open day session where you can get a feel of what life is like and find out about what, and how we learn in the Reception year. You will also have the opportunity to see and find out about the whole school setting.

In Golden Class we aim to create a classroom environment that is fun and engaging and which supports learning through play and exploration. We do this through a variety of learning activities which include daily Phonic/English and Maths learning, as well as activities that children can access themselves, often inspired by the children's ideas and interests. Through positive relationships with peers and adults, we aim to create happy, confident, independent children who are excited to learn.

You are invited to attend one session on Thursday 5th December, either 9.30am to 10.30am OR 1.30pm to 2.30pm. The session will run as follows;

- Meet the staff and explore the Foundation Stage setting. Children can take part in learning activities and play alongside the current Golden Class children in the classroom and outside area.
- School tour with the Head teacher.
- Tea/coffee and biscuits and an opportunity to ask any questions.

We look forward to giving you an idea of what to expect from the Reception year and our school as a whole, as we understand that you want the very best for your child(ren) as they start their school journey.

Wendy Abbott

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How many little
Santa's did you find?
Answer: 11



Claire Pike (nee Rumsby) sent in this photo of the Merriott Baby Clinic Christmas party in 1951. Her mother, Muriel Rumsby, is Father Christmas and Claire's older sister, Lorna, is next to her in her grandmother's arms, looking rather startled! Claire remembers some of the mums and babies - Sylvia Best is in the front row holding her daughter Jackie and Mrs Lawrence is holding Wendy and Jennie.

Are you in the photo or do you recognise anyone? We'd love to hear from you if you can add any other names.
Email: merriottmessenger@gmail.com

New Sponsor

Jaime Knibbs is a general builder who has been in the trade for over 25 years. He gained his love of building from his Dad, Barry Knibbs, who is still a builder to this day (currently 72 years young and still working!) Jaime has carried out a variety of interesting projects during his professional years, from complete barn conversions, commercial work, new builds including a house constructed of straw bales, to more traditional smaller works, such as extensions, porches, patios, decorating etc. Then of course there is their own renovation project in the village and many numerous jobs aside. Jaime manages multi-skilled teams from carpenters (including his brother) to electricians and plumbers to provide a single reliable point of contact for all of your building needs.

Born in Hardington Mandeville and a local lad, Jaime and Nats bought Blair Athol (the old Scotts Nurseries house) 3 years ago as a long term project and are loving living in Merriott with their 10 month old son (and building apprentice to be) Percy.



One hundred and thirty eight "thank-you's"!

Once again we have checked and filled 138 shoe-boxes that will be arriving in Romania in time for Christmas, where they will bring huge joy and gratitude to desperately needy families. It has been heart-warming to receive so many fillers, donations, and beautiful hand-crafted items for the boxes. Thank you all so very much!

Local volunteers will be joining the team going to Romania, as they did last year, where they will see some of the shoe-boxes being distributed - a truly moving experience.

We wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.



The Merriott shoe-box team

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