



Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Shepton Montague Wyke Champflower
Bratton Seymour



'Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.' (John 12:3)

During harvest season, and in particular at our harvest festival services, we tend to think more about apples, marrows and corn than we do about nard. We think more about ploughing and scattering

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than about anointing. More about farmers and growers than about Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

But what we should be thinking about is the generosity of God. That divine generosity is, of course, seen and known in the harvest of crops, but generosity is also embodied in this extraordinary act of Mary, as she responds to the generosity of God that she knew in the person of Jesus.

It is not only during the harvest season that it is good to think about generosity: it is always a good time to think about it, both the generosity of God and our own generosity. Our generosity is a response to the generosity of God, but not in a grudging, duty-bound sort of way. It is not that because we have received a gift we feel obliged to give a gift in return. Rather, if we are getting it right, we are generous because by being generous we can participate in the life of God (who is generous), just as by loving we participate in the life of God (who is love). Living generously draws us deeper into God's life of abundance and sharing.

We will very soon be challenged to think quite hard about our financial generosity, as we face the prospect of having to pay the full costs of the paid ministry we receive from the Church, rather than depending on subsidy from elsewhere in the Church, as has been the case until now. This will be a serious challenge for us all. If we are unable to meet these costs, it is not clear what will happen, but it seems that we can no longer assume that other people will pay these costs for us.

Yet generosity is about much, much more than money. Mary's generosity to Jesus was only partly about the value of the nard –

there is much more meaning in her action than that. You can explore more about this wonderful and life-changing story about Mary in a series of videos, with accompanying notes, prepared by Jonathan de Bernhardt Wood, who is the Church of England's Director of Giving. I commend these materials to you for your own study and prayerful reflection. You can find them here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/generosity-resources/living-generously-films-small-groups-and>



If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, do 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

Litter Pick

Thanks to all those who helped with the litter pick in Bruton on 28 September and to Mike and Marian Kelham for organising it. The 8 volunteers who turned up together collected 8 or 9 bagfuls of rubbish from the streets, hedgerows and parks.

Harvest Festivals

We have celebrated the harvest with thanks giving and joy at Brewham and Shepton Montague and Bratton Seymour and Pitcombe. We will celebrate again at Bruton and Wyke Champflower and Redlynch later this month – see the dates below and do join in if you can.

Recent Arts Events

St Mary's welcomed a capacity crowd for an excellent folk music concert given by Martin and Eliza Carthy and a poetry evening with the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. St John's had an equally full house for a wonderful evening with the Aber Valley Male Voice Choir. David Slater gave a hugely varied, entertaining and skilful recital on the digital organ at St Mary's, showing off not only his skill but the versatility and range of the organ. More arts events are coming up soon, at both St Mary's and St Leonard's – see the details starting on p.22.

Shepton Film Night

Our film this month is *Vindication Swim* (2024/98mins/PG) on Thursday October 10. Doors open at St Peter's, Shepton Montague, at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. This is the inspirational story of Mercedes

Gleitze, the first British woman to swim the English Channel, and her battle against both the cold waters of the Channel and the oppressive society of 1920s England. When a rival claims to have performed the same feat and is shown to be lying, Mercedes' own achievement is called into question, forcing her into a repeat performance, the 'vindication swim' of the title.

With Kirsten Callaghan, John Locke and Victoria Summer, and directed by Elliott Hasler. For more information, please contact Sarah Maude 01749 812 149, sarahjmaude@btinternet.com

Sexey's School Interviews

Sexey's School will be holding interviews for a new Head Teacher on 1 and 2 October. Please hold the candidates and the interview panel in your prayers as we make this important appointment.

St Leonard's

On Sunday November 3 we shall celebrate our patronal festival with Choral Evensong at 4pm led by the choir of St Mary's. Our guest will be Canon Chancellor of Wells Cathedral, The Rev'd Canon Dr Megan Daffern, who took up her post a year ago. The job of chancellor of a cathedral is to keep it on the academic straight and narrow: she is responsible for the schools' work, for resourcing lifelong learning, and for the Library and Archives. She is also Keeper of the Fabric and supports the breadth of volunteer ministry.

Megan was Chaplain of Jesus College, Oxford, then a tutor at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, and latterly Acting Dean and Director of Studies in Theology at Caius. She also supported candidates and

ordinands coming into ministry while she was Diocesan Director of Ordinands in the Diocese of Ely. She continues to teach Hebrew Bible/Old Testament courses online for the Eastern Region Ministry Course and is committed to keeping up her research in the Psalms.

Charles Brook

***Tales and Legends* – an atmospheric blend of themed piano music and literature.**

Following a very successful *Dreamscapes* concert in June, Clare Sydenham (Piano) and David Hindley (Narrator) have created another mystical programme on the theme of 'Tales and Legends'.

The concert includes piano favourites by Maurice Ravel, Erik Satie, Claude Debussy and Edvard Grieg, alongside choice literature and poetry from Classical myths to legends of kings and water-sprites!

Sunday November 24 at 3pm, St Mary's Church, Bruton, BA100EB.

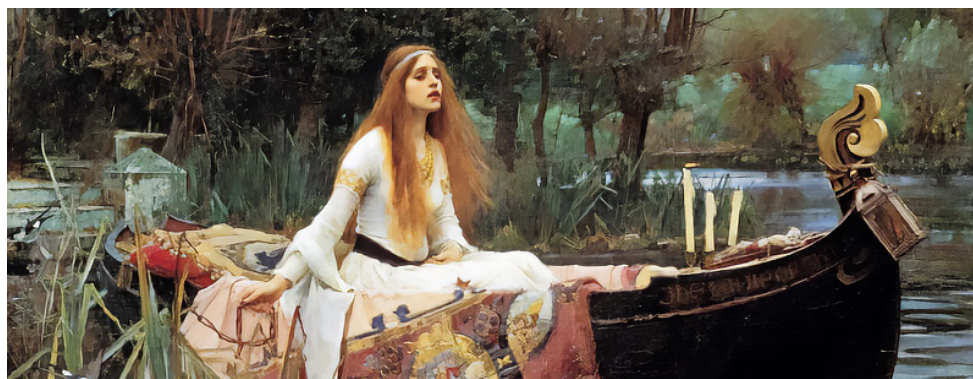
Advance tickets £10 online:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/clare-sydenham>

or from

clare.sydpiano@gmail.com

Tickets on the door £12/ under 18 free.



St John's, Brewham



On Saturday evening of the 7th September, St John's Brewham attracted a really good audience for the third visit of the ever popular Aber Valley Male Voice Choir. Lead by Geraint Evans who has been with the Choir for over fifty years, and Aurelia Jones the accompanist on piano (who has been with them for

over 40 years), they entertained us with songs from the Verdi Opera Aida, Sondheim's A Little Night Music, and pop classics such as Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline. We also enjoyed some superb piano solos by Aurelia.



The evening was rounded off with the National Anthem, and a resounding rendition of Land of my Fathers. We were very privileged to have the Choir in Brewham, as they have previously sung at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff before the start of Wales' international rugby matches against Argentina and South Africa. We hope they'll be back to sing for us again soon.

Incidentally, our PCC Meeting on 16 September has been cancelled due to holidays and ill health. Jonathan is going to suggest a new date.

St Mary's Harvest Barn Dance

Tickets are now on sale for our Harvest Barn Dance & Hog Roast/ Supper. Numbers will be limited so reserve your tickets by emailing benefice@stmarysbruton.org, or snap them up at Bruton Convenience Store! It's important to either buy or book your tickets promptly as numbers will be finalised by Thursday 3 October to determine how much food we will need. Please also email benefice@stmarysbruton.org if you have any special dietary requirements – don't let the awkwardness of having to ask for specific foods put you off coming along to a wonderfully fun evening of dancing and merriment!

Tickets can be bought on the door at £8, but won't include food.

So...

Join us for a hilarious and energetic evening of food and dancing! If dancing isn't your thing, trust us when we say that watching everyone else go in the wrong direction and trip over their two left feet is just as much fun, especially when the whole thing is fuelled by beer. Or cider. Or wine of course. A variety of food – including a hog roast – at 5pm, and dancing madness from 6.30. We once again welcome **Teasing the Cat** to lead us in this mayhem!



St Mary's Harvest Barn Dance & Hog Roast/Supper!

Sat October 5 – Bruton Club

Food at 5pm, dancing from 6.30pm

Most excellent music by
Teasing the Cat

Tickets £14. Book in advance via

benefice@stmarysbruton.org

or buy from Bruton Convenience Store

Bar available, possibly necessary!

www.stmarysbruton.org



www.teasingthecat.wixsite.com/teasingthecat

Trick or Eat

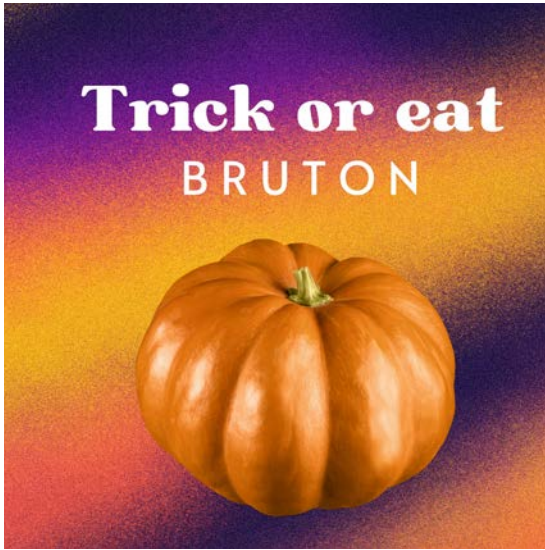
Halloween is a strange sort of festival. Many are unaware (but all readers of this Newsletter will know) that its name derives from All Hallows Eve: it is linked to the Christian festival of All Saints (or 'All Hallows'). But much of the rest is contested. Is it an inherently pagan celebration? Is it demonic and something the Church should be fighting against with all her might? Is it harmless fun for children? Is it crass consumerism imported from the USA? Is it barely legitimised extortion mixed with vandalism and threats of violence or terror? Views differ.

Some churches go to great lengths to set up rival celebrations on All Saints Eve, celebrating not darkness and fear, but light and hope, seeking thereby to counter the perceived spiritual risks associated with the devils, demons and witches of Halloween. Other churches deploy a lighter touch and carve pumpkins, but into pretty patterns, not ghoulish grimaces

In Bruton, we have an excellent alternative to the mischief and obesity-inducing antics of trick or treating: Good Company are once again running 'trick or eat'.

The organisers write:

Local residents set up Trick or Eat Bruton a few years ago to collect food and other essentials for our community, as the temperature



drops, and the nights draw in. In previous years, the organisers have placed Trick or Eat donation stations at residential addresses around Bruton. This year they're doing things a little differently. This Halloween some of the town's brilliant

businesses and organisations will be hosting donation stations instead, including St Mary's Bruton!

You can donate non-perishable food and other essentials into Trick or Eat boxes between Saturday October 26–Friday November 1.

We hope the good people of Bruton will once again come together to help some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and fill up Bruton's food bank ahead of the colder months when an influx of requests for help happens every year.

For details on what donations to make, along with a list of all participating businesses and organisations, visit:

<https://www.trickoreat.org/>

Do please consider whether you are in a position to support this positive initiative.

Loose Ends

As I'm heading off to the east for a month shortly after writing this piece, it seems a suitable moment to tie up a few loose ends from September. The ideal in the final paragraph was to leave you wondering if you had been reading fact or fiction. It was FACT. All true – except for a few Gothic embellishments of mine on the saga of Death at the Organ.

Playing far too much dull organ music was something I inflicted on listeners for the best part of fifteen years up to retirement in 2005. The listeners were the boys at a very religious school in the Home Countries where I played the organ for chapel services six times a week, even though I was not a member of the music staff. For some reason I set myself the target of never playing the same piece of music twice during an entire term, and I kept a record of what I played to ensure that I was achieving my aim. Inevitably a lot of inconsequential, boring pieces were played, so I failed to further the cause of getting people to listen to stimulating if sometimes serious organ music. My choices of music in the first and last weeks of every term, however, did attract attention. In the first week it was Funeral Marches, reflecting the gloom and despondency I felt with a long term lying ahead. By way of contrast, to greet the holidays, I always included joyous pieces in the last week, such as Nun Danket, Liberty Bell and Lefébure-Wély's Sortie in E flat. Some pupils and staff noticed – yes, staff too were expected to attend chapel regularly. The Head Master, a religious zealot, didn't notice as he had no ear for music and no sense of humour.

I still keep a list of the voluntaries I play before and after services: it became a habit, and does serve the purpose of avoiding repetition of pieces too soon after a previous performance. It also serves as a reminder of what I played at important occasions. Sunday 26th July 2020 was an important occasion at St. Leonard's, Pitcombe, because it was the first open service after months of lockdown, and because it was taken by the Dean of Wells, the sermon being preached by another senior cleric from Wells. I do not need my list to remind me what pieces I played, because the events at the end of the service are so clearly engraved on my memory. My opening voluntary had been Bach's Prelude & Fugue in e minor, BWV 533; nothing controversial there. At the end I played Sousa's Liberty Bell in the hope that a shared smile in church after the wretchedness of lockdown was in order. The Dean's colleague, however, was having none of this, rounding on me in fury while the congregation were leaving, demanding to know why I had played this piece. Caught completely off my guard at this outburst I mumbled something about bringing cheer to people after lockdown. The Dean kept his own counsel while congregation members expressed pleasure at my choice; but the Rev'd ___ ___, (in a minority of one I think), continued his tirade. (I do, in fact, remember his name and office in the Cathedral hierarchy, but I think it would be indiscreet to print them here.)

He had a point, to be fair. (See May issue of Benefice Newsletter.) For centuries organists have, at least occasionally, allowed themselves the liberty – excuse me! – to play something light-hearted after a serious service, and I was guilty of this. But the Rev'd ___ ___ need not have been so unpleasant, so lacking in tolerance and understanding,

so disdainful of the basic human need for shared happiness. The unacceptable face of Christianity, which I had never experienced before or since.

I should not sign off without thanking Sarah, not only for shouldering the burden of typing these articles but for coming up with amazing photos to accompany my tales of adventure on Sri Lankan railways. You might think that I wrote the description of a typical Sri Lankan Station Master (July–August) to match the photo, but – no – it was the other way round. Where did you dig it up, Sarah?

The picture in June was the nine-arch railway viaduct near Ella, a charming village up in the hills. I've travelled across it on the train a number of times, and last February / visited it as a tourist attraction. It's in a beautiful situation but it is less spectacular than, say, the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Scottish Highlands with 21 arches (on the route of the Hogwarts Express, as every Harry Potter fan knows), less spectacular than the Ribbleshead Viaduct on the Settle–Carlisle line, less spectacular than many an awe-inspiring viaduct in different parts of the world... BUT only on the Ella nine-arch viaduct are tourists allowed to scramble down narrow paths – in their hundreds when I was there – to enjoy the outstanding views but also to relish the freedom, the normally forbidden thrill of walking along a single-line railway track in regular use. The answer to the obvious question is that about five minutes before a train is due a railwayman walks the length of the viaduct, blowing a whistle. Everyone gets the message. The train itself can, in any case, be heard from miles away, its supercharged horn blaring away fit to waken the dead – even the deaf. By the time it

emerges from a tunnel and starts to cross the viaduct, everyone has had time to retreat to the viewing areas at either end or squeeze up against the side walls as the train trundles by at a reassuringly safe distance of about five feet.

Back at home, to conclude. Requests for favourite hymns continue to trickle in. Do keep them coming! If you have a favourite organ piece or, at least, a favourite organ composer, you could also try your luck.

It was a request from the Rector for a contribution to the Benefice Newsletter from someone other than himself that prompted me to submit my first article back in January. Frankly, I surprised myself by continuing as long as I have. It was never my intention to monopolise a column in the Newsletter, so as I sign off (at least for the present) may I encourage someone else to take up their pen!



Photo: Pixabay

The Ribbleshead Viaduct, or Batty Moss Viaduct, carries the Settle–Carlisle railway across Batty Moss in the Ribble Valley at Ribbleshead, in North Yorkshire, England

Confirmation Preparation

As previously advertised, there will be a service of confirmation at the cathedral on 23 November and a number of candidates from this benefice and neighbouring benefices will be meeting for some preparation sessions during October. If anyone would like to join (whether for baptism / confirmation preparation or as a refresher on the basics of our faith) it is not too late. Please speak to the Rector if you are interested.

Remembrance Sunday Poppies



Call in at St Mary's Church and sponsor a beautiful ceramic poppy for £15. So far 30 have been sponsored and we have 85 altogether. All money collected goes to the Poppy Appeal and to St Mary's.





All Souls

All Souls Day is 2 November and we will hold a special service of prayer and thanksgiving for the departed. This will include the reading of names. If you would like the name of someone to be read out during this service, please email details to the benefice office. Please pass on this information to anyone you know who has recently suffered a bereavement: it is a service that many find moving and helpful.



Prayer Ministry

A recent Gospel reading and sermon was on Mark 9:30-37, which includes the following verse:

'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'

Mark 9:35

With this in mind, it would be good to pray for those in our benefice who serve us:

Our rector - Jonathan Evans

Retired clergy - Mark Ellis, Dan Richards, Hilary Jalland and Charles Roberts.

Area Dean - Caroline Walker

Church wardens and PCC members

And also to pray for ourselves that we would be willing to serve in our churches and communities.



Rural Ministry Forum

On 21 October, there will be a one day conference on the theme of rural ministry. This is open to all, but pre-booking is essential. It takes place in Bagely and is usually very interesting and helpful as we consider the shape of future ministry in our parishes.

Intercessions Training

It would be very good to involve more members of our congregations in leading the prayers of intercession during our services. If this is something you feel drawn to, or indeed if you are already doing it, please do let the Rector know, so that we can organise some training and guidance. This is such an important part of our collective worship and corporate prayer that it needs careful (and prayerful) preparation. Please do think whether this is something you can offer to our church life.



Benefice Discussion Group

For the next series of discussion groups, we are going to try something slightly different. The proposal is that we meet and watch together a recording of a lecture from the Autumn Lecture Series at St Martin in the Fields, London, and then discuss the lecture together afterwards. Refreshments will be provided.

Subject to ironing out a few details, the likely venue will be the Community Hall in Bruton and the time will be 3.00pm – 5.00pm on Monday afternoons, starting on 14 October.

The lectures that we intend to watch are from a series entitled 'Inspiration: The Influences That Have Shaped My Life'. The four lectures are as follows:

- William Dalrymple – Inspiration: A Quest for the Sacred
- Rev'd Sam Wells – Inspiration: Moments of Truth
- Rowan Williams – Inspiration: Soul Friends
- Neil MacGregor – Inspiration: Living with the Gods

You can read more about these, and other lectures in the series, on the St Martin in the Fields website:

<https://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/congregational-life/lectures/>

You can of course watch these lectures from the comfort of your own home if you would prefer to do that, and then perhaps compare your thoughts with others in your own way and in your own time.

If you would like to be part of the group viewing and discussion, then please do come along. Subject to final confirmation:

- 4 sessions
- Monday 14 October – Monday 4 November
- 3.00pm – 5.00pm
- Bruton Community Hall



Arts Events


September saw a wonderful organ recital given by David Slater, plus duo Martin & Eliza Carthy bringing wit and wisdom through folk music, and then an evening with Poet Laureate Simon Armitage which was both funny and profound.


Into October we go! Tonight we welcome John Crace – sketch writer for *The Guardian* and author of *Depraved New World: Please Hold the Government Will Be With You Shortly*. Saturday 19 sees Fire and Rain & American Pie perform musical homages to ‘the great U.S. singer-songwriters of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, featuring beautiful songs from Carole King, Simon & Garfunkel and more’.

Even further ahead than that St Leonard’s have Good Habits on October 17, St Mary’s will host Oysterband (Nov 9), a talk about The Newt (Nov 14), and band Penguin Cafe (Nov 28).

Watch our different spaces for updates!

 www.facebook.com/stmarys.bruton

 www.stmarysbruton.org

 [@st_marys_bruton](https://www.instagram.com/st_marys_bruton)

John Crace Oct 3

Fire and Rain & American Pie Oct 19

Oysterband Nov 9

Penguin Cafe Nov 28

cabaretvoltaireevents.com

John Crace – Oct 3

The last few years of post-Brexit politics never failed to deliver John Crace with material for his Guardian sketches. After a sold-out event in



Exeter, John is now joining us at St. Mary's Church in Bruton, Somerset. In conversation with Ritula Shah, he will reflect on the many tumultuous and often humorous moments of the past few years, including various Prime Ministers, and some heated parliamentary debates.

From Partygate and Boris Johnson's farewell to Jeremy Corbyn handing over Labour's leadership to Keir Starmer – John will take us on a hilarious tour of the whirlwind world of post-Brexit Britain.

John is Chief Sketch Writer at *The Guardian* and author of *Depraved New World: Please Hold the Government Will Be With You Shortly*.

The Guardian's parliamentary chief sketch writer has been on the front line of the last ten bonkers years of politics, from U-turns to the revolving door of Number 10, and from party-gate to Brexit blithering. John's brilliantly acerbic political sketches have provided the nation with a much-needed injection of humour and we very much look forward to hearing him talk in St Mary's.

At St Leonard's, Pitcombe, Oct 17

On Thursday October 17 at 6 for 6.30pm we have Good Habits – an award-winning alt-folk duo – performing at St Leonard's, Pitcombe, in aid of the Friends of the church, thanks to the good offices of Take Art, a Somerset promoter of performances in towns and villages.

Bonnie Schwarz (cello + vocals) and Pete Shaw (accordion) mix vivid storytelling with eclectic sounds, drawing on their 'diverse musical tastes and weaving them into an action-packed narrative of folksy goodness'. Their performance has taken them to Glastonbury, Cambridge Folk Festival and to festival venues in Europe and Australasia. It sounds a light hearted outing for people of all ages!

Tickets at £15 will include a drink and nibbles. They can be bought at the door for cash (no mobile phone signal or internet) or online in advance through Friends of Pitcombe Church (sort code 60-04-33, account 10501789). Remember to leave your name.



Fire and Rain & American Pie – Oct 19



A heart-warming, musical homage to the great U.S. singer-songwriters of the late 60's and early 70's, featuring beautiful songs from James Taylor, Carole King, Simon & Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, Don Mclean, Crosby, Stills & Nash, America, Carly Simon and more! Many of their timeless classic songs, from this special era, will be brought to life by a band of top musicians, along with a fascinating nostalgic narrative with screen images from the time. The band is fronted by Paul Prem Nadama who is perhaps better known in the world of TV comedy as Paul Wheeler, Director of award-winning TV shows such as 'Live at the Apollo' and 'Have I got News for You'. Paul is also an accomplished guitarist and singer-songwriter playing at intimate venues around UK and Europe.

Ticket info tbc

OYSTERBAND – Nov 9

Legends on their last ever tour: from their earliest days as a noisy, politicised ceilidh band in the late Seventies, Oysterband have never stopped evolving or providing soundtracks to the changing times.



Emerging in the early 80s from their ceilidh band days they infused both the traditional and their own songs with a passion and energy that was electrifyingly fresh for the time. Signing to new roots label Cooking Vinyl, headlining English Roots Against Apartheid, playing Glastonbury and the Fleadh several times each, touring with The Pogues in Europe and Billy Bragg in North America, and hosting the Big Session Festival, all gained them a large and loyal following both at home and internationally.

Coming to St Mary's Church Saturday November 9, 8.00pm.

TICKETS

<http://cabaretvoltaireevents.com/event/oysterband/>

Friends of St Mary's – Nov 14

Friends of St. Mary's, Bruton
St. Mary's Church, Bruton: Thursday November 14th 6.30pm.

Talk with Arthur Cole, Head Gardener, The Newt

A Journey through Three Centuries:
History of Hadspen House, the Hobhouse's, The Newt from concept
through to delivery, the Roman Villa, the Four Seasons Garden, future
developments and personal reflections.

Tickets available £10 via Ticketsource or on the door on the night.



On Thursday November 14 at 6.30pm we have a talk by Arthur Cole, head gardener at The Newt.

Join Arthur in St Mary's for a journey through three centuries of Hadspen House, the Hobhouse family, and The Newt from concept to delivery.

Arthur will talk about the Roman Villa, the Four Seasons Garden, and the future of The Newt.

TICKETS

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/somerset/st-marys-church-bruton-somerset/>



TALES and LEGENDS

An Atmospheric Blend of Themed Piano Music and Literature

Clare Sydenham- Piano

David Hindley- Narrator



Sunday November 24th 3pm

St. Mary's Church, Bruton BA10 0EB

Advance Tickets £10 online

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/clare-sydenham/t-dvqqgxy>

or from clare.sydpiano@gmail.com

Tickets on the door £12/under 18 free



Penguin Cafe – Nov 28

CABARET VOLTAIRE

Cultural events: mostly music, but sometimes poetry and other things



PENGUIN CAFE PERFORMS MUSIC FROM THE PENGUIN CAFE ORCHESTRA LIVE

THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024
BRUTON - ST. MARY'S CHURCH,

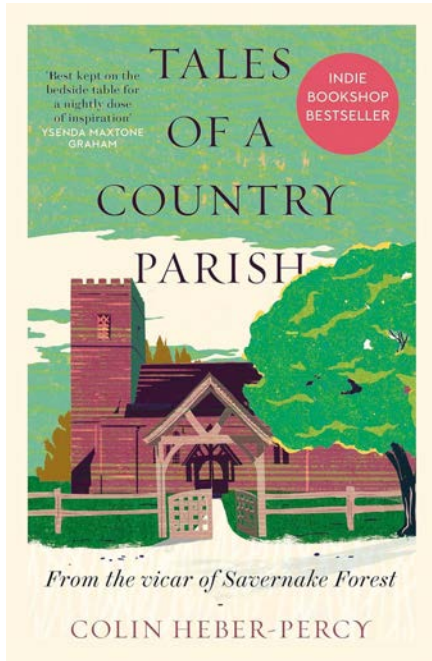
Penguin Cafe was founded by Arthur Jeffes in 2009, bringing together a talented and disparate group of musicians initially to perform his father Simon Jeffes' legacy of world-renowned PCO music, ten years after his untimely death in 1997. Arthur, a talented composer in his own right, quickly began to create new and unique genre-defying music, blending classical instruments like violins and cellos with unexpected elements like ukuleles and melodicas, the spellbinding philosophy of the Penguin Cafe always in his mind. This winter, Penguin Cafe is bringing the music of the legendary Penguin Cafe Orchestra back to life, with a UK tour featuring a collection of PCO classics, celebrating the unique sound that has captivated audiences worldwide.

TICKETS

<https://cabaretvoltairerevents.com/event/penguin-cafe-bruton/>

Book Review

Colin Heber-Percy, *Tales of a Country Parish*: a review from the vicar of Savernake Forest.



This book was a chance find when I stepped into Wincanton Library to pass a few spare minutes. It has turned out to be quite a gem. I thought I might find something recognisable from our own country parish but it has been much more than idiosyncratic tales of country living. In fact, tales is something of a misnomer. These are reflections and meditations sparked by observations of the world around at an extraordinary time, but with

resonance for any time and any place.

Heber-Percy began writing in 2020 during lockdown when he found himself unsure how to fulfil his day-to-day ministry to those in distress, frightened and alone. Before becoming a priest he had worked as a screenwriter; now he began writing for his parishioners and found himself writing from the heart, for his friends. Those 'friends' became a world wide web of connection. Each meditation follows a thread

of thought drawing on philosophy, literature, theology, music, the natural world, and everyday contact, or lack of it, with our fellow human beings.

Unlikely analogies tease us to think more deeply, widely. Where do we belong? What does belonging mean? Look at the butterflies in the church, the fingerprint on a fragment of Roman pottery, what do they say to us? How could the boss of Debenhams be connected to Plotinus? Who? How could this be relevant to us? Not only does it feel relevant, it feels hugely significant. A small book full of riches. He even references the Wiltshire legend for which our house is named!

The author writes with humour, tenderness and passion, and from a basis of extensive learning and knowledge. He makes you want to research further, which means I would have been wise to read the book more slowly and take time to ponder, whereas my impatience drove me on to read the whole thing. A copy of my own seems indicated – look out for this one in the library.

A final word for what a wonderful resource our libraries are, even in their current stripped-down state. There are surprising treasures to be found all around us as this book demonstrates.



Harvest Festivals

October

- 6 • St Mary's, Bruton, 11am, followed by lunch in the Community Hall
- 13 • St Peter's, Redlynch, 11am, followed by refreshments in church
- 20 • Holy Trinity, Wyke Champflower, 6.30pm

Diary Dates

October

- 3 • John Crace, St Mary's, 7pm
- 5 • Barn Dance and Hog Roast, Bruton Club, 5pm
- 6 • Confirmation class, Rectory, 2pm
- 10 • Shepton Montague Film Night, 7 for 7.30pm
- 13 • Confirmation Class, Rectory, 2pm
- 17 • Good Habits folk duo, St Leonard's, 6pm
- 17 • Deanery Synod, N. Barrow, 7.30pm
- 19 • Fire and Rain, St Mary's, 8pm
- 20 • Confirmation Class, Rectory, 2pm
- 21 • Rural Forum, Bagley Baptist Church, 10am
- 27 • Confirmation Class, Rectory, 2pm

November

- 2 • All Souls Service, St Mary's, 6.30pm
- 10 • Oysterband, St Mary's, 8pm
- 10 • Remembrance Sunday
- 13 • Bruton PCC, Plox Meeting Room, 5.30pm
- 14 • Arthur Cole Lecture, St Mary's, 6.30pm
- 15 • Pitcombe PCC, Hadspen Farm, 2pm
- 16 • Diocesan Synod, Canalside, 9.30am
- 18 • Brewham PCC, Colinshayes, 7pm
- 23 • Coffee Morning, Bruton Community Hall, 10.30am
- 23 • Confirmation Service, Wells Cathedral, 2pm
- 24 • Piano and poetry [check title], St Mary's, 3pm
- 28 • Penguin Café, St Mary's, 8pm



Services in the Bruton & District Benefice – October 2024

| Parish | Sunday 6th Oct Trinity 19 | Sunday 13th Oct Trinity 20 |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Brewham | 9.30am Eucharist (CW) | _____ |
| Bruton | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 11.00am Harvest Festival (CW1) | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 11.00am Eucharist |
| Pitcombe | 11.00am Holy Communion (BCP) | 9.30am Holy Communion (BCP) |
| Shepton Montague | _____ | _____ |
| Wyke Champflower | _____ | _____ |
| Redlynch | _____ | 11.00am Harvest Festival (tbc) |
| Bratton Seymour | _____ | _____ |
| St Mary the Virgin, Bruton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 11am service on the first Sunday of the month is generally a sung liturgy with Bruton Church Choir. | |
| Sexey's Hospital Chapel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All services according to the Book of Common Prayer Sunday: 9.45am Morning Prayer; 10.25am Holy Communion Festivals and special occasions as announced | |

Sunday 20th Oct

Trinity 21

Sunday 27th Oct

Trinity 22

9.30am
Morning Prayer

8.00am
Holy Communion (BCP)

8.00am
Holy Communion (BCP)

11.00am
All Age Worship

9.00am
Breakfast Service

11.00am Eucharist (CW1)

11.00am
Matins (BCP)

4.00pm
Evensong (BCP)

9.30am
Eucharist (CW1)

6.30pm
Harvest Festival

Roman Catholic Mass

- RC Mass is occasionally held in Bruton on a Thursday
Please check Wincanton for dates. 01963 34408

Methodist services

- Sunday services at Castle Cary Methodist Church,
castlecarymethodist@gmail.com

ABBREVIATIONS

BCP BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 1662 CW COMMON WORSHIP (MODERN LANGUAGE)

Contact

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