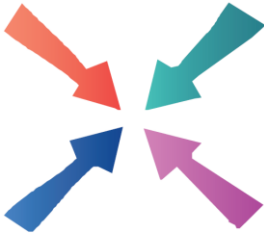


# Meeting Point



December 2020



# Meeting Point

**Volume 45, Number 3, December 2020**

The community magazine for the villages of Olveston, Tockington, Old Down, Lower Hazel, Awkley, Ingst, Aust, Elberton and Littleton upon Severn

## **EDITOR:**

**Marelin Orr-Ewing**  
Courtlands  
Olveston  
Bristol BS35 4DU  
Tel: 01454 610081  
*meetingpointeditor@gmail.com*

## **ASSISTANT EDITOR:**

**Angela Williams**  
Ashlea  
Haw Lane  
Olveston  
Bristol BS35 4EG  
Tel 01454 612850  
*meetingpointmagazine@gmail.com*

## **ADVERTISING:**

**Bernard Amos**  
Tel: 01454 620388  
*meetingpointadvertising@gmail.com*

Publication date  
*1st of each month*

Material for January 2021  
to the Editor or Deputy Editor  
by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

## **From the Editor**

Looking back at the Meeting Points produced in 2020, a story emerges of a year that none of us was expecting. The January and February editions were much as normal. The March edition, which went to the printers in mid-February, was the same. However, what we all know now, is that most of the events featured in the March magazine were cancelled due to the pandemic. We put out an April edition, which included reviews of some of the activities that had managed to go ahead prior to lockdown. However, the May and June editions had to go 'online only' to safeguard our team of deliverers. In July we got back to a printed copy for the remainder of the year but, with no events being 'advertised', the magazine had to change and adapt. We are hugely grateful to the talented and imaginative contributors who have helped keep the pages full!

So, as this challenging year draws to an end, from all of us who work together to produce and deliver Meeting Point, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

*Marelin*

This month's cover is by Ernie Baker  
Meeting Point Founded in 1976 by the Anglican and  
Methodist churches in Olveston, near Bristol.

**Meeting Point magazine and Meeting Point Directory are online at the  
Community Website: [www.olvostonandaust.com](http://www.olvostonandaust.com)**

# Parish Players' Award for Phil Savage

Olveston's local drama group, The Parish Players, has recognised the huge contribution of one of their most dedicated members by awarding him Life



Membership. Olveston resident Phil Savage has been treading the boards at the Parish Hall since 2002. He has also taken the role of Chair on more than one occasion and has been responsible for many front of house and organisational roles. At the recent Parish Players' AGM it was proposed that Phil should be awarded Life Membership. The motion was carried unanimously.

On hearing of his award, Phil said 'Please pass my thanks on

*to everybody. I feel greatly honoured by the invitation. It is a great privilege when there are so many equally deserving thespians.'*

Phil richly deserves the award, having taken leading roles in many past productions and entertained so many local people with his engaging performances.

Starting in 2002, he played Major-General Stanley in 'The Pirates of Penzance', then Benny Southstreet in 'Guys & Dolls', Motel in 'Fiddler on the Roof', Valentine Sutton in 'White Horse Inn', Professor Higgins in 'My Fair Lady', Will Parker in 'Oklahoma!', Marco Palmieri in 'The Gondoliers', Mr Snow in 'Carousel', Herbert Parchester in 'Me & My Girl', King



Mongkut in 'The King & I', Mr Bumble in 'Oliver!', Daddy Warbucks in 'Annie', Captain Hook in 'Peter Pan' and Herr Zeller in 'The Sound of Music'.

Phil was Chair of The Parish Players from 2008 to 2012, and again in 2015. Behind the scenes, he has continued to do an enormous amount of work in organisation, fundraising and securing sponsorship, as well as managing front of house. As our Director Linda says, *'We are all exceptionally grateful for everything Phil has done, and for his friendship, dedication and commitment, over the years.'*



Like so many theatre groups, The Parish Players has unfortunately been 'resting' since their highly successful production of 'South Pacific', which was staged just before lockdown started in the spring. However, the group is full of plans for the future so, if you would like to get involved (either on stage or behind the scenes), please get in touch:

[secretaryparishplayers@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryparishplayers@gmail.com) or  
[www.facebook.com/OlvestonParishPlayers](https://www.facebook.com/OlvestonParishPlayers).



# News from St. John's, Aust



*Trevor Cook, Focal Minister*

At our recent District Church Council (DCC) meeting, our long-standing churchwarden, Jon Burnett, decided to stand down. We thank Jon for his many years of devoted service to St. John's and, on a happier note, report that Jon has agreed to continue as a member of the DCC, which means we can look forward to

his continued support. In his place Clive Roberts has stepped forward to fulfil this important role. At the same time Susie Roberts has agreed to fulfil the equally important role of DCC Secretary. Both Clive and Susie are long time members of St. John's congregation and we know they will apply their energy and commitment to their new roles in the religious life of the village.

It is hoped that we can hold a Village Carol Service on Christmas Eve at 4pm, although this does, of course, depend upon the Government's lifting of the current lockdown. Unfortunately, there will be no Midnight Mass this year, nor any service on Christmas Day. Changes, or new developments, will be circulated via the Church's WhatsApp group and the village email.

## Old Down Cricket Club

*Tony Gardner*  
07889 727729

### **150 Club Winners November 2020:**

£50 Alex Grosvenor  
£15 Archie Stenning  
£5 Bill Finch

### **Latest £25 Bonus Ball Winners:**

10/10/20 Paddy Gardner

Up the Down!!



# News from St Mary's

*Debbie Harries*

We hope you are all well and keeping safe. St Mary's continues to remain open on Wednesdays and Sundays for private prayer.

## **Christmas**

Due to Covid and the present uncertainty, sadly many of our usual Christmas services have had to be cancelled, including Christingle, the Village Carol Service and Midnight Mass. There will be a service on Christmas Day at 10am. As we are unable to have our Carol Service, you are invited to pick up a copy of 'Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas' for use at home from Christmas to the New Year. These will be available in the church porch, Olveston Stores and The Crusty Loaf from 21st December.

## **CHAT**

If you would like to visit our Zoom CHAT discussion group during December on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm, when we will be having special Advent, or pre-Christmas, CHATs, please contact Sue on [farrdoodie@hotmail.com](mailto:farrdoodie@hotmail.com).

## **Food Bank**

A reminder to visit the church porch, where donations to the Food Bank will be most appreciated. (You can also look at notices to discover what is going on in December!)

## **'The Christmas Story'**

If the regulations allow, we will show the BBC Phil Redmond film 'The Christmas Story' in St Mary's on Wednesday 9th December at 2.30pm. This comes highly recommended for its simple portrayal of the familiar. View the website ([www.stmarysolveston.org.uk](http://www.stmarysolveston.org.uk)) for any changes of predicted dates.

## **Advent Windows**

Advent Windows will be lit up each day during December. See below for the addresses and dates where they can be seen. We hope you enjoy them!

1. Orchard Lea, Vicarage Lane, Olveston
2. 30 Orchard Rise, Olveston
3. Lavender Cottage, Vicarage Lane, Olveston
4. Alma House, Tockington Green, Tockington
5. Holly Cottage, New Road, Olveston
6. Sedgeley, The Street, Olveston
7. Little Grange, The Green, Olveston

8. 8 Orchard Rise, Olveston
9. 12 Orchard Rise, Olveston
10. 13 The Crescent, Old Down
11. The Cottage, New Road, Olveston
12. 47 Laxton Close, Olveston
13. Cromwell House, The Street, Olveston
14. Daldry Gardens, Vicarage Lane, Olveston
15. The Crusty Loaf, Olveston
16. Oakdown, Vicarage Lane, Olveston
17. The Wesley Rooms, Tockington
18. Holly Cottage, Church Hill, Olveston
19. 19 Orchard Rise, Olveston
20. Travalan, New Road, Olveston
21. 6 The Green, Olveston
22. 19 The Green, Olveston
23. The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane, Olveston
24. St Mary's Church, Olveston

## From the Registers of St. Mary's, Olveston

September 20<sup>th</sup>

Funeral of Kenneth Sidney Joseph Neale, followed by burial in the churchyard.

November 5<sup>th</sup>

Funeral of Rosemary Hannah Hewson, followed by burial in the churchyard.

## Greenforce



**Did you know.....**that the plastic stem of a cotton bud takes 150 years to degrade?

Or that Morocco has the largest wind farm in the world, which provides 40% of their country's needs?

**Have you thought of.....**building a pile of logs in the garden, where insects and grubs, and possibly a toad, could hide? Or of burning coffee logs in your wood burner or on your open fire? They are made from compressed used coffee grounds and are being sold online or in some stores locally.

# Elves of Olveston

*Hannah Thompson*



Starting on 1st December 2020, at 12pm, I shall be hiding a selection of Elf doors around the village, each will be labelled with a number and the name of the Elf living behind the door.

Once families have found all of the names and filled in an answer sheet, they can return a photo of the completed trail to my email address, see below, and they will be entered into a prize draw.

At certain times during the month, the Elves will also leave secret surprises for lucky hunters.

To obtain a copy of the trail sheet and for

questions or to return completed answer sheets email:

[elvesofolveston@gmail.com](mailto:elvesofolveston@gmail.com)

We also have a Facebook group 'The Elves of Olveston- 2020' which many villagers have already joined.

# St Mary's, Olveston, Used Stamp Collection

*Fiona Macaskill*

At this time of year, we often receive Christmas cards with stamps on the envelopes. Please can you take a little time to collect these, leaving about half an inch of paper around the outside? It would be helpful if you could also separate UK and foreign stamps.

St Mary's is open on Wednesdays and Sundays, so please can you pop any used stamps into the boxes that are on the table, just inside the church door?

What a simple way to re-cycle and raise money for the Scripture Union at the same time. Thank you.







## ST MARY'S CHURCH TOWER RESTORATION PROJECT

# St Mary's Church Tower Restoration Project

*Peter Floyd*

Since we have been unable to hold fund raising events, you have read through this series of articles that after the collapse of the spire in 1605, the tower was restored in 1606, in just one year! If only we could manage that. We have wondered how, in hard times, they ever found the money. In those days the church was responsible for the poor, for health, for education and even for roads! All of which had to be paid for by the community. Once the government had taken over the majority of these duties, the church has still to pay for itself, its continuing charitable work and its buildings.

Although the English don't like talking about money, in asking for your help in raising £200,000 to restore our church tower, now is perhaps a good time to outline how St Mary's is funded.

### **St Mary's Income**

The congregation pays for the whole church through regular giving, including generous gifts left to the church in wills and through fundraising via special events like the Summer Fete and, of course special appeals, like the current 'Tower Appeal'.

### **Outward giving.**

Since the church tries to help those less fortunate, every second year the church chooses a charity to support and over the last ten years there have been five major appeals, covering a range of initiatives to which you may have contributed.

Clean water, cataract operations, and support for returning refugees in Africa; a new building for worship, healthcare and education in India; a drop- in centre for the Night Shelter in Bristol and a Reflective Space for the children of Olveston School.

These five appeals raised almost £82,000, which, together with a wide range of other, smaller donations, makes a total of £137,000 given to deserving causes, both here and around the world.

## **Maintaining the Church Building**

Our church of St Mary's is old (the tower was built in 1150, over 800 years ago); is the largest building in the village and is beautiful, so is expensive to maintain. We are lucky that the church was soundly built and has only occasionally required really heavy expenditure and happily there is a charity whose sole objective is to help fund the maintenance and restoration of the church building.

## **The Olveston Church Buildings Trust**

This ancient and independent charity was created in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to administer land and buildings left to the church and to use the income for the benefit of the church building. The Trustees, sometimes called by their ancient name of Feofees, still have their minute books going back three centuries, showing how regularly it has offered financial support. The Trustees sold their land in the 1920's, creating a fund, the interest from which was used to help support the church building. In 1955 the roof had to be largely rebuilt and the Trustees took the generous decision to sell most of their assets in order to fund two thirds of the considerable cost. Over time, with care and added contributions, the depleted fund has been rebuilt, so that the Trustees have been able to pledge a very welcome £25,000 towards the cost of the current Tower Appeal. The trustees welcome more generous donations in order to continue offering help to keep St Mary's church building fit for the future.

There are leaflets available in St Mary's with details of how to give, or you may care to ring John Gunnery on *01454 413225*.

## **The Friends of St Mary's**

This kindly group was set up in 1994 with the intention of providing regular payments to the church (currently about £4,000 a year) to provide, not only to the building, but for the countless other things which might not otherwise be afforded. Money is raised primarily through its popular Lottery, the winners of which are regularly reported in Meeting Point, with additional sums raised at special church events. It is independent, with its own constitution and committee, though its accounts are integrated with those of the church and subject to the same independent examination.

The list of items paid for by The Friends is long and includes carpets, choir robes, hand bells, a flagpole, hymn boards, vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, a ladder, cupboards and many more. Since 1994 and by the end of this year they will have given the church about £112,000.

If you would like to learn or give more, leaflets are available in church or ring Andy Phillips on *01454 614890* or email him at *andisp28@hotmail.co.uk*



**Decay**



**Hope**

## **The Tower Appeal**

In December we all look forward to the festive season, when we hope, in this time of crisis, to be able to meet in our lovely old church, to remind ourselves of the reasons for Christmas; to be cheered by decorated trees and by offering gifts.

The church's future is as ever, down to us all. Please help us to restore our tower; replace its pinnacles and underpin our spiral access stair, ensuring that St Mary's continues to be as well cared for as it has always been - after fearful 1605/6 – and now in 2020/21!

Depending on the outcome of the Appeal, we aim to bring you articles in the spring from the sculptor, the architect and the engineer explaining what is actually going to be done.

*Facts for this article from John Gunnery, Andy Phillips, Debbie Harries and David Prothero. Photos from Marcus Chantry and Les Harper.*

## **Appeal Update**

*David Prothero, Treasurer, St Mary's Church Olveston*

A big thank you to all who have donated so generously in response to the Appeal, published in recent issues of Meeting Point. We have so far received

24 donations from individuals, families and companies, totalling £12,500. This is a wonderful response from the local community at a very difficult time for so many, and takes the total amount raised to-date, including grants, to £178,500. As a reminder, if you would like to help, donations can be made in one of the following ways:

**By bank transfer** to the St Mary's Church bank account, the details of which are: Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00029936, using the reference 'Tower Project'.

**By cheque** made payable to 'St Mary's PCC Olveston', and sent to David Prothero, Treasurer, St Mary's Church Olveston, Rose Cottage, Buckover, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8DX.

If you wish to Gift Aid your donation, please e-mail me at [djprothero@talk21.com](mailto:djprothero@talk21.com).

## Aust Parish Council

*Emma Pattullo, Parish Clerk*

Aust Parish Council has continued to meet remotely (via Zoom) and would welcome any parishioners to attend these online meetings. It is possible to join via a telephone call if you do not have internet access – please contact the Clerk for details. We normally meet on the second Tuesday evening of the month, except in December and August.

At the moment the Council is involved in responding to various planning matters, drawing up the budget for the next financial year, and representing residents in discussions with South Gloucestershire Council, and other bodies, on issues such as anti-social behaviour, noise complaints and highway verge maintenance.

Councillor Shaun Sutton is moving out of the area and has therefore tendered his resignation as a member of the Council. I would like to extend our thanks to Shaun for his time and commitment to the Parish since becoming a Councillor and wish both him and Robin all the best in the future.

If you would be interested in serving as a Councillor, please get in touch with myself or with the Chairman, Catherine Collinson, (email: [catherine.collinson@btinternet.com](mailto:catherine.collinson@btinternet.com)) It is a very good way to connect with your community and influence decisions for the benefit of the people of Aust Parish. You can contact the Council on [austparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:austparishcouncil@gmail.com) or 01454 837271.

# Severn Tunnel Disaster

IC Awkley

Here's a question for you; can you remember where you were and what you were doing at 11am on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December 1991? I can. I was walking with my family and dog in the Forest of Dean, when my pager went off marking the end of our day out and the start of a very intense 48hrs for myself and many others.

The Severn Railway Tunnel, always known as the Black Hole to railway workers, is just under 4 ½ miles in length, and carries the South Wales main line under the Severn Estuary between Pilning on the English side, and Severn Tunnel Junction on the Welsh side. Earlier that morning passengers had happily boarded the 08.30 High Speed Train (HST) from Paddington to Cardiff. The HST set consisted of two power cars and eight coaches and was carrying 129 passengers and three railway employees as it approached the tunnel.



*A Paddington to South Wales High Speed Train entering the Severn Tunnel*

Railway signalling is a vastly complex subject, but it is only necessary for our purposes to understand some rudimentary facts. When travelling west (towards Wales) the last signal before entering the tunnel was at Ableton Lane, a bit less than a mile from the tunnel mouth. This signal showed either



red or green, the meaning of which is obvious. As the HST approached this signal it was firmly showing a red. The driver stopped the train and after about a minute walked to the telephone at the base of the red signal. He was informed by the railway signaller at Newport that there was a technical fault with the signalling in the tunnel and he should proceed past the red signal at caution (fairly standard railway practice in the circumstances). The train then entered the tunnel at about 20 mph with the intention of maintaining that speed until the next signal, located just before the exit of the tunnel.

The tunnel has a horizontal elevation rather like a 'U', the tunnel itself being at the bottom of steep inclines from both the English and Welsh sides (1:100 and 1:90 respectively). Travelling westward, the tunnel is initially straight but about a mile before the western portal it turns to the left. The combination of vertical and lateral changes in direction together with absolute darkness made forward vision somewhat restricted, but the experienced driver was proceeding cautiously and had no reason to be unduly concerned. As the HST started to climb away from the lowest point of the tunnel the driver felt a severe bump and the brakes of his train came on automatically bringing it to a stand. He knew something had gone wrong but knew not what. He was only going slowly, and the headlights of his locomotive showed that he hadn't run into anything. What could have happened?

Much earlier that morning at 07.00 a two-coach Class 155 Sprinter train had left Portsmouth Harbour Station bound for Cardiff. The Sprinter's route was circuitous via Southampton, Salisbury, Bath and Bristol but would eventually join the main South Wales line at Patchway Junction, some six miles before entering the tunnel. What happened as this train carrying 168 passengers passed the signal at Ableton Lane and then entered the tunnel has never been properly established, but what is known is that disaster was seconds away, as the Sprinter train travelling at some 45-55mph ran into the back of the slowly moving HST. The photo below shows damage to the front of the Sprinter train.



Inside the two trains shock and confusion reigned. Many passengers in the heavy HST had been thrown forward by the force of the collision, striking their heads and limbs on the seats in front of them. Matters were

made worse by the internal lighting failing for a few seconds before emergency lights came on. The situation in the lighter built and faster moving Sprinter was substantially more serious. The driver was trapped in his cab and a number of passengers had sustained serious injuries, though miraculously none were killed. Following announcements made on both trains, a number of doctors and nurses came forward to start treating the most seriously injured.

Meanwhile, three calls had been made by use of emergency phones situated in the tunnel, alerting the signallers at Newport to the exact location of the collision, the nature of the injuries and requesting urgent medical and rescue services. Only weeks before a joint emergency planning meeting involving railway, police, fire, and ambulance officials had taken place to consider emergency response within the tunnel. A large-scale exercise was planned for a future date. Yet, on this fateful day it took emergency services two hours to reach the injured people trapped on the trains. Why so long, was the question at the time and at the enquiry thereafter? The bigger question, how the two trains had managed to collide on one of the best managed and safest railways in the world, also needed to be answered.

More to follow next month.....

## Friends of St. Mary's

The prize winners in the November draw, held on 5th November 2020 were:

Amount	Number	Name
£150	349	Mrs L Thomas, Tockington
£75	608	Mrs E Marsh, Tockington
£25	589	Mr B Amos, Olveston
£25	315	Mrs J Spratt, Tockington
£25	231	Mr & Mrs A Gardner, Olveston
£20	360	Mr & Mrs T Roper, Fernhill
£20	292	Mrs I Phillips, Olveston
£20	289	Mrs G Davies, Abergavenny
£10	216	Mrs J Hahn, Olveston
£10	295	Mrs A Wytchard, Olveston
£10	482	Mrs N Turner, Olveston
£10	629	Mr & Mrs J Poulton, Olveston

The Friends' committee is very grateful for the continued support of our members, especially in such troubling times. Many thanks!!

If you are not yet a member and wish to join the lottery, please telephone Andy Phillips on 01454 614890 or email: [andisp28@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andisp28@hotmail.co.uk).



# News from Marlwood School

After a parent remarked that not much had changed in the Marlwood Food Technology rooms since they were a pupil, the Friends of Marlwood School (FOMS) decided to make

the Food Technology kitchens a focus of their fundraising efforts this year. And so, despite all the disruption of lockdown, FOMS has been able to help the school purchase three new 'state of the art' refrigerators. The new fridges were installed in time for the start of the new school year in September. They will be used by children in all year groups, from the new Year 7 pupils just starting on their Marlwood journey, to Year 11 GCSE pupils who will be taking their exams this academic year.

Louise Beveridge, Food Technology teacher, wrote:

*"Thank you so much for your kind donation and our new fridges. They are fantastic and the children were so happy to see them. These are a super update for the room and gives us a much safer way to store ingredients and prepared dishes. The fridges are much more robust and appropriate for school use, being made from strong materials, so I imagine them lasting for many years. They demonstrate to the students some of the differences between a commercial and domestic kitchen, adding to their understanding about the food industry. We are very grateful, thank you."*

This purchase was aided considerably by a £1000 grant from Olveston Parish Council, as part of their community grant scheme. FOMS is very grateful to Olveston Parish Council for making this purchase possible and for their ongoing support of Marlwood School.

Thank you.





# Oveston Parish Council

Pat Savage

## **Local Community Grants**

A reminder to all groups and organisations within the Parish that the Community Grants are available. Alas, during the initial lockdown, we did not receive any applications. The Council allots a total of £10,000 per annum. If you feel you may benefit from this funding then please contact [clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Councillor Vacancies**

We are incredibly pleased to report that our latest effort to recruit new Councillors has resulted in a goodly number of applications. It is our intention to hold interviews post the lockdown being lifted in mid- December.

## **Woodland Trust**

The Trust is very keen - as part of a national drive - to plant trees in all communities and Parishes. The trees will be supplied free of charge and will be planted by volunteers subject to the cost of a stake to any parishioner. If you are interested please contact [clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Speedwatch**

Whilst we were making great progress under the leadership of Martin Gibson, the second lockdown caused a halt—in more ways than one! This will be re-started once restrictions are lifted. Martin holds periodic training sessions in the Parish Hall Car Park. Please check the Council's website for dates.

## **Oveston Primary School**

On behalf of the Council and our Parishioners we wish to extend our gratitude to Amanda Luke and her staff at the school who have continued, despite all the obstacles imposed by the lockdowns, to deliver a wonderful educational experience to all the children in a safe and 'bubbled' environment. Well done!

## **And finally, Christmas Greetings from your Councillors and Clerk. We wish you a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas.**

We all look forward to a new dawn in 2021, with the probability of a Covid vaccine around the corner.

# A Christmas Card of Hope

*Revd. Stephen Oram*

The joy of the Christmas season begins with the words 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth'. This Christian message of 'Peace and Goodwill to all' was spoken by the Angels to the Shepherds in the fields that first Christmas over 2000 year ago, as they announced the birth of Jesus.



It is also a message on many of our Christmas cards. The sending of Christmas Cards started just over 150 years ago. In 1840 the 'Penny Postal System' was started, allowing the sender to write to people, anywhere in the country, simply by affixing a penny stamp. It quickly became a custom, at Christmas, to send letters of joy and hope to friends, but within three years Sir Cole, the founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum, found the thought of

having to write letters to all his friends at Christmas was causing him 'much anxiety'. He had an idea and approached an artist friend, J.C. Horsley, asking him to design him a card showing a family at table celebrating the holiday flanked by images of people helping the poor with the words 'To ....., ' allowing the sender to personalize the printed greeting 'A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year To You'.

The Christmas card trade soon became a booming industry, but the most popular Christmas card of all time, is a very simple one. It's an image of three cherubic angels, two of whom are bowed in prayer. The third peers out from the card with big, baby blue eyes, her halo slightly askew. 'God bless you, keep you and love you...at Christmastime and always' reads the sentiment. First published in 1977, this card by Hallmark and has sold 34 million copies.



As many our lives are still being turned upside down by the pandemic, I would like to make this Christmas a special one. As I write I am confident that the churches will be open at Christmas for private prayer. I would like you to make St. Mary's a very special place of prayer. Please design - reflecting on the Christmas story - your own very special Christmas Card of Hope. These will be displayed at St. Mary's Church from 9am – 5pm from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December to Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December. Please help as to share God's message of peace and goodwill to all and bring hope to all this Christmastime. To take part please email me: [stephen.oram@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:stephen.oram@blueyonder.co.uk)



# What is it and Where is it?

In the November magazine there were some photographs, taken locally, for readers to identify. Here are some answers.....



The first of these was a photograph of a hole, with a metal rim, in the grass verge between the road and the football pitch at Old Down. The question was, did anybody know what this hole was for? An answer has been provided by an Old Down resident, who explained that there used to be a plastic speed limit sign located there, but someone knocked it over and it was not replaced. The No Entry sign is at the Plough, Pilning Street.



The plaque in memory of Jonathan King can be found at Pilning Station. So, who was Jonathan King? This is what the Pilning Station website says: '*Sadly Jonathan is no longer with us, having passed away in 2014, but his valiant campaigning efforts on behalf of the station and its community are*

*commemorated in a memorial plaque which was mounted on the brickwork of the station footbridge*'. ([www.pilningstation.uk](http://www.pilningstation.uk)).

You can find out more about Jonathan, and the ongoing campaign to keep Pilning Station open, on the website.

# Local Businesses and Covid

*We have asked some of our regular advertisers to let us know how they are coping during the pandemic. This month, Kate Chick tells us what Jolies Fleurs in Thornbury has been doing.*

The current pandemic has sadly created a huge challenge for all those in the live events industry and the wedding business. Jolies Fleurs, an independent florist based in the St Mary Centre in Thornbury, has had to face this challenge head-on, along with all the other businesses in the area. In the first lockdown, once we had recovered from the shock of having to suddenly lock the shop doors, we turned to delivering many, many special bouquets to help spread smiles and love from afar. It was a very emotional time; we had to chat to all our brides about their wedding plans being placed on hold and sadly, it seemed that the number of funerals increased. In some cases, flowers were the only tributes which could be given, as friends were unable to attend memorials.

We also spent quite a bit of our time working out new and alternative marketing strategies (invariably modifying these quickly to keep up with the ever-changing government guidelines.) We recognised that 'Micro-Weddings' were fast becoming the obvious and only choice for 2020 and possibly 2021, so to help local couples whose plans were in disarray, we formed The Thornbury Wedding Collective - a group of passionate and talented independent suppliers - all within a stone's throw of each other who could assist in re-building those plans in a small and perfectly formed way! We launched The Collective on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October with a beautiful photo shoot based at Ronnie's of Thornbury, to help couples visualise how wonderful a ceremony for 15 people could be. Since then we have had so much positive feedback and we are feeling very honoured to now be helping local couples with their revised plans.

The second lockdown has not been quite so much of a shock and we have felt much more prepared – importantly the wholesalers are operating so we can still get flowers! We are back to deliveries and collections again and our green fingers are very firmly crossed that this time it will not last quite so long as the first. We are delighted to still be here and incredibly grateful for all the support from the wonderful residents of Thornbury and surrounding villages. We and all the other shopkeepers in the area could not have made it through without everyone remaining so loyal to us!

Jolies Fleurs: <https://www.facebook.com/jloiesfleursflowers>  
The Thornbury Wedding Collective:  
<https://www.facebook.com/thornburyweddingcollective>

# Jerry Harding

Jerry Harding, who was born in Haslemere, Surrey, lived in Alveston from 1999 before moving to Olveston in 2013. He was brought up during the 40s



and 50s on an organic mixed farm, run by his father for a Christian Community, based in West Sussex. This was an unusual upbringing at that time but one that was to prove to be the foundation on which Jerry forged his life.

Following school, Jerry obtained a National Diploma in agriculture at Harper Adams Agricultural College after which he travelled to South Africa to work on a Christian

Mission Station farm at Engcobo, Transkei. From Engcobo, he went to volunteer at a large rural hospital at Nqutu in Zululand (now KwaZulu-Natal) where his uncle was the medical superintendent.

He returned to the UK, qualified as an agricultural engineer in Essex and then worked for the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering on various projects including a grain storage project in Ghana and Nigeria. Back in the UK again he worked for Findus, the frozen food company, as an agricultural engineer, a post he held for many years based in Grimsby but involving a lot of travel around Europe. He was then transferred to work at a Crosse & Blackwell factory in Cape Town where he lived and worked for 4 years. It was here that he met his wife Val. They were married in Haverfordwest in 1977 during a period of home leave.

Jerry returned to Grimsby in 1979, resuming his role with Findus, but on being made redundant a few years later, decided to pursue his long-desired dream of running his own organic farm. Jerry and Val (now with 2 young children) bought an 88 acre farm near Cardigan, West Wales and set about converting it to comply with Soil Association organic standards. The main income proved to be from the growing of vegetables on a field scale, the most successful of which were brassicas and potatoes. These were marketed through a packing plant near Lampeter which sold them on to supermarkets. They also ran sheep, cattle, egg-laying hens, soft fruit, all using an 8-year rotation without

using artificial fertilisers or pesticides. Jerry was the chair of two local organic co-operatives, one selling meat, the other vegetables. In the 1980s organic farming was growing but still uncommon and from time to time, leaving a field to fallow had his neighbours scratching their heads! Three years running they were visited by a group of conventional farmers from Lincolnshire, who were fascinated to see what could be achieved by organic growing methods. Although the farm slowly became fully mechanised, initially everything was done by hand.

In 1992, they responded to an invitation to join a Christian Community near Hermanus in South Africa whose aim was to provide a level playing field for all people, regardless of race, in the dying years of apartheid. Their three children, having been educated in the Welsh stream at Cardigan, continued their education in an Afrikaans local school in Hermanus. After a year, they left the community and moved into the town, working for a local architect. They returned to the UK in 1999 with their youngest son, whilst the older two completed their university education at two separate South African universities. When back in the UK Jerry quickly found work as an organic inspector with the Soil Association where he worked for 11 years. This role involved inspecting organic farms and processors both in the UK and many countries overseas like Iran, Uganda, Nigeria, West Indies, Netherlands, South Africa.

Jerry's focus has always been on the environment and he feels we humans face very serious challenges if we continue to cause the extinction of so much wildlife, whether insects or larger animals, by the way we live and misuse the planet's resources and how we grow our food. The notion that it is uneconomic to produce organic food comes from not looking at the whole picture (environmental degradation, water pollution, loss of habitat for wildlife etc). He feels a healthy soil, containing millions of microorganisms is the best basis for plants, animals and consequently, humans too. It saddens him that UK rivers are amongst the most polluted in Europe.

Jerry has an allotment in Olveston where he grows organic fruit and vegetables and, as a beekeeper, has hives in Old Down and Thornbury. He also continues to do what he can to promote a more sustainable environment.

The last word goes to his father, who lived by the mantra: 'Live as if you might die tomorrow; farm as if you will be there a thousand years.'



*Bee close-up*

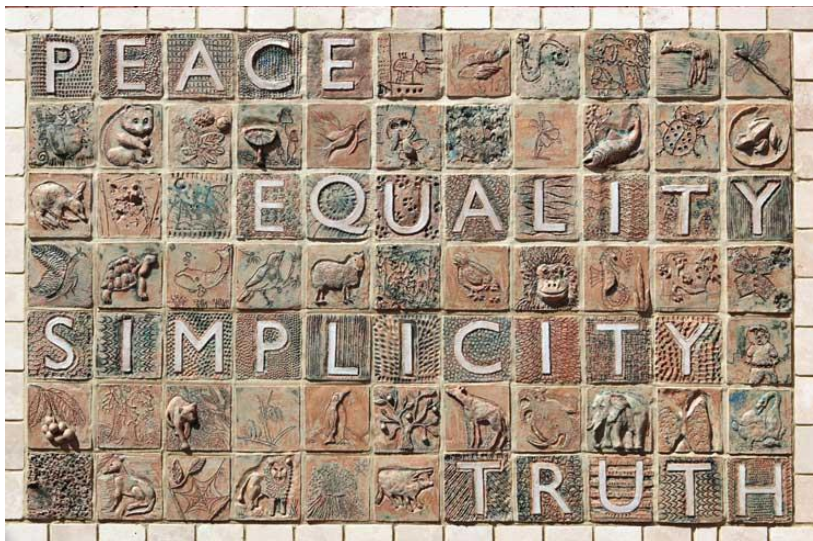
# Equality, Simplicity, Sustainability Stillness, Truth, Peace

Are you tired of a world seemingly divided by media spin, political rifts and sensationalism; a world where our connection with deeper meaning has been lost to the clamour of consumerism? There are many organisations working hard to heal these divisions and to bring about positive change. One of these groups is Quakers.

Quakers is a faith group working for equality, peace and sustainability. Although its roots are in Christianity, Quakers welcomes seekers from all faiths and none. We share certain ideas, but recognise that the spiritual journey is different for everyone. We believe there is good in everyone and we try to put our faith into positive action in the world.

Our meetings are held in silence and are an opportunity for reflection, for spiritual exploration and for self discovery. During the pandemic we are meeting weekly on Zoom.

If the above resonates with you, please join us. For further details contact: Sheila Waters on *07738495776* or visit *www.quaker.org.uk*



**An image from the Bristol Quaker Peace Garden**



# Yours Faithfully

*Neil Mobbs,  
Oasis Church, Old Down.*

Probably many of us had an Advent Calendar when younger. We opened the little door for each day, leading up to Christmas Day. Maybe we even had a sweet or chocolate on certain days. We are looking forward again to Christmas, even though it will be somewhat different this year due to the pandemic. Because of the virus and the people who have been ill, or possibly have died, we may be looking ahead with fear or anxiety. In these uncertain times it is such a comfort and encouragement to be able to put our trust in Jesus Christ, whose coming as a baby we shall soon be celebrating.

Those of us who are Christians believe that Jesus so loved us that He came to earth as a man to die on a criminal's cross, bearing the punishment for our sins. Miraculously He was raised back to life to give us the possibility of eternal life. He said, "Because I live, you too shall live." There is a day when Jesus will come back to our world – this may be sooner than we think as we witness so much suffering and evil around us. I look forward to His second coming to put right all that is unjust and wrong. The committed Christian has something to look forward to beyond the present trials and troubles.

Dear friends, I do hope you have a daily personal relationship with Jesus. He speaks with us as we read the Bible and through His creation. We communicate with Him through prayer and worship. It is great that millions of people around the world have this living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You too can be one of them. He is the Prince of Peace and is willing to be your peace in these uncertain days.

May God greatly bless you and your families with this peace, as we look forward to Christmas 2020.



# Church News

**NB. All Services subject to change due to Covid rules. Please check.**

## **ST MARY the VIRGIN, OLVESTON**

No services in December at time of printing. Please check the Church website or Facebook page or Church Noticeboard.

Church open for private prayer Wednesdays and Sundays from 9am-5pm.

**Contact:** Rev Steve Oram, 07830 151622: email:

*steve.oram@blueyonder.co.uk*, Rev David Moss, 01454 415190, email:  
*mossds@gmail.com*

## **CHAPELRY OF ST JOHN, AUST**

Village Carol Service on Christmas Eve at 4pm if Covid restrictions permit.  
Next service, Holy Communion on Sunday 27 December, Covid permitting.

**Contact:** Trevor Cook, 01454 618442

**Church Wardens:** Jenn Dickens 632312 & Clive Roberts 632238

## **ST MARY DE MALMESBURY, LITTLETON-ON-SEVERN**

**Please check the services are happening!**

Advent Carol Service on 10 December at 3pm.

Christmas Day, Holy Communion at 9am.

**Contacts:** Mrs Tracey Black 417660 & Tim Pyper 416422 /07802 419451

## **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, ELBERTON**

**Please ring John Gunnery 413225 nearer the time to check.**

Carol Service on Sunday 20 December at 4.30 in Church.

Christmas Day, Holy Communion, 9am.

**Contact:** Mrs Judith Heybyrne 01454 616725

## **AUST EVANGELICAL CHURCH and LITTLETON EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

**Contact:** Danny Bamfield 01454 419324 email *danny@thebamfields.co.uk*

## **SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS), Thornbury**

**Contact:** Brian Hawkins, *hawkinsb863@gmail.com* 01454 854867

## **RC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING, Thornbury -**

Tel: 01454 412223, *www.ctk-thornbury.org.uk*

# OLVESTON AND TOCKINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

All services are at Olveston and subject to Covid rules.

Dec 6	10am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion	Rev Simon Edwards
Dec 13	10am	Carol Service. Admission by Ticket Only.	
Dec 20	10am	Morning Worship	Rev David Hardy
Dec 27	10am	Worship led by members of the congregation.	

**Contact:** Rev Simon Edwards 01454 418176  
email: [simon.edwards@methodist.org.uk](mailto:simon.edwards@methodist.org.uk)

## THE OASIS CHURCH, OLD DOWN

Please check regarding Covid restrictions.

Services each Sunday at 6.30pm. Speakers to be arranged

**Contacts:** Jenny Parfitt [jennyparfitt@ymail.com](mailto:jennyparfitt@ymail.com) & Sue Tett  
[stett56@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stett56@hotmail.co.uk)

## THE VINE House of Prayer, Pilning Street, Awkley

Please check regarding Covid restrictions.

Meetings on Sundays at 10.30am and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 2.30pm.

**Contact:** Mike and Barbara Matthews, 07512 917229 or email:  
[thevine\\_awkley@hotmail.com](mailto:thevine_awkley@hotmail.com)

<p><b>Contact details</b> for any clubs or organisations in the Meeting Point area can be found in the Meeting Point Directory on the community website: <a href="http://www.olvestonandaust.com">www.olvestonandaust.com</a>. If you would like to update your organisation's details, please email: <a href="mailto:meetingpointsecretary@olvestonandaust.com">meetingpointsecretary@olvestonandaust.com</a></p>
--

**Advertisements** Neither Meeting Point, its editor, nor management committee accept any responsibility or give any guarantee in case of any dispute or claim as to quality, condition or delivery of commodities or services advertised in this magazine. It is not to be taken that publication implies recommendation. It is always advisable to check prices when ordering goods or services.

**Views** expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or Meeting Point magazine.

**Copyright Meeting Point 2020.** Copyright remains with the author(s) and Meeting Point. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of the copyright owners.