

Issue 267
December 2023

The Shroton Lines

The Shroton Lines is a community newspaper which celebrates the life of the village and its inhabitants. It is compiled by local volunteers and provides information and news. Those of us who are involved with the creation of the Lines are hugely grateful for everyone who contributes and particularly to Emma who is responsible for printing it. Contact: shrotonlines@gmail.com. Editor: Helen Christmas,

Dates

Rubbish & Recycling

(Please see more information on page 4)

Main Village/Bessels

Dec

4 Rubbish
11 Recycling
18 Rubbish
27 (Weds) Recycling

Jan

3 (Weds) Rubbish
9 (Tues) Recycling

The Corner/Courtney Close

Dec

6 Recycling
13 Rubbish
20 Recycling
29 (Fri) Rubbish

Jan

5 (Fri) Recycling

All village

Dec 13 Garden waste
Jan 10 Garden waste

Wednesdays: Coffee and Chat in the Village Hall from 10—12 pm

Thursdays: Singing group in the village hall at 5.45 pm

Thursdays: Craft Group at 7—8 pm in the village hall

Events: details on later pages

Dec 3: RDA Christmas Fair

Dec 8 : Film night in the village hall

Dec 14: Christmas table decorations

Dec 15 –18: Christmas light trail

Dec 16: Christmas dinner

Dec 19: Lunch and Chat (See Ena Rees or Barbara Briggs to book)

See page 6 for Church services at Christmas

Riding for the Disabled
Hanford Group
Christmas Fair
Shroton Village Hall
Saturday 2nd Dec 23
10:00 – 12:00
Crafts Stalls
Raffle & Books
Teas & Coffees
Cakes and more

Hanford Group RDA - Reg No: 1074214



Shroton Village Hall Christmas Dinner

Saturday 16th December at 7pm
Christmas Dinner with Christmas Pudding

Bring your own drinks

Prize for the best Christmas attire!

★ *Grand Christmas Raffle* ★

Adult £15 Child £10 Family £40

Tickets available from

Wendy Gredley 07495 010396

Jonathan Maguire 01258 860132

Joe Holmes 07538 336142

Shroton Village Hall Presents
Cinema Evening
Friday 8th Dec
The Duke
In 1961, Kempton Bunton, a 60 year old taxi driver, steals Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London.
He sent ransom notes saying he would return the painting if the government invested more in the care for the elderly.
What happened next would become the stuff of legends.
Cast: Helen Mirren and Jim Broadbent
Doors open 18:30
Film starts 19:00
£6
Refreshments Wine Bar
Advanced booking: Tracy 07774140371

Christmas giving

As a Citizens Advice case-worker, I am based in two foodbanks (Gillingham and Sturminster). This year more than ever, we have been inundated by requests for help and support and the vast proportion of these are to do with financial difficulties. The foodbanks do a marvellous job, but they are currently having to buy food to go into the bags/boxes, using precious resources. So, in December, can we all pick up a few extra items when we do our weekly shop to put into the foodbank collections. It **WILL** be appreciated.

Light in the Dark, a short story by Ursula Goodall

The rain had soaked her trouser through and her shoes were getting squelchy. This seemed to happen to her every year. They hoped for clear and cold, but wet and misty seemed to dog their steps. It did lend to the atmosphere, making the coloured lights seem strangely brighter and the street vendors made a fortune on hot food and seasonal drinks. None for her until afterwards, even though the gusts of wind wafted the heady scent of burgers and caramelised onions towards her. She was too excited to eat yet, anyway.



Being tall and 'not petite' as Harry the designer said at the audition (thinking he was being tactful), but he meant that the weight of the floor would be unbalanced. He also used the word 'unique' meaning that there wasn't anyone to match her on the other side of it, so once again she found herself in black shoes and trousers and a big unisex blob of a hi-vis jacket. The only sparkle of her outfit – the bucket for collecting the money for charity.

She sighed as she heard them running the music track for the last time in the Warehouse before the cast clambered up onto the float to get plugged into and belted onto their positions on the transport. Her toes were cold, but as she counted and moved in time to the routine that she too knew off by heart, she really didn't care.

Carnival was a family affair. It was where her mum and dad had met doing costumes and electrics respectively. As the kids came along, they were absorbed into it too. But to Bridget – Birdie as she was known – ('Big Bird' when banter ricocheted around the warehouse workshop, stabbing in her the heart, even though she appeared to laugh it off), it was how her year revolved.

She almost disliked summer for bleaching colour out of everything. Sometimes she would catch herself drifting off when she heard the sound of a generator at an ice cream or burger van, as the sound triggered a major reminiscence of the previous Carnival season.

As the nights drew in, the anticipation and excitement grew – even when it rained. Rain seemed to enhance the quality of the coloured lights as circuits and effects were tried out. She got lumbered with helping her dad cabling and such-like, but in any spare time and when most of the workers had gone, she would go to her first love – the Costume area – and set to on the worksheet that her mum had gaffer taped to the brick wall. They had a little joke together that she was like the mice to her mum's Tailor of Gloucester!

Sometimes, her mum would allocate all the jobs secretly, saving Birdie some Stand work. The costume would be put on the tailor's dummy, so that the maker could easily decorate it with sequins, rhinestones, gold braid, feathers – whatever was appropriate for the design. Birdie's fingers flew. She appliqued, she stitched, she hot glue gunned - whatever it took - and she managed it in no time at all.

This was just what Birdie was doing now in her imagination: listening to the track. She pretended she was in the favourite of this year's costumes: one that she had previously worked on – a beautiful Peacock, whose tail feathers blazed with jewels. She and her dad had rigged the board behind it to cascade light onto the rhinestones in time to the music, which really added to the spectacular effect of the Float. Talk was that it was the Club's best year yet. Regional prizes had been mentioned. Her wet feet reminded her not to get ahead of herself. The rain had lifted to a light atmospheric drizzle. Her dad gave her a wink as he passed her to the warehouse entrance and gave the go ahead for the cast to load onto the float.

A cheer went up, then various characters and animals scuttled past her to get into position. Walkie-talkies squawked noise at each other; the generator and lorry engines answered in the affirmative as Birdie's heart skipped a beat. She forgot everything but the joy of this particular annual walk, basking in the multi-coloured reflected light.

Christmas and New Year photographs: I would be delighted to receive photos of village life/scenes for the January edition of The Shroton Lines. Please send to shrotonlines@gmail.com

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Christmas Lights

Following Natasha's wonderful 'Christmas Light walk' last December, she has organised an even better event this year.

This time, there will be 12 windows in the village displaying one of the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' themes for the children to find.

Look out for more details on Pie'd Piper and on notices around the village, but the 'Light walk' will run from 15–18 December, with maps available from the bus stop and arrows to show the trail which ends at The Cricketers so that hot chocolates can be bought to celebrate the end of the trail!

Natasha will also be organising a children's craft morning before Christmas...look out for notices in the Pie'd Piper and on the village notice boards, including the bus stop.

(Good luck to whoever has 'Lords a Leaping! It isn't me! Ed.)

Village hall news

The Village Hall hosted a successful **Curry Night** with both Indian and Thai flavours on offer. It was a sell-out evening with a bonanza raffle t'boot.

Last Saturday was **Soup 'n' Pud and the fabulous Make Do & Mend** team event. What a high standard of catering – a choice of 4 soups and puddings galore all for £3.50. You can't say fairer than that. I came back with several items BEAUTIFULLY repaired and a righteous sense of satisfaction that they hadn't contributed to landfill. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard for these events to be such a success.

LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION! - The inaugural opening of the Village Hall Cinema is on Friday 8th December. Doors open 6.30pm. Film starts 7pm. Tickets £6. Bar selling wine and beer.

Shroton Christmas Dinner – Saturday 16 Dec 7pm. Festive nosh with all the trimmings. Adults £15, Child £10, Family £40. Check the advert for more details and where to buy tickets.

Village Hall Carols – Tues 19 Dec 6pm. Come and get festive - Mince pies, mulled wine, a hot sausage and a carol or two. What's not to like?

Emma

A reminder:

CHRISTMAS TABLE DECORATION MORNING – Thurs 14 December

(5 Courtney Close. Small fee, coffee & cake. Call Frances 01258 861769)



Letters to the editor

Dear Shroton Lines,

As a resident of Courtney Close I was delighted to see that John Simmons has given his hedge a serious trim. And what a difference it makes!

Now when any of us North Shrotonians approach the crossroads we can do so with increased confidence, thanks to the improved sight lines down Frog Lane. Hopefully this will greatly reduce the number of "near misses" many of us have experienced. For The Corner and Courtney Close it would seem that Christmas has come early. Chris Pearson

Christmas Raffle

There will be a hamper raffle at the Christmas dinner. If anyone can donate something for the hampers, (non perishable food and drink please) we would be very grateful.

Please drop any donations off to **4 The Glebe** or call on **07989628368** to arrange collection.

Many thanks
 Karen Holliday

Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council - Meeting summary 15th November 2023

The Parish Council has agreed to the appointment of a contractor to fell the Lombardy Poplars. Consideration will also be given to how the felled trees can best be disposed of, the timber being of no commercial value.

The operation of new PC website is under review and changes made to considered to enable this to be used as a photo archive.

The DAPTC have published the timetable for the 2024 Local Council elections. Residents who are eligible are asked to begin considering if they wish to be nominated:

<https://www.dorset-aptc.gov.uk/news/elections-2024>

Planning application reference P/HOU/2023/05442 - 6 Rectory Gardens Shroton Dorset DT11 8RQ – (Erect double storey side extension and single storey rear extension)

The Council could neither support or object to the application and agreed only to comment.

It is proposed to set a precept of £5,000 for the year 2024/2025, which would require a £ 2.16 addition to Council Tax Band D for the year. A final decision will be made in January 2024.

This is an abridged summary of the Parish Council meeting; a full version of the minutes is available on the Parish Council website:

<https://www.dorsetparishes.gov.uk/council/iwerne-courtney-and-stepleton-parish-council/minutes-meetings-and-agendas/>

The next scheduled PC meeting will be on 17th January 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

David Green, Parish Clerk

Christmas Rings and Table Centre Making Morning

On Thursday December 14th, we are planning on making the floral table centres for the village Christmas meal which is taking place on Saturday December 16th.

We would love it if you would like to be with us from 10am onwards at 5, Courtney Close and join in the fun. You don't have to be a flower arranger; beginners will be welcome plus there will be coffee and cake.

When you have made your Christmas ring or table centre you will be able to take it home after the village Christmas meal. There will be a small charge to cover the cost of wire, candles etc.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jean and Frances

For further information please contact Frances on 01258 963769



Please also remember that if the lid of your wheelie bin (including garden waste bins) cannot close completely, the bin cannot be managed by the machine on the collection lorry and the bin may not be emptied. There have been several bins left unemptied in the village for this reason and then the contents have blown/spilt out.

Information from Dorset County Council website

Remember:

- we will collect up to two extra sacks of rubbish beside your bin on your first rubbish collection after Christmas Day
- no garden waste collections will take place from Christmas Eve until Monday 8 January
- household recycling centres are open from 9am to 4pm daily, except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day
- extra recycling, including glass and food, will be collected on your recycling collection day, provided it has been separated correctly and placed in a suitable sturdy container (no bags) that can be easily lifted by one person
- please help our crews by putting your glass out for collection before Christmas

This ensures you have as much space as possible in your glass box, helping prevent over spilling containers, and reduces the amount of extra glass we collect over the busy festive period.

Many households produce extra waste over Christmas, but much of it can be recycled using your kerbside Recycle for Dorset service. Remember that you can recycle:

- cooked and uncooked food, using your food waste bin
- wrapping paper (not foil or glittery paper, please)
- cardboard and recyclable packaging (not polystyrene)
- Christmas cards and envelopes (no glitter)
- Christmas trees

Dorset Council does not collect Christmas trees of any kind with rubbish or recycling at the kerbside.

You can recycle your real Christmas tree by:

- home composting it
- cutting it up and placing it in your garden waste bin
- taking it to a household recycling centre or booking a Christmas tree collection with a Dorset-based charity or service.

Display of Christmas Crib sets from around the world

As a legacy from her years of working for international organisations, Clare Amos has an extensive collection of Christmas Cribs or Nativity Sets from around the world – Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as Europe.

She is planning to hold a display of her crib sets in St Mary's Church on Friday 22 December 2.00pm – 3.30pm. It is likely to be accompanied by Christmas music on the piano played by her husband Alan. It will be a walk round display, with people free to come and go when they wish. All are welcome, especially children, to come in and share something of the excitement of how the birth of Jesus is recalled in different parts of our world.

For more information contact Clare on clare.amos@europe.anglican.org



The History of the Nativity scene

St. Francis of Assisi is credited with staging the first nativity scene in 1223. The only historical account we have of Francis' nativity scene comes from *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan monk who was born five years before Francis' death.

According to Bonaventure's biography, St. Francis got permission from Pope Honorius III to set up a manger with hay and two live animals—an ox and an ass—in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio. He then invited the villagers to come gaze upon the scene while he preached about "the babe of Bethlehem." (Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion that he couldn't say "Jesus.") Bonaventure also claims that the hay used by Francis miraculously acquired the power to cure local cattle diseases and pestilences.

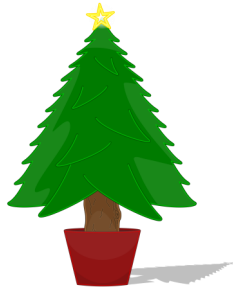
The nativity scene's popularity took off from there. Within a couple of centuries, nativity scenes had spread throughout Europe and later scenes began incorporating dioramas and life actors, and the cast of characters gradually expanded to sometimes include an entire village.

The familiar cast of characters relied upon today—the three wise men and the shepherds—is not biblically accurate. Of the New Testament's four gospels, only Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth. Matthew mentions wise men, while Luke comments on shepherds. But nowhere in the Bible do shepherds and wise men appear together. (summary of an article from The Smithsonian magazine: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/the-first-nativity-scene-was-created-in-1223-161485505/>)

Christmas trees

For anyone looking for a (real!) Christmas tree for next month's celebrations may we remind you that they will be available from Oasis Plant Centre (in Child Okeford) from 9.00am on Wednesday 29th November.

Judging by the number of customers who have contacted us over the past few days we recommend that you come over to get your tree at the earliest opportunity.



Please remember that although it is possible to purchase your tree and leave it with us for a few days, we will be closing for Christmas on Saturday 16th December and reopening on Thursday 1st February (2024!). With that in mind, please remember to collect your tree before 4.00pm on 16th December to avoid disappointment.

Please note that we hope to have some Christmas wreaths for sale also.

Needless to say, we look forward to welcoming you and offer our seasonal greetings.....if it isn't too early to be doing that!

John & Val Harbour and Andrew Davies

At the Solstice by Shaun O'Brien

We say Next time we'll go away,
But then the winter happens, like a secret

We've to keep yet never understand
As daylight turns to cinema once more:

A lustrous darkness deep in ice-age cold,
And the print in need of restoration

Starting to consume itself
With snowfall where no snow is falling now.

Or could it be a cloud of sparrows, dancing
In the bare hedge that this gale of light

Is seeking to uproot? Let it be sparrows, then,
Still dancing in the blazing hedge,

Their tender fury and their fall,
Because it snows, because it burns.

(Winter solstice: Friday December 22 at 3.25 am)



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Make your own fat balls for feeding birds (from the National Trust website)

What you'll need

Hard fat, such as lard or suet, at room temperature

Handful of birdseed

Handful of unsalted peanuts

Grated cheese or raisins

Dry leftovers like oats or bread

Old, clean recyclable yoghurt pots or coconut shells for a plastic-free alternative

String

Small stick, roughly 7–12cm long

This will make one to four fat cakes depending on size.

Method: Mix the ingredients

Use one part fat to two parts dry mixture. Melt the fat slightly if it's not at room temperature and is still a little hard. Mix the fat and the other ingredients together in a bowl.

Prepare the containers

Make a small hole in the bottom of each of your yoghurt pots or coconut shells. Thread a long piece of string through the hole and tie it around your small stick, pulling it tight so the stick sits snugly against the top of the yoghurt pot or coconut shell. This will act as a perch for the birds.

Fill the moulds and chill

Scoop the mixture into the yoghurt pot or coconut shell, packing it tightly around the string 'core' and filling all the way to the top. Put it in the fridge until it has set hard.

Remove the fat cakes

Once it's fully set, carefully remove the fat cake from its pot or shell. It should come out easily if the mixture is cold enough, and you can reuse your yoghurt pot or coconut shell to make more fat cakes in the future. If you have to cut away your yoghurt pot to remove it, don't forget to recycle it.

Hang out for the birds

Tie the string over a tree or shrub branch. Make sure you choose somewhere away from cats. If you find the mixture is a bit crumbly, next time add a little more fat and fewer dry ingredients.

Don't use margarine or left over fat from baking trays. Fat cakes can be frozen for use throughout the winter.

What's on in Church



Our traditional Carol Service will be held at 6pm on Sunday 17th December. Usual mince pies and seasonal drinks afterwards.

On Sunday 24th December we will be celebrating Holy Communion (Midnight Mass) at 23.30.

A family Christmas celebration will be held in Church at 10am on Christmas Morning.

Concerts

On 20th October we enjoyed an amazing concert in aid of the Blandford Foodbank which Alan Amos had organised. We raised £570 for the foodbank.

On 10th November Blandford Rural Music Society held their first concert in Church which was a huge success. They (and we) are keen to develop a series of concerts. The acoustics in our Church are brilliant for this – and it is a warm space!

Church calendar for December

3rd December – Common Worship Service with baptism led by John Simmons.

3rd December - prayer gathering in Shroton Church at 4.30pm.

10th December – Common Worship Service led by David John.

17th December – 6pm – Carols by Candlelight led by John Simmons.

24th December – 23.30 Midnight Mass led by John Simmons.

25th December – 10am Family Christmas Celebration Service led by John Simmons.

31st December – 10am Benefice Service in Shroton Church led by Alan Amos.

Christmas cheer



How did the reindeer know it was going to rain?

Because Rudolph the red-knows-rain, deer!

How did Scrooge win the football game? The ghost of Christmas passed.

What is interesting about this phrase..? **"A Santa spit taboo bat tips at NASA"**

"Alive without breath, As cold as death; Never thirsty, ever drinking, All in mail never clinking. **What am I?** (With thanks to JRR Tolkien!

Answer to last month's picture question: Andy Rees!



What 5-letter word typed in all capital letters can be read the same upside down? SWIMS

I add 5 to 9 and get 2. The answer is correct, so what am I?

A clock

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