

# Shire

Your local community newspaper  
with news and views from the  
Shirehampton area

No. 634 - November 2024 [www.shire.org.uk](http://www.shire.org.uk) 5,000 copies monthly

Have you got a job that needs doing? Go to YOUR LOCAL TRADESPEOPLE section on pages 17-18 to find a local business who can help.

**Be SAFE this  
Bonfire Night!**

**Remembrance  
Sunday  
10th November**

## Remount Station Memorial Bench Vandalised

Article and photos by Kathryn Courtney except broken Bench photo taken by John Hastings, FoLM.

Many local people will know the history of the Daisy Field, just off the Portway in Shirehampton, was once a Remount Station where horses were trained and then shipped out via Avonmouth Docks to the battle front during WWI. It is now a significant part of Shirehampton's History.



During November and December 2013 a collaboration between LinkAge, Oasis Academy Lawrence Weston and Alistair Park, a professional Wood Carver, made a special bench with carvings etched into the wood that would be a lasting memorial to the Remount Station. It was an intergenerational project with local students, local people aged over 50 years, LinkAge and Alistair Park who oversaw the project. He put the bench together so it could be installed in the Orchard area of the Daisy Field during 2014. I was lucky enough to be asked to photo-diarise the project.

As you can see from the photos a lot of work had gone into the bench with the carvings being made. My mum was one of the people who helped with the project along with several of her friends. Dick Helme, the local Wood Turner who took part in the Craft Exhibition each year was also prolific in the project. The local students were fascinated with his work and advice he gave them. Both have since passed on but for me I was able to say 'my mum helped make this.'

*Continues on page 4.*

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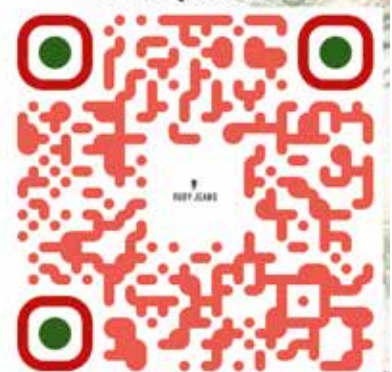
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for the Christmas menu

# Shire

We hold regular monthly meetings on the first Monday of each month at 5.30pm in Shirehampton library. All welcome!

Official address: The Library, Public Hall, Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 9TU.

Please contact Shire on: [chairperson@shire.org.uk](mailto:chairperson@shire.org.uk)

## 'SHIRE' Contact Details

Web address: [www.shire.org.uk](http://www.shire.org.uk)

Submit articles: [editor@shire.org.uk](mailto:editor@shire.org.uk)

Sport & Activities: [sports@shire.org.uk](mailto:sports@shire.org.uk) or 07981 927787

Advertising: [adverts@shire.org.uk](mailto:adverts@shire.org.uk) or 07742 804737

Finances: [treasurer@shire.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@shire.org.uk)

Distribution: [distribution@shire.org.uk](mailto:distribution@shire.org.uk) or 0117 982 0478

Requests for SHIRE by Post 0117 904 3037

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Mr. John Rohde (Sport & Activities)

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N.B. To meet the deadline with our typesetters, all written copy should be submitted by email or to the Library by the 10th of the month before it appears in print, or it may not be included in the next edition. While advertisements in this paper are accepted in good faith, readers are advised to make their own enquiries and assessment. We request that all adverts are supplied in the correct format and size or there may be a charge should you require artwork to be created. Price on application. Unless otherwise stated, all material appearing in SHIRE is the copyright of SHIRE Publications. Please ensure photographs submitted with articles are cleared for use and permission sought especially when featuring individuals including children. The Shire cannot accept responsibility if photos are published in error where permission for use has been not sought. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Shire. All information correct at time of going to press to the best of Shire's knowledge.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome contributions for publication in 'SHIRE' but reserve the right to edit any copy received. Articles should not exceed 500 words. Any material published is at the editor's discretion and may also be included on our website [www.shire.org.uk](http://www.shire.org.uk) unless the copy is clearly marked 'not to be included on the world wide web'.

Contributions submitted to: [editor@shire.org.uk](mailto:editor@shire.org.uk)

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## REGULAR EVENTS IN SHIREHAMPTON

### SHIREHAMPTON PUBLIC HALL REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY	Twyford Art Club	10am-12noon	Main Hall
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Music with Mummy 9 to 5 Ladies Choir Line Dancing Community Living Room Bereavement Support (1st Tues) Puppy Training	10am-12noon 11am-1pm 2-3pm 3-5pm 5.50-7pm 6.30-8.30pm	Main Hall Library Main Hall Library Library Main Hall
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Healing Rooms (2nd Weds) Over 75s Exercise Extraordinary Links (Term Time) Women's Fellowship (2nd and 4th Weds) Shire Stitchers (3rd Weds)	10.30am-1.30pm 2-3pm 3.30-5.30pm 7.30-9.30pm 7.30-9.30pm	Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Shire Social Group Tai Chi Family History Group (2nd Thurs) Model Railway Club	10am-12noon 2-3pm 6-8pm 7-10pm	Main Hall Main Hall Library Main Hall
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Youth Group (2nd and last Fri) Shire Stitchers (1st Friday)	7-10pm 10am-12noon	Main Hall/Penpole Bradley Room
<b>SUNDAY</b>	Church of Grace	11am-4pm	Main Hall & Springfield

The Hall is also home to Shirehampton Community Action Forum (SCAF) and Tandem Arts CIC

## SHIREHAMPTON COMMUNITY ACTION FORUM (SCAF) SHIRE COMMUNITY LITTER PICKS 2024

Meet at 10.30am at Shire Public Hall, Station Road, BS11 9TU

Pick up equipment & we'll go to different areas of Shire and tidy up for 1-1.5 hours

**Thursday 21 November**

**Thursday 19 December**

Please come along and help us clean up Shire! All litter picking kit will be provided

**Contact: Ash Bearman at SCAF on 0117 982 9963  
or email [ash@shirecaf.org.uk](mailto:ash@shirecaf.org.uk)**

## Events in our library



Every Tuesday afternoon 3pm – 5pm

**Shire's Living Room –**

free tea/coffee/biscuits/games and a friendly chat.

1st Wednesday of the month 7:30pm – 9pm

**Record Appreciation Club –**

(next one on 2nd October)

Using analogue equipment, we play a classic vinyl album every month and have a discussion afterwards.

2nd Thursday of the month 6pm – 8pm

**Family History Group –**

We have a team of experts at hand to help you navigate the Ancestry.com website and other online tools and find out more about your family's history.

Every Sunday evening 6:30pm – 7:30pm

**Heartfulness Relaxation and  
Meditation**

Email [southwest@heartfulness.uk](mailto:southwest@heartfulness.uk) before your first session. All welcome 18+

If you'd like to attend any of the above sessions,  
either email [friendsofshire@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofshire@gmail.com)  
or phone/text 07943-401575



**Cotswold Community Association**  
Dursley Road, Shirehampton,  
Bristol, BS11 9XH  
Registered charity no. 1101427  
Website: [cotswoldcommunity.org](http://cotswoldcommunity.org)  
Email: [cotswoldca@gmail.com](mailto:cotswoldca@gmail.com)  
Phone: 07943-401575

## Regular Events at the Cotswold Community Centre

**MONDAY** Pilates 9.30-10.30am  
Kettlebells 5:15-6:15pm  
6:30-7:30pm

**TUESDAY** Film Night 7:30pm  
(1st & 3rd of month)

**WEDNESDAY** Keep Fit 10:30-11:30am  
Kettlebells 5:15-6:15pm  
Pilates 6:30-7:30pm

**THURSDAY** Welcome Space 10am-Noon  
Bingo 2pm  
Kettlebells 5:15-6:15pm  
6:30-7:30pm  
Table Tennis 8pm

**FRIDAY** Happy Space 2pm-4pm  
(3rd of month)

**SATURDAY** Coffee Morning 10am-11:30am  
(2nd of month)  
Bingo 7:30pm

**SUNDAY** Cotswold Christian  
Community Service 4:45-6pm  
(2nd of month)





**Come along and join in the fun**

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# The *Shire* Community Pages

*Continued from page 1.*

Fast forward to **September 2024** and having had a few incidents reported that two or three youngsters had tried to set fire to the bench and destroy it, only intervention from the public had stopped them on several occasions.

**Friends of Lamplighters Marsh** are the custodians of Lamplighters Marsh and the Daisy Field, had kept a close eye on this along with additional community people, but on **Friday 13th September John Hastings** a member of FoLM made the heart breaking discovery that the bench was vandalised during the previous night. He posted his photo on the FoLM Facebook page saying "Here's a photo of the damage done to our lovely bench in the Daisy Field. Hopefully we can get it repaired fully, but, nonetheless, it's extremely heart breaking"

Outrage had spread across social media with many saying that this shows great disrespect. "Countless hours of work to make this and minutes to destroy" said **Sharon Davies** whilst **Pamela** said "The parents of these vandals should be ashamed. My Great Grandad was based in Shirehampton in WW1 looking after the horses. I just can't understand this mindless vandalism that is a plague and a stain on society."

Offers of help have also been made to fix the bench to which FoLM and the local community are thankful for this. It certainly puts faith back into community togetherness no matter where you live.

Alistair Park was informed of the travesty as he was part of the team that helped put together and installed this bench into the Daisy Field. He remembers the project well and will be helping with repairs

John Hastings from FoLM has given an update. "We met with Alistair Park, who created the bench, and he was amazed how well it had been looked after over the last 12 years, which is a testament to the local community ownership. We have applied for a grant to cover the cost of repair and the bench will be back in place before very long."

You now know why the Remount Station Memorial Bench has been removed from the Daisy Field and placed in storage for safe keeping. Please go to FoLM FaceBook page [www.facebook.com/groups/1508854592747931](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1508854592747931) for updates on the bench.

*Kathryn Courtney*



© Kathryn Courtney



© Kathryn Courtney

## Volunteer Trustees Required

**Do you want to serve your community in a meaningful way but without having to devote too much time to it? If so the Avon (University Settlement) Community Association (AUSCA) which runs the Shire Advice Service, is looking for new trustees who can bring fresh ideas to our local charity.**

We meet quarterly, three meetings on Zoom and our AGM in September in person. **Our charity has been running in Shirehampton and local area for over 100 years**, and the **Advice Service** for almost half of that and provides a valuable service to people who are struggling with debt issues and benefits/welfare matters, which can affect mental and physical health quite profoundly. Our board of trustees out-source the service **North Bristol Advice Centre** so we just oversee and manage the finances and monitor the data and statistics that keep us abreast of the value and demand for it.

Anyone who feels they could give us just a few hours per year can contact me on [julielhelme@aol.com](mailto:julielhelme@aol.com) and I will send you a copy of our Annual Report which sets out exactly what we do. If you just want to give it a go first of all you can join us on a Zoom meeting before making a decision. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Judy Helme (Hon Sec)*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We especially enjoy spreading community news and we love to hear from all our readers.

Please, send in your letters and stories to [editor@shire.org.uk](mailto:editor@shire.org.uk) or deliver to The Library at The Public Hall. If requested, we will not print the name of a letter written to the Editor, but we cannot accept an anonymous letter.

*Many thanks.*

## RESPONSE TO THE PORTWAY GIRLS SCHOOL PHOTO

Dear Editor,

I write in response to your query regarding the photo in *The Shire* number 632, September 2024 of Miss Mead's class, Portway Girls' School, during the last term of 1962. I did not go to Portway myself, as I was fortunate enough to pass the 11 plus exam, but many of the girls in the photo had been in my class at **Shirehampton Junior School**.

I have to thank Shire Juniors for the excellent education I received there which set me on my way to my own career in teaching. The classes were large but the discipline was good. Thank you **Mr Hall!**

I think I may recognise, **back row, left to right ?; Janet Geater; Susan Webb; Janet Butler; ?; ?; Denise...; ?; ?; Lesley James; ?.**

**Middle row, left to right ?; ?; ?; ?; Miss Mead; ?; Susan Bennett; Anne Massey; Valerie Gates; ?; ?; ?.**

**Front row, left to right ?; ?; ?; ?; Sandra Miles; Maureen Nicholson; ?; Elizabeth Morris; ?.**

My good friend **Penny West** was a pupil at Portway but is not in the photo - she can't



remember why. She stayed on for a fifth year and went to the **Bristol Dental Hospital** where she trained to be a dental nurse. Penny and I stayed in touch, through **Groveleaze Youth Club** where **Mr Grainger** and **Shirley** looked after us. How I loved that club! Playing netball, chess in the canteen, dancing on Wednesdays and Saturday nights with **George** playing the drums up on the stage! Post 18, Penny and I were still going about together, as I had joined the **Civil Service**, and we were both still living at home in Shire. Time to move on - Penny to **London**, and me to **Teacher Training College**. We are still friends today and meet regularly.

*Thank you for the photo.*

*Yours sincerely, Maggie Powell, née Culverwell.*

# Shire NOTICE BOARD

## APPEAL FOR A DELIVERER

It has recently come to my attention that **Webb Court** at the top end of **Park Rd** by the village no longer receives the *Shire* paper! If there is anyone that lives in or close to this address, and has 20 minutes or so once a month, and is happy to help us, please contact me, **Bobbie Perkins**, on **0117 982 0478**. Thankyou in advance!

## POLITE REMINDER

The Editing team would like to remind all contributors that articles should not be longer than 500 words. We are receiving more and more articles and due to lack of space some cannot be included. We would like to thank all our contributors, old and new, for their very interesting articles and look forward to receiving many more in the future. Thank you.

## Personal Announcements

Do you wish to announce a personal or family celebration, marriage or death?

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## SHIRE ADVICE SERVICE

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*Linda x x*

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- **Kettlebells** are Monday 5.15 - 6.15pm and 6.30 - 7.30pm, Wednesday from 5.15 - 6.15pm and Thursday from 6.30 - 7.30pm at the **Cotswold Community Centre**. Message for 1:1 technique session.
- **Bootcamps:** Monday and Wednesday 6.15-7.00am. Please message for details.



For a free initial consultation in your own home or mine. Telephone: **07875 054 292**

Email: [t.linda1206@gmail.com](mailto:t.linda1206@gmail.com)

[www.shirestrong.co.uk](http://www.shirestrong.co.uk)



# Happy Days Memory Café is Full of Activity

The Bristol Dementia Action Alliance has been busy making Shirehampton the first dementia aware village in Bristol. They are spreading their wings to other areas of North Bristol with similar plans.

Living with dementia or awaiting a diagnosis is not easy, in fact it can be quite scary with the fear of the unknown not only for the person concerned but their loved ones as well.

The **Bristol Dementia Action Alliance (BDAA)** is the one stop shop for anyone needing advice and the organisation can provide plenty of information for you and who to contact. But the BDAA also organise regular activities for people living with dementia, even those struggling with memory loss and their carers.

They have **Happy Days Memory Cafés** in **Shirehampton, Avonmouth, Sea Mills and Westbury-On-Trym** and I decided to find out more about the Shirehampton monthly event that is held at the **Cotswold Community Centre, Dursley Road**.



Being August some people were away on holiday but there were still people attending and ready to have a go at willow weaving. **Guy from Alive! Activities** had brought along everything you needed to make a small willow fence that you could use as a garden border. Willow weaving is quite repetitive and relaxing. I think everyone is having a brilliant time and that is important. It makes people feel that they are still engaged with life, still doing things that they enjoy doing and the social side is also massive," said Guy.

I am observing everyone in the room. Three groups of people, some living with dementia, their carers and some volunteers. The camaraderie is impressive and everyone is chatting and enjoying themselves. The progress of willow weaving is creative and needs some concentration although you wouldn't think it due to the fast progress they are making.

**Lisa Dicker** is the **Community Development Manager** for Bristol Dementia Action Alliance. She said "We like to do different things to keep people stimulated and today Guy has come along to do some willow weaving. There's been no injuries as yet, just a few pokes on the head but everyone seems to be enjoying themselves and being kept busy. The other week we had mini Olympics in Avonmouth, people really enjoyed it and it was simple things like cups with ping pong balls. It's just getting people moving and having a bit of fun. It also helps with



co-ordination as dementia can have an effect on this. One of the favourite activities was with owls. We had a lovely organisation come in bringing owls along with them. It was wonderful because people that don't normally engage very well lit up, they came to life and they were holding the owls when I didn't think they would. But everybody likes something different. Sometimes we have singers in, some people love to join in and sing and reminisce sessions too".

With all the Happy Days Memory Cafés refreshments and biscuits are served and each is run from 2pm until 4pm. The one in Shirehampton takes place the third Friday of each month at the Cotswold Community Centre, Dursley Road, BS11 9XH. Avonmouth is the second Tuesday of the month at Avonmouth Community Centre, 257 Avonmouth Road, BS11 9EN. Sea Mills is the last Thursday of the month at Sea Mills Methodist Church, 140 Shirehampton Road, BS9 2DY.

For more information on activities including skittles, dunk a doughnut (or in the case of the Cotswold Café – DUNK A DAVE!) and carers cuppa's please contact [lisa@bdaa.org.uk](mailto:lisa@bdaa.org.uk) telephone: 0741 937 3947. You can also check out [www.facebook.com/Bristoldaa](http://www.facebook.com/Bristoldaa) or <https://bdaa.org.uk/>

*Kathryn Courtney*



## Dunk Dave for Dementia (Again!)

Following the success of last year's Dunk Dave it was decided that we would hold another event to support Dementia, so on Thursday 10th October Dave donned his wet suit again and faced the wet sponges of the Welcome Space attendees.



Once a month the **Cotswold Community Centre** hosts the **Dementia Happy Space** so we thought we would combine the fund raising for this well-deserved charity with our own **Welcome Space**. At first we thought we wouldn't have to bombard **Dave** with wet sponges as the rain was doing it for us but eventually it stopped and to everyone's delight they had their chance. Thank you all who took part, especially Dave. **We raised £126.**

*Jill Williamson*

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# An Update from Darren Jones MP, Bristol North West

[www.darren-jones.co.uk](http://www.darren-jones.co.uk) | [fb.com/darrenjonesmp](https://fb.com/darrenjonesmp) | [@darrenpjones](https://twitter.com/darrenpjones)

Bristol North West is home to several historic villages, but none are closer to my heart than my home area of Shire.

I'm therefore saddened that my office has been contacted by many Shire residents of late who are concerned about persistent antisocial behaviour in our village. It's deeply troubling to hear constituents say they feel unsafe and intimidated by groups of young people on our streets.

We've had reports of garden gates being kicked in, windows broken, and vandalism of retail units and community facilities.

A particular menace of late seems to be people driving loud electric 'scrambler' bikes – high-speed dirt bikes that are designed for off-road riding. However, these are reportedly being driven at high speeds in pedestrianised areas, causing alarm and safety concerns, as well as on our green spaces where they could harm flora and fauna.

Constituents who have written to me have shared their dismay that **Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)** have said they have no powers to stop these electric scrambler bikes.

In response to these queries, I've been in touch with my colleague **Dame Diana Johnson MP**, who is the **Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention**, to discuss how the government will be implementing measures to tackle antisocial behaviour and increase the role of community policing. I have also raised the issue with our local **Police and Crime Commissioner** and **Leader of**

**the Council** to understand what more can be done locally to not only punish bad behaviour but redirect energy to better pursuits.

Staying on the topic of law and order, I was pleased to have the opportunity recently to meet some of the **officers from Bristol North West** who policed the recent violent disorder in the city centre.

My visit to thank the brave officers who restored peace and order to our streets was arranged for **21st September**, to mark the **International Day of Peace**.

During my visit, **Superintendent Mark Runacres**, **Chief Inspector Vicks Hayward-Melen** and **Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody** also gave me a briefing on how they are tackling knife crime in Bristol.

Hopefully, a recent change in the law that means it is now a criminal offence to possess a zombie-style knife or machete will help to get these weapons off our streets. This law came into effect on **24th September**.

Zombie-style knives and machetes have been added to the list of prohibited offensive weapons under the **Criminal Justice Act 1988**, along with a ban on their manufacture, importation, sale, and supply.

And finally, I would like to invite you to a special event that I'm holding on the afternoon of **Saturday, 9th November**.



© Darren Jones/Houses of Parliament

**Rachel Reeves**, the **Chancellor of the Exchequer** – and my boss! – will deliver her **Budget at the end of October**. To answer any questions that my constituents have once the Budget has been announced, I'll be holding a **Budget Town Hall** the following week. I've chosen a central venue for this event, near **Westbury-on-Trym**, so that it is accessible to constituents from across Bristol North West.

To book a ticket for this event, please visit [www.darren-jones.co.uk/events](http://www.darren-jones.co.uk/events). If you don't have internet access, you can call my office to book on **0117 959 6545**. I hope to see many of you there!

As always, if you need my help or have a question, you can get in touch with me on e-mail at [darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk), by calling my office on **0117 959 6545** or by writing to me at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

**CONTACTING YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR**  
Shirehampton is in the Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston Ward

Your Councillors are:

Donald Alexander – Labour: [cldr.donald.alexander@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.donald.alexander@bristol.gov.uk)

Zoë Peat - Labour: [Cllr.Zoe.Peat@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Zoe.Peat@bristol.gov.uk)

Tom Blenkinsop - Labour: [Cllr.Tom.Blenkinsop@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Tom.Blenkinsop@bristol.gov.uk)

Labour Members' Services Office: **0117 922 3827**

**CONTACTING YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

Shirehampton is in the Bristol North West Constituency

Darren Jones Phone: **0117 959 6545**

Email: [darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk)

Website: [www.darren-jones.co.uk](http://www.darren-jones.co.uk)

## Cotswold Community Centre Coffee Morning

On Saturday 12th October the Cotswold Community Centre held their regular monthly coffee morning but this month all proceeds were donated to the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity.

As always the morning was very well supported with beautiful and very tasty home made cakes donated by our committee members and supporters. Unfortunately as we were so busy we

didn't have time to take any photos. But we would like to thank all those who attended and donated helping raise the fantastic sum of £641.

*Cotswold Community Centre Committee*

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# Volunteers Needed To Set Up "Poppies On The Green" Display

The annual display for 'Poppies On The Green' has increased in size for November 2024 and we are in need of volunteers to help set up the display of poppies and silhouettes onto The Green in Shirehampton on Tuesday 5th November from 10am until 12noon.

The display will be taken down on **Thursday 14th November** between 10am until 12noon, with volunteers needed and for it to be taken back to the Public Hall, Shirehampton to be stored for another year.

Please turn up on the dates mentioned or leave a message with SCAF on: 0117 9829963 that you are able to help. For further updates check out [www.facebook.com/poppiesonthegreen](http://www.facebook.com/poppiesonthegreen)

Kathryn Courtney



© Kathryn Courtney



© Kathryn Courtney

# Goldies Sing and Smile Christmas Gathering



© Shelley Cox

The Shirehampton Goldies group has been going from strength to strength in recent months, with lots of new members. Do come along and give it a try! It's not a choir, but an opportunity to sing along with hits from the 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, and to chat to other people from the area. Sessions are at 10.30am on the first Wednesday of each month, in St Mary's church. There's no need to book.

In December, Goldies groups from across the region will be getting together for a **Christmas celebration**. There will be afternoon tea, entertainment, and Christmas songs. **Come along to the St Mary's session on November 6th to find out more!**

Shelley Cox

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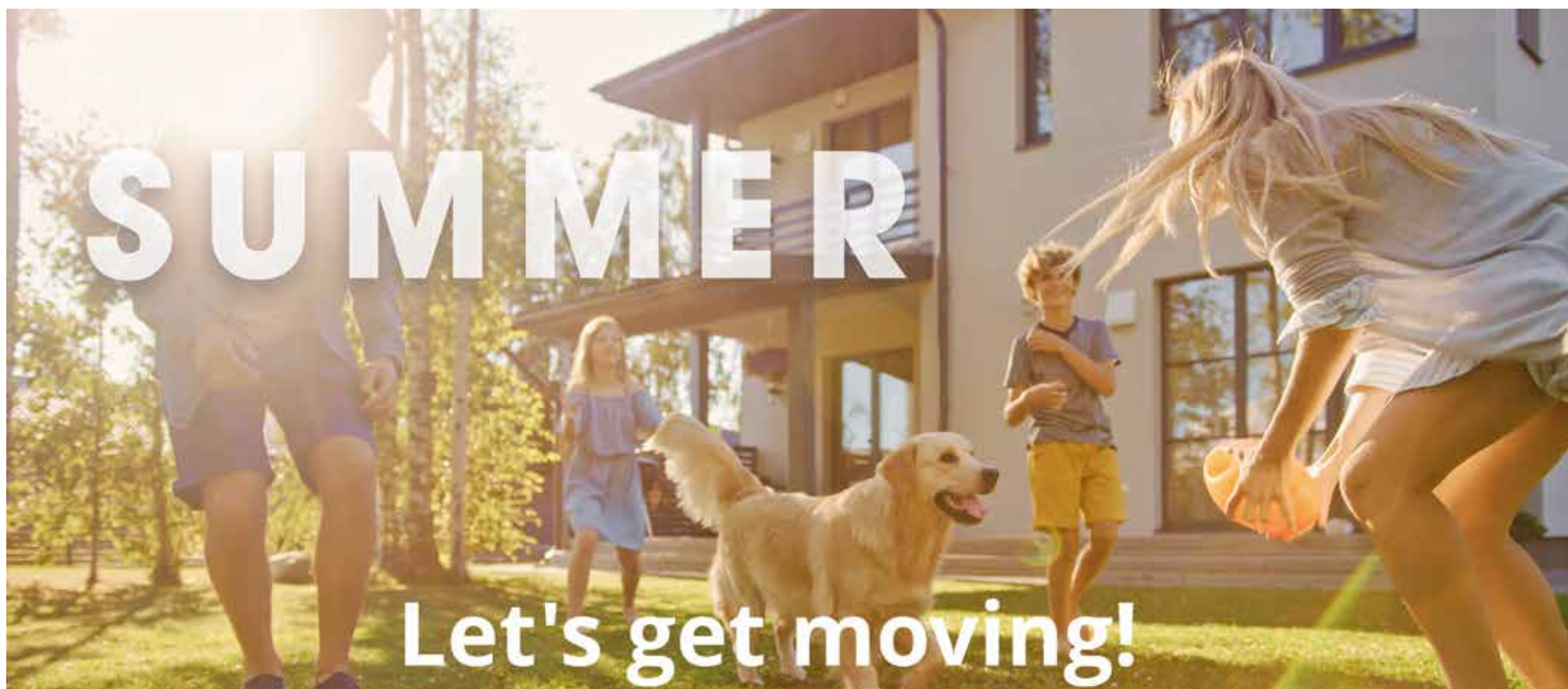
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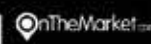
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# Churches in the Shirehampton Area

## Hello from Shire Methodist

We have been a bit quiet in the Shire News this year as we have been busy with many projects. We have added secondary glazing to our beautiful stained-glass windows. You can hardly see it is there! It is already making the church building much warmer and more comfortable for our Hub users and Sunday congregation. Paul from Hellier Stained Glass Restoration and his team have done a great job. We were able to carry out this work thanks to a grant from Bristol City Council's Community Resilience Fund. Reverend Pearl Luxon has been instrumental in arranging this work - thank you, Pearl!

Chris and Lee from ALFA (Abundant Life for All Christian Community) built some wooden planters and donated them to our church to brighten up our car park area and stop cars reversing into the ditch! We are very grateful to them for this. ALFA is a local charity in Shirehampton who particularly support adults with learning and other disabilities and offer training in cooking, gardening and woodwork as well as respite stays. They also welcome people to their house and garden for tea, cake and a chat, and hold various garden-based events. For more information, their website is: [www.alfacc.org.uk](http://www.alfacc.org.uk)

If you are mourning the loss of a loved one, whether recently or many years ago, we would like to invite you to a special event called **Candles in the Darkness**, led by our minister, **Reverend Martin Slocombe**, on **Friday 1st November at 3pm**. This will be an informal gathering: a time for reflection, as we remember together those we love but see no longer. If you are unable to make this afternoon event, it will be repeated at **7pm at Horfield Methodist Church, BS7 8SN**.

We continue to hold **Morning Worship** each Sunday in our church building from 11am (10.50am on **Remembrance Sunday**). The first Sunday in November is led by a **guest preacher**, the second is

**All-Age Worship**, the third is **Holy Communion** led by our minister Revd Martin Slocombe, the fourth is a more informal gathering with **coffee and conversation**.

**Our Hub** has recently begun its 4th year offering many free events which happen in our building on weekdays: games, benefits and jobs advice, support groups, and a community fridge. We are very grateful to the **Co-op** and **local bakery** for their contributions of food. We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped the Hub to support so many people in our local community, particularly **Darren, Kirsty, Steph and Mary** and all our fantastic volunteers.

If you are unsure where we are located, our building is opposite Boots, Lloyds Bank and the Job Centre on the High Street. The entrance is on **Penpole Avenue**. There are three doors; the most accessible entrance is the white door a little way up the road. Please ring the doorbell if the door is shut!

*May God's peace be with you all during November.*

*Everyone at Shire Methodist*

## St Mary's News

Hi Folks!

Here we are with less than two months to go until Christmas and immediately thereafter into a new year, and we have plenty of things happening before then. By the time this copy of Shire arrives on your doorstep, you will have only just got used to putting your clocks back and see the dark nights coming in earlier.

As briefly mentioned in last month's edition, we are holding our **All Souls' Service at 4pm Saturday, 2nd November**, when we remember lost loved ones, both recently and many years ago. If you would like to have your loved ones names included in the prayers, please call into the church to pick up a form for this purpose or E-mail the Church Office with the relevant names - [office@stmarysshire.org](mailto:office@stmarysshire.org). In January 2025, **Bereavement Journey sessions** will be run by **Rev Alison** in one of the **ASMA** churches for those people who feel they would benefit from it - these spaces must be booked in advance. Watch out for details nearer to the time!

**Goldies Singing Sensation** will take place as usual on **Wednesday 6th November from 10.30am**, being the first Wednesday of the month. Come along and join us with your favourite piece of music from yesteryear!

On **Saturday, 9th November** there is a monthly meeting, during Coffee Time, of our **Crafting Group**. This is an informal group for anyone who wants assistance in any project they may be working on, or seek advice on how to start one. It is also an opportunity to share your crafting skills with others.

You will be most welcome to join in with the group - they meet on the second Saturday of each month.

The next day is **Remembrance Sunday, 10th November**, when we remember those folks who lost their lives in two World Wars and many wars since. Our Remembrance Sunday Service in St Mary's commences in the church at the earlier time of **10am**. This will allow time for the formal service to start and the reading of the **Roll of Honour** of the names of the war dead from Shirehampton Parish. Once this has been completed the Church Choir will lead the congregation in procession through the Village to the **War Memorial** for the **Act of Remembrance at 11am**. After the ceremony, **Shirehampton Cricket Club** have very kindly agreed to open their Pavilion for Tea, Coffee and light refreshments.

On **Tuesday, 19th November, from 3.30pm until 5.30pm** there will be a **"Winter Warm Up"** pop up session in the Church when there will be Soup and Board Games to play, along with other activities. All are most welcome.

While on the subject of "Winter Warm-ups", you are reminded that our **Friday Welcoming Space**



is available until 2pm during the colder months, where free lunches are available from midday. Our **coffee mornings** continue as usual (**10am to midday** every day except Thursday and Sunday, when we have services).

Just a peep into what's on in **December - Sunday 1st is Advent Sunday**, when there will be a **Sung Eucharist at 10.30am** followed at **4pm with a Christingle Service** - many of you know what type of service this is, and if you don't, come along and be pleasantly surprised. Then on **Saturday, 7th December** we hold our **Christmas Fayre** - there'll be lots of activities, games, refreshments and opportunities to buy some gifts - **DON'T MISS IT!!**

As this Newsletter comes out around **Bonfire Night** I suppose I had better find an appropriate joke to end it. Question: What do you call a Duck that likes watching fireworks? Answer: A Firequacker!!!!

I'll chat to you again next month!

*Bye for now. C.M.E.*

# Shire Baptist Church News

As this article has to be in by October 10th many of this month's events have not yet taken place but it looks as if we will have a busy month.

In last month's Shire news **Lyn Morton** shared the news of a **Training Lunch Club** moving from Redland to our church in **Station Road**. This is run by **Alfa Christian Community**. Four trainees with learning difficulties trained by two chefs produce a three course meal in our lovely kitchen. All are enjoying the venue and we are pleased to provide the premises.

Our next **Songs of Praise Café** will be on **November 10th**. The theme is **Remembrance** when we join with many to remember and pray for all who have been afflicted by wars past and present. We will also share **Communion** as we remember

the **Last Supper** when **Christ** asked his disciples to eat and drink remembering Him. We meet on the **second Sunday** of the month at the **Community Hall**, Dursley Road, 4:45-6pm. All very welcome.

**Rock Steady Drama Group** are now working towards our **Christmas Carol service** which will be **December 22nd**. The **School Drama Group** are working on two Christmas themed dramas - **Herod and the Jester** and the **Legend of Saint Nicholas**.

The next **Life Café** will be on **November 28th** in our church building **Station Road** at 10:30am-11:30am. All are welcome to come and have a hot drink and cakes.

We meet **every Sunday at 10:30am** in our building, **Station Road**. We are a child-friendly church and have a crèche and Sunday School while the sermon is being preached so parents can relax knowing their offspring are being looked after. We observe strict child Health and Safety rules.

October has marked a year of conflict in the Middle East. Let us pray that it will end and bring hope to all who have suffered.

*We send love and our prayers for all in Shirehampton Village.*

You can contact us on 07743 683684 or [rhodespaul360@gmail.com](mailto:rhodespaul360@gmail.com)

**BRISTOL HEALING ROOMS** are in **Shirehampton every second Wednesday of the month.**

Don't miss this opportunity to drop in between **11am and 1pm** at the **Shirehampton Public Hall, Station Road**, to be prayed for in the name of Jesus. **AS IT WAS IN THE GOSPELS!** We have many stories of healing on a daily basis.

Jesus heals today as He did during His time on earth.



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# EDUCATION CORNER...

## Shire Primary School News

Term 1 week 5 has been the Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) week at SPS. All week, children throughout the school have been learning about STEM by exploring and investigating a variety of topics covering these subject areas. We have had lots of fantastic visitors and experiences, including: Badminton School (with a 'Liquid Nitrogen' show), The University of the West of England (UWE) Engineering (exploring using Minecraft), Wessex Water Education, Avon Gorge and Wildlife ('Autumn Antics').

Almost all of the external activities were **very kindly provided free of charge** by the various providers, and this sort of experience would simply not be possible without their generosity, and we would like to thank them for this. We also made very good use of the lovely school minibuses!

A particular highlight were the two visits by Y6 to **Nisbets Limited** (the leading catering equipment supplier in the UK) at their main site in Avonmouth. The children (and staff) were provided with a fascinating insight into this amazing local success

story (which is now 41 years old and has become one of the largest employers in the area). Nisbets were incredibly generous with both with their time and resources. There was a food-based quiz (with prizes), a tour of the premises and a breakfast/brunch (including a slushy!). We discovered that there are strong links with the school with some parents work there and some older siblings (now at **Oasis**) having completed work experience there. The children were really engaged and several of them have said that they are now thinking of a career in catering!



© Shirehampton Primary School

The Bristol area has a long and proud history in STEM and the children certainly seem very keen to continue this tradition. They now realise that STEM can provide fantastic opportunities for them in the future, especially with Shirehampton being so well located for some major employers. Most of all, they understand that STEM can really be fun!

## Oasis Alcohol Awareness Event

On Tuesday afternoon, 150 year 8 pupils at Oasis Academy Brightstowe received a powerful lesson on the dangers of underage drinking from the alcohol awareness theatre production **Smashed**. Combining live theatre performance with interactive workshops, **Smashed** helps young people understand the causes and consequences of underage drinking by encouraging pupils to reflect on the themes and answer questions about the choices made by the characters.

The performance at **Oasis Academy** was the final show of **Smashed's** most recent tour of 12 schools across Bristol this September. Over the past ten days, **Smashed** has performed for **over 2,300 pupils in Bristol** and the surrounding area, helping to transform attitudes and encourage meaningful behaviour change around alcohol consumption among young people.

Commenting on Tuesday's performance, a teacher at Oasis Academy, said: "We were lucky enough to have **Smashed Live** do a performance for our year 8s. Our year 8s really enjoyed it; they were really engaged and they learnt loads about the effects of alcohol in a really engaging way".

This year, **Smashed** is celebrating its **20th anniversary** and has to date helped educate over 580,000 students in Great Britain and 5.5 million young people globally in an effort to reduce underage drinking across the world.

The UK has made encouraging progress in reducing levels of underage drinking in the past decade. However, there is still more to be done to drive down the rate of underage drinking across the country. In Bristol, hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions among under 18s remain above England's national average.

In addition to live interactive workshops, schools not reached by the live tour also can take part in **Smashed Online**. To find out more, visit: <https://online.smashedproject.org/gb/>

*Jill Shaughnessy (Executive)*

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# Extraordinary Links

**Who are Extraordinary Links and what they do?**

Extraordinary Links started out just before the Covid Pandemic took hold that then led to lockdown. They had only had one event before 'closing' and decided to go online to continue with their work. They provide regular activities for *children with Special Education Needs*, with support and information also provided to parents and carers.

**Gill Cray** is the person who runs **Extraordinary Links in Shirehampton**: "We do an activity every week for the children. This is a planned activity and it can be anything from science to cooking to art. At our group we have our **Minecraft** group for kids who are really into Minecraft and it helps promote social communication and development".

Gill is very dedicated and helps where she can. "Our children have additional needs or special educational needs. They come here and they find people that are very similar to them and this helps promote social skills. The parents come along too and they find friendship as well as realising that we are all in the same boat. It can be very isolating having a child with special education needs and this group makes sure that you know that you are not alone, other people have gone through the same thing and we can help each other out."

"We can offer advice and sign posting to organisations that can provide more help or information. With parents, I also help them with

**Educational Health Care Plans** and **Disability Living Allowance** forms as they can be very tricky to complete especially if you are not used to filling them out. I personally also help with advocacy for parents so I can go along with them for meetings at schools and help them that way to make sure their children get the best outcomes for them."

"It is a safe place for all and you don't have to come every week. A child may decide they don't want to be here one week and we do have flexibility. Parents have to stay throughout the sessions and its free too. **SCOPE** have actually said it costs £900 extra a month if you have a disabled family member in your home so we don't want to add to that stress."

The hall is buzzing with activity. There is plenty of chat and involvement with parents and children alike. It feels a happy place to be, allowing children to be children. They were making pancake pizza's and filling them with fruits and chocolate. A fun thing to do and the children were being creative too.

I asked mum, **Sarah** why she brings her children here: "I have four children, two of which are autistic. We come here to meet with other families that totally understand that some days are low and some days are high but here that's ok. We can be just ourselves here with no judgement. You don't feel any pressure. My daughter enjoys arts and crafts and my son likes to run wild as you see."

I just see a young boy running around enjoying play and the freedom to do so. Isn't that part of childhood? It was part of mine.

**Kirsty** is another mum who has three children with two at school age: "The kids love it and it's free flow play where they can join in, they can choose to do other activities with other children or be on their own. At the moment they enjoy Minecraft, but its lots of fun to be here. For me it's relaxed, easy and I feel supported".

Extraordinary Links is funded by various organisations which means no charge is made. It's free to attend. One hour sessions take place every Wednesday from 4pm until 5pm at the Public Hall, Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 9TX and during termtime only.

For more information about Extraordinary Links check out their web site: [www.extraordinarylinks.org](http://www.extraordinarylinks.org) Join their FaceBook Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/extraordinarylinksactivitygroup/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/extraordinarylinksactivitygroup/) or send an email to: [support@extraordinarylinks.org](mailto:support@extraordinarylinks.org)

*Kathryn Courtney*

## SHIRE NEEDS YOU!

**Are you searching for something to fill those empty hours?  
Looking for a rewarding local community group to join?  
Enjoy finding out the news before it happens?**

Why not join the Shire newspaper committee!? We're a relaxed, supportive and friendly team working to bring an interesting and useful community newspaper to Shire.

We have lots of tasks and activities you can get involved in - editing, distribution, reporting, advertising - the list is endless.

We're always open to new ideas on what we should be including and reporting on too - so if you have things you want to share please get in touch.

If this sounds like your thing, and you'd like to get involved please reach out to the editor mailbox ([editor@shire.org.uk](mailto:editor@shire.org.uk)) or pop along to one of our monthly meetings on the 1st Monday of each month at 5.30pm in Shirehampton library.

***Come on, join us,  
you know you want to!***



# Climate Repair Café is Back

At the heart of our repair café are three very capable and experienced sewing machinists *Rebecca, Gail and Juliet*. Between them they deal with whatever is brought to them on the day.

As Juliet recalls: ‘The **sewing repair service** was in great demand at this event with a steady stream of visitors arriving throughout the morning, clutching various items hoping that one of the team would be free to help. Fortunately, no one had to wait for long. During the morning, I was able to fix someone’s favourite pair of exercise leggings, alter the length of a pair of pyjama bottoms, shorten and reshape the sleeves on a lady’s top, and create a new backing for a much-loved fold up chair. To this already impressive list Rebecca was able to add the repair of two leather gloves, two fencing jackets, a rucksack and an outdoor jacket’ That makes for a good many happy visitors!



© Kathryn Courtney

There were other things going on in the space. We brought in **garments to swap or give away**. **Bike repair tools** were on hand. **Georgie** brought with her a **pop-up library** with very interesting books on foraging and guides for greener ways of living. **Annelies** demonstrated **dyeing with onion skins** – and upcycled an old summer jacket in the process.



© Kathryn Courtney

Dyeing fibres naturally with plants is labour intensive and rather ‘niche’; something textile artists or artisans might do. However, onion skins are something we can all accumulate; it is worth knowing that they can be turned into an effective non-toxic dye, suitable for all natural fibres.

On offer were also **delicious cakes and biscuits** served up with a warming cup of tea or coffee. Information on how to stay warm over the coming months was made available by **Theresa** from the **Bristol Energy Network**.

People are asking if we are planning to arrange for other kinds of repairs: electrical, wood, ceramic. We hope the Café will grow and eventually be able to offer more types of repair services. In the meantime, you can be sure to have a stimulating and sociable time at our **next event on January 18th, 2025**.

The Repair Café is organised by the Shirehampton Climate Emergency Group. We are planning to offer a ‘Talking Space’ as part of our future cafés, for questions and concerns about the changing climate.

Further dates in 2025: 18 January, 22 February, 22 March, 26 April and 24 May.

If you’d like to get involved, please email Leonie [repaircafeshirehampton@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafeshirehampton@gmail.com)

*Annelies Egli*



© Kathryn Courtney

## Nature Notes

I wanted to share a picture that would symbolise the change in the season, as we move into Autumn and Winter. I hope this works! I have never managed to get a really nice picture of the sun, or the moon to be fair, as it relies on my very ordinary and far from smart mobile phone!!

But I was quietly pleased with this one taken just a few mornings ago. Not only had the wispy morning mist decided NOT to suddenly disappear before I could line it up, but the Sun remained fairly clear, and nicely settled on top of the trees!



© Bobbie Perkins

In other news, we have had a delightful few days watching another Autumn event. Namely the frenetic comings and goings of the local, seldom seen, squirrels! One in particular has been busily collecting conkers from the heavily laden tree just outside our garden, and hiding some of them under our forsythia bush! I am grateful they are so very swift off the mark if seen either by us humans, or more so by our four legged friends, as Russ gave chase to one the other day as it was ‘conkering’ and caused it to take an enormous leap of faith straight into the branches half way up the afore mentioned conker tree!

We have seen geese, woodpeckers, and this morning a beautiful, healthy fox going about their lives recently, and a friend was thrilled to see a badger foraging close to our homes just a few days ago!

*Happy nature watching folks, as it’s a busy time of year for our wild life.*

*Bobbie*

# Activism Through Climate Choir Concert

I was privileged to attend the wonderful Climate Choir Concert at All Saints church in Clifton on 11th October. It was an uplifting event with people from choirs in Bristol, Bath, Exeter, The Forest of Dean, Plymouth and London, all joining their voices together.

It was a fundraising evening, with half the money raised being donated to a school and orphanage in Zimbabwe where they have set up a Climate Choir to highlight their urgent need for water, because the local water source is drying up.

The Climate Choir Movement aims to sing truth to power. Whilst the concert was packed with supporters of the Climate Choir, the people who usually hear the choir's meaningful songs are Banks and Museums that continue to invest in fossil fuels. The Climate Choir frequently perform inside or outside these buildings, using their voices in a different way of displaying climate activism.

Leonie Hastings



© Leonie Hastings



© Leonie Hastings

## Shirehampton Community Action Forum

*Share Your Views on Climate and Nature Action in Shirehampton.*

Shirehampton Community Action Forum is gathering views from the local community about the actions we can take on climate and nature.

We received funding from the Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership to develop a community climate plan for Shirehampton. We want to hear from anybody who lives or works in Shire. You can fill in a survey online at [shirecaf.org.uk/climate](http://shirecaf.org.uk/climate) or you can drop down to the Public Hall or the Cotswolds Centre to pick up a paper copy.

If you are resident in, or work in Shirehampton, are 18 years or older, and you fill in the survey by the 1st of January you'll be entered into a prize draw to win one of ten £25 gift cards. Only one entry is allowed per person, and incomplete entries will not be eligible. Further terms and conditions are available on the website.

## Shirehampton Community Garden Needs You!

Bee Happy Shire and Shire Greens are working together to make Shirehampton Community Garden a welcome, tranquil, colourful place, where local people can visit and enjoy not only on their own but with family and friends as well.

Shirehampton Community Garden is in need and wants volunteers to make the area as inviting as possible, as well as attracting pollinators such as bees and butterflies and being kind to the local environment.

You don't have to be professional gardener, just an interest in gardens and plants. If you are a neighbour, an individual, part of a couple or family or have a disability, all are welcome to join in. There is no age limit and children can be part of this, just as they are with their local school gardens.

I had a chat with Sara Cech-Lucas from Bee Happy Shire about this wonderful opportunity "This is a very exciting time for the Shirehampton Community Garden. We are planning Phase 2 of the SCG right now.

Phase One has given us an extremely good start, with Joe's Mural 'The Four Seasons Tree', We have four raised flowerbeds, many free-standing flower tubs, a water-butt system and a bench.

The next step is to grow this wonderful garden for nature and the community. Gardening is good

for you in many ways and we are open to ideas and design to build the best garden you can imagine. It's your chance to renovate this remarkable gem in our community."

Meet up at the Shirehampton Community Garden the **first Saturday of each month**. Tools are provided so get involved, All welcome.

The next event is Saturday 2nd November from 10am until 11am at the Community Garden, Pembroke Avenue, Shirehampton, behind the Baptist Church. Come along and have a hot drink/squash as well as homemade biscuits to find out more and chat with Sara about your ideas and how you can help.

Other dates are Saturday 7th December 2024 and Saturday 4th January 2025.

To find out more go to our Facebook Page Shirehampton Community Garden or call the SCAF office on: 0117 9829963

Kathryn Courtney



© Kathryn Courtney



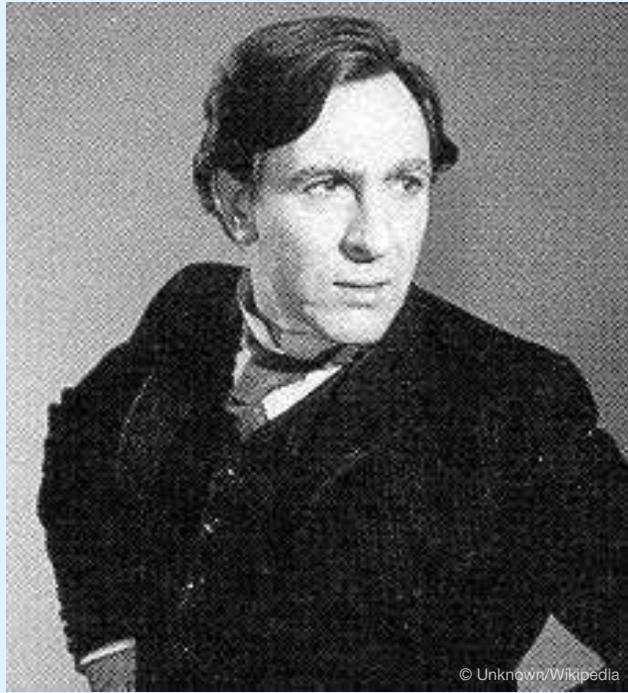
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# Robert Stephens – From Shirehampton to the Royal National Theatre and the Big Screen

On 27 September 2024 our country lost one of its finest actresses and a “national treasure” when sadly *Dame Maggie Smith* passed away. For over seven decades she entertained us in memorable film and TV parts with her wit in comedic and dramatic roles.



© Unknown/Wikipedia

I was sparked to write this article because little is known today about her first husband, **Robert Stephens**, to whom she was married to for eight years from 1967 to 1975.

One day, whilst walking down **Priory Road**, I spotted a blue plaque outside one of the houses and I was curious to see what famous person had lived there. It said “Sir Robert Stephens (1931 – 1995) – Early star of the National Theatre, London. Stage and screen actor. Lived here from 1931 to 1939.”

I was curious to learn a bit more about this actor from Shirehampton and was fascinated to read about his illustrious career.

He was from very humble beginnings. His father was a shipyard labourer and his mother worked at the chocolate factory. At the age of 18, Stephens won a scholarship to drama school and his career blossomed thereafter. He was amongst the first ensemble of great British actors at the **Royal National Theatre** and worked alongside such greats as **Michael Gambon, Derek Jacobi, Lynn and Michael Redgrave** and with his future wife, **Maggie Smith**.

Stephens had roles in some classic films such as *Cleopatra* with **Elizabeth Taylor**, and he starred alongside **Rita Tushingham** in the cult film *A Taste of Honey* (1961), with Maggie Smith (his then wife) in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1969) and **Billy Wilder’s** *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970).

Following the demise of Maggie Smith, I recently watched the superb film, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, for which she won her first **Oscar** as the liberal-minded and unrestrained teacher in a girls’ school. Stephens plays the sophisticated and handsome (and married) art teacher to whom Miss Brodie is madly in love with, and he with her, and the chemistry between them on screen is palpable.

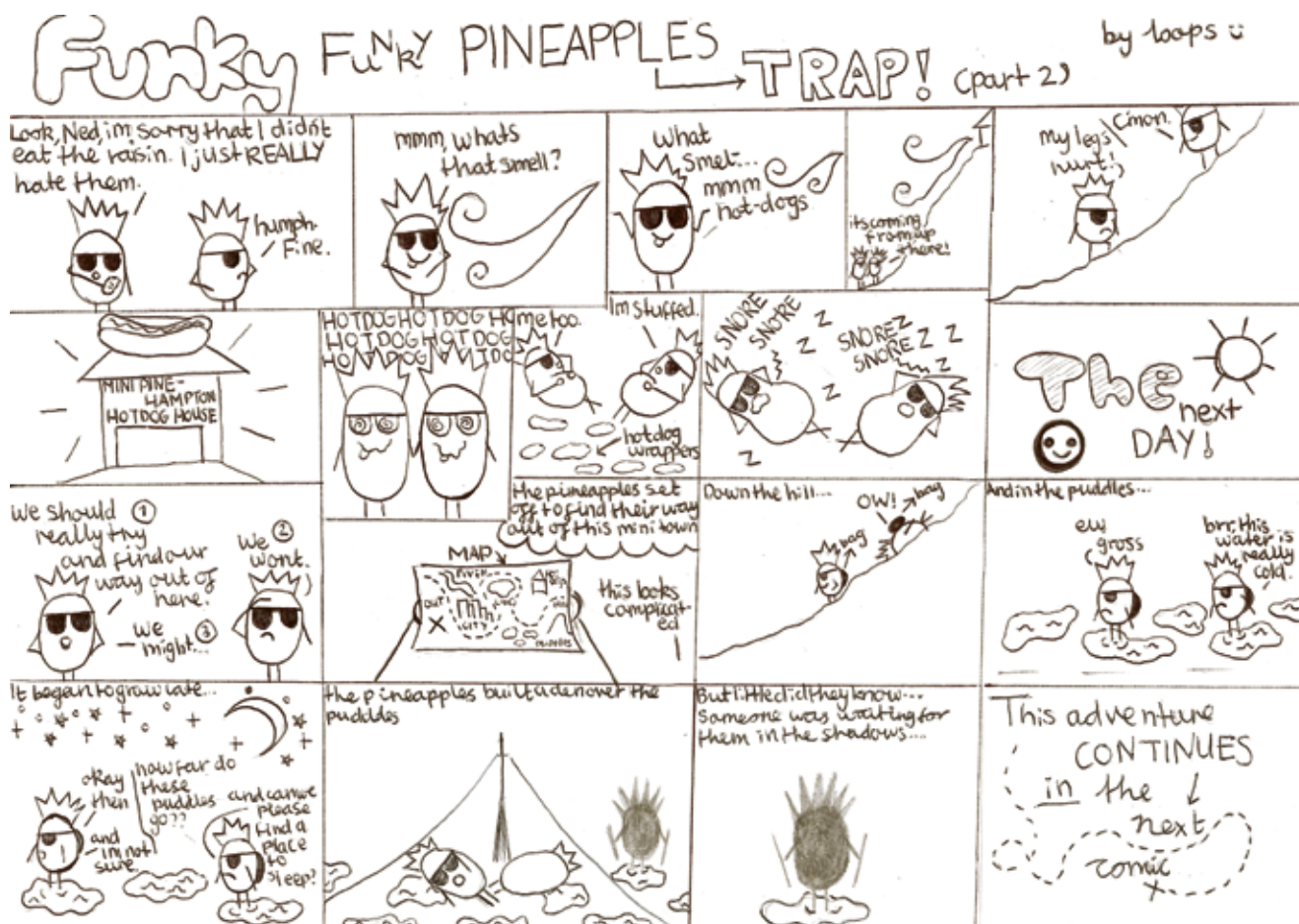


Sadly in 1970, following Stephens’ departure from the National Theatre and the break-up of his marriage to Maggie Smith in 1973, he suffered a career slump - not helped by heaving drinking and a breakdown. However in the 1990s he re-established himself at the forefront of his profession when the Royal Shakespeare Company invited him to play some leading roles and in 1993 he won the **Laurence Olivier Theatre Award for Best Actor** for his performance as **Falstaff in Henry IV**.

Stephens was knighted in 1995 for his “**Services to Drama**” but 11 months after his knighthood he died at the age of 64 due to complications during surgery.

It’s amazing that only a few streets away from where I live was born an actor who went on to achieve a wonderful stage and film career and marry one of the country’s finest and most loved actresses, **Dame Maggie Smith**.

*Vanessa Evans*



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# Sport and Activities IN SHIREHAMPTON

## “Go on Isla, show us your pearly whites!”

### U14 Girls Rugby: Avonmouth v Imperial, Sunday 6th October

This match involved the girls of two clubs with rich histories, Avonmouth founded in 1897 and Imperial in 1905. (A third club was involved too; more about that later.) That rich history continues, with the welcome growth in girls rugby at Avonmouth over the last 10 years; the club is now seeing girls progress through tots, minis and girls sections to play for the senior ladies team. The club told us that they are proud to have built such a solid rugby pathway for youngsters to progress at Avonmouth OBRFC and to get the best out of their rugby journey.

It's a work in progress and that's where the third club enters the story. Avonmouth did not have quite enough u14 girls, so they joined forces with **Ashley Down** this summer, to enable the clubs to field a full team. This was their first match together.

Two of the girls spoke to us about their love of the game. **Avonmouth's Milly** said that she had been playing for eight years. She plays scrum-half and loves the physicality of the game; it's not about hurting people but about fighting hard for your team, she said. Out of that comes the camaraderie and the deep friendships that she so obviously treasures.

**Isla, of Ashley Down**, also began at u7's and also plays in the back line, at centre. She too values the close friendships that are forged by playing together. Our headline is a quote from Isla's cheeky brother **Jacob**, as she smiled for the camera. It's a good illustration of the great family atmosphere that permeated the air as the girls readied themselves for the match.

The result of the match was secondary to the efforts of the two clubs to give these girls the opportunity to compete in the sport that they love. Imperial's experience as a team showed, running in early tries but our girls never gave up, playing for their team with the passion and commitment that had been described by Milly and Isla. **Phoebe** ran in two tries for Avonmouth and **Molly R** converted one of them; they will only improve as a team, as they play together more.

It was great to witness the traditional mutual guards of honour that the teams provided at the end of the game; fight hard, play fairly and respect your opponents, who share your love of the game.

**The girls train every Wednesday evening from 7-8.30 and the ladies every Thursday, 6.30-8.**

**Lucy Souch, Girls and Ladies Rugby Lead**, said “The joy with rugby is that everyone is welcome no matter your experience, fitness or age, so if you feel you'd like to try something new, don't hesitate to get in touch.”

Lucy Souch: 07398770858

Website: [pitchero.com/clubs/avonmoutholdboys](http://pitchero.com/clubs/avonmoutholdboys)

*Paul McMillan*



© Kathryn Courtney

**New team mates.**



© Kathryn Courtney

**At this age, it's full-contact rugby!**



© Kathryn Courtney

**Imperial go over for a try.**



© Kathryn Courtney

**Avonmouth conversion.**

# Martial Arts for Children; Training for the Mind, Body and Spirit

**Jake Watts**, a 4th Dan Black Belt in karate and kickboxing, is open about his reasons for taking up martial arts; he had experienced bullying throughout his school days and young adult life, suffering an assault at work. So, seventeen years ago, he *“decided to take control of his life”* and took up martial arts. As he progressed through the grades, he jumped at the opportunity to train as an instructor, going on to launch the *Victory Martial Arts Academy*, starting at the PBA club; following the COVID pandemic, the academy continued to grow and Jake moved into his own premises four years ago, in the High Street.



© Paul McMillan

When Shire visited the **VMA dojo**, Sensei Jake was addressing a group about to go through grading assessments, a test of physical and mental prowess, allowing students to move up a grade and get their new coloured belts. What was immediately obvious was the discipline, poise, dignity and focus that each and every member of the group showed. It was truly impressive. Jake told the group, that he was not there to fail them. If they didn't get it right first time they had to “try, try and try again” until they did. Jake's philosophy is *“A Black Belt is just a White Belt who never gave up!”*, a powerful message for the children.

Jake told us that two of the achievements he is most proud of are:

In a previous school, taking 20+ students to the world championships in Portugal, with 15 winning gold medals in their respective divisions.

Being told by students of his academy that they are **now confident in standing up to bullying** at school, thanks to the skills and confidence they've developed through his classes.

He then said that as long as a student leaves the dojo feeling fulfilled, that's his greatest accomplishment.

**Jake's future aspirations?** He hopes to move to bigger premises, accommodating more students as numbers grow and maybe even take students from his academy to an international tournament.

His basic aspiration though remains to continue to help students to feel the way that he felt himself when he left his first class with his instructor **Dylan**, so many years ago.

Photos were taken of the warm-up, but it did not seem right to linger for the assessments. As these remarkable young people began to work for their gradings, they deserved an environment in which they could concentrate wholly on the development of **Mind, Body and Spirit**.

## Jake offers training across all age groups:

- Little Dragons, 4-6
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- Adults

You can find more information on the website: [vmabristol.co.uk](http://vmabristol.co.uk) or on Facebook (search for Victory Martial Arts)



© Paul McMillan



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The personal development of our children is the keystone of our society; it's great that we have this facility, on our doorstep, that offers us the opportunity to help “turbo-boost” our children into a bright and happy future.

*Sensei Jake Watts in remote interview with John Robde and Paul McMillan. Editing and photos by Paul McMillan*

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# Bristol Saturday Youth League, u10's Squads

## Shire Colts v Shine Saints Colts, September 14th

If you are expecting a match report, with all the goals and final score, this isn't it. F.A. regulations for reporting matches, up to and including u11, forbid inclusion of results. That doesn't mean that I can't give you a "snapshot" of the game though.



**"Rock, Paper, Scissors" for kick off rights!**

Both keepers made early saves, the Shire keeper saving with his legs when a goal seemed certain! It was Shine who got the breakthrough, a central defender slipping a perfect ball to the left winger who galloped away down the wing. A pinpoint ball from him into the area was met by a Shine forward, who gleefully smashed the ball high into Shire's net. A lightning break with pace, precision and awareness of space.

The game continued from end to end with defences largely in control, so Shire went for another option,

with a powerful long range shot from the left that was a goal all day until the Shine keeper miraculously got fingers to it to tip it over the bar. Brilliant save! Shire were determined to try and get back on terms before half-time and they nearly did; a lightning break out of defence produced an effort that pinged off the Shine post and rebounded to a defender who gratefully hooked the ball clear. At half-time it was the visitors who had the lead.

In the second half, well worked chances continued to come and go but the next goal was really "out of a clear blue sky". A loose ball in the middle broke to Shire's number 8. He powered forward and released a long range firecracker that gave the Shine keeper no chance. What a goal! That wasn't the end of the scoring but I'll have to leave it there if I'm going to stick to the F.A. rules!

This was a hotly and skilfully contested match from two committed teams. There were fouls, some clumsy, some tactical and at least one, obviously retaliatory; the lads are not "angels" and we would not expect them to be. What they are is energetic, skilful, joyful, and passionate about "the beautiful game." It was a PROPER game of football, flowing



**Half time team talk for Shire Colts.**

from end to end, with great saves, shots rattling off the woodwork, last ditch tackles, goalkeepers throwing themselves into the path of the ball and great goals too! After the game the players lined up for a photo. Of course, the boys want to win, but what is more important is what they share; a passionate love of football for its own sake.

Here's links to the club's websites:

Shire Colts: [pitchero.com/clubs/shire](http://pitchero.com/clubs/shire)

Shine Saints Colts: [myshine.co.uk](http://myshine.co.uk) (go to "Join a Squad" and scroll to the football section)

Paul McMillan



Action around the Shire area.



A shared love of "The Beautiful Game".

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# Thinking, Feeling & Knowing

**In fencing, as in any other sport, there are those annoying characters who are just good at it. They don't know how or why; they just are. There's one consolation for the rest of us; that they'll never be as good as they should be if they stop at that.**

Truly to master and fully enjoy a sport requires that we know, feel and understand; using all three effects of experience to solve the problem before us.

There's always the element of skill. Some lucky dogs have it, it seems inherently. How could we ever gain it? Think how you learned to ride a bicycle. It wasn't explained to you in detail; in my case, as in many others, someone I trusted told me to peddle away and that they'd be holding securely to the saddle. At some point, they let go; I didn't notice until I was peddling, happily away and was riding and could ride the bicycle. That's how skill works; we trick the monkey part of our brain into solving the problem for us. We never know how it does it.

Fencing is both more complex and more forgiving than riding a bicycle; I can ride a bicycle or I can't. If I can't I fall over. There's one, basic way to solve the problem for our monkey brain. It's possible to deliver a hit or stop one in many ways and that

monkey brain can conjure any one of them at random. Think of it as the difference between chess and snakes and ladders. There's only one way to solve the problem of playing the latter game but although I might have many moves I could make, not all of them are equally useful.

To make sure I learn the right skill, my coach has to understand what the right one is and how to trick me into it. As my opponent is trying to thwart my skill, I have to understand how they are doing it and what counters I have to their intentions in pursuing my own. I have to be my own coach in the fight and that needs an understanding.

Where does feeling come in? It's what allows us to judge when there's no time to review or analyse. It has to be corrected and informed by both but in the moment, we feel what the distance is we should be at; feel when an opportunity is a trap and feel when are controlling and compelling the reactions of our opponent.

When thinking, feeling and knowing are working in harmony, the effect is sublime. Of course, our opponent is trying to knock us off that cloud and sometimes we just can't get there but that's why we do it; to be up on that cloud with the heavens.

*John Rohde*



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# Hallen AFC v Shirehampton FC

This Jewson Western League Division One fixture was played on a clear, chilly evening at the neat MB Frames Stadium on Moorhouse Lane. Hallen were top of the league with a lead of 11 points over Shire, but Shire had three games in hand. Could Shire close that gap to 8 points this evening?



Elliot Gardner fires in the Hallen opener.

Early signs were hopeful, Shire pressing and winning the first corner. The corner resulted in the Hallen keeper just managing to turn a Shire effort around the post for another corner. Hallen stemmed the Shire tide and the game ebbed and flowed from end to end, but in the 14th minute, Hallen got the breakthrough. A good ball across the area from the left reached **Elliot Gardner** in the centre; he had a simple tap-in to set Hallen on their way. **1-0 to Hallen.** Hallen ramped up the pressure and another effort dropped on top of Shire's net. Although Shire were competing well, Hallen looked more likely scorers and so it proved. In the 18th minute, Elliot Gardner popped up again with a clinical finish to increase **the Armadillos** lead. **2-0 to Hallen.**

Could Shire reduce the arrears to give themselves a fighting chance in the second half? Only 4 minutes later we had the answer. Shire fought to win the ball back after Hallen took possession from a Shire corner; they did win it and **Ryan Radford** fired into the Hallen goal. **2-1 to Hallen.**

Half time thoughts, with a snack and hot drink from the excellent refreshment kiosk, were of a good, competitive game with little to separate the teams. It had been combative; not great football but highly competitive and Shire were still firmly in this game.

The second half began very much like the first; competitive and end to end. In games like this, it takes something special to break the deadlock. In the 61st minute, **Jack Askins** provided that for Hallen. A superb ball across from Hallen's right winger was met by Jack, prowling on the left of Shire's area and he rose to bury a bullet header into the Shire net, giving the keeper no chance! **3-1 to Hallen.** It was an uphill battle for Shire now, but their efforts to drag themselves back into the game continued until the 89th minute, when a misplaced back-pass let Elliot Gardner in to steal the ball and complete his hat-trick. **4-1 to Hallen.**



Shire get one back, with Hallen appealing for offside. No flag and the goal stands.

## Friday Oct 4th



4 - 1



Hallen AFC

Shirehampton  
FC

That's how it ended but the scoreline didn't fairly reflect the gap between the teams. Hallen deserved their victory but Shire were always in the game, right up until the killer goal with one minute of normal time remaining. The Shire lads played with passion and full commitment; we can ask for no more than that.

Paul McMillan



Askins fires a majestic header into the Shire net.



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- Fri 8th Nov 8pm - Singer TBC
- Weds 13th Nov 8pm - Open Mic
- Sun 17th Nov 4pm - Singer TBC
- Tues 19th Nov 7.30pm - Quiz Night
- Fri 22nd Nov 8pm - Singer TBC
- Sun 24th Nov 5pm - Tony Rooke
- Tues 26th Nov 7.30pm - Bingo
- Fri 29th Nov 8pm - Singer TBC

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# Fundraiser Lifts Linda to Championships!

It was eyes down at the Cotswold Community Association (CCA) on Sunday 29th September for a very special fundraising event. Linda Thorne a local resident, member of the CCA committee and organiser of ShireStrong has been selected to represent Great Britain in South Africa at the World Power Lifting Championships. The difficulty for Linda is that this is an amateur sport and therefore she must cover all costs including travel and accommodation herself.

On hearing this, the CCA Committee, ShireStrong members and friends, decided to hold a special event to raise funds to help her with her costs. On the day, in addition to playing bingo, hot food was served and a raffle was held. Many raffle prizes were donated by local businesses including; Woods Butchers, Ruby Jeans, The Lifeboat, Clubhouse Harbourside, Leanne (nail manicure), Through the Lens and Emma Bexon (Massage).

Great Britain and our community. She has achieved so much in such a limited time and remarkably has won a host of medals and is already a **European Silver Medallist**. We wish her well and know that she will do her very best in the competition.”

Rather overwhelmed, Linda thanked the organisers and everyone who donated prizes, bought raffle tickets and came along on the day. We raised a whopping £1080 to help Linda on her journey.

*Debs Parsons*



© Linda Thorne



© Linda Thorne

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