

WATCHET CONNECTS

MAY / JUNE 2026



EDITION 43

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Watchet Coastal Community Team

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EDITOR'S PAGE

WELCOME TO ISSUE 43 OF WATCHET CONNECTS

Wow, what a change (again)!

The first issue of **Watchet Connects** in 2019 was single-handedly produced by Rachel, our Editor. 3 years later, I asked her if she wanted a helping hand with the layout and she almost bit my hand off! After many years running a small creative agency, I had recently semi-retired and had some spare time to make small improvements here and there on the layout using my limited skills (I had employed professional designers and artworkers but was never a designer myself). So Issue 21 (Sept/Oct 2022) marked a radical change of look. Now, 3 years later and having encouraged the progression from black-and-white to full colour, I am passing the baton to Claire, who is actually qualified to take **Connects** to another level of design - quite obviously better than my efforts!

As I grow frail and ancient, I look back fondly on my three years of bringing you news and such under the ever-watchful eyes of our magnificent Editor, Rachel. Without Rachel, there can never be **Watchet Connects**. So please support it and encourage potential advertisers and sponsors.

I'm stepping back now though I will continue to assist with proof-reading and sometimes driving to Taunton to collect the 2,500-odd copies of **Connects** for Fiona's army of deliverers to distribute. I will also be stepping into Claire's shoes laying out issues when necessary but don't expect the same high standards!

Christian Williams AKA Chiz the cartoonist

*PS from Editor – thank you for compliments Chris. It is brilliant that **Watchet Connects** will be in the hands of new designer Claire, but I am sure it now has a life of its own and can withstand new editors too! I am not planning to give up soon (though my frailness and ancientness certainly surpasses that of Chris, shall we have a competition?) but if there is anyone out there who would like to come and understudy editor with a view to taking it on in the future, or even of sharing the task occasionally, please let me know.*

This issue's cover image is by local artist, Gillian Apps

THE DEADLINE FOR JULY/AUGUST ISSUE WILL BE 1 JUNE

Please send any copy or updates on adverts to editor@watchetct.co.uk

Contributors please note: to enable us to continue to make **Watchet Connects** free to all residents we accept free of charge editorial entries from local social and not-for-profit organisations up to half a page maximum (around 200 words, or fewer if including images). Beyond that we must ask contributors to support our printing costs by paying the standard advertising rates unless otherwise agreed: see inside back cover.

WATCHET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NPAG) UPDATE



I hope you have had a chance to stop and admire the new **Market House** window display installed a few weeks ago? We are super pleased with it, we hope to add in the QR code soon (sticker on the window pane) to direct you to our new website and also our link to the consultation mentioned in the last **Watchet Connects** issue.

The **NPAC committee** are meeting regularly and planning how we will come and speak with all the Groups and organisations in Watchet so that you can have your say on future planning.

We met with Anne from Somerset Council who will be supporting us on our NPAC journey, guiding us and offering ideas, keeping us on track.

We were pleased to support the *Town of Culture* bid with the Town Council and hope all of these activities serve to promote what a fantastic little town we live in. More next time!

Keep in touch - our email address: neighbourhoodplan@watchetcct.co.uk

Bernice - Chair - Watchet NPAC

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On the first Saturday of March, over 80 people gathered on West Street Beach slipway for the first beach clean and litter pick of 2026.

Volunteers spread out on the beach, along the coast and around town collecting a large amount of litter including discarded drinks cans and glass bottles as well as a variety of plastic bottles, cups, containers and packaging – much of it single-use.

Amongst the team were **Eco Warriors** from **Knights Templar School**, who represent their class throughout the year by championing caring for the environment.

Seven year old Eli said “It’s important to look after the planet and protect the world from bad stuff happening to it – like littering, and rubbish ending up in the sea. It was good to clean the beach and get rid of the rubbish that shouldn’t be there.”

After an hour, all returned to The Sanctuary to sort what was collected. Puzzling items found included a plastic flower, a charity collection tin, a jumper and some carpet and the prize went to Pippa for finding the sole of a Converse boot!

Follow ‘*Plastic Free Communities in West Somerset*’ on Facebook for info about the next one.

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Watchet & West Somerset



WEST SOMERSET BRASS BAND CONCERT AND CROWDFUNDER

WATCHET ESPLANADE 22 MAY AT 7.30PM

Our wonderful town crier, David Milton, requires a new formal jacket for his duties and to represent the town at various events throughout the year. David can often be found entertaining locals and visitors alike on walking and singing tours around the town, and at fun summer events such as the Wheelbarrow Race and the Court Leet ale tasting, as well as formal occasions like Remembrance Commemorations.

David inherited his current attire from his predecessor, Alec Danby, when he assumed the role in 2012. The coat is now worn and tired. The plan is to get a new, correctly fitted and sized tunic with the help of a fundraising event on the Esplanade on Friday 22nd May. David will join forces with the West Somerset Brass Band for an evening of music, including some collaborations of David's very own Sea Shanties as featured on his 2018 recording 'Songs from the Bell Man'.

A collection will be made on the evening, and a Just Giving page is being set up by Watchet's Court Leet, who officially appoint the Town Crier at their annual meeting every October.

Keep an eye on social media to make a donation.

Niall Watson, West Somerset Brass Band



17-22 AUGUST 2026

Thanks so much to those who supported our fundraising Ceilidh at the Bowling Club - fantastic food prepped by Iorwerth and Dorothy (Thanks both!), great live music and lots of hilarity, as those of us with two left feet and short recall, careered up and down in the wrong direction, stepped on toes and bumped into friends!

Now - down to business - we are preparing for our **Summertime** event, we have booked bands, been in touch with the firework crew and liaised with the Marina regarding a boating theme complete with rib rides from the Marina. Super exciting, we're planning a great Summertime week - more info next time!

Bernice - Secretary - Watchet Summertime

Article and Ad deadline for the July/August edition is June 1st

WATCHET BOWLING CLUB (WBC) & COMMUNITY VENUE

SUPPORTING CHARITIES!

In this first quarter of 2026 we have proudly facilitated a number of charity events in our Clipper Lounge at WBC and Community Venue.

A fun evening was had when a quiz was held in aid of the **South-West Ambulance Charity**. Prizes and a raffle rounded off the evening and **£710** was raised.



In March we supported **South Coast Waves Cheerleaders** again in raising much needed funds for their trip to Florida, performing on a World Stage for the Cheerleading Allstar World Championships! DJ Bubble hosted the event, Music Bingo, which saw people wearing Fancy Dress all evening and winning very random prizes. The winners then held dance-offs!! There was a lot of singing and so much laughter. Some lucky winners won more valuable prizes including Butlins day passes and Rail Rover family tickets. The Cheerleaders were very grateful for our support, and we hope to continue supporting each other in future. Altogether the two events we have hosted for them have raised a massive **£1,924** for their amazing opportunity. Let's keep our eyes peeled for their next event!

Later in March we hosted a bingo night with a difference in aid of Crohn's and Colitis, **A Drag Bingo Nite, Penny Drops**. This was great fun and raised an amazing **£2,155!**

The final charity event of the quarter was held at the end of March in aid of the **St Renan Twinning Society**. A fun quiz raised some **£235**, which will help in hosting the St Renan visitors.

SO, A PRETTY IMPRESSIVE TOTAL OF OVER £5,000 RAISED OVERALL.

We continue to hold exercise classes, live music, and celebratory events, oh and some indoor bowls too! And outdoor bowling season starts very soon.

Come on down and see what we have to offer. A warm welcome awaits anyone who visits and if you particularly fancy having a go at bowling you can call Derek (a really nice man, qualified coach and excellent bar steward!) on 07368 592 613.

Watchet Bowling Club hope to see you soon!

Photos courtesy of Elaine Preston

THE WATCHET SINGERS

We will be performing on the Esplanade on August 20th at 1.15pm as a part of the **Watchet Summertime** presentation.

At the time of writing this we are preparing for our concert on April 16th which I hope many of you who are reading this will have enjoyed. Following this we will have a summer break.

We are scheduled to resume on September 10th. However at present we have neither a conductor nor an accompanist for our choir. **If you know anyone who is likely to be able to fill either of these positions please get in touch asap.** We are unable to offer paid posts, but expenses can be covered. We have always donated the income from our concerts to local charities.

I hope you all have a lovely summer, and we look forward to a fulfilling season of autumn singing.

Mary Rhodes

HOW TO MAKE BREAD

A series of Saturday morning workshops at the Phoenix Centre, Watchet.

Learn how to make artisan bread with a master baker. Each workshop will last approximately 3 hours from 10 am to 1 pm and will focus on a specific tradition or style of bread. The fee for each workshop is £40.

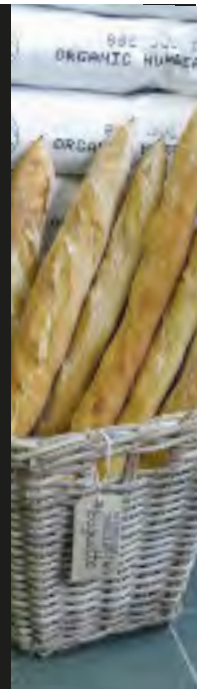
Date	Workshop
1st June	Traditional English
27th June	Sourdough
11th July	Continental Style
1st August	Croissant
5th September	Speciality Sourdough
19th September	Sweet Doughs



You will take home bread you have baked and extensive notes to encourage you to make bakery quality bread at home.

Places are limited to 6 people per workshop.

For further information email: MarkNewman3@gmail.com



THE WATCHET/SAINT RENAN TWINNING SOCIETY

We held our annual community quiz at Watchet Bowling Club on Saturday March 28th. The question master Tony Bowden devised a very entertaining range of questions and the overall winners were the team 'Ooh Là Là' who received their prize from the Society Chairperson Marilyn Binding. The event raised nearly **£300** for the Twinning Society.

The Twinning Society has been very active since its inception in 1979, and is currently preparing to receive a group of 18 French visitors in May. Various events have been planned, including a visit to the Minehead Lifeboat Station

and a trip to Fairfield House. Anyone interested in joining the Twinning Society should contact:

marilyn.binding349@btinternet.com
or *CynthiaPWebb@outlook.com*

We are immensely grateful to those who have agreed to host our French guests.



WATCHET COMMUNITY CHOIR

During March and April we had a busy time with performances at Dene Lodge Minehead, a Summertime fundraiser at the Boat Museum and great fun at the *Singing Walk* in and around Watchet.

We are now busy rehearsing for performances on 30th May at the Salvation Army. Please come and join us for a fun evening. On 20th June we will be performing at the Watchet Food Fair 1.00 pm on the Esplanade.

Ann Gedge

WATCHET PHOENIX NEWS

Watchet Phoenix have their AGM on Friday 15th May at 2.30pm. Everyone is welcome. Please come along and support us.



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WATCHET FORGET ME NOT CAFÉ

We shall be meeting between 10.30am and noon on May 13th and 27th and June 10th and 24th. Our meeting on 27th May will be on the Esplanade (or in the Esplanade Club depending on the weather!) and we shall be celebrating our 11th Birthday. The other meetings will be in The Sanctuary in Swain Street.

All those living with dementia and their carers are very welcome.

For more information, please contact Margaret Tatham 07973 638 030 or watchetdementia@gmail.com

WATCHET FUN DOG SHOW

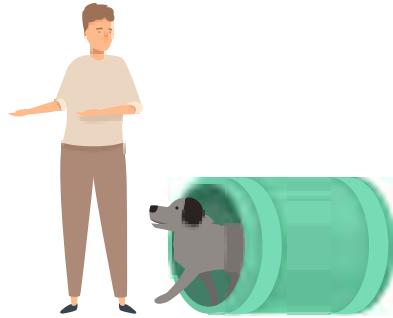
May 17 at War Memorial Ground from 11.00am.

Entry forms are out now in Alberts Ardware and the Visitor Centre.



Have you ever wanted to try a mini agility course with your dog? There are 7 obstacles to navigate at £1.00 a go. Judges of the 10 classes along with the showing classes and fun ones like 'Resist the Sausage' are Dr. John Gage of Glenmore House Veterinary Surgery and Karen Minto, Regional Co-ordinator of the animal charity, Cinnamon Trust.

This promises to be a fun day out for all, with doggie refreshments for sale by the Dog Shop in Minehead and other animal related stalls including Hera K9 Training Academy for all your dog training needs.



Many lovely raffle prizes including a £200 animal portrait by Donna Terry Art, 25% discount on dog training course along with other great non-doggy raffle goodies!

Contact Lori Lee
07935 38 022



Change of Venue
Flexercise Club Watchet now meet at
The Salvation Army Watchet Tuesdays 2.30

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Article and Ad deadline for the July/August edition is 1st June

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KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SCHOOL NEWS

We can hardly believe we are heading into the last term of the academic year!

We have packed so much into the Spring Term over the past few months alongside everyday learning: the exciting opening of the *Reading Realm*, a super silly *Red Nose Day*, a visit to the new skatepark, a Gymnastics Competition, a fantastic Music Workshop, a Swimathon, a Silent Disco with special guests Mickey and Minnie and our SIAMS Inspection!

We are delighted with the outcome of the SIAMS Inspection and looking forward to sharing the full report with our school community. The strengths identified truly capture what makes our school such a special place. A heartfelt thank you to the parents who gave their time to speak with the Inspector – your support is greatly appreciated.

We have two new Head Girls this term – Emily and Lexi-Mae. A big thank you to Jake and Renesmae for all their hard work during Spring Term.

Our Eco warriors, along with Miss Hake, participated in the recent

Watchet Beach Clean along with eighty other members of the community.

On *World Book Day* we were delighted to welcome Jill Newton into school. She led inspiring workshops, helping children create their own characters through illustration and powerful descriptive language. Thanks to the KTSCA for funding this workshop. Reception children brought stories to life using percussion instruments.

The KTSCA hosted a brilliant *Easter Eggstravaganza*. Children were mesmerised by a fairy, skilled at blowing remarkable bubbles and also took part in a fairytale themed Easter Egg hunt before being awarded prizes by Peter Rabbit! It was a great success, thank you to all of those in the community who supported us.

Upcoming events we look forward to include our Year 4 residential to Great Wood, and our annual sports day and family picnic.



We always try to broaden the range of extra-curricular activities our children can access including non-sports related clubs. In the Spring Term, we launched our *Knights Fever Dance Club* - a big hit! Children can sign up to the Art club at East Quay or visit Minehead Eye.

If anyone in the community has a particular interest that could be developed into a one-hour weekly club session, please contact the school office to discuss the process (01984 634 385 or office@ktcc.uk).



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WATCHET LIBRARY NEWS

Spring is here and we're all tidying our gardens – hopefully to sit in and read over the summer! If you're struggling for inspiration, call in and borrow a gardening book or a book on nature so you can identify what wildlife is living in your garden. If you want a book that we don't have in stock then we can always order it for a small fee.

May Half Term is fast approaching, and we'll be having a craft afternoon for children on Thu 28th May 2.15 – 3.15pm. It's free to take part and no need to book – just call in. We'll also have our Lego & Duplo out on Saturdays 30th May and 27th June as they are the last Saturdays of the month, 11.15 – 12.00noon. Free to come and play and no need to book but we do ask that children are supervised at both events, especially with small bricks being a choking hazard.

We're delighted to report that we've been able to start our Digital Drop In again. It will be on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10.30 -12.00. So, if you or someone you know needs help using their laptop or mobile phone then please call in and see our friendly volunteer. He will be at the library on 7th May, 21st May, 4th June and 18th June.

Looking forward to seeing you all, Mich



CRIME FICTION BOOK CLUB AT PHOENIX CENTRE

We have just read Felix Francis' *Pulse*, Jeffrey Archer's *Next in Line* and now Nicci French's *The Unheard*. Later in the year we hope to read *One Wrong Turn* by Chris Ewan, who featured in the recent 'Words in Watchet' weekend.

We have 14 members but there are two library book places available. Cost is £2.50 inc. hot drink. Meeting 1.00pm first Thursday of the month. Dates: May 7th & June 4th. Contact Lori 07935 318 022



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WEST QUANTOCKS REPAIR CAFÉ

Our Cafés are proving very popular and are held on the first Saturday of alternate months, from 10am to midday,

Future dates are: 6th June, 3rd October and 5th December.

Venue unless otherwise notified will continue to be Watchet Community Centre, Doniford Road TA23 0TE





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WATCHET

WHEELBARROW RACE

Watchet's spectacular and wacky/ F1 thrilling
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Sunday 24th May 2026

Race starts: 2.00 p.m. on The Esplanade:
Starting Grid/Finish Line.

Teams of 2 (incl. using wheelbarrow) due to proceed
from Watchet to Watchet, Watchet to Favy (B&B) and
starting patterns & trials. (To be made)



WATCHET

CARNIVAL

24th to 26th July 2026

Friday Evening 'Music & Song'
7 pm to 9 pm on The Esplanade.

Saturday 'Fiesta' 12 pm to 8.30 pm
in Watchet and on The Esplanade.

Sunday 'Fayre' 12 pm to 5 pm.
Watchet Memorial Ground TA23 0TE.




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Sir Nigel Gresley photo by Mike Pimm

FRIENDS OF WATCHET STATION

Every year, WSR holds 'steam galas' during which heritage steam locos are loaned from their owners for a short stay on our line and fans from far and wide flock to celebrate the steam era.

For four days over May Bank Holiday (1st to 4th May), the WSR will host five guest engines to supplement its five resident locos. This spring, one will be an extra special draw to steam lovers. Nigel Gresley (later Sir) was the designer of many of the finest locomotives of the steam era, like the Flying Scotsman which visited us last year. He also designed the A4 Pacifics, of which the most famous is *Mallard*,

still holding the record for the fastest steam train ever at around 126MPH. For 2026 spring gala WSR is delighted to include the eponymous *Sir Nigel Gresley* (LNER A4 No.60007) in its distinctive blue livery. Although only moving at 1/5th of its potential capacity, it will be quite a sight running along our tracks. If you want to take photos/videos, it is best not to stand too close at the Goviers Crossing.

Meeting and Training Room Available

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We currently have availability throughout the week at the following times:

9am – 1pm ■ 1pm – 5pm ■ 5pm - 9pm

Daytime sessions are only available during the Harbour Bookshop closed season (end of October to Easter)

£15.00 per session. To book or for more information contact:
admin@watchetcct.co.uk



We recommend (for safety and better shots) the footpath between the railway and the Harbour Road car park.

Over winter, much-needed repairs and renovations to our station have been made. Volunteers have devoted hundreds of hours of time and effort to restore historical items such as lampposts and benches. Thanks to contributions from passengers, we have been able to employ Joe, a local decorator who repainted and restored our 1862 Brunel-designed station. We are all amazed at his dedication and thoroughness. Our visitors always



notice the work of our maintenance volunteers, as well as the team led by Rob, who plant and maintain copious beautiful plants and flowers. All the time and efforts of our 50 volunteers bring custom - and jobs - to our local economy, our shops, cafés, museums and pubs. We never lose sight of the fact that visitors get off at our wonderful “harbour town of 1000 years” because it is special, and we help them discover all the hidden places and activities that make it so. And, from the station we send them to Fiona in the Visitor Centre!

We always welcome new volunteers. Enjoy the summer!

Chris fows.chris@gmail.com

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 *Watchet Family Boxing*

**Watchet
Jumble Trail**

Date
Sat 30th May

Time
10am - 4pm

**For More Info
Contact Kate
Kennedy:**
07954059296

Join the Trail!
A fun community event
where Watchet residents
can sell items outside their
homes and businesses.
Shoppers follow a map to
discover bargains and
unique hidden gems. Get
updates on our Jumble Trail
Facebook Page!

**Become A
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- £5 seller fee
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Cheerleading Club

Seller Deadline May 23rd

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WHAT'S ON IN MAY

FRI 1 MAY - MON 4 MAY **SPRING STEAM SPECTACULAR**

West Somerset Railway will host 5 guest steam locos including the iconic Sir Nigel Gresley. See page 18 for details.

SAT 4 APR - SUN 7 JUN 10am - 5pm ONGOING MAKER RESIDENCY at Studio 10 space East Quay. Bec Briar, shepherd, spinner, weaver creating textiles from her own sheep and foraged plants.

SAT 2 MAY 10 - 12noon METHODIST TABLE-TOP SALE To book a table please phone 01984 631 054.

SUN 3 MAY 10am - 4pm WATCHET STREET FAIR on the Esplanade. Stalls offering arts and crafts, jewellery, local meats and cheeses, clothing, handcrafted chocolate, Watchet cider and more. Face painting for all. Live music in the afternoon provided by West Somerset Brass Band. And explore the town! Enquiries contact Molly Quint tel: 07557 644 141 email: quint407@btinternet.com

MON 4 MAY 11am MEET THE SOMERSET DRAGON! The Esplanade. Part of Somerset Day Celebrations. Meet a 7ft Dragon and hear about Somerset Day. The Hobby Horse will also be in Watchet. Free. Come along!

MON 4 MAY 1pm - 5pm East Quay Courtyard. An afternoon of music, dancing, storytelling, face painting, craft demonstrations, fantastic food and drink to celebrate sunshine, Beltane and the natural world. Free entry.

FRI 8 MAY 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) **WATCHET COMMUNITY CINEMA** at Knights Templar School. Film tbc see local advertising harisonanne@hotmail.com

SUN 10 MAY from 2pm WEST SOMERSET MORRIS will be dancing in on The Esplanade as part of Somerset Day Celebrations. Plus Live Folk Music (TBC). Free.

SUN 10 MAY 2.30pm SALVATION ARMY HALL CREAM TEA (suggested donation £5). Come for a natter and good fellowship.

SUN 10 MAY 4.30pm (provisional tbc) **WATCHET MEMORIAL GROUP CAR BOOT SALE** see details in article.

WED 13 MAY 1pm - 5pm LAYERED MONOTYPES One day workshop at East Quay Print Studio. Learn and experiment with different techniques of mono-printing and take home your results. Free, donations welcomed. Contact 01984 263 103.

THU 14 MAY 7pm SOMERSET YARN East Quay Kitchen. A film screening plus conversation with Bec Briar and Trevor Pitt. Admission £5 please book in advance 01984 263 103.

FRI 15 MAY 2.30pm PHOENIX AGM at Watchet Phoenix Centre, all welcome, please come to support us.

SAT 16 MAY 7pm HARMONIA CHAMBER CHOIR Beautiful Music from Britain & France. Nether Stowey Church Centre. Tickets £8 on door (cash only) or Sue Pow 01278 662 755

WHAT'S ON IN MAY

SAT 16 MAY 7.30pm SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE HOUND OF

THE BASKERVILLES Backyard Theatre. The Pantaloons Theatre Company present their brand new riff on the famous Sherlock Holmes mystery. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk/ or call the Ticket Source Box Office: 0333 666 3366

SUN 17 MAY From 11am WATCHET FUN DOG SHOW Watchet Memorial Ground. Agility and dogs of all kinds, refreshments, raffle etc. Doggie and other refreshments, come along and join in the fun. See article.

SUN 17 MAY 2 - 5.30pm HARTWOOD HOUSE OPEN GARDEN FOR RNLI

Crowcombe Heathfield TA4 4BS. Entrance £5, children under 12 free. Cream Teas, Plant Stall, Treasure Hunt and Garden Games. Parking, Dogs on Leads.

TUE MAY 19 HEDGEHOGS AND LOCAL WILDLIFE TALK Methodist Schoolroom Watchet Conservation Society. All welcome.

WED 20 MAY 7pm MONTHLY SPOKEN WORD EVENING guest poet Sophie Sheppard. East Quay Kitchen. Come along, share your work and listen to others. Free, donations welcomed.

FRI 22 MAY 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) **WATCHET COMMUNITY CINEMA** at Knights Templar School. Film tbc see local advertising harisonanne@hotmail.com

FRI 22 MAY 7.30pm Watchet Esplanade concert with West Somerset Brass Band and David Milton. Free but donations welcomed. Fundraiser for new uniform etc for Town Crier. All welcome.

FRI 22 MAY 7pm THE BEACH'D BUOYS Live music at Watchet Boat Museum. Shanty singing to raise money for South West Children's Hospice. Tickets £6 from Watchet Visitor Centre or tickettaylor.com/events/visitorcentre/2114358

SAT 23 MAY 11am DUNSTER FESTIVAL FAMILY CONCERT East Quay Courtyard. Kensington Brass comes to East Quay for a family concert in partnership with Dunster Festival. Free, donations welcomed.

SAT 23 MAY 6pm EXHIBITION OPENING East Quay. Join us for the opening of our Print Studios Mini-Print and Always Coming Home exhibitions (see details below). Drinks and nibbles served throughout the evening. Free, donations welcomed.

SAT 23 - SUN 31 MAY 10am - 5pm 2026 MINI PRINT EXHIBITION East Quay Print Studio. Over 150 experimental small-scale prints. Free, donations welcomed.

SAT 23 - MON 31 AUG 10am - 3pm New exhibition **ALWAYS COMING HOME** by Poulomi Basu. Gallery 1 & 2 East Quay. A powerful solo exhibition by a UK BAFTA Breakthrough awardee, presenting new and existing works exploring transnational identity, migration complexities and the trauma of displacement caused by conflict and violence. Free, donations welcomed.

SUN 24 MAY from 1pm WATCHET WHEELBARROW RACE on The Esplanade and round town. Come and watch Watchet's infamous race. A great spectator sport!

continued...

continued...

WHAT'S ON IN MAY

TUE 26 - THU 28 MAY 11am - 1pm HALF TERM WORKSHOPS at East Quay.
 A series of free family workshops exploring art through hands-on activities.
 Drop in to try out different materials, techniques and ideas together.
 Free, donations welcomed.

WED 27 MAY 6pm OLIVE BRANCH AT EAST QUAY East Quay Courtyard.
 An acrobatic show blending physical theatre and martial arts, which follows two strangers in a magical forest, they must unite to save Mother Nature. Free, donations welcomed.

THU 28 MAY 2.15 - 3.15pm CRAFT AFTERNOON FOR CHILDREN at the Library - free, no need to book but supervision of children necessary.

SAT 30 MAY 11.15 - 12noon LEGO AND DUPLO at the Library. Free, no need to book but supervision of children necessary.

SAT 30 MAY 10am - 4pm WATCHET JUMBLE TRAIL All around town. Households can register to sell their unwanted items or come and have a wander to discover pre-loved treasures. Map of venues available from Watchet Visitor Centre nearer the day.

SAT 30 MAY 6.30pm WATCHET COMMUNITY CHOIR sing at The Salvation Army Hall. Come and sing along!

Torre Cider Farm
Events Venue

A beautiful space for any event. Looking out over the orchard, children's play area and farm.

OUR SERVICE

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- Family gatherings
- Weddings
- Team meetings
- Christmas
- Baby showers

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EAST QUAY

LOADS TO DO AT EAST QUAY EVENTS - WORKSHOPS - EXHIBITIONS RESTAURANT - COURSES - ACTIVITIES



GROUPS FOR ADULTS IN MAY / JUNE

FREE REGULAR GROUPS ON TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS

CREATIVES' CLUB (1st Weds) / FOLK JUICE (1st Tues)
SPOKEN WORD (3rd Weds) / DRINK & DRAW (4th Tues)



FOOD & DRINK

KITCHEN & BAR: Open every day from 9am – 5pm, serving breakfast from 9am – 11am and lunch from 12pm – 3pm. Open for evening meals from 5pm – 8pm Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.



EXHIBITIONS

SHOWING IN GALLERY 1 & 2: ALWAYS COMING HOME by Poulomi Basu. A powerful solo exhibition which explores transnational identity, migration complexities, and the trauma of displacement caused by conflict and violence. 23.05.2026 – 31.08.2026

SHOWING IN THE PRINT STUDIO: MINI PRINT EXHIBITION

A display of over 150 experimental, small-scale prints.
23.05.2026 – 31.08.2026

Join us to celebrate the opening of Always Coming Home and the Mini Print Exhibition on Saturday, the 23rd of May from 6pm.

MAKER RESIDENCY: BEC BRIAR – Local shepherd, spinner, and weaver works with wool hand-sheared from her own sheep to create textiles that celebrate the surrounding landscape.
04.04.2026 – 07.06.2026



FUN FOR FAMILIES: MAY HALF TERM

Join us between 11am – 1pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for a series of free, family workshops exploring art through hands-on activities. Try out different materials, techniques and ideas together.
Plus, enjoy a free drop-in activity in the foyer running all week.



EVENTS

There's plenty going on in May and June, from our May Day celebration and acrobatic dance to supper clubs and the ever-popular Drag on the Quay. Take a look at the Connects events listings for more details.

www.eastquaywatchet.co.uk 01984 263103



@eastquaywatchet

WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

TUE 2 JUN 5.30pm FOLK JUICE: MUMMERS AND BALLARDS East Quay Kitchen. East Quay's monthly gathering to share folk knowledge and remember our collective folk culture, this month exploring folk plays and songs. Free, donations welcomed.

WED 3 JUN 10am - 4pm INTRODUCTION TO SILKSCREEN a one day workshop at East Quay Print Studio. A relaxed introduction to screen printing. Learn the fundamentals and explore variations of the process. Admission £120, please book in advance 01984 263 103.

FRI 5 JUN 6pm CLOSING CELEBRATION OF BEC BRIAR'S RESIDENCY Studio 10 Project Space East Quay. Come and explore what she has been creating during her residency. Free, donations welcomed.

FRI 5 JUN 7pm FISH AND CHIP SUPPER at Royal British Legion. A fundraising event for the Watchet 1940s weekend. Cost £10 including supper. Bring along your £1 coins for fundraising fun. Tickets from Watchet Visitor Centre

SAT 6 JUN 10.30am - 12noon WEST QUANTOCKS REPAIR CAFÉ at Watchet Community Centre. Bring your items to be fixed!

SAT 6 JUN 3pm HARMONIA CHAMBER CHOIR Beautiful Music from Britain & France at All Saints Parish Church Dulverton. Tickets £10 on the door (cash only)

HARMONIA CHAMBER CHOIR

*Beautiful Music from
Britain and France*

Saturday 6th June 2026 - 3:00pm
All Saints Parish Church, Dulverton

Faure: Boulanger Franck Elgar
Vaughan Williams & Shearing

Conductor - Jackie Ayres Organist - Mary Morgan
Arranger/piano - Mark Sangle Clarinet - Stephen Archibald

Tickets £10 on door (cash only)
Reservations available

01984 263 103 www.harmoniachoir.co.uk

WATCHET CARNIVAL FUNDRAISER

Tea By The Ritz

You are cordially invited for
AFTERNOON TEA
Saturday, 13th June 2026
Watchet Phoenix Centre
Two sittings: 2.30pm and 4.15pm.

*A delicious selection of sandwiches and
arrangements cakes served with tea or coffee.*

Cost: £10.00 per adult, £5.00 per child (under 12)

Early booking recommended.
Table reservations: Tel: 01984 632703
<https://www.watchetfestival.co.uk>

WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

SAT 6 JUN 7.30pm WHERE IS MRS CHRISTIE? at The Backyard Theatre. On-a-Role Theatre unravels Agatha Christie's strange 11 day disappearance – lies, amnesia or scandal? Gripping revelations await in this solo thriller. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call the Ticket Source Box Office: 0333 666 3366

SUN 7 JUN 10am - 4pm WATCHET STREET FAIR on the Esplanade. Stalls offering clothing, jewellery, local cheeses, handcrafted chocolate, artisan coffee, hot food, local butchers and more. Face painting for fun-loving kids of all ages! Live music in the afternoon provided by the one and only One Tree Hill. Enquiries contact Molly Quint tel: 07557 644 141 or email: quint407@btinternet.com

THU 11 JUN 7pm ARGENTINIAN SUPPER CLUB at East Quay Kitchen. A delicious Argentinian meal with empanadas, asado and chimichurri. Vegetarian options available for all courses. Tickets £35, pre-booking essential 01984 263 103.

FRI 12 JUN 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) **WATCHET COMMUNITY CINEMA** at Knights Templar School. Film tbc see local advertising harisonanne@hotmail.com

SAT 13 JUN 10am - 12noon METHODIST TABLE-TOP SALE To book a table please phone 01984 631 054.

SAT 13 JUN 2.30pm & 4.15pm (2 sittings). You are cordially invited to **TEA BY THE RITZ** in Watchet Phoenix. Delicious Sandwiches, cakes etc. Carnival Fundraiser. Adult £10, under 12 £5. Table reservations 01984 632 783.

SUN 14 JUN 4.30pm (provisional) **WATCHET MEMORIAL GROUND CAR BOOT SALE** - see article for details

WED 17 JUN 7pm MONTHLY SPOKEN WORD EVENING with guest Erin McDonald. East Quay Kitchen. Come and share your work and listen to others. Free, donations welcomed.

THU 18 JUN 7 - 9pm PRINT CLUB East Quay Print Studio. Each month we try out a different style of printmaking in a relaxed atmosphere. A great opportunity to learn and experiment with multiple techniques. £15 non-members, £13 members.

SAT 20 JUN Get your **SCARECROW** entered into the competition by today! Forms at Visitor Centre.

SAT 20 JUN 9.30am - 4pm FOOD FAIR 1pm COMMUNITY CHOIR SINGING on The Esplanade. Local produce and live entertainment.

SAT 20 AND SUN 21 JUN WATCHET PHOENIX CENTRE open for refreshments & sales.

FRI 26 - SUN 28 JUN NEW SCARECROW COMPETITION being judged!

FRI 26 JUN 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) **WATCHET COMMUNITY CINEMA** at Knights Templar School. Film tbc see local advertising harisonanne@hotmail.com

continued...

WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

SAT 27 - SUN 28 JUN WATCHET OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND and **SCARECROW COMPETITION**. Brochures are out in the library, Visitors Centre and on Watchet Gardening Club Facebook group online. Tickets £5.00 for all 10 local gardens to view are available from Visitors Centre.

SAT 27 - SUN 29 JUN ART EXHIBITION featuring Greshna Dibble Beyond the Seed in St Decuman's Church.

SAT 27 JUN 11.15am - 12noon LEGO AND DUPLO at the Library. Free, no need to book but supervision of children necessary.

SAT 27 JUN 7.30pm DRAG ON THE QUAY returns to East Quay for its third year at East Quay Courtyard. Expect plenty of sparkle, laughs and fabulousness. Hosted by Me The Drag Queen, with fantastic guest performers. Free, donations welcomed.

SAT 27 JUN 7.30pm THE 39 STEPS at The Backyard Theatre. Falsely accused of a murder he did not commit, Buchan's famous thriller of one man on the run is performed by Goodwin in his one-man-show. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call the Ticket Source Box Office: 0333 666 3366

see following pages 30 & 31 for Regular Weekly Classes & Events...

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FREE QUOTE



HARMONIA CHAMBER CHOIR

Beautiful Music from Britain and France

Saturday 16th May 2026 – 7:00pm
Nether Stowey Church Centre

Works by
**Fauré • Boulanger • Franck • Elgar
Vaughan Williams & Shearing**



Conductor – Jackie Ayres
Accompanist – Kath Sugden
Soprano – Mary Morgan

Tickets £8.00 (cash only)

Refreshments available

Sue Pow 01278 662755
harmoniabridgwater@gmail.com

REGULAR WEEKLY CLASSES & EVENTS

FIRST & THIRD MONDAYS 10.30am KNIT AND NATTER at The Phoenix.

WEEKLY MONDAYS 10am CHAIR FIT EXERCISES at The Bowling Club.

Just come on down!

WEEKLY MONDAYS 7.30 - 9pm WATCHET COMMUNITY CHOIR meet at The Bowling Club. 07810 510 142

LAST MONDAY (FEB - NOV) 7 - 9pm WEST SOMERSET FAMILY HISTORY GROUP meet at The Phoenix £2 for members, £4 for non-members (inc refreshments). For info contact Alma Williams 01643 818 096.

WEEKLY TUESDAYS 8.50 - 9.45am YOGOLATES at The Bowling Club. 07775 632 807

WEEKLY TUESDAYS 10 - 11am YOGA at The Bowling Club. 07775 632 807

WEEKLY TUESDAYS 2.30pm FLEXERCIZE CHANGE OF VENUE! Now in The Salvation Army Hall. Chair based exercise for over 55s with some cardio, stretches and balance. Followed by tea and chat. £5 a session.

Contact flexercizewestsomerset@gmail.com

WEEKLY TUESDAYS 7 - 8pm YOGA at The Bowling Club.

WEEKLY TUESDAYS 7.30 - 9pm WATCHET TOWN BAND REHEARSALS at The Bandroom, Market Street Carpark. All woodwind and brass players welcome. Contact watchettownband@gmail.com

FIRST TUESDAY 7.30pm THE BRITISH LEGION BOOK CLUB

WEEKLY WEDNESDAYS 10 am - 12.30pm WATCHET ART CLUB The Methodist Schoolroom. Meet to paint and/or draw and have a cup of coffee. Occasional workshops. Contact Phyllis 07972 693 239.

WEEKLY WEDNESDAYS 10 am LITTLE SAINTS TODDLER GROUP in The Salvation Army Hall.

WEEKLY WEDNESDAYS (APR - SEP) 9.30am - 4pm WATCHET TOWN MARKET on The Esplanade, weather permitting.

WEEKLY WEDNESDAYS From 7pm LADIES DARTS NIGHT at The Bowling Club. Come on down!

EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY 10.30am FORGET-ME NOT CLUB at The Sanctuary. All enquiries to Margaret Tatham 07973 638 030 or watchetdementia@gmail.com. **MAY 13 & 27** (meeting on the Esplanade for 11th birthday celebrations) & **JUN 10 & 24**.

LAST WEDNESDAY 5 - 7pm FOLK CLUB at The Esplanade Club monthly. Free to attend, welcomes new players.

FIRST THURSDAY 2.30pm WATCHET ARTS & CRAFT Friendly group meeting. We bring our own projects ranging from zentangles, life embroidery and other sewing projects, knitting, painting, paper crafts. £3.00 inc hot drink at Phoenix Centre.

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 9.30 - 10.30am TAI CHI at The Bowling Club. Come on down!

REGULAR WEEKLY CLASSES & EVENTS

EVERY FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAYS 10.30 - 12noon DIGITAL DROP-IN at Watchet Library.

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 6.30 - 7.30pm WATCHET SOCIAL NETBALL A fun, friendly, non-competitive group meeting at Watchet Community Centre MUGA weekly for all abilities 16+. £1 a session - first session free.

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 6 - 7pm CEILIDH CLASS at The Bowling Club. Country Dancing, beginners welcome. With Judy Mapledoram, £5 session. No need to bring a partner. Contact Judy if planning to come, 07474 601 497.

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 7pm onwards CRIBBAGE for all in the bar, The Bowling Club. Come on down!

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 7.30pm WATCHET SINGERS at Methodist Schoolroom. Spring Concert.

WEEKLY THURSDAYS 7.30pm Eyes down for **BINGO** at The British Legion.

EVERY FIRST THURSDAY 1.00 - 2.30pm CRIME FICTION BOOK CLUB at The Phoenix Centre £1.50 inc hot drink. (May 7 & June 4)
Contact lorileeart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022 for details and costs.

EVERY FIRST THURSDAY MAY 7 & JUNE 4 2.30 - 5pm

WATCHET ART & CRAFTS GROUP at The Phoenix Centre £3 inc hot drink. Friendly group working on own wide range of projects.
Contact Lori lorileeart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022 for details and costs.

EVERY SECOND THURSDAY 2.30pm THURSDAY CIRCLE at Methodist Schoolroom. Everyone welcome to these free events.

WEEKLY FRIDAYS 9.30 - 11.30am SALVATION ARMY COFFEE MORNING
All welcome.

WEEKLY FRIDAYS 5 - 6.30pm COMMUNITY MEAL at The Sanctuary.

WEEKLY FRIDAYS 6-7pm WARRIORS LADIES BOXING FITNESS at The Boxing Club, The Temple, South Road. First visit free, usually £2.50 session. Contact Craig for more info 07594 564 944.

SECOND AND FOURTH FRIDAYS 7pm WATCHET COMMUNITY CINEMA at Knights Templar School, see local advertising for details. harrisonanne@hotmail.com

EVERY THIRD FRIDAY MAY 22 & JUN 19 2pm GARDENING CLUB at The Phoenix Centre £1 inc free raffle. Contact Lori Lee lorileeart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022

WEEKLY SATURDAYS from 10am METHODIST COFFEE MORNING. All welcome.

see following page 32 for Future Dates for your Diary

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUN 12 JUL & SUN 9 AUG 4.30pm WATCHET CAR BOOT SALE on The Memorial Ground (provisional dates to be confirmed)

SUN 19 JUL WATCHET GARDEN AND FLOWER SHOW at the Memorial Ground. Schedules and entry forms available from Albert's 'Ardware and The Visitor Centre.

FRI 24 - SUN 26 JUL WATCHET CARNIVAL WEEKEND An incredibly important **FREE** celebratory event in West Somerset bringing people together, showcasing our town and community with a full programme of superb entertainment and fun activities for everyone of all ages to enjoy.

FRI 24 JUL 7 - 9pm WATCHET MUSIC EVENING on The Esplanade. Music and Song for all!

SAT 25 JUL 12noon - 8.30pm SATURDAY FIESTA in Watchet and on The Esplanade.

SUN 26 JUL 12noon - 5pm SUNDAY FAYRE on Watchet Memorial Ground. Further details go to Watchet Carnival website watchetcarnival.co.uk or our social media pages.

MON 17 - SAT 22 AUG WATCHET SUMMERTIME see article for details.

MON 31 AUG MARITIME FANCY DRESS FUN RUN/WALK on the War Memorial Recreation Ground up to 10 laps 5k+. Pirates, sailors or any other maritime fancy dress. **Register at 10.30am. Run/walk starts 11.00am.** See article for further details.

Free, confidential and non-judgemental support with Benefits, Housing, Debt, Employment or other life complications, big and small.

If we can't help we may be able to advise someone who can!

Email: advice@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk Phone: 0800 802 1808

Face to face: The Lane Centre, Market House Lane, Minehead 10am – 1.30pm. Locally, we regularly visit The Sanctuary in Watchet.



Currently, *Watchet Connects* is being sponsored by
Watchet Coastal Community Team
 and **Watchet Community Choir**

To sponsor or advertise, please see the inside back page

WATCHET COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM

THE REGAL THEATRE MINEHEAD

MAY

SAT 2 MAY 11am – 1pm COFFEE MORNING IN THE BAR

SAT 2 MAY 7.30pm REGAL COMEDY NIGHT

TUE 5 MAY 6pm BALLET AND OPERA EUGENE ONEGIN (The Metropolitan Opera AS LIVE) Soprano Asmik Grigorian (Tatiana) and Baritone Igor Golovatenko (Onegin) in this Pushkin Opera directed by Deborah Warner.

FRI 15 & SAT 16 MAY 7.30pm Family dance show **ILLUMINATE – SPOTLIGHT** Talented students from SDA, ballet, tap, commercial dance, lyrical and acro – something for everyone!

THU 19 MAY 7.30pm The Regal Film Society Screening **TBC** (Cert 15)

THU 21 MAY 7.30pm EXHIBITION ON SCREEN - FRIDA KAHLO: THE MAKING OF AN ICON Discover the woman behind the bright colours, big brows and floral crowns. Find out about her turbulent life and her art.

JUNE

TUE 2 JUN 7.30pm The Regal Film Screening **TBC** (Cert 15)

THU 4 JUN 7pm NT LIVE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD Filmed live on stage at the National Theatre, directed by Caitriona McLoughlin.

SAT 6 JUN 11am – 1pm COFFEE MORNING IN THE BAR

SAT 6 JUN 7pm CANCER RESEARCH UK – THE CONCERT

SAT 13 JUN 7.30pm THE ALTER EAGLES A celebration of one of the best loved bands of all time. 23rd anniversary tour of one of the countries top tribute bands. A mix of old and new Eagles songs.

FRI 19 & SAT 20 JUN 7.30pm LADA 2026

TUE 30 JUN 7.30pm The Regal Film Society Filming **TBC** (Cert 15)

Tickets for all events may be booked in advance online at <https://regaltheatre.co.uk/whatson> or from the Box Office (Tel 01643 706 430) between 9.30am and 12.00pm Mon - Sat.

WATCHET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PRACTICAL GUIDE, 1907

I am lucky enough to possess a rare copy of the above fascinating booklet, written by a former well-known man of Watchet, W.J.E. Lee, who had a formidable knowledge of the little town he loved. Mr. Lee was a journalist for the West Somerset Free Press and was still at his desk on his 82nd birthday in 1950.

The following are direct quotations from the booklet.

“Watchet has been a port on the Bristol Channel for over a thousand years, but it has also other claims for consideration...

While making no pretence to be a summer resort, in the generally accepted sense of the term, its fine bracing air and pleasant situation and surroundings will amply compensate those in search of a quiet place for a

restful holiday. It is situated about 160 miles from Paddington on the GWR by the new direct route to Taunton... whence there is during the summer a good service of trains... in a little more than four hours after leaving London, visitors reach their destination... and as there are weekly excursions from London and many of the larger provincial centres, no difficulty will be found reaching the town.”

With all our progress, we may be a bit harder to get to now! Mr Lee continues:

“The origin of Watchet is lost in antiquity. Even the derivation of its name is by no means certain, but the usual explanation is that it relates to a colour – blue – and that the name arose on account of the ledges of blue lias rock which line the shore. Its ancient name is said to have been Veched, and

it is called variously in old documents Weced, Wecedpoort and Wecheport. In the Anglo-Saxon period Watchet appears to have attained considerable prominence, and in the time of the Heptarchy was the capital of Wessex. There was established here a royal mint, and it is possible that the mint may have been in a measure responsible for the many vicissitudes

which the place experienced during the raids of Danish freebooters in the ninth and tenth centuries. About the year 918 Watchet inhabitants had the unpleasant experience of a Danish invasion, led by the redoubtable twain Ochter and Rhoald. For once the Norsemen had much the worse of the encounter, and were driven back to their fleet with great slaughter. Some 70 years later a new generation of Vikings laid waste to



Watchet Town Guide 1907

the town, and when shortly after they made a third descent they not only left the place in flames but slaughtered nearly all the inhabitants. Between Watchet and Williton a field, known as Battlegore, is said to be the site of one of the encounters... Tumuli mark the spot and there are two enormous stones that at some time probably marked the grave of a notable chieftain."

In 1931 a group of people, led by Somerset archaeologist H. St. George Gray, F.S.A., assisted by William Wedlake, organised a dig at Battlegore to try to discover if there were any remains of the old battle buried there. Disappointingly, although there were extensive excavations, no evidence linking to the battle was found. There has always been rivalry between Williton and Watchet. Having been born in Williton, and lived now in Watchet for many years as well as being in sports teams for both towns, I am very aware of this and wonder if this rivalry stretches back to the Battlegore conflict?



Mr Lee continues:

"After the Norman Conquest, Watchet became one of the manors conferred upon Sir William de Mohun as an appanage to Dunster Castle... at length attaining to the proud position of sending two members to Parliament. With ... a re-distribution of seats, the electors lost their right to separate representation, but one very interesting link with other times still remains – the Court Leet. The Court meets yearly to elect a portreeve and other officers. In older times the portreeve had to fulfill the office of magistrate, and his jurisdiction extended over the town and the shipping in port. At the same time there were elected ale-tasters, inspectors of weights and measures, scavengers, a stockdriver, and a town crier."

It is very pleasing that the Court Leet is still in existence, and Watchet still keeps the tradition of the above officers, most of which play a very small part in town life, but we still see (and hear) our Town Crier!

In this same small booklet are many advertisements for local businesses which we hope to include in future editions of Watchet Connects, as they give a vivid picture of life as it was being lived in the early 20th century.

Maurice Chidgey

Left: Williton workman William Trebble (left) and Thoman Tipper at the excavation at Battlegore (a field opposite the present Danesfield school) in 1931.



Watchet Harbour by Jane Mary Percival in 1864. Of note is that the building now Corner cafe is thatched in the picture, and the horse and cart crossing the harbour show that there must have been less mud at that point than in recent years.

Reproduced courtesy of Martin Stevens

WATCHET CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Another busy time for **Watchet Conservation Society** as we are moving forward with different ideas to conserve things within the town and around. We are hoping, with the Street Fair, to rent part of the Notice board at the entrance to the Esplanade for forthcoming events and also looking into repairing the Old Red Mine ready again to receive donations for The Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Society.



Our Open Meeting was an excellent demonstration by Jim Patterson on Paper Making in Watchet for which he is now famous throughout England. Our next open Meeting is on 19th May given by our leaders from Wildlife and Hedgehog groups. Please come, it should be fun.

Very Best Wishes, Molly.

Currently, *Watchet Connects* is being sponsored by
Watchet Coastal Community Team
 and **Watchet Community Choir**

To sponsor or advertise, please see the inside back page

WATCHET COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM

WATCHET WAR MEMORIAL AND THE MEMORIAL GROUND, RAISING FUNDS

Watchet Memorial Ground is the green space at the heart of our town, and we are planning to raise some money to maintain it and improve the pavilion for all the town to enjoy.

We will be holding four car boot sales on four Sunday afternoons this year (weather permitting) to help raise funds. Provisional Dates are **10th May, 14th June, 12th July and 9th August**. Please check posters and Facebook to confirm dates from beginning of May. Sellers for the 10th May will be charged an introductory £5.00 per car, Vans £10.00. Gate open to Sellers 3.30pm. Open for Buyers at 4.30pm. There will be limited parking for Buyers on the ground £1.00 per car. Vehicle access Football Club Lane gate entrance ONLY to the Memorial Ground on the day. Contact Lori 07935 318 022.

ANOTHER DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES:

Monday 31st August Maritime Fancy Dress Fun Run/Walk on the War Memorial Recreation Ground. Up to 10 laps 5k+. Pirates, sailors or any other maritime fancy dress - even just a boater hat would do! Register at 10.30am. Run/walk starts 11.00am. Purchase tickets beforehand £5.00 adults £1.00 (16 and under) children. These are available with sponsorship forms from Monday 1st July from the Visitor Centre and online (see posters and Facebook group page 'War Memorial Recreation Ground Committee' for online link/QR code - there is a small extra fee for online ticket purchase). Please get your friends and family to sponsor you - it all really helps to boost funds

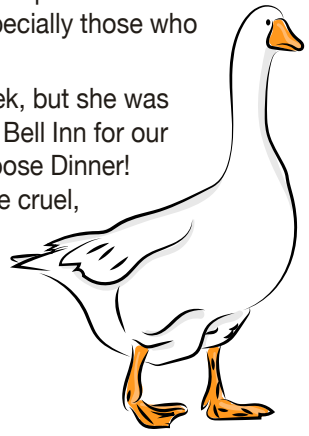
and any amount you can raise will support the Memorial Ground. If you are not sure beforehand how many laps you can complete, your sponsorship money can be brought into The Visitor Centre until the end of September. 86 years old Val Norman raised £400 in sponsor money on our Christmas Santa Run walking all the 10 laps, but even if you can just walk or run 1 lap, it all helps! We will have some lovely raffle prizes so come along to have fun for an hour or so to support and encourage the fancy dress runners/walkers and buy a tea or coffee plus a raffle ticket. (Ticket and sponsor forms will be available on the day too). Contact Lori 07935 318 022.



KNIGHT'S TALES

In the autumn of 2021, I was bewildered when it was announced in the National Press that Watchet was in mourning for the death of Derek the Goose. Was it just me who did not know about Derek? I discovered almost everyone I met had no idea either. Martin (Stevens) with his boat owner's knowledge, updated me on the full story and I realised that I had occasionally seen a white goose or duck in the marina. Friends connected with Scouting or boating/fishing interests and those living close to the harbour knew about Derek but a lot of people seemed unaware. It showed how unobservant many of us are, especially those who do not regularly venture down into town.

I don't suppose we will ever know what happened to Derek, but she was a topic of conversation in 2021 when we sat down at The Bell Inn for our annual Court Leet meeting and traditional Michaelmas Goose Dinner! We all agreed Nature's law of 'survival of the fittest' can be cruel, evidenced when we watch TV Naturalist programmes, or when sparrow hawks pounce on pigeons and smaller birds visiting our bird-feeders.



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St Margaret's Hospice Care

Mention of Derek the goose and her memorial reminds me of how, over 25 years ago Carlisle-born Gordon Young, a respected artist specialising in public art, produced a Maze on the ground at East Quay. In the centre he erected a Red Anchor. I believe the words from The Ancient Mariner painted on the old warehouse (and now preserved on East Quay seawall) were down to Gordon as well. Later, Watchet Town Council, with the involvement of the late Sally de Renzy-Martin, were permitted to keep the Anchor (for which I believe we paid a nominal amount). After much discussion it was agreed to move it to the town entrance at the top of Brendon Road, and we persuaded our fellow councillors to change its colour to 'Watchet Blue'.



During those distant days, as Chair of the Town Council and Regeneration Partnership I had numerous meetings with Dean and Dyball discussing ideas for the East Quay development. Amongst these, my proposal for a Village Square centred by a pile of rocks with a sculptured seabird on the top and water cascading down over it, surrounded by business outlets, a cafe etc. Cue much excitement, as the idea received encouraging comments from a junior member of the Dyball family but as we know nothing came of any of those meetings.

Tony Knight



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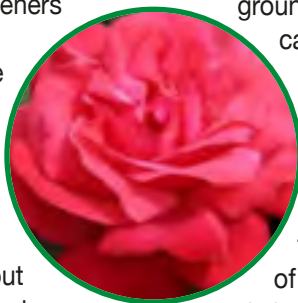
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IN YOUR GARDEN WITH ALAN JONES

Roses, being one of our national symbols, are much associated with England. Over the years, blackspot and mildew have put many gardeners off growing them (including me), but rose breeders have worked hard to breed varieties resistant to these fungal diseases. Keeping roses free of diseases is as much about good hygiene as keeping plants healthy, but if you start with good resistant stock, you are half-way there.

Some people don't grow roses because they think that pruning is complicated. Interestingly, recent research has shown that roses cut back with a hedge trimmer flowered just as well as those carefully pruned to an out-facing bud. I wouldn't advocate butchering your roses, but it's not a precise art, just cut them back and wait for new growth. Unwanted shoots can be trimmed off at any time of the year.

Traditionally roses were planted in the winter when dormant but I'm a believer in waiting until the plant you want is flowering so you really know what you are getting. Even the best of



companies can get their labels mixed up. Container-bought roses can be planted at any time, but prepare the ground well in advance. A rose can live happily for 50 years so it's worth planting it carefully. Make sure that the hole is twice as big as you need and have plenty of good compost on hand to back-fill. If you use bags of peat-free potting compost,

mix in some John Innes No 3, otherwise the compost will be too light and the wind will blow it about, preventing the roots anchoring the plant well. Also, add garden compost and a handful of bone meal to encourage the roots to grow and tread it down carefully. Give it loads of water, at least 4 gallons per plant.

Many people like the colourful hips (just another name for the fruit or berry) produced by the rose. These can be black or yellow as well as various shades of red. There are many roses that showcase these. I feel it is worth waiting until later in the season before you buy, so you can see what you are getting.



A word of warning, if you want to replace old roses don't plant new ones in the same place. This is not an old wives tale, it has been scientifically proven! If you are short of space grow your rose in a really big tub, at least 24 inches deep. Place this tub/barrel or pot where you want it to stay, once you have filled it the chances are you won't be able to lift it. (I learned this lesson the hard way!). Then, watch the rose grow and flower - and get covered in greenfly! Be careful what you use to remove the pests, think of our bees and hoverflies. Soapy water and fingers will usually be enough to remove aphids. Hoverflies are harmless to humans, have evolved to look like a honeybee to avoid being eaten (life can

be cruel if you're tiny!) and some lay their eggs near a cluster of aphids so that their young have a ready meal waiting when they hatch.

We are fortunate here in Watchet that 'RHS Rosemoor' is only just over an hour way by car. From the 13th June until 12th July Rosemoor will be holding their annual Festival of Roses when their rose gardens, boasting some 2000 roses from more than 200 different varieties will be looking at their very best. From experience I know that they will be looking wonderful weeks before and after if you can't visit during those dates. It really is the best way to choose new roses for your garden, and a lovely day out.

Alan Jones



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WATCHET GARDENING CLUB

We recently had two great talks, on *Square Foot and Vegetable Gardening* by Mary Alexander, and *Slugs, Friend or Foe* by Dee Mayo.

We are hoping in May to have a talk by Alan Jones on Fuschias (May 22nd) and in June (on 19th June) we are building our own scarecrows to enter the town's new front garden scarecrow competition being judged on 26th, 27th, 28th June. If you can't make our meeting but would like to enter your own Scarecrow, forms are available at Alberts Ardware and Visitor Centre. Don't forget, in order to be judged, fill out an entry form and pop it into the Visitor Centre together with £1 entry fee by 20th June. Plant your completed Scarecrow in your garden by 26th June. Prize winners will be announced at the Watchet Garden and Flower Show on July 19th.

If you would like to join our friendly gardening club whether you are a novice or experienced, there is no membership fee, you just pay when you attend. It is on 3rd Friday of the month 2.00pm at Phoenix Centre. £2.50 Incl. hot drink and raffle ticket. More info Lori Lee 07935 318 022.

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WATCHET GARDEN AND FLOWER SHOW JULY 19 AT WATCHET MEMORIAL GROUND. ADVANCE NOTICE! MORE CLASSES!

Schedules and free children's seeds are available in the Visitor Centre. Entry forms available in Alberts Ardware and the Visitor Centre.

Why not start growing now, ready for the date, crafting and making your food and drink for the show now in our 3rd year. Last year we were delighted with the 200+ entries and there are 52 classes this year (10 more).

We would love to get more entries for the Mini Chelsea Garden display class - a great addition to the show. This comprises of a small portable display of outside plants in pots. Pots are usually plastic so not too heavy to move from your car onto a small area of ground. We have had a lovely trophy donated for the winner by Mayor Loretta Whetlor so, if you are a keen gardener, it is well worth taking part.

We would like to encourage more children to take part in the Garden and Flower show Children's Classes and have added some new ones including LEGO and a Lego prize (donated by Rogers Emporium). Last year we didn't have many entries for the Children's Classes and, as each class costs money, we do not want to exclude children in the future. Do any parents or grandparents have suggestions for low-cost ideas for Children's classes we haven't tried yet? Any suitable inspiring ideas gratefully received! (see entry form for details).

Contact *Lori*: lorileart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022.

WATCHET OPEN GARDEN WEEKEND AND SCARECROW COMPETITION JUNE 27TH AND 28TH.

Brochures are now out in the library, Visitor Centre and on Watchet Gardening Club Facebook group online. Tickets for the weekend Open Gardens are £5.00 for all 10 local gardens to view and are available from Visitor Centre or online. There is a QR code below (small online fee for this). Money raised will be divided between Watchet Salvation Army (West Somerset homelessness project) and the Watchet Garden and Flower Show.

The 10 Open Gardens will be judged but we would like the public to choose their favourite, so please post your vote (before 17th July) in the Visitor Centre box or on 'Watchet Gardening Club' group page on Facebook. Winners will be announced and rosettes presented at Watchet Garden and Flower Show on July 19th. Contact Lori Lee for any more info 07935 318 022





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WATCHET METHODIST CHURCH

Thank you for your generosity at our community coffee mornings every Saturday which start at 10am and finish when everyone has gone home!

You raised £429 for Water Aid in January and £652 for Mercy Ships in February.

In May we are raising funds so that the Bridgwater and Taunton college SEND students can attend the Gold Duke of Edinburgh residential course.

In June we are raising money so that the South Coast Waves Cheerleaders can attend the World Championships in America next year.

Table Top Sales on Saturday 2nd May and June 13th from 10am to 12.

To book a table please phone 01984 631 054.

Our Sunday services, led by a variety of preachers, at 10.30am and followed with refreshments.



WATCHET SALVATION ARMY NEWS

We here at The Salvation Army continually thank the community for their support in all we strive to do.

This month's issue of **Watchet Connects** makes us realise we are halfway through the year. People will be booking holidays, hopefully the sun will shine and more of us will be enjoying a walk about town in the fresh air.

The Salvation Army will be hosting a cream tea afternoon at our Hall on May 10th at 2.30pm (suggested donation £5). Come along for a natter and good fellowship.

Keep an eye out for the Jumble Trail on May 30th we will have new and used gifts at Wristland Road, with all donations going back into the church.

Watchet Community Choir will be performing at the Hall Brendon Rd. on May 30th at 6.30pm. Come along and have a good old sing song. From ABBA to 'you name it' we'll give it a go!

Spend some time taking a moment to reflect what's around you and to see God's hand in everything we see. He is the Master, Creator and Provider of all the beauty in our world. He created each one of us and knows us by our name.

Sam Searl.

A HISTORY OF ST DECUMAN'S CHURCH PART 2 – 13TH & 15TH CENTURIES

Last time I wrote about the early church built in the 12th century. By the 13th century the building had become too small, so tripled in size. Much of the new building is still visible today, typical Norman, with a central nave and tall tower. By the 15th century further expansion was necessary. You can see this as you enter the current church through its 15th century porch and original 15th century solid oak door. Outside, beside the path leading to the old vicarage, is a fine example of a medieval preaching cross.

On the left, as you enter the church, is a 15th century font. This has a smooth stone bowl supported by angels and behind it on the west wall the list of vicars dates back to 1310, with the name of the reigning monarch listed alongside each vicar. Records at Wells cathedral go back even further to 1245.

The north and south aisles are built in perpendicular style, the wagon roofs across the nave and aisles are particularly noteworthy. Overhead you can see carved wooden angel figures lining the nave aisles and chancel, on

the south side of the north aisle holding books and shields, on the north side the instruments of the passion. The bosses in the wagon roof are all interesting, as are the leaf trail carvings connecting the angels.

The pillars either side of the centre aisle don't match as the north aisle was built later when the central tower was removed in 15th century. Some pillars have empty canopied niches, but four are filled with carved statuettes representing Sts Gregory, Augustine, Ambrose and Jerome. Behind the pulpit there are two further statuettes, St George with a dragon and St Anthony with a staff and pig. All these date from early 15th century.

The rood screen in the church centre is striking. Much of its 13th century wood carving is original, though restored many times over the years. During the medieval period the interior of the church would have been brightly painted and there still are traces of red paint. A rood screen usually bears a cross but the whereabouts of the original cross is unknown.

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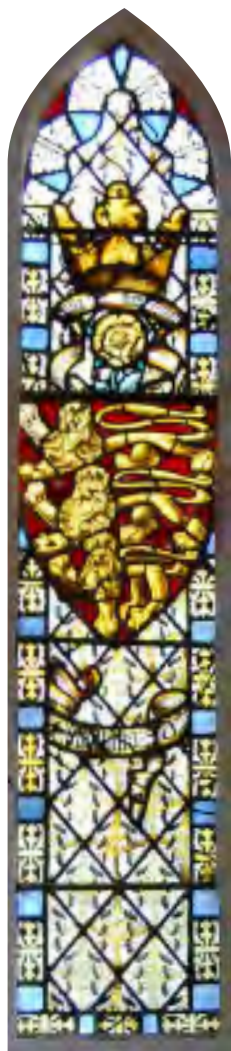
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Alan Jones

Moving through the screen arch you are in the oldest 12th century part of the church. Between the choir stalls you walk on 13th century floor tiles, believed to have come from Cleeve Abbey. Above, on the wagon roof you will see further carved angels and leaf tracing, and on the boss above the vicar's stall (south side nearest the screen) you will see a carved serpent, which was often used to symbolise wisdom.

The oldest window in the church on the north wall of the Chancel (left), is a lancet window bearing the crest of King Edward 1, dated 1273. Sadly, over the centuries and as recently as 1998, this window has been used by people who have broken into the church. It is still beautiful but, although meticulously restored, cannot be considered 'original'.

The chancel is wide by local standards; maybe it housed the tomb of St Decuman when it was first moved from the previous minster church, which was closer to the sea near Dawes Castle. We know (from early records dated 1412) that Decuman's tomb was removed to the current church because the date of the 'translation' (transfer) was celebrated as a feast day for many years. Sadly, we have no record of where St Decuman's tomb might have been, or indeed where it is now. (Professor Eric Robinson believed it was taken to Llandaff cathedral). Come and see for yourself, travel back through centuries in your imagination. What stories could these walls tell?

The next chapter will tell of the Georgian period, and the refurbishments of 1880.

Alan Jones

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BAPTIST MESSAGE FOR MAY/JUNE 2026

We're supposed to stay away from some subjects in polite company – such as religion and politics. So please be kind as I push my luck a little!

I recently went to a seminar about extreme political views. I learned that the best way for ordinary views to become extreme is to stop the dialogue between people who think differently. The answer seems to be for people to call out the extremists on their own side (lefties say no to extreme lefties; rightists say no to extreme rightists) – and then make sure they keep talking to each other.

The singer Frank Turner wrote: "On the borders, in our heads/Between things that can and can't be said/We've stopped talking to each other/And there's something wrong with that/So before you go out searching/Don't decide what you will find/Be more kind, my friends/Try to be more kind."

Jesus said it was best to sort out a broken relationship before going to church! (Matthew 5:23-24) I reckon that whether it's in Watchet or international politics, it's always better to keep talking.

If you want to talk to me, drop me an email: mike@watchetbaptist.org.uk, or visit our website: watchetbaptist.org.uk (which also tells you where and when we're meeting).

Mike Sherburn Pastor, Watchet Baptist Church, 07466 195 976
watchetbaptist.org.uk • [youtube.com/watchetbaptist](https://www.youtube.com/watchetbaptist)

NEWS FROM ST DECUMAN'S CHURCH

The church is usually open daily for prayer, quiet reflection or to look around this beautiful building. For our services see elsewhere in this magazine.

Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th June the garden at St Decuman's Well, down the track to the right of the churchyard, is taking part in the Watchet Open Gardens Weekend. Tea, coffee, cake, etc will be served from 2.00pm-4.00pm on both days in the church, with donations welcomed for the West Somerset Homelessness project. (Tickets are £5 to visit all ten gardens, from the Visitor Centre and online. Details elsewhere in this magazine.)

Also during the weekend of 27th and 28th June, there will be an art exhibition in the church, called "Beyond the Seed", by Greshna Dibble, which will include "a democratic wall of dandelion images created by as many people as possible".

Tower Lighting – the church tower can be lit up in memory of a loved one or special event/birthday etc. Dedications are posted on Watchet Facebook groups and in the church newsletter, with a copy in the church porch. For terms & bookings please contact Tony Knight on 07891 688 448.

For up to date details about services and events, see our weekly news sheet or our website: www.achurchnearyou.com

Contact: Revd Mark Phillips (Vicar) tel. 01984 63669
email: revdmarkphillips@outlook.com

To receive our weekly news sheet by email, please contact Sarah Lander: sclarkelander@gmail.com



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WATCHET COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM

WATCHET CONNECTS ADVERTISING

WATCHET CONNECTS is the **FREE** not-for-profit newsletter distributed to everyone who lives or works in Watchet. It is probably the most well-thumbed reference for the town's inhabitants, even in this digital age.

Generally, not-for-profit and charitable organisations can submit articles for free up to half a page (for community entries - e.g. charities, social enterprises, churches etc - approx 200 words or less if images included. Please adhere to this limit to ensure we can continue to provide **WATCHET CONNECTS** free of charge).

WATCHET CONNECTS depends very much on the generosity of local organisations to support our cause via advertising and sponsorship.

WATCHET CONNECTS is published bi-monthly and is distributed to around 2,200 households in Watchet by volunteers. The handy A5 booklet is usually around 48-52 pages and is available to outlying villages at cost.

Advertising and sponsorship rates are extremely affordable for even the smallest of shops, clubs, pubs, cafés, self-employed and other local businesses.

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WATCHET CONNECTS ADVERTISING RATES FROM APRIL 2026

As our circulation is increasing in line with Watchet new-builds, our printing costs are rising too. Please contact us for sponsorship and advertising rates for our new financial year, April 2026-2027.

The future of **WATCHET CONNECTS** relies largely on the continued support of our sponsors and advertisers, and very many of our readers look to **WATCHET CONNECTS** as their "go to" source of local information, a tangible reference booklet even in this age of internet information.

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Goodnight Lois

Sunday 17 May 3pm
Rockin' the Joint

Sunday 24 May 3pm
Old Skool Rox

Sunday 31 May 3.30pm
The Groove collective

Saturday 6 June 9pm
80's Night with
Nick Taylor

Sunday 14 June 3pm
Tournette Doone

Sunday 21 June 3.30pm
Roy Corbett - ODNT

Saturday 27 June 8.30pm
Ooshka



Opening Times:

Monday	5pm-11pm
Tuesday-Thursday	7pm-11pm
Friday	4pm-12am
Saturday	12pm-12am
Sunday	12pm-11pm

*More dates to follow:
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for any updates to our
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