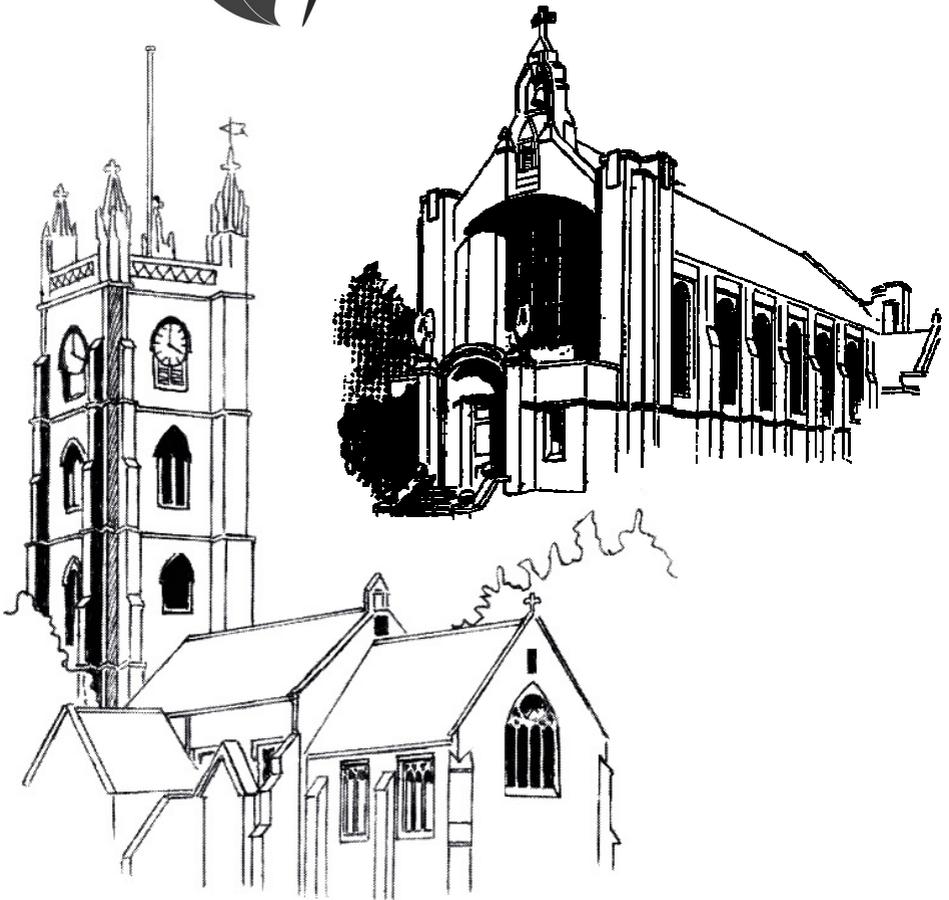


Portishead Parish Magazine



Portishead Church of England
Growing & Going in God's Love



March 2026

£1

Portishead Church of England · St Peter's & St Nicholas' Churches
in partnership with St Peter's C of E and Trinity Anglican-Methodist Schools

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Church Office	St Barnabas Centre, West Hill, BS20 6LN 846230 · office@portisheadparish.co.uk
Parish website	www.portisheadparish.co.uk  Portishead Church of England
Church Wardens	John Knightbridge · 843113 Kathryn Phillips · 07834 097595
PCC Secretary	Gill Colston · 845970
St Peter's School	Head Teacher: Catrin Battista · 843142 www.st-peters.n-somerset.sch.uk
Trinity School	Headteacher Claire Howell · 397710 www.trinityprimaryschool.co.uk

For initial enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns and other special services
please contact the Church Office.

Sunday Services See Church Calendar (middle pages)
or check the website calendar

We welcome contributions to our parish magazine.

Please submit items to **portisheadparishmageditors@gmail.com**
or hand in to the Church Office. Please mention the Parish Magazine when contacting any
of the advertisers.

Greetings from Revd Tonya

The season of Lent is upon us once again. It's that time of year where we are invited to look deep within ourselves and take stock of how life is going. The question I find myself pondering is this:

Do you see yourself as a glass half empty, or a glass half full person?

I think humans are positive beings. We can take those opportunities that life throws at us to grow, to laugh, to explore. But that is of course, if we see ourselves as a glass half full person.

What if life has thrown you challenges along the way? You may well be feeling tired, fed-up and unsure. A bit like the glass being half empty. And when life is viewed like that we can lose our sense of fun, our sense of self-worth and our sense of being valued.

So what does Lent offer us: a sackcloth, ashes, laying our souls bare to God? Well, if it's just that, then we'll have a very disappointing Lent! I believe that Lent offers us the opportunity to refill our glass.

To learn again about the freedom we have. Freedom to just be what God has made us. To do this, we need to consciously turn away from the things that hold us back spiritually and mentally and we need to consciously make time to be with God.

So I wonder how we might do this? It might involve going for a walk every day and taking time to be and to reflect. Or it might be that you give up something and every time you are tempted, you instead give the moment to God. It might mean coming along to the Lent Course – 'The Plenty Course' (further into the magazine you'll find details).

So this Lent – How will you spend it? And I wonder, where might it take you?

With every blessing for a holy and happy Lent and Easter

Tonya

Contributions to the parish magazine
can be emailed to

portisheadparishmageditors@gmail.com

From the Church Registers

Funerals: Charmaine Cornish



Tea and Toast served from 9.30

9:45 SPECIAL

Informal and Creative Service

Date: **Sunday 15th March**

Time: **9.45**

St Peter's Church, Portishead

Portishead Church of England
Growth & Unity in God's Love

Macular Support Group

The Portishead Macular Support Group meet on the last Thursday of the month in The Folk Hall from 2 - 4pm. The group is open to everyone who suffers from Macular Degeneration to enable them to be able to get together with others in the same position so they don't feel so alone and try to make life easier. We make new members very welcome. For further information please phone Hazel on 01275 845238.

Copy date for the April edition is Friday 13 March

Contemporary Ethics Forum:

**Topic: Human Genetic Manipulation - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.
St. Peter's Church, Portishead, BS20 6PS: Monday 27 April, 7:30-9:30 pm**

We are delighted to welcome Professor Keith Fox as our speaker for the next Ethics Forum. Keith is Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry in Southampton University and former Associate Director and then Director of The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge (2015-2021).

Recent scientific advances enable us to manipulate (edit) our genomes with the potential for preventing or curing some genetic diseases. This may seem like an exciting prospect, but it raises questions about what is 'normal' and what it means to be human. Is this the slippery slope to the production of 'designer babies'? Should we be allowed to select embryos that will produce children who will have the right combination of genes to give particular skills (such as IQ, athletic or musical ability)? Or is this a sophisticated form of eugenics, making people in our own likeness?

Keith's research interests concern DNA structure and its recognition, and his scientific work has been published in over 200 papers and articles. He is a former Chair and Trustee of Christians in Science and is Editor of Science & Christian Belief. Since retiring in 2023, he has been ordained and is serving as a curate in Highfield Church, Southampton. His book *Modifying Our Genes: Theology, Science and 'Playing God'* was published by SCM Press in March 2021.

All are welcome. No tickets needed. Admission is free, but donations are welcome (Suggested donation £5). We also plan to livestream the forum to the church's YouTube channel: <https://youtube.com/live/RkjuSPBH85Y>

Contact: David on 01275 840 245 or david.tyers@gmail.com for further information.

Date for your diary

There will be a special concert on Saturday 25 April at 7pm in St. Nicholas' Church, to celebrate the purchase of a brand new digital piano for the church. Paul and Rosemary Reid will be joined by their daughter Helen, a professional pianist, and by a group of local singers. More details in the April magazine, but please note the date and please come and join us.

Paul & Rosemary

Mary's Song

During the Candlemas / Licensing service, I had the privilege of reading a beautiful poem written by the Revd John Swales. Its words clearly touched many hearts, as several of you have since asked for a copy. I'm delighted to share it here so that you can revisit it in your own time, reflect on its message, and perhaps be encouraged by it once again.

Magnificat in the Gutter

I Found a Bible in the foodbank queue. / Someone left it wedged in the radiator.

It fell open to Mary's song—The 'Magnificat', they call it.

Sounds posh. But it hit different. / Like prophetic fire packaged in a lullaby. She's a girl—young, pregnant, shamed / unseen by priests / invisible to Caesar.

And still she sings. / Not soft. / Not safe. / But fierce, like she's seen through the lies of empire / and lived to tell the tale.

'He has scattered the proud.' / Good. / Because the proud don't see me.

Not the bank manager. / Not those who hoard wealth. / Not the judge who fills out the form / and moves on.

'He brings down the mighty from their thrones.' / I've seen thrones—not gold ones, but high-rises full of profit / built on broken backs, / courtrooms where the suits smile /

while I get time, / boardrooms where they hoard. /

Mary's not playing. / She's preaching. / Like Hannah before her, / like the midwives in Egypt,

like that woman in rev-uh-LAY-shuhn / screaming against the Beast. / And here I am, /

in a cold flat with mould on the ceiling, / shaking through another night, / and I wonder — /

'Is she singing for me?' / Because if God lifts the lowly, / I qualify. / If God feeds the hungry, /

my belly's ready. / If God remembers mercy, / I've got a list of things / I can't forget.

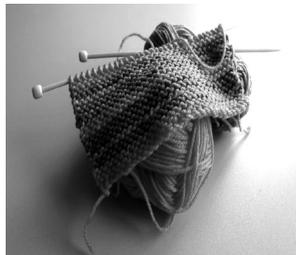
They sing this song in cathedrals — / robed choirs, golden processions.
But I think she sang it in a whisper, / mud on her sandals, / blood in her veins, /
a heartbeat like revolution. / If that's true, / then maybe / this old book / ain't a fairy tale after all.
Maybe / it's a manifesto / from the margins.
Maybe / God's already here— / in the cracks, / in the cold, / in the cry of a girl /
who dared to hope / in the shadow of empire.
And maybe / So can I.

© Rev'd Jon Swales, 2025

Afternoon of Craft, Bible & Prayer

Enjoy being creative? In need of a little peace this Lent...

An afternoon to pray, to hear words from the Bible, to share with one another over a cuppa, whilst working on your favourite craft



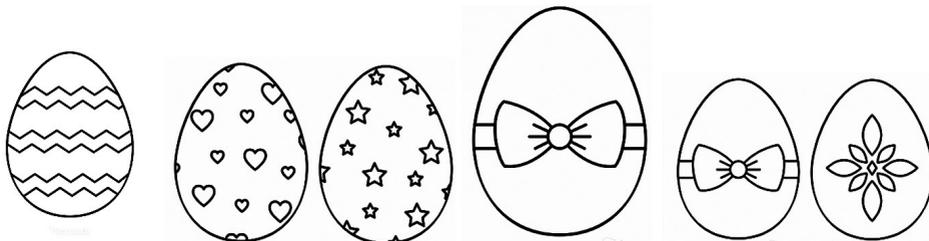
When: Tuesday 24 March 2026,

Time: 2.30pm – 4.00pm

Where: St. Peter's Church

Easter Bingo

Saturday 28 March 10am -12 noon



An all age fun-filled morning - save the date!

Faith in Action:

Fairtrade Places of Worship and Fairtrade Portishead

As people of faith, we know that caring for our global neighbours and standing up for justice are at the heart of what we believe. One simple and practical way churches can live this out is by becoming Fairtrade Places of Worship – choosing Fairtrade products, talking about why it matters, and linking our everyday choices with our worship and values.

We're really pleased to hear that St Peter's Church and St Nicholas Church are now officially recognised as Fairtrade Places of Worship. This is a wonderful sign of their commitment to supporting farmers and workers around the world to earn a fair income, work in safe conditions, and build better futures for their families and communities.

Choosing Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar and other products for church events may seem small, but these everyday choices send a powerful message of solidarity and compassion. They turn ordinary moments of hospitality into acts of justice.

We at **Fairtrade Portishead** work hard at encouraging individuals, churches, schools and local groups to get involved and think more carefully about the impact of what we buy. Each year we help mark Fairtrade Fortnight, shining a light on the people behind our food and the challenges they face, especially with climate change and rising costs.

Over the past few years, our group has been busy! We've had stalls at Royal Jubilee celebrations, the Town Council's Sustainability Event and a Volunteer Open Day. We provided refreshments for the "Turn the Tide" litter pickers at the Lake Grounds, run competitions in schools, helped young people bake Fairtrade treats at the Youth and Community Centre, and hosted a stall at a local WI meeting and served and promoted Fairtrade tea and coffee at the Summer Show. Along the way there have been coffee mornings and Fairtrade hamper raffles.

We collected signatures in 2025 for the **Brew it Fair** campaign, which asks the UK government to make sure tea growers can earn a living income and protect themselves from the impacts of climate change. On Human Rights Day in December, Representatives of the Fairtrade Foundation took the petition with 21,000+ signatures to 10 Downing Street.

Thanks to this ongoing work, Portishead has achieved Fairtrade Town Status – and with the award up for renewal in the autumn, we are continuing our efforts. Part of this includes encouraging more local churches to explore becoming Fairtrade Places of Worship and promoting Fairtrade chocolate over the Easter period. We will soon start planning activities to mark Fairtrade Fortnight 2026 which will run from September 21st to October 4th. Watch this space!

By supporting Fairtrade, we show that our faith isn't just something we talk about on Sundays – it's something we live out day by day. Together, we really can help build a fairer, kinder world, one small choice at a time.

Fair Trade Portishead



FAIRTRADE



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Arrangements can be made within our modern office, or in the comfort of your own home. To discuss funeral arrangements that reflect your personal wishes please contact us.



01275 814400

www.portisheadfunerals.co.uk
portisheadfunerals@outlook.com

Church Calendar

Please use this as a focus for prayer this month. Please note that the churches may be in use at other times so check the website and notice sheet for up-to-date details and changes.

Sunday 1st March – 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12.1–4a Romans 4.1–5, 13–17 John 3.1–17

8am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Peter's Church

9.30am Parish Eucharist at St Nicholas' Church

9.45am The 9.45 at St Peter's Church

11.15 Morning Worship with the URC at St Nicholas' Church

11.30am Parish Eucharist at St Peter's Church

Mon 2 nd	7.15am	Mission Prayer - online
	9.15am	Café Prayers – Lighthouse café, St Nicholas Church
	9.00pm	Evening Prayer – online
Tues 3 rd	9.00am	Refresh Parent, Baby and Toddler Group at St Peter's Church
Weds 4 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer - online
Thurs 5 th		'Thought for the Day' available from 8.00am via our website, YouTube and Facebook
	6.45am	Morning Prayer - online
	10.30am	Midweek Communion at St Peter's Church
	10.40am	Midweek Church Coffee - online
	2.00pm	Lighthouse Café at St Nicholas' Church

Sunday 8th March – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17.1–7 Romans 5.1–11 John 4.5–42

8.00am Holy Communion at St Peter's Church (Exodus and John)

11.00am Churches Together Unity Service at Gordano School

2.00pm The Gathering at St Peter's School

Mon 9 th	7.15am	Mission Prayer - online
	10.30am	Lighthouse Cafe Thank You Social St. Nicolas Church
	9.00pm	Evening Prayer – online
Tues 10 th	9.00am	Refresh Parent, Baby and Toddler Group at St Peter's Church
	2.30pm	Bereavement Support Group at St Nicholas' Church
Weds 11 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer - online
Thurs 12 th		'Thought for the Day' available from 8.00am via our website, YouTube and Facebook
	6.45am	Morning Prayer - online
	10.30am	Midweek Communion at St Peter's Church
	10.40am	Midweek Church Coffee - online
	2.00pm	Lighthouse Café at St Nicholas' Church
	7.30pm	Sue Parfitt - Christianity and Protest – St Nicholas Church
Sat 14 th	10.00am	St Peter's Church – Tidy Up
	10.30am	LLaDs at St Barnabas Centre

Sunday 15th March - Mothering Sunday, 4th Sunday of Lent

Exodus 2.1–10 2 Corinthians 1.3–7 John 19.25b–27

8.00am Holy Communion at St Peter's Church
9.15am for 9.30am Café Church at St Nicholas' Church
9.45am The 9.45 Special at St Peter's Church
11.30am Parish Eucharist at St Peter's Church
5.00pm Evensong at St Peter's Church

Mon 16 th	7.15am	Mission Prayer - online
	9.00pm	Evening Prayer - online
Tues 17 th	9.00am	Refresh Parent, Baby and Toddler Group at St Peter's Church
Weds 18 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer - online
Thurs 19 th		'Thought for the Day' available from 8.00am via our website, YouTube and Facebook
	6.45am	Morning Prayer - online
	10.30am	Midweek Communion at St Peter's Church
	10.40am	Midweek Church Coffee - online
	2.00pm	Lighthouse Café at St Nicholas' Church
Fri 20 th	6.00pm	Youth Group – St Nicholas Church
Sat 21 st	10.00am	Tidy Up – St Peter's Church

Sunday 22nd March – 5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37.1–14 Romans 8.6–11 John 11.1–45

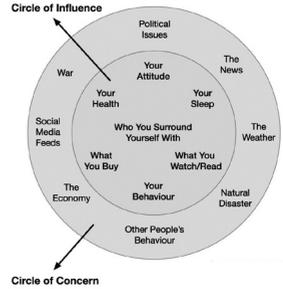
9.30am Parish Eucharist at St Nicholas' Church
9.45am The 9.45 with Communion at St Peter's Church
11.30am Parish Eucharist at St Peter's Church
6.00pm Haven at St Peter's Church

Mon 23 rd	7.15am	Mission Prayer - online
	9.00pm	Evening Prayer - online
Tues 24 th	9.00am	Refresh Parent, Baby and Toddler Group at St Peter's Church
	10.30pm	Lighthouse Carers' Group at St Nicholas' Church
Weds 25 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer - online
Thurs 26 th		'Thought for the Day' available from 8.00am via our website, YouTube and Facebook
	6.45am	Morning Prayer - online
	10.30am	Midweek Communion at St Peter's Church
	10.40am	Midweek Church Coffee - online
	2.00pm	Lighthouse Café at St Nicholas' Church
	2.30pm	Mothers' Union at St Peter's Church
	7.30pm	Setting Sail – 2 Brambling Lane BS20 7NN
Fri 27 th	10.00am	Easter Bingo – St Peter's Church
Sat 28 th	2.00pm	Legacy Event – St Peter's Church

Circles of Influence

I don't know about you, but if you take your eyes off God, it is easy to feel pretty despairing at the moment. The problems the world is facing are so very big.

The writer Stephen Covey distinguishes between the 'Circle of Concern' that we all have (things we care about but can't control – all those BIG issues) and our 'Circle of Influence' (things we care about and can actually impact). When the Circle of Concern feels huge and overwhelming, the best thing to do is to focus on the smaller, closer matters that we can influence and be proactive in. Covey says when we focus on these small achievable things, our circle of influence actually also increases. We have more 'agency' in our lives. Viewed through a lens of faith, this can of course be a way to let the Holy Spirit work in us too – through our being faithful and intentional in the small things we are trusted with, God forms us and strengthens us to reach out and do more.



So, here's a chance to have a go!! We know we can't single handedly stop climate change (out there in the Circle of Concern), but there is an opportunity coming up that we COULD all help with in our Circle of Influence. The scientists and data-crunchers need to gather evidence about the way we live.



Between **9th -15th March**, thousands of people will be taking part in the Big Plastic Count - counting every piece of plastic packaging they throw away. Some of us in the parish did the count a few years ago, and it's time to do it again. The scientists and lobbyists need more data to uncover the scale of the UK's big plastic problem and call on the government to do more about it. By counting our plastic rubbish for a week, we can play our little part in helping to influence policy decisions further out in that 'Circle of Concern' - to better look after God's beautiful creation. It's all within His Circle of Concern after all.

It's easy to take part. Check out <https://thebigplasticcount.com> for more info and to download the counting 'Tally Sheet.' Let's do some Jesus-focused, Spirit-empowered plastic-counting action (and resist the despair while we're at it)!

Verity Eastwood-Dewing

Community Morning at St Peter's church

Saturday 21 March - 10-12am

There's something rather special about working side by side — sweeping a floor here, pulling a few weeds there, cutting out craft shapes, dusting a windowsill, or giving the paths a tidy. None of it is difficult, but together it makes a huge difference. And of course, it wouldn't be a St Peter's morning without **good conversation, coffee, and a slice of cake** to keep us going.

Lindsay

Renewed Portishead

Bristol rail link begins to take shape



The M5 overbridge on the former (and future) Portishead – Bristol branch line. (Image credit: Bristol Rail Campaign.)

In an increasingly rare item of environmental good news, it is pleasing to be able to report that work is progressing on the reinstatement of the former branch rail line from Portishead to Bristol Temple Meads. The winter months have seen vegetation cleared from the route and major construction is due to begin in spring. The new Portishead station site will be just east of the existing Quays Avenue/Harbour Road/Phoenix Way roundabout, with the road junction itself moved slightly to the west, and the former continuation of the old line behind Sainsbury's becoming a walkway towards the High Street. The route will remain single-track as far as the junction with the main line at Parson Street but with passing loops, making possible initially hourly services in both directions, with the capacity for possible increased frequency in future.

Pill station will be rebuilt, although with a single platform replacing the former two, and a station at Ashton Gate may later be added. Journey time will be around twenty-five minutes, along a route taking in the Avon Gorge, making it one of the most scenic nationally. Portishead is presently the largest town in the UK lacking a direct connection to the rail network, and the project will restore this connection to around 50,000 people in all, with the potential to see a considerable reduction in local road use.

Nick McDuff

Lent Groups

This year we will be using The Plenty! Course developed by environmental organization **Green Christian's** '*Joy in Enough*' project. Through it we will consider how we as Christians and a church can create a fairer and greener world. You can find out more about the course by watching this video <https://shorturl.at/KzcfY>

Some of the House Groups will be following the course and groups will also be meeting on **Fridays at 3.00pm in St Nicholas' and on Mondays at 7.30pm over Zoom.**

If you think that you would like to join the course please email the church office (office@portisheadparish.co.uk). This is essential for those attending by Zoom so that we can let you have the link. For both groups it would be good to gauge interest levels and share some material before the first session.

Martha's Kitchen @ Impero Lounge!

Volunteers from Martha's Kitchen will be in the Impero Lounge, on the following Tuesdays. Children can stop by on their way to school for a FREE breakfast of cereals and toast, while parents can enjoy an early morning coffee and chat. They will also be available to issue foodbank vouchers and lunch bag Vouchers.

Date & time:

3 rd March	8am – 9.30am	10 th March	8am – 9.30am
17 th March	8am – 9.30am	24 th March	8am – 9.30am
31 st March	8am – 9.30am		

Venue: Impero Lounge 60 High St, BS20 6EH, Portishead, UK

For more information, contact: Revd Lindsay: 07483 932608.

Email: Pioneer@portisheadparish.co.uk

St Peter's and St Nicholas' Charitable Giving

Collections taken at the 2025 Christingle services at both our churches for the benefit of the Children's Society totalled £518.85.

Foreign and out-of-circulation UK notes and coins deposited in our 'coin jars' during 2025 yielded a total of £185.

Thanks to all who have given so generously towards a chosen charity and for the work of our own parish.

Pastoral Care

Revd Tonya will be loitering most weeks in a café in Portishead. Should you have something pastoral you'd like to discuss or just to say hello, why not drop by.

Dates & time for March:

Wednesday 4th, Wednesday 11th, Wednesday 18th, Wednesday 25th-
all 10.15am-11.45am

Venue: The Port, 3 The Precinct, Bristol BS20 6AH

Or you could contact her on: 01275 840016/07341328682
pastorportishead@outlook.com

This article is a follow-up to that which appeared in the February issue of the magazine titled:

The 1876 Portishead Flower Show – it was about more than just fruit and veg!

Following the 1876 Portishead Flower Show, maritime events moved ahead rapidly on both sides of King Road. Despite rockfalls in both dock constructions Avonmouth opened in 1877 and Portishead in 1879.

Bristol magnates needn't have been worried, since the city had gained control of both docks by 1884. Councillor Proctor Baker knew that his own Bristol provender mills were conveniently connected by barge from the new locks opposite Portbury.

Interesting subsequent history shows that during WW1 Portishead was the first port locally to pipe motor spirit to tanks rather than barrels, just inside the entrance.

When the huge Royal Edward Dock opened in 1908, the original Avonmouth Dock was used for the Elders and Fyffes banana trade, and when that ceased much later the original entrance was closed and heavily blocked. In 1959 I must have been one of the last passengers aboard the Appledore ketch 'Irene'. I remember going for a drink with the crew to the Miles Arms, which must have taken its name from a parcel of land owned by the former landed family.

For many years Portishead was rewarded by the charity which owned Forehills Quarry and sent vast quantities of stone to build the docks. How was the stone transported down Newlands Hill, Slade Road (by the pillar box) to the Parish Wharf at the head of the creek?

The closure of Portishead Dock in the 1980s saw the imaginative marina development take place but of the trace of four massive books of the arrivals since the opening there is absolutely nothing...

Happily, Dr Wigan's residence Clarence House still stands, although much altered – though still surrounded by its original stone walls and a delightful original magnolia in the back garden.

Nigel Coombes



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Cruse Bereavement Support Meetings 2026

Cruse

Bereavement Support

‘Walk and Talk’ meetings start outside Waitrose, second Thursday of each month at 10:00 am for one hour’s guided walk in Portishead. Please contact cruseclevelandonyvette@gmail.com with your contact details, if wishing to join for first time.

‘Drop in’ meetings are held at the Methodist Church Community Hub, last Thursday of each month from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Many people find meeting up with others who are facing similar situations very supportive. Trained Bereavement Volunteers are available and refreshments are provided.

‘Walk and Talk’ Thursdays 2026

12 March	13 August
9 April	10 September
14 May	8 October
11 June	12 November
9 July	10 December

‘Drop in’ Thursdays 2026

26 March	27 August
30 April	24 September
28 May	29 October
25 June	26 November
30 July	31 December

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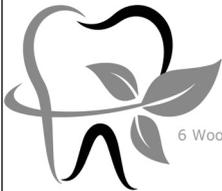
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BS20 7AN. Tel (01275) 397178
Email: diyelectrical@hotmail.com

Please note new address for Portishead

Bereavement Support Group

Grief doesn't stop after the funeral

A space to talk, to just be, a space to share memories

2nd Tuesday of each month 2.30pm – 4pm
St. Nicholas Church, Nore Road

Portishead Church of England

K. Palmer Memorials

Kelvin Palmer
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