

Our beautiful village Christmas tree is twinkling and sparkling away outside the village hall. Many thanks to Mike Johns and Simon of the Ferry Boat Inn for organizing and providing the tree, all made possible with generous donation from villagers.

There is still time to buy a ticket for the Dittisham Football Club Christmas Draw, taking place tonight Friday 18th December at 7.30 in the Red Lion. There is a host of fantastic prizes to be won. Tickets are available from Red Lion and Ferry Boat Inn. The organisers would like to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone who donated the prizes so generously.

The Christmas spirit is well and truly in full swing at the Red Lion Inn. The decorations are all up and this year there is a charity post box for village Christmas card mail. Villagers can put their cards in the trays marked with the village street, make a donation to Children's Hospice South West, and then, like magic, Christmas Elves will deliver your mail. Saving you time and helping such a great cause.

Our Family Christmas Carol Service will be held this Sunday in St George's Church starting at 4pm. Please do come along to enjoy traditional Christmas carols and readings, and watch the children of the congregation help Penny search for the nativity scene figures located around the church...and who knows it may even snow again inside the church this year!

After the service, from 5pm, there will be a chance to get together with villagers and mingle over mulled wine and mince pies in the Village Hall. Donations welcomed which will go towards the maintenance of our Village Hall.

Recently I have had the pleasure to talk to a number of long time residents of our village who were either born in the village or have lived here for many years, to find out what Christmas was like all those years ago. Its heartwarming to hear from so many people that Christmas morning was a special time filled with friendship. It's fascinating to hear about village life back then, including all the village shops, grocers, bakers, gift shops, tea rooms and about all the trades that would visit on a weekly or daily basis such as butchers, fishmongers and haberdashers. Our Village Hall, once a thriving Village School, had two classes and at Christmas the children would walk down to St George's Church to sing carols. Holly trees were brought into homes to be decorated, and paper chains hung from the ceiling. On Christmas morning milk would be delivered door to door by Dorothy Webber, the milk would be ladled into villager's jugs, and cream would be poured into best Sunday dishes. Betty McLeod was born on Christmas Day in Dittisham 91 years ago, and still lives in the same house. Like most villagers, she remembers wonderful family Christmas celebrations in

Dittisham. She would open her Christmas sack in the morning to find gifts of fruit, sweets and one year a wonderful teddy bear. I'm sure you will all join with me to wish Betty a very Happy Birthday on Christmas Day, and to wish everyone in our lovely village a very Happy Christmas.