

Silchester Magazine



December 2020 / January 2021
Village and Church News

Volume 61 No 10

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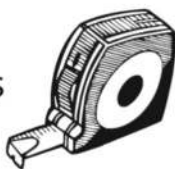
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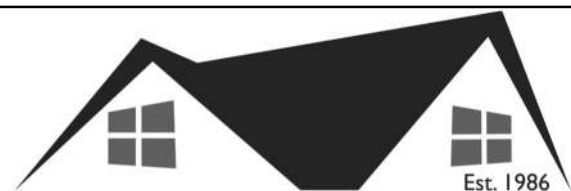
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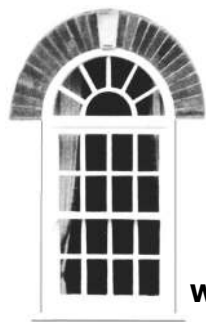
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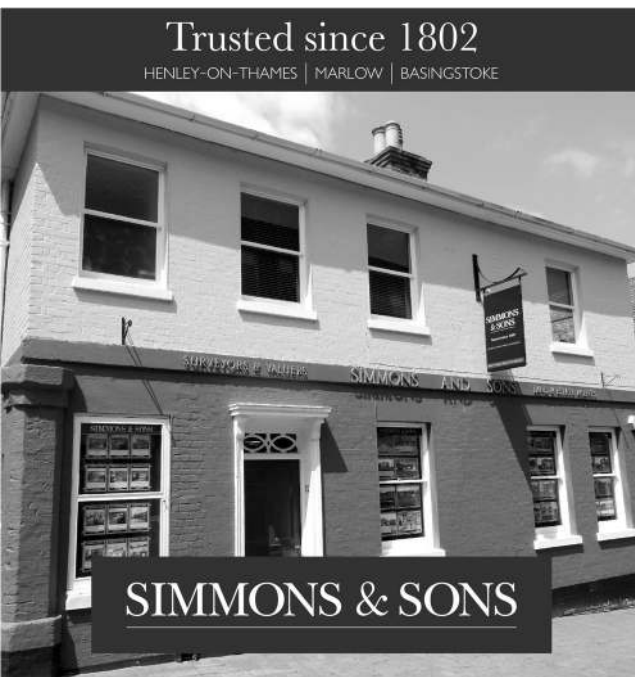
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Silchester Magazine

December 2020 – January 2021

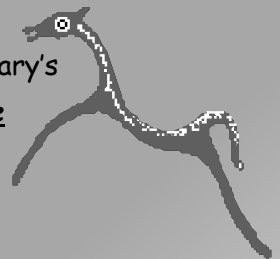
Given the current situation with COVID-19, all events listed are subject to change.

December

Sat	5th		Silchester Common Volunteer Working Party
Sun	6th	8.00am	Book of Common Prayer Communion ~ at St Mary's
Sun	6th	10.30am	Outside Communion Service ~ in the Methodist Church garden
Wed	16th	8pm	Silchester Community Choir Virtual Christmas Sing-a-long ~ link at www.facebook.com/SilchesterCommunityChoir/
Thu	24th	11.30pm	Christmas Eve ~ Midnight Communion ~ at St Mary's (Because of Covid restrictions this is strictly a ticketed event)
Fri	25th	10.00am	Christmas Day ~ Christmas Communion ~ at St Mary's (Because of Covid restrictions this is strictly a ticketed event)
Sun	27th		Silchester Common Volunteer Working Party
Sun	27th	2pm	Silchester Players Radio Panto ~ Dick Whittington broadcast on www.hhcr.org.uk , Basingstoke's Community Radio

January

Sun	3rd	8.00am	Book of Common Prayer Communion ~ at St Mary's
Wed	13th	midnight	Magazine Copy Deadline for February Issue
Sat	16th		Silchester Common Volunteer Working Party
Sun	17th	8.00am	Common Worship Communion ~ at St Mary's



Copy for this magazine should be sent to: editor@silchester.org

The next deadline for copy for the **February** issue is **midnight on 13th January**



2020 has been an challenging year for many - not least for the Magazine Team. We would like to thank all our Readers and our Advertisers for their understanding and support this year. It proved difficult to provide a physical copy of this magazine during much of this year - but we hope that our efforts to at least get the magazine to you digitally were appreciated. We very much hope that you will continue to subscribe and advertise, and that during 2021 it will be easier to get your physical magazine to you. Our Advertisers support our magazine and the upkeep of St Mary the Virgin: challenging times are ahead for small businesses so please consider supporting them.

We would like to thank all those who have continued to send us content for the magazine. A special thanks go to those who uploaded and shared the digital copy for us throughout this difficult year.

We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2021.

Claire & John Richardson ~ editor@silchester.org





I'm feeling really pressurised over Christmas this year. And no, it's not the religious celebrations, or lack of them - it's the media telling me day after day how awful it is going to be if I can't spend vast sums of money in the shops or can't eat more food or drink more alcohol than I can possibly need, which I confess is what happens to me most years.

And what about families getting together? Increasingly over the years I have friends, and relatives, who deliberately go away each Christmas to avoid family gatherings, who get tired of the "whose turn is it for us to spend Christmas with this year?" And as for the over-the-top Christmas decorations with Santa climbing up walls, sleighs with flashing coloured lights parked on the rooftops, and endless playing of 1970's Christmas songs - need I say any more? This year could have been the best opportunity ever to have a non-family, quiet, inexpensive Christmas, saving the money for a Galapagos Islands adventure in the summer, or post-Covid heli-skiing in the Rockies, but at the time of writing it looks like the Government is going to spoil it all by trying to get some normality (whatever that is) back into Christmas!



Now I can imagine a certain friend in the village agreeing with these thoughts wholeheartedly, whilst others may be thinking "I didn't know Rob was such a terrible Scrooge", well sorry to disappoint - I'm not. I do want us all to enjoy food and drink, the giving and receiving of presents, the illuminated animals on the lawn, the blow-up snowman on the drive. I do want the economy, including the hospitality industry, to recover, and especially - I want lonely people not to be lonely at Christmas, and for families to enjoy time with each other - but I do want to ask the question "What are we really searching for in amongst the traditions, glitter, excess, and celebration of Christmas - and could we find it in a better way?"

Before 25th December became the celebration of Christ's birth, there was a pagan winter solstice festival, which I suspect flourished because people just felt the need for a break. The human soul needed that respite, that break in the grind of winter. As a pagan website puts it "At the Winter Solstice we reach the depth of that darkness with the longest night of the year. Darkness has reached its peak."

The Christian Christmas festival took over that slot in the calendar year because the birth of Christ cut through that darkness once and for all. The birth of Christ, the incarnation, God coming to earth in the form of a human baby, brings respite to the soul and the opportunity for all human kind to break out from that darkness, which so often overwhelms us even in a normal year. It is a sign of hope to be celebrated, and an opportunity to reach out towards the light.

And it is a present from God; the biggest and most expensive present God could ever give the world, Jesus his son who through his birth, example, sacrificial crucifixion and conquering of death offers the fantastic present of everlasting life in the loving Kingdom of God.

So, Happy Christmas; celebrate as best you may in whatever way brings you joy and peace; please remember the lonely and the outsider; and at least one time over Christmas, in your heart, give thanks to God for his extra special present.

God bless you, keep safe, and may we all have a blessed, Covid free, and Happy New Year.

Your loving Resident Vicar Rob

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Prayers & Poems ~ Celebrating the Season of Christmas

Prayers for celebrating the season of Christmas

Holy Jesus,
by being born one of us,
and lying humbly in a manger,
you show how much God loves the world.
Let the light of your love
always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven,
and see you on your throne of glory.
Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.
Amen.

Loving Jesus,
you were born in a stable but worshipped by
the angels.
Be with us and all who are lonely,
and with all who feel distant from celebrations.
Be for us a living hope
that lightens their hearts.
Amen.

The kings, Lord,
brought myrrh, frankincense, and gold.
Lord, we have nothing of our own to bring;
we bring you what you have given:
our lives for your life.
Amen.

Jesus, Saviour, son of Mary,
you know us and love us,
you share our lives
and hear our prayer.
Glory to you forever.
Amen.

May God, who has called us out of darkness
into his marvellous light,
bless us and fill us with peace.
Amen.

Everyday Christmas

(Mal 4:2, Mt 1:23)

Light a candle,
Look into the light,
Pray.

Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings

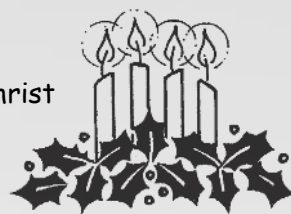
As the flame rises,
Smooth, bright,
Know the comfort of Christ
In the carol speaking
Afresh.

Bringing Jesus
Into heart and prayer.

Emmanuel, God with us.
Light of the world,
Out of the stable
Into our situations.

Because of Jesus
Christmas is everyday.

The Lord is here.
Hallelujah.



Daphne Kitching

Christmas Frustration????

I said to God, upon my knees
"O Lord, I am so cross!
"That gift I sent to Aunt Denise
"Within the post is lost!
"That tree I bought for forty pounds
"(Well, just a penny less)
"Its needles lie upon the ground
"It looks a total mess!"
"I know," said God, "I understand,
"I sent my Son, you know.
"He came to Earth, just as I'd planned
"Two thousand years ago
"Was born within a stable bare -
"The cattle heard Him cry
"He spoke of love, men didn't care
"They led Him out to die."
"No gift was given with such love
"No higher price was paid.
"He left His throne of light above
"For sin His life to trade.
"But even after all these years
"This gift you men eschew,
"So Christmas is a time of tears
"For Me, as well as you."

Nigel Beeton



St Mary the Virgin Church

over Christmas and the New Year

At the time of writing it was not entirely clear as to what Covid restrictions would be in place during December and January, so please be aware everything could change, and if so we will endeavour to notify you through the church email list and other social media in the village. However, we are currently working on the basis that Covid restrictions will be similar to that in October, and on that basis we will continue weekly Zoom services plus a limited number of small communion services in Church. This will include two ticketed services over Christmas, for which tickets must be obtained prior to the service as set out below. However, all services in Church, including Christmas, will have to be strictly limited to an absolute maximum of 30 to allow for social distancing and face masks will have to be worn. Sadly at the time of writing, there can be no singing by the congregation.



There will, however, be an online YouTube service of Carols and Readings from 20th December which will have contributions by video from many individuals in the village, the Community Choir, and others, including many familiar Carols and Christmas Readings.

The Church Building should also be open every day, though with possible restrictions on numbers entering at any one time, but it will be decorated from Sunday 13th December. But just a warning, Covid sanitation after services, for instance a funeral, may mean occasional closure for up to 72 hours.

In addition, to help us observe Advent from Wednesday 2nd December there will be midweek said Night Prayer (Compline) on Zoom.

To obtain the Zoom links, on-line Carol Service link, and tickets to Christmas services, visit the St Mary the Virgin Silchester website at <https://www.silchesterchurch.co.uk> and sign up to the Church's email list, or email Revd Rob Young robwyong101@gmail.com

Note: Sorry no 8.00am Communion on the third Sunday, 20th December, as the decorated Church would have to be closed for 72 hours afterwards for Covid sanitation.



8 ways to avoid stress this Christmas

Change your expectations this Christmas. Don't waste time lamenting what should have been. Instead, try and enjoy whatever is possible this year.

Make a list. Include sending cards, buying presents and organising food for the big day. Having a list helps keep you in control of your life.

Set a reduced budget this year. With a pandemic raging, this no time to take on Christmas debt. If you can't pay for it this month, probably best not to buy it.

Exercise each day - it releases happiness-inducing serotonin. That will help you to keep calm and positive over the festive period.

Don't overindulge. Too much alcohol and rich food won't improve your life.

Keep calm and keep kind - urge your family members to try and avoid any flare-up of family tensions. If you need to cry, cry, but then, keep on keeping on.

Entertain the kids - plan ahead various films, games and whatever it takes to give them a memorable Christmas.

Make the most of Zoom this year - especially with far-flung relatives and friends.

Services for December and January

Sunday 29 November Advent 1

10.00am Service on Zoom

Wednesday 2 December

7.00pm Night Prayer on Zoom

Sunday 6 December

8.00am Book of Common Prayer Communion
in Church

10.00am Service on Zoom

Wednesday 9 December

7.00pm Night Prayer on Zoom

Sunday 13 December

10.00am Service on Zoom

Wednesday 16 December

7.00pm Night Prayer on Zoom

Sunday 20 December

10.00am Service on Zoom

On-line Service of Carols and Readings
(available on-line from 20 December onwards)

Wednesday 23 December

7.00pm Night Prayer on Zoom

Christmas Eve Thursday 24 December

11.30pm Midnight Communion in Church
(Because of Covid restrictions this is strictly a
ticketed event)

Christmas Day Friday 25 December

10.00am Christmas Communion in Church
(Because of Covid restrictions this is strictly a
ticketed event)

Sunday 27 December

10.00am Zoom Service from St Paul's Tadley

Sunday 3 January

8.00am Book of Common Prayer Communion in
Church

10.00am Service on Zoom

Sunday 10 January

10.00am Service on Zoom

Sunday 17 January

8.00am Common Worship Communion in Church

10.00am Service on Zoom

Sunday 24 January

10.00am Service on Zoom

Sunday 31 January

10.00am Service on Zoom



The Story is still the same!

'Christmas may look different, but the story is still the same!' That's the message for Christmas in 2020. Coronavirus will make our celebrations this year look very different from usual. However, the message of the baby born in Bethlehem is still relevant!

In one nativity play, the highlight was to illuminate Jesus, with a light in the manger, when all the other lights were turned off. At the appropriate time, all the lights went out, including the manger one. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly whispered: 'Hey, you turned off Jesus.' Of course, nobody can turn off Jesus this Christmas!

The angels announced, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all

the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.' (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of this baby brings great joy and good news for everyone! As the king of the universe, He has come as our Saviour. In an uncertain world, He offers joy and hope, because He holds this pandemic in His hands. This is a real cause for joy!

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.' (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace amid the anxieties over our current circumstances. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine bring peace to our lives today? Jesus established peace with God through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace for our lives brings God's peace amid the huge uncertainties we face. As the carol says, 'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'



First Aid Course

The Silchester Association is planning to organize another First Aid Course in the village on Wednesday 24th February 2021.

It is open to anyone in the village who helps out at local events and who would like to keep their first aid qualification up to date.

Our last course was held three years ago so anyone who took that one should think about attending as the qualification expires after three years.

There will be a limit of 12 people who can attend and obviously the event will be dependent on the current Covid restrictions in force at the time.

If you are interested, please contact Simon Brewin at treasurer@silchester.org

Silchester Village Hall

November has been a very quiet month for the Village Hall with the only user being Cherry Trees pre-school. With the end of Lockdown 2 at the beginning of December we are hopeful we can welcome some more users back.

We did manage to have a virtual meeting of the Village Hall Trustees which was well attended and enabled us to sort out some administration issues such as agreement to getting the boiler serviced. We also agreed to do some major pruning to the hedge and arch at the front of the building as it is becoming very overgrown and blocking the view of the Hall.

The illuminated Silent Soldier was in place for the armistice commemorations and we will leave it there for the time being. We are in discussions with the Parish Council about having a village flagpole at the Village Hall, possibly next to the Silent Soldier.

We were planning to run another Fine Dining event in February but have put this on hold until the Covid situation is clearer.

We hope you and yours are keeping safe in these strange times. We would like to wish you a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Steve Spillane

Chairman, Silchester Village Hall Managing Trustees

steve@spillane.com 0118 970 0996

"I am looking for a Christmas Card that contains inclusive language, and yet retains the richness of 16th century English and is overtly Christian whilst being sensitive to the multi-faith patterns of our day ... any suggestions?"





St Mary's Church, Bishopswood Road, RG26 4HQ
St Paul's Church, The Green, RG26 3PB

Tadley Christmas Shed

Outdoor Carol Services with a difference

- 📺 Discover what's behind the doors!
- 📺 See the Christmas story in new ways!
- 📺 Music by Tadley Concert Brass
- 📺 Songs by a mini-choir
- 📺 Pack a snack, if you want, and dress warmly!

Sunday 20th December at 6pm at St Mary's Church

Monday 21st December at 6pm at St Mary's Church

Tuesday 22nd December at 6pm at St Mary's Church

Wednesday 23rd December at 6pm at St Paul's Church

Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th December at 4pm
at St Paul's Church



Obituary ~ Monica Rowson

We are deeply saddened to announce the sudden death of Monica Rowson, who had lived in Silchester for over 50 years.

Monica moved to Inhams Way with her husband Ken and young children, Julian and Penny, in 1969 where they lived for 30 years. Monica, and her late husband Ken, were both active members of the village community, with Monica an early member of the Silchester Players, taking part in several of the productions in the 1970's & 80's.

A keen singer, Monica belonged to St Mary's Church choir and was an active member of the Silchester WI and the Methodist Church. An enthusiastic bridge player Monica latterly enjoyed attending the Phoenix Club and could be seen on her frequent walks around the common.

Monica's funeral was held at St Mary's on Thursday 19th November, followed by a family only cremation at Thatcham Crematorium. A fan of Joyce Grenfell, Monica left this poem for her children to find, and her eldest granddaughter read it at her funeral.

*If I should go before the rest of you,
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone.
Nor when I am gone speak in a Sunday voice,
But be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must,
Parting is hell -
But life goes on,
So sing as well.*

Penny Govier



Mistletoe

This time of year you can see all sorts of traditions played out with regard to Christmas decorations. Strict adherents use holly, ivy and of course, mistletoe. While holly and ivy are to be found in gardens and hedgerows, mistletoe usually only appears in greengrocers' shops, or high in a tree well out of reach.

Mistletoe is hemiparasitic, meaning that although its leaves enable it to feed itself through photosynthesis, its roots invade the host tree or shrub to extract water and other nutrients. Its favourite host trees are apple, lime, hawthorn, poplar or oak and it normally hangs as a large globe, tantalisingly high and totally visible once winter arrives and it is the only green left on the tree. There are some spectacular examples in Windsor Great Park, clearly visible from the path on the opposite side of the River Thames.



We all know about the almost translucent white berries, fleshy and sticky, which form in the forks of mistletoe's many branches. While they are toxic to humans, they are attractive to birds. When birds have enjoyed the juicy flesh, they wipe the remaining seeds off their beaks onto the nearest branch [somewhat like small children wiping sticky hands on any surface close by - mummy's face or clothes?]. With luck the seed remains stuck to the bark and solves mistletoe's problem of reproduction.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe gave access to the Underworld. Romans thought it represented Peace, Love and Understanding and perhaps that is how it has sidled into our Christmas celebrations.

The earliest documentary evidence for kissing under mistletoe dates from the sixteenth century. Some people think a berry should be removed after each kiss. Given the small size of pieces generally available these days, perhaps that is a practice not to be pursued!

People News

By the time you read this article the 2nd Lockdown will have come to an end and we will know what Tier Level we are in and what the arrangements are for Christmas.

We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year. Let's hope 2021 will be a less 'extraordinary' and we can resume the many wonderful things that make Silchester such a friendly and wonderful place to live.

We also thank all of the un-sung heroes who have offered help and support to so many people during the difficult times of 2020.

We welcome Sukhdeep and Inderjeet Panesar and Sukheep's mother Navinder Panesar to Holly Lane. The family have moved from Slough, we wish them every happiness in their new home in Silchester.

We are sad to report that long time Silchester resident Monica Rowson died at the end of

October after a short stay in hospital. Monica was one of the first people to move into the new Sarum Chase development (Dukes Ride, Lordswood, Inhams Way). Her funeral was conducted by her friend and former neighbour Rev. Ken Batt in St Mary's Church, Silchester on Thursday 19th November attended by close family and friends. Our thoughts and prayers go to her children Julian and Penny and their families.

We are aware that new people have already or will soon be moving into Chestnuts, Sallow Copse and Silchester House and we look forward to welcoming them to the village - once we know their names and they have settled into their new homes in the New Year.

If you have any news for the People News, happy or sad, please send details in an e-mail to peoplenews@silchester.org or telephone Ann-Marie on 9700627 or Irene on 9700996.



Phoenix Club

Wishing all of our members a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.



Well, we really hope 2021 will be a better year and that we will be able to meet again once a month in the Village Hall. We know everyone has missed being able to enjoy time with their friends and neighbours, and we are so sad that we won't be able to enjoy our usual Christmas lunch in the Calleva.

We have had to cancel so much of our programme in 2020, and will hopefully be able to put together a full programme for 2021, with some of the cancelled talks and some new ones too.

What we are able to do will of course depend on the new rules once Lockdown 2 comes to an end. We never meet in January, but will (hopefully) have our new programme available from February - watch this space.

With our very Best Wishes to you all,
Ann-Marie and Jan xx



Silchester Methodist Church

Minister Revd Dr Ruth Midcalf (0118 9700139)



We are still meeting as a church on Zoom, every Sunday morning at 10.30am, with our friends from the Tadley and Mortimer churches. For details of the Zoom ID please contact Gill gill@lawson-net.co.uk Anyone is welcome to join.

We still are not sure what the government is going to advise after this lockdown. We are hoping to hold an outside Communion Service on Sunday, 6th December, in the garden, social distancing. Please phone Angela for details on 01256 850432.

The Action for Children Coffee Morning which Olive Hiscock ran for years could not take place, so her daughters Angela and Carol ran a socially distanced Christmas card and paper sale, which so far has raised over £260.

Thoughts before attending a church service in a church building since lockdown:

Our singing
May be silenced
By Covid
Our smiles
Maybe shrouded
By Masks
Our eyes
Still twinkle
With bubbling joy
Your spirit
Still witnesses
With our spirits
That we are Children of God



Revd Angela Webb



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

6	1			7				
					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7



Silchester Players

We are pleased to announce that, despite all the challenges of lockdown, we will be performing the pantomime *Dick Whittington* over the Christmas season. Due to the Covid restrictions we are unable to perform in Silchester Village Hall. Instead we will present a radio production.



A great deal of work has gone into preparing *Dick Whittington*. The script we are following is of a suitable length for radio but had been written for a stage performance. A number of adaptations for radio have been necessary so as to set the different scenes and to make the action readily understandable to a listening audience. Regrettably such pantomime staples as "He's behind you!" have had to be excised, but we have been able to retain a few others such as "Oh yes I can" and "Oh no you can't!" There will be a pantomime dame, a principal boy and principal girl who fall in love, a talking cat and, of course, a baddie.

All our auditions were held by Zoom and twice a week we have been conducting Zoom rehearsals. We have a chorus who will deliver the musical numbers. We obviously cannot enjoy the traditional community song, but will be asking our listeners to join in with the final number. Our technical team have assembled some striking sound effects (pun intended!). They have also devised a means of recording. The cast will assemble on a Zoom meeting, but listening with headphones and recording their lines on the Voice Memo app on their mobile phones.

The preparation of this panto has been fun, but it has presented huge challenges both to cast and crew. It is vital that the dialogue be clearly heard and also important that all the separate pieces of recording are joined seamlessly to make an entertaining radio programme.

This panto will run for about 45 minutes and will be broadcast on HHCR, Basingstoke's Community Radio, at 2 p.m. on Sunday 27th December.

We ask all our regular supporters to listen to the panto and enjoy our seasonal offering, even though it is in a somewhat different format this year. The programme can be accessed via the Internet on www.hhcr.org.uk It is available on PC, laptop or mobile phone. If you have Alexa or Google Home simply say 'play hhcr' and your device should be able to connect.

We will also be hosting a podcast of the pantomime on our website following its initial broadcast, see: www.silchesterplayers.org

We sincerely hope that next year we will be able to perform once again in Silchester Village Hall. Despite the current difficulties we are determined to remain active and there will be further news from us in 2021.



The one benefit of a Covid Christmas?

A Covid Christmas (no more than six) could actually help take some financial pressure off you, according to Martin Lewis, the personal finance expert.

The Money Saving Expert founder recently pointed out that because of the enormous pressure on people to spend, spend, spend at Christmas, the festive period has become one of the 'biggest causes of debt and misery' in the UK.

This year, though, could be different. Most of us will be visiting fewer people, buying fewer presents and having smaller dinners. So, 'it might just take the pressure off people.'

Silchester Association

www.silchester.org

The new Silchester Calendar is now in production and will hopefully be available by the time this goes to press. The response to the competition was fantastic and we had an amazing selection of photos to choose from.

The winners of the competition are as follows:

Silchester Scenes and Landmarks	Votes
Breaking Dawn - Keith Miller	16
DSC_3843-4 (St Mary's at Night) - Adam Tresh	14
St Mary's and Daffodils - Richard Ellis	9
Snowy Calleva - Stephen Langstaff	7
Silchester Wildlife	Votes
Pheasant - Angus Macklin	39
Tawny Owl in Benyon's Enclosure - Tim Martin	12
Alpacas - Biddy West	12
Red Kite over Aldermaston Soke - Tim Martin	9
Silchester Events and Village Life	Votes
2019 Remembrance Day - Pete Hughes	22
Dexter Cow - Lesley Brewin	14
2019 Fun Run - Pete Hughes	11
Frosty Walk for the Silchester Striders - Rebecca Hedges	10

The overall winner of the competition by a long way was Angus Macklin with his beautiful photograph of a pheasant. Well done Angus.

The calendar will consist of a selection of the winning images as voted for by the village. Thank you to everyone who voted - it was great to have so much participation and interest in the project.

The Silchester Association has arranged for the compilation and printing of the calendar and all proceeds from the sale will go to St Mary the Virgin Church. After having to cancel the Village Fete and also the proposed Arts and Crafts Exhibition, this will be the only fund-raiser for the church this year, so please support us. The cost of a calendar is only £10 and they will make great Christmas gifts!

A preview of the calendar is available on the www.silchester.org website under 'Silchester 2021 Calendar' and orders can be made by emailing 2021calendar@silchesterchurch.co.uk or by visiting our order page at <http://www.silchesterchurch.co.uk/community-links/silchester-2021-calendar>

Normally at this time of year, the Silchester Association helps out with funding for the Brownies Christmas Lunch which they have been organising for people in the village. Sadly, this year it will not be taking place due to lockdown restrictions but the Brownies have got something else in mind to bring some Christmas cheer to the village.

This year as usual the Silchester Association has helped to pay for the Village Christmas Tree. This is normally a joint venture with the Calleva but, in view of the fraught trading conditions caused by the Pandemic, the Association wanted to alleviate them of any financial contribution this year. To this end we approached the Parish Council to see if they would consider going 50/50 with us and I am very pleased to say that they were very happy to help with the costs of this

Parish Council News

Gateways to the Village

You have probably noticed that a number of white gateways have been installed on the roads leading to the village. It has taken quite some time from the initial discussion and vote in the village back in 2015 for these to be installed, but it has finally happened. Thanks are due to Cllrs Earl, Livingstone and Miles for leading this effort on behalf of the Council. Thanks also to our County Councillor, Cllr Rhydian Vaughn MBE for his help and support and Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke & Deane Council for their financial support for the project.

The gateways have roundels indicating that the speed through the village is limited to 30mph. These roundels are the largest which are legally permitted, these signs are considered secondary speed indication signs and the size is governed by regulation.

Speedwatch

The Speedwatch team continues to be active in monitoring the speeds of traffic through the village. The data which is collected from the Speedwatch deployments is forwarded to the Police, where it is entered into a Hampshire wide database. Those drivers who are regular offenders in speeding in any area in Hampshire are noted, and when they have appeared on the database regularly they receive a contact from the Police to discuss their driving habits.

It is clear that speeding in the village is an issue which we need to continue to address. Almost half the vehicles driving in the village are exceeding the 30mph speed limit, with some travelling at considerably higher speed than permitted.

Prior to the installation of the gateways, a deployment at the junction between Little London Rd and School Lane between 8am and 9am on a Thursday morning, when children were on their way to the school. The results were very concerning:

88 vehicles drove past the Speedwatch team, of whom 33 were driving in excess of 35mph:

23 were driving at 35 to 39mph

8 were driving at 40 to 46mph

2 were driving at above 46mph - the unit used by Speedwatch only measures to 46mph

Considering the time and location, this is a serious concern. The Speedwatch team are considering a further deployment at this location at a similar time of day and plan to request a Police presence to provide support and advice. It is also expected that the presence of the gateways will help to reduce the incidence of speeding through the village.

The Speedwatch team provide a very valuable service to our community. They are currently looking for further volunteers to enable more regular deployments, if you are able to join the team please contact Chris Gunnell at clerk@silchester-pc.gov.uk

Recycling

On Fridays at the Silchester Pavilion, there are bins available for the recycling of items which the Council recycling scheme will not accept. From biscuit wrappers to toothpaste tubes; Tassimo pods to Marigold gloves; Babybel packaging to Roll-on deodorants, and many, many more. By supporting this scheme you are not only "saving the planet" by reducing landfill, but also generating funds for Silchester charities such as the Village Hall and the playground.

clerk@silchester-pc.gov.uk



Parish Council Contact Details

Our primary point of contact is our Parish Clerk

Parish Clerk: Chris Gunnell	07470 809086	clerk@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Mike Baldock (Chairman)	0118 970 1931	mike.baldock@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Janet Earl	0118 970 2251	janet.earl@silchester-pc.gov.uk
David Livingstone	0118 970 0135	david.livingstone@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Dan Male		dan.male@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Paul Miles	07760 888995	paul.miles@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Richard Westwood	07876 610577	richard.westwood@silchester-pc.gov.uk
Graham Wright	07837 248047	graham.wright@silchester-pc.gov.uk

Calleva Society - Travellers site on land off Culhams Mill ~ Planning Appeal date

The Planning Inspectorate have announced the dates of the hearing into the Travellers appeal against the enforcement notice. The hearing will start at 10am on Tuesday 13th April and sit 13th-16th, 20th-23rd and 27th-30th. The location of the meeting has not been confirmed.

We would like to encourage as much local support from Residents as possible at the hearing and will publish further details in the New Year.

Steve Spillane
Chairman Calleva Society
callevasociety@gmail.com



Silchester Community Choir's Virtual Christmas Singalong



Christmas is a very special time for the choir. It's our chance to dust off our favourite songs, like we do our favourite decorations, and play our part in bringing together this very special community that we're so grateful to be part of.

There's no getting away from the fact that this Christmas is going to be a little bit different, and sadly we won't be able to hold our normal Christmas concert... but we're not going to let that stop us bringing you all together for a festive tune or two.

That's why we're warmly inviting you to **join us for our first ever Virtual Christmas Singalong.**

If you're thinking *I'll be there with bells on*, everything you need to know is below. We look forward to singing with you.

What: Silchester Community Choir's Virtual Christmas Singalong

When: 8pm, Wednesday 16th December

Where: On Zoom. We'll publish the Zoom link on the Silchester Community Choir

Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SilchesterCommunityChoir>)

in the lead up to the event, as well as on the day.

Dress code: Your best Christmas jumper



Silchester Calendar 2021



The Silchester 2021 calendar is now available to order
from 2021calendar@silchesterchurch.co.uk

price £10



This beautiful calendar is compiled from images
taken in and around Silchester
by local photographers

A full preview of the calendar can be seen at
www.silchester.org

Size A4 opening up to A3 size as shown

Supplied in an paper envelope

All the proceeds from the sale of the calendar
will be given to St Mary the Virgin Church

Silchester Village Life



1st - 2019 Remembrance Day - Pete Hughes



2nd - Dexter Cow - Lesley Brewin



3rd - 2019 Fun Run - Pete Hughes



*4th - Frosty Walk for the Silchester Striders
- Rebecca Hedges*

Silchester Wildlife



1st - Pheasant - Angus Macklin



2nd= Alpacas - Biddy West



2nd= Tawny Owl in Benyon's Enclosure - Tim Martin



*4th - Red Kite over Aldermaston Soke
- Tim Martin*

Silchester Scenes



1st - Breaking Dawn - Keith Miller



2nd - St Mary's at Night - Adam Tresh



3rd - St Mary's and Daffodils - Richard Ellis



4th - Snowy Calleva - Stephen Langstaff



St Mary the Virgin Silchester

Remembrance 2020 - Bell Ringing

On Sunday 8th of November the tenor bell was tolled half muffled for 15 minutes prior to the outside service at the War Memorial.

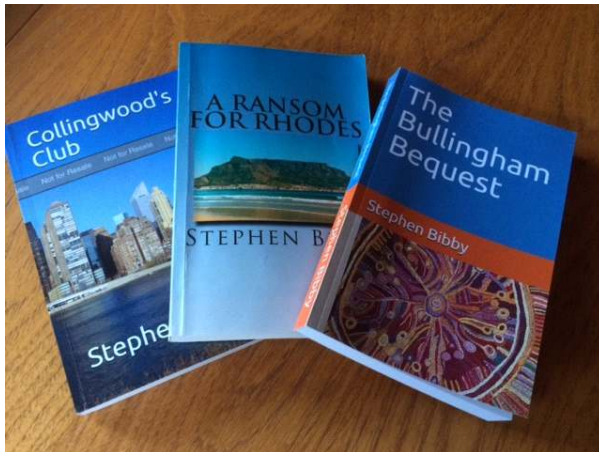
On Wednesday 11th the Tenor was rung half muffled for 107 blows for each of the six 1914-18 soldiers remembered on the War Memorial. Reuben Knight, Walter G Aldridge, Francis E Stacey, Robert W Neville, George Hunt and Arthur W Pearce.



Virginia Budd - Bellringer

New Novel

Stephen Bibby has recently self-published his third novel, entitled *The Bullingham Bequest*.



This is the third in a series - the Collingwood Collection - featuring hero Ben Turner and his adversary, Crispin Collingwood.

Stephen's first novel, *Collingwood's Club*, sees Ben Turner working in the world of international finance. Initially befriended by Crispin Collingwood, he is sent on a mission to South America. There are graphic scenes in the Peruvian jungle and Ben has to confront his great weakness: a hatred of heights.

In the second novel, *A Ransom for Rhodes*, Ben is blackmailed into another overseas trip. This time the action is set in Southern Africa as he tries to locate and free a kidnap victim.

The Bullingham Bequest continues where *A Ransom for Rhodes* ends. The plot is entirely fresh but has links with previous events and includes characters who have become familiar. This time the action moves rapidly between rural England, Southern Africa and a hair raising encounter in the Australian outback.

All three novels are written at a cracking pace and set in locations visited by Stephen either when working overseas or on foreign trips he has been able to undertake in recent years. They are available as paperbacks or e-books via [Stephen's page](#) on the Amazon website.



Bags 2 School

The donations of bags to the school was fantastic this time, from both parents and residents of the village. The PTA managed to raise £448.50 which is a huge increase from previous times.

With COVID it has obviously been really difficult to raise funds for the school, so this money is very much welcomed and needed.

Thank you to everyone who donated and look out for the next collection beginning 1st March 2021.

The Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme - Government funding to improve your home

At the start of July, the Chancellor announced a £3 billion investment to improve the energy efficiency of the country's homes and stimulate parts of the economy to support the green recovery. £1.5 billion of this was allocated to fund homeowners and landlords - the Green Homes Grant scheme. Full disclosure: I've spent much of the time since then trying to turn this announcement into reality.

The scheme provides grants of up to £5,000 for two thirds of the costs of certain energy efficiency or low carbon heating improvements for homeowners and landlords. If the homeowner or anyone in their household is in receipt of certain benefits the grant will meet all the costs up to £10,000. So, there has probably never been a better time to make energy efficiency improvements to your home.

The UK has some of the leakiest and least energy efficient housing in Europe. We have deliberately built our homes that way for well over a century. In the past, to cope with our mild but damp climate and, more recently, because building quality homes properly is slightly more expensive - and anyway the UK has had access to lots of cheap gas from the North Sea. However, the cost of energy has increased, we have come to expect greater levels of comfort and now the climate emergency too have all changed people's thinking. More and more people are looking to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, to be more comfortable, to save money and to help the environment.

So what can you do to improve your home? For a lot of the older houses in Silchester, particularly those without cavity walls, it's very difficult to generalise and I would always advise seeking expert advice from an independent retrofit designer. But nearly half the houses in Silchester are located in the Dukes Ride estate and were built 50-60 years ago using fairly standard construction methods. These homes have the potential to be pretty energy efficient but require considerable work to upgrade from their original build. Thankfully, most houses have done much of this already.

Possibly the biggest energy efficiency improvement you can make in these homes is insulating the walls, by filling the cavity between the two layers of bricks. Another big change is putting insulation into the loft. Current recommendations are for 270mm (about one foot) of insulation! Replacing any single glazed doors and windows with new double or treble glazing is often the way to add most value to a home, but it also saves energy while cutting down draughts. While on this subject, draught proofing is probably the most cost-effective measures you can take to improve comfort and reduce energy use.

The other change most houses can make is to use a more efficient or lower carbon form of energy for heating. If your gas boiler is over 15 years old, replacing it with a new one will cut your gas bill (and carbon emissions) by about one quarter. New heating controls and thermostatic radiator valves can also deliver a significant improvement. Currently, going further than this and retrofitting a renewable heating system in a home with mains gas is primarily for the green enthusiast. But for homes elsewhere in Silchester, without a connection to mains gas, a heat pump or perhaps even solar thermal panels can be an excellent option.

With the exception of new gas boilers, all the measures I've written about are available through the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme. To find out more about available options for your home visit the Simple Energy Advice Site at www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk and potential installers. To apply for a voucher go to the government website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>.

I tried to write a short article but found I've got far too much content, so depending on feedback, I'll try to write a more regular feature focusing on things you can do to help green Silchester.

Jon Saltmarsh

RADIO PANTO



SILCHESTER PLAYERS PRESENTS

Dick Whittington

by Liz Carroll

SUNDAY
27TH
DEC 2020

Performance: 2.00pm

Augmented and
adapted for radio
by Stephen Bibby
with additional
verses by
Sarah Oliver.



HHCR
Basingstoke
Community
Radio

www.hhcr.org.uk

Just click the "LISTEN LIVE" button at the top of the site.
Listen on your Smart Speaker.
Simply ask your Amazon Alexa or Google Home to "Play H H C R"
Listen on your Mobile or Tablet.
Download the FREE Tunein App from your app store.

After the broadcast listen again at: www.silchesterplayers.org



Silchester Recycling News

First I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who has supported our "hard to recycle plastics" (or "Grazeley scheme") recycling initiative in Silchester. This is the scheme which aims to capture as much as possible of the recyclable plastic 'waste' that the Council don't deal with, and to keep it out of landfill or incineration.

Extra thanks go to those lovely pet owners (the majority) who clean out their pet food pouches thoroughly. I hate having to throw away any dirty, smelly, contaminated ones (that we cannot send for processing as they attract vermin and pose a health risk). While I am on the subject, thanks also to those who refrain from knotting, folding, crushing or otherwise mutilating their bread wrappers and crisp packets - it makes the sorting process so much easier!

Most of you will know that we operate this scheme in conjunction with the international organisation "TerraCycle" (<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades>). Part of their strategy is to reward the volunteers who provide, collect and sort the "hard to recycle" items by making (modest) financial contributions to nominated charities.

Until now our small-but-growing collections in Silchester have been "lumped in" to the general 'pot', which generates rewards for the Grazeley Primary School, and, recently, for a few other charities in nearby participating villages. But, it would appear, **Silchester has now crossed a threshold** and the administrator asked us to nominate a charity of our own to share the rewards! **We chose two worthy causes - the Playground and the Village Hall.** So, please tell all your neighbours and friends about this scheme as the more we can collect, the greater the rewards will be - not to mention "saving the planet" as well of course!

While most people I speak to are keen to support the initiative, many (including me!) often find it confusing to work out exactly what items are "Acceptable". Logically, you'd expect that because they can process resealable coffee packets, they must be able to take and process other resealable packets in the same way. NOT SO! Undoubtedly they CAN but, because of the way the operation is structured and funded, they choose not to.

Each TerraCycle "Recycling Programme" (RP) is individually funded by a commercial organisation, most often the "brand" or manufacturer of the items listed. Some are very parochial ("Why should we, Kenco, choose to fund the processing of rival Nescafe or Sainsbury's products?"), others are more relaxed about things ("As long as it is a soft polythene sliced bread wrapper we don't mind whether it is Hovis, or Allinson, or Kingsmill, or Warburtons, or Tesco own brand!").

To try and help with this, the display above the bins at the Pavilion includes one "Poster" for each of the TerraCycle RPs that we are "signed up for". There are currently 17 of these, listed on the "information" board. Each poster should make it reasonably clear whether "all brands" are included or not, and shows in words and pictures, what is "Acceptable". Many Posters also list explicit exclusions. All these posters can also be found online, via the link to the TerraCycle site mentioned above.

Note that our displays will change from time to time as existing programmes close and new ones are added. Look out for the "NEW" flashes on the recently introduced RPs - "Cheese wrappers", "Babybel packaging" and "Marigold gloves".

Finally, regulars will have noticed that we have doubled the number of collection bins available outside the Pavilion (on Fridays from about 7am to 'dusk' pm), so there should sufficient (and drier!) space now. When they are allowed to restart (post COVID), we will also be able resume collections at the Monthly Village Markets (first Saturday in the month 10am - 12:30pm). If you have suitable items to contribute but cannot get along to any of these venues, please contact either me or Paula Gibbons to work out whether it is possible to make alternative arrangements.

Chris Hawkes & Paula Gibbons

Planning

<u>Planning Applications for Consideration</u>		
1	T/00557/20/TCA - The White House, Little London Road, Silchester 1. Fell approx 30 Leylandii. 2. Fell 1 Leylandii.	
2	20/02749/FUL - The Calleva Arms The Common Silchester RG7 2PH A temporary erection of a marquee in the existing pub garden	
3	20/02343/FUL - Macartneys The Common Silchester RG7 2NS Retention of existing building (to be used as a games room and ancillary home office) and change of use of the land back to residential	
<u>Approvals/Refusals/Withdrawals*</u>		
1	20/00297/FUL - Land at rear of Bridles View, Byes Lane, Silchester Erection of 1 No. new dwelling with detached double garage and garden/bin/bike store	Objection Withdrawn
2	20/02432/HSE - 12 Lordswood, Silchester, RG7 2PZ Erection of single storey rear extension	No Objection Granted
3	20/01285/PIP - Land At O/S Ref 462670 161631, Little London Road, Silchester Permission in Principal for residential development of up to 9 no. dwellings	Objection Application Refused
4	T/00463/20/TCA - The Shambles, 5 Whistlers Lane, Silchester T1 - Spruce - Fire damage to tree on the southerly side. Damage found by new owners of property. Fell tree for risk of failure.	No Objection Raise no objection
<u>Notifications*</u>		
1	None	
<u>Pending Applications*</u>		
1	20/01674/FUL - Wood Farm, Ash Lane, Silchester, RG7 2NH Formation of a ground source heat pump and pipeline - Wood Farm Ash Lane Silchester RG7 2NH	No Objection
2	20/01998/GPDE - 36 Dukes Ride, Silchester RG7 2PY Erection of a single storey rear extension (permitted development notification) - 36 Dukes Ride Silchester Reading Hampshire RG7 2PY	No Objection Awaiting Decision
3	20/02248/LDEU - Silchester House, Holly Lane, Silchester, RG7 2NA Certificate of Lawfulness for the existing use as mixed use residential dwelling, wedding venue and conference centre	No Objection
4	20/02481/HSE - Mynet House, Little London Road, Silchester, RG7 2PR Ground floor rear and first floor side extension creating additional day room, ensuite and dressing room	No Objection
5	T/00489/20/TCA - Culhams Farm House, Little London Road, Silchester T1 - Weeping Willow Tree. Tree has a large hazard beam crack in lowest limb overhanging Firth Close, presenting a H&S risk to pedestrians & parked cars in Firth Close from limb failure. To reduce back the lowest limb to appropriate point to remove the hazard beam. To reduce the whole crown by approx. 4m to create a pollard leaving a finished height of 15-16m with a crown spread (radius) of 15-16m. T2 - Sycamore Tree. To section fell to ground level, due to this specimen's proximity to the weeping willow (T1). T3 - Scots Pine Tree To section fell to ground level. Tree is a poor specimen as its growth has been suppressed by its proximity to T1 & T2. T4 - Beech hedge To reduce to approx height 3.6m above ground level and create a level hedge.	No Objection

* Objections/no objections listed are the opinion of Silchester Parish Council only, and do not reflect any submissions placed by members of the public or other bodies with Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

Here we continue *The Labours of Heracles* written by *Stephen Bibby* - it was aimed at children of around 10 years old ... But has been enjoyed by all ages over the last few months.

The Labours of Heracles

The Tenth Labour -

The Cattle of Geryon

For his next task King Eurystheus commanded Heracles to capture the cattle belonging to King Geryon.

Geryon, King of Tartessus in Spain, was the strangest of men. He had been born with three heads, six hands and three bodies joined together at the waist. Each individual body was very powerful. Thus, although Geryon was only one person, he had as much strength as three men.

King Geryon kept his cattle on the island of Erytheia, the site of what is now Cadiz in Spain. This meant that, to find them, Heracles needed to travel in a westerly direction. The journey was long and difficult. Day after day Heracles trudged his way across the Libyan Desert suffering from the blazing heat. He became so frustrated that he seized his bow and shot an arrow high into the air, directly at the scorching sun. This angered Helios, the sun god, who shouted at him in rage. Immediately Heracles dropped to his knees, uttered a prayer of apology and unstrung his bow.

The sight of this penitent, kneeling traveller, addressing him with utmost courtesy, impressed Helios. His heart was touched with pity and he decided he would help Heracles. He lent him a large golden goblet shaped like a waterlily. Instead of continuing his tiring trudge across the desert, using this goblet as a vessel Heracles was able to launch himself into the Mediterranean Sea and then sail to the island of Erytheia.

The winds and the waves carried Heracles, in the goblet, to the point where a narrow passage of water separates the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. Today this is known as the Straits of Gibraltar. Heracles decided that he would make the straits narrower to discourage whales and other sea monsters from leaving the wild Atlantic and swimming through the gap into the Mediterranean. He built two enormous pillars, one on each side of the narrow gap. It is said that the present Rock of Gibraltar is the northern pillar. To this day the Coat of Arms of Spain contains two pillars which are known as The Pillars of Hercules (using the Roman name).

Once Heracles landed at Erytheia he was met by Geryon's guard dog, a fierce two-headed hound

named Orthrus. The creature rushed at him, barking furiously. Heracles swung his heavy club and, with two blows, one at each head, bludgeoned the creature lifeless.

The herdsman guarding the cattle had been roused by the noise. He came running after Orthrus but met the same fate. Heracles struck him down with another blow from his massive club.

Once Geryon learnt of the death of both his two-headed dog, and his herdsman, he was furious. Not trusting anyone else, he decided to go immediately in person to check on his cattle. As soon as he saw Heracles he yelled out, challenging him to stand and fight.

To any normal person Geryon would have been a terrifying opponent. He charged at Heracles, running at full speed, his three heads purple with fury, his six arms reaching out from his three bodies clutching three swords and three spears.

But Heracles was as clever as he was strong. Instead of standing to face Geryon, he ran to one side of him. Then he spun on his heels and let fly an arrow which sped from his bow with tremendous force. Instead of aiming at the three flailing bodies, Heracles shot the arrow into Geryon's side. Here it hit, just below Geryon's first rib cage. It did not stop, but continued on its swift passage. The shot was so powerful that the arrow passed directly through Geryon's first body, beyond into the second and came to rest in the stomach of the third.

The goddess Hera, always anxious to make trouble for Heracles, now came rushing to the aid of Geryon. But she was too late. Geryon had already fallen. Seeing Hera by the stricken king, Heracles let fly another arrow. It hit her on the chest.

Although Hera was immortal she could still feel pain. She yelled out, clutching her wound. Stumbling and hindered by her injury, she was unable to prevent Heracles from escaping.

It took a very long time indeed for Heracles to gather all the cattle together and drive the whole herd back to Eurystheus. Once he had set out, Hera again tried to prevent the completion of the task. She sent a vicious gad-fly which bit the cattle. This made them wild with irritation. Shaking



their heads madly, they ran off in all directions, scattering far and wide. It took a full year for Heracles to round them up and lead them in a long dusty line to the court of King Eurystheus.

With great relief, after this long and wearying journey, Heracles once more faced the king who had set the difficult task. King Eurystheus stared down from his throne as Heracles solemnly announced that he had completed his ten Labours and was ready for some rest.

The Eleventh Labour - The Apples of the Hesperides

Heracles thought that after he had delivered the cattle of Geryon to Eurystheus his Labours were completed.

But now King Eurystheus revealed what he had been secretly thinking for a long time. He claimed that only eight out of the ten Labours had been properly completed and went on to explain why.

Eurystheus had made it clear that the task of killing the Hydra should be performed 'single-handed'. As Heracles had been helped by his nephew, Iolaus, when he carried out this Labour Eurystheus said it did not count. Also, because Heracles had demanded a reward for cleaning the Augean stables and had again been helped by Iolaus, King Eurystheus regarded that as cheating. He ruled that the Fifth Labour did not count either.

The king told Heracles sternly that he could not rest. He commanded him to perform two more Labours.

For his eleventh Labour Heracles was sent to fetch fruit from the golden apple tree in the garden of the Hesperides which lay on the slopes of Mount Atlas.

The mountain was named after a Titan called Atlas. The Titans were very early gods who existed before Zeus and the other gods who lived on Mount Olympus. In an ancient battle Zeus and his fellow gods had defeated the Titans. After this, Atlas was condemned for ever to hold up the world on his shoulders.

The garden on Mount Atlas belonged to Hera. She also owned the golden tree on which apples grew, having planted it herself. She had commanded the daughters of Atlas, who were named the Hesperides, to guard it for her.

One day she found that the Hesperides were stealing apples from the tree. As they could not be trusted she set a fierce dragon called Ladon to coil itself around the tree and protect the fruit.

King Eurystheus was delighted with himself. Knowing that Hera disliked Heracles and that the apples were heavily guarded, he thought that at last he had found a task which it would be impossible for Heracles to complete.

The first challenge for Heracles was actually to find the garden of the Hesperides. He learnt that the one person who could give him directions and advice was a sea-god named Nereus. But first of all he had to capture Nereus who lived in the water and had the ability to change size and shape.

Heracles was lucky. Two friendly nymphs (beautiful young female goddesses) showed him where Nereus lay sleeping. Heracles crept up on the unsuspecting god and locked his arms in a wrestling hold. Promptly waking, Nereus immediately changed his shape into a sea creature with slimy tentacles. But Heracles was an expert wrestler and the old sea god was no match for a strong man. Heracles clung tenaciously onto Nereus despite the sea god's twisting and turning as again and again he changed his shape taking the form of many amazing underwater animals. Never once did Heracles relax his grip on the squirming, slippery sea creatures which Nereus became, so that eventually the cunning old sea god became totally exhausted.

Having been fairly defeated in a long wrestling match, Nereus developed enormous respect for Heracles. He gave him not only directions to the garden of the Hesperides but also some advice. He pointed out that Heracles would never be able to pick the apples himself as they were guarded closely. Instead he suggested that Heracles asked the father of the Hesperides, Atlas, to collect the fruit.

Heracles travelled onwards until at last he met Atlas. He found him, bent almost double, holding the world on his back.

After greeting Atlas, he politely asked him to do a favour and pick apples from the golden tree inside the garden. Atlas replied he was very willing to help in this way but was afraid he would be attacked by Ladon, the fierce dragon. On hearing this, Heracles strode away until he reached the garden wall. He leant over and fired a single shot from his bow. It was deadly accurate and had such force that it

pierced the leathery skin of the dragon. Ladon fell dead against the tree trunk.

Atlas still hesitated, claiming there was another problem. How could he pluck the apples from the tree while he was carrying the world on his back? He asked Heracles to shoulder his burden for him while he went to the garden. He knew that Heracles possessed superhuman strength and that no one else would be capable of doing what he asked.

Accordingly Heracles bent his back and accepted the transfer of the enormous globe which Atlas slowly passed to him. Straightening up and with a new spring in his step, Atlas quickly set off to the garden of his daughters, the Hesperides.

Heracles waited patiently. His neck and shoulders ached agonisingly with the weight of the world. He yearned for relief.

After what seemed like a very long time, Atlas appeared once more, bringing with him three pieces of shiny, plump, smooth fruit.

"Here are the apples from the golden tree," he announced. "You told me that they had to be taken to King Eurystheus. I will take them to him myself!"

Heracles was worried by what he heard, but he kept his face calm and tried to disguise his alarm. He had been warned by Nereus that Atlas might try to trick him. Thinking quickly, he responded with care.

"Very well," he replied calmly. "I will indeed be grateful if you can carry these wonderful apples to King Eurystheus. It will save me the journey. But I must ask you first to do me another favour. I am very uncomfortable and scared that, unless I shift position, I will drop the globe. That would be a disaster for all the people of the earth. Can you please take the world back for a moment while I move slightly and adjust my cloak?"

Not clever enough to realise his own trick was being turned against him, Atlas readily agreed. He put down the apples and once more bowed his back.

Carefully Heracles transferred the globe back to Atlas.

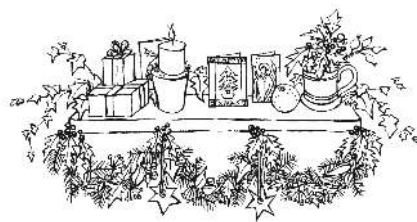
As soon as the movement was complete, Heracles snatched up the apples. Then he turned and waved farewell, leaving Atlas to hold the world for evermore.

King Eurystheus was most surprised to see Heracles when he returned. He gazed at the apples from the golden tree but was worried about taking them because he was afraid that he would be punished by Hera. He remembered that, after all, the apples were her property. He therefore gave them back to Heracles who in turn handed them to the friendly goddess, Athene, as he too did not wish to anger Hera any further by keeping fruit which belonged to her.

Hera herself remained distraught because Heracles had killed her dragon, Ladon. She set its image among the stars as the constellation of the Serpent.

Stephen Bibby

*To be continued ... Next issue we will have
The Twelfth Labour - The Capture of Cerberus
and we will conclude with **Heracles' Later Life***



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Silent Night Wordsearch

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg.

As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass.

The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.



Silent
Night
Loved
Carol
Austria

First
Sung
Stille
Nacht
Heilige

Christmas
Eve
Father
Joseph
Mohr

Young
Priest
Organist
Midnight
Mass

Melody
Single
Bing
Version
Third



SILENT NIGHT

We continue the tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

St James the Least of All

On this year's Christmas services

The Rectory,
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Hearing about your "Zoom-Service" endeavours was something of a revelation. When I first read the name I was hopeful of a very short duration - instead I find out that it involves watching your parishioners on a computer screen - and that you get to look up their noses for most of the service.

The restrictions this year remind me of the four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas; no Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. It feels all that was old is new again.

Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2nd January. This year, with all the chaos, all those plans were torn up months ago. It is now unlikely we will decide on what services will happen until the day before. That should help with keeping to the 30 person rule.

Whilst the Covid regulations mean that at St James the Least there will only be thirty participants, no-one will be able to fall asleep during the services this winter. Our antiquated heating system relies on the church being packed with many warm bodies after a frosty spell to ease the chill.

If the hostilities do stay closed through Christmas, one thing I will miss this year is giving a disapproving look at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

Normally, way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found to marshal those who only turn up once a year. At least this year those thirty will know how to park in our tiny church car park; though that doesn't mean there will be any less problems parking.

At least this year we will all be spared the normally mandatory post-service Rectory Christmas supper. After the extensive boiling the vegetables normally get they would better be served in a mug as a thick soup.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone awry, I can't help but wonder what next year will bring. I do hope for less chaos than this year.

Mr Cromwell, it feels like your spirit lives on this year. Thinking about the last twelve months, perhaps I will be looking forward to a normal Christmas at the end of 2021.

Your loving uncle, Eustace



How many Christmas carols do you really know?

Here is a challenge: why not spend some time learning the words to traditional carols this year? Polls have found that too many of us know the title of a carol and the tune and the opening line or so, but then we have to make it up. This year you probably have more time at home, so get going!

The Amazing Unlovables

British invertebrates come in all shapes and sizes, each with a part to play in the local ecosystem. But some aren't winning any popularity contests. Here's why we should all try and embrace some of our unlovable species.

Slugs and snails are hated by gardeners the world over for chewing unsightly holes in treasured flowers and shrubs. Their slimy appearance and eating habits make them unwelcome in the immaculate show gardens that many of us know and love.

However, in the nature-centric garden (the kind we prefer here at the Wildlife Trust), slugs and snails are very important and should be tolerated. They are a vital food source for all sorts of birds, mammals and reptiles, and are a part of the natural balance. Leave them be and you may be amazed at the wildlife that follows.

Spiders have inspired some of our best-loved novels and comics, but did you know without them the world might be overrun with swarms of insects. Despite this, spiders carry formidable reputation.

House spiders are incredibly helpful in the house and the garden, keeping flies and other pests in check. In autumn and winter it may seem like there are more spiders in your home

than usual, but they are just more active at this time of year. Though they can appear large and sinister, the UK house spider is harmless.

Encourage spiders in the

garden by providing logs and stone piles for them to live, feed and breed in. Spiders are a food source for many creatures - providing another vital link in the food chain.

Moths are often overlooked in favour of their often more colourful cousins - butterflies. They are dismissed as brown and dull, but in fact many species are bright and colourful, and with over 2,500 types of moth in Britain, there's an amazing amount of diversity to be discovered!

If you want to get a closer look at these flighty little visitors, why not set up a simple light trap using a white sheet, washing line and torch?



Angle shades © Amy Lewis



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Claire Thorpe
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



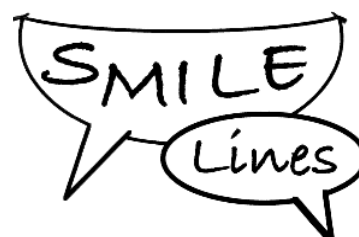
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust strives to create a better future for wildlife and wild places in our two counties.

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Friction at Christmas

This Christmas, when your family gets together, remember: a certain friction between the generations is inevitable. After all, the young and the old have all the answers and those in between are stuck with all the questions.



To All Our Friends at Home and Abroad

We have a list of folks we know,
all written in a book,
And every year when Christmas comes,
we go and take a look,
And that is when we realise
that these names are a part,
Not of the book they're written in,
but of our very hearts.

For each name stands for someone
who has crossed our path sometime,
And in that meeting they've become
the rhythm in each rhyme.

And while it sounds fantastic
for us to make this claim,
We really feel that we're composed
of each remembered name.

And while we may not be aware
of any "special link"
Just meeting you has changed our lives
a lot more than you think.

For once we've met somebody,
the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word
or of a friendly face.

So never think our Christmas cards
are just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list,
forgotten in between.

For when we send a Christmas Card
that is addressed to you
It's because you are on the list of folks
we're indebted to.

For we are but the total
of many folks we've met
And you happen to be one of those
we prefer not to forget,
And whether we have known you
for many years or few
In some way you have had a part
in shaping things we do.

And every year when Christmas comes,
we realise anew
The best gift life can offer
is meeting folks like you.
And may the spirit of Christmas
that forever endures,
Leave its richest blessing
in the hearts of you and yours.

By George A. Gladden, Sr (1935-2005)

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Churchwarden	Sandra Speight	0118 970 0570
Assistant Wardens	Veronica Picton	0118 981 5782
	Richard Eldridge	0118 970 0744
	Em Paddick Wilsdon	0118 970 0542
Vice Chairman	Richard Fletcher	0118 970 0633
Honorary Treasurer	Richard Eldridge	0118 970 0744
Deanery Synod	<i>vacant post</i>	
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PCC Secretary	Colin Hunt	0118 970 0726
Church Electoral Roll Officer	Heidi Williams	0118 970 1299
Organist	Henry Peat	07711 651 111

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Church Secretary	Angela Hiscock	01256 850432
Local Methodist Contact	Kathy Evans	0118 970 1234
Methodist Hall Hire	Lynda Kennedy	0118 981 2785

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Parish Secretary	Barbara Davis	E mail: Tadley@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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Distribution/Printing & Advertising Managers	Nancy & Marsden Jones	0118 970 0546 E mail: nancy@silchester.org

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Sow & Grow	Rosemary Lister	0118 970 2219

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Macmillan Cancer Support	Virginia Budd	01256 850239



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Guides, 1st Silchester	Della Raven	0118 970 1627
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Scouts, Cubs & Beavers ~ Pamber Heath	Melissa Stroud	0118 970 2241
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Dancing	Daphne Bennett	0118 983 2638
Air Cadets - Tadley		0118 981 9186

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Silchester School PTA	Vicky Rodd (Secretary)	0118 970 1880
The Hurst Community College, Baughurst		0118 981 7474

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	The Surgery, Mortimer	0118 933 2436
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	Thornhill Pharmacy, Mortimer	0118 933 2373
	Sainsbury's, Tadley	0118 981 3572

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Local Borough Councillor	Roger Gardiner	0118 970 1109
Local Borough Councillor	Simon Mahaffey	
County Councillor	Rhydian Vaughan	07712 695476

Police**REPORTING AN INCIDENT****101**

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Library	Tadley Library	0118 981 4602
Village Hall and Club Room	Bookings : Vivienne Hartshorn	0118 970 0940
Secretary	secretary@silchestervillagehall.org.uk	
Village Market	Paula Gibbons: info@silchestervillagemarket.org.uk	0118 970 0999
Dial-A-Ride Community Transport		01256 462101
Age Concern	Chute House, Church St, Basingstoke	01256 840553
Hospice Shops	Chineham Shopping Centre	01256 331888
	Mulfords Hill, Tadley	0118 982 0888
Helping Hands - Community Shop	Franklin Avenue, Tadley	0752 713 7778
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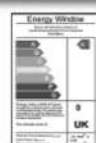
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