

# DNL Dockenfield newsletter

News and events from in and around the village of Dockenfield  
Issue 282 Published 2 December 2020



## And so, this is Christmas?

Hands up if you saw what was coming this year. No? Me neither. I don't suppose there was anyone who predicted how 2020 would unfold. In our Parish alone there have been so many things missing...D Day, Frensham Fayre, our lovely pubs, church services and events, the annual skittles, our clubs and societies and so much more.

On the plus side the strength of our community has shone through, with so many volunteers helping those less fortunate to cope with the deprivations that Covid has brought. I don't think I know anyone who doesn't believe that we are blessed to be living in a lovely Parish, with a strong community, in some glorious countryside. And now we approach a Christmas unlike any other we have experienced. But, in this strangest of years, as we hope for a better 2021, there are so many reasons for us all to rejoice at our good fortune.

**Michael**



**Replacing this year's Crib Services, the fun Nativity Nature Trail starts at the Good Shepherd and finishes at St Mary's. Pictures by Simon Claiden**

## Christmas in Dockenfield: Covid Style

Normally, this is one of my favourite articles of the year. Raising the Christmas Tree; the wonderfully atmospheric Carols at the bus shelter, with music, singing, mulled wine and mince pies; and the fabulous, fun-for-everyone Christmas Party. A good, old-fashioned proper village Christmas that sets us all up for a great festive season.

And then along came coronavirus and spun the world off its axis, with a sad inevitability one of the victims is going to be our Christmas village festivities. So, sorry folks, in order to comply with the restrictions and to ensure your safety there will be no carols and no party this year. The Activities Committee is going to try and get the tree raised in its usual position, although we can't invite anyone along to help in the usual jolly fashion. Once it's there though, do feel free to come along, in individual families, to hang a present on the tree. An empty box, wrapped in Xmas paper (and perhaps cling film to keep out the wet) does the trick and makes the tree look pretty.

So, in a word, our village Christmas is going to be different this year. But we know you will all find ways of having a very happy Christmas and see you all, same place, next year!

## This edition explained

This edition is late. Deliberately so. It was due out towards the end of November but is only being published today, 2 December. We wanted to wait until it was clearer what awaited the country (and hence our Parish) at the end of the lockdown today, before publishing. We wanted to be able to bring you the most up to date news, particularly from the pubs, churches and others whose circumstances will be greatly influenced by decisions made by the government in response to the pandemic. What is in these pages is our very best effort to keep you informed of the current position. But please be aware that things can change at very short notice and you are advised to double check if you are in doubt.



## Diana and Harold celebrate at the Bluebell

The ‘competition’ to establish which couple in the village had been married the longest was won by Diana and Harold Parratt of Abbotts Cottages, who got married on 17 March 1956. Their prize was a £50 voucher for a meal for two at the Bluebell, donated by Robin and Lucy Catchpole. Harold and Diana had lunch at the pub on 22 September and they are pictured here smiling happily before tucking into their meal. They write to say: ‘On the last sunny afternoon of September, we went to the Bluebell to have our lunch with the voucher Robin and Lucy generously donated for the longest married couple in Dockenfield. We had a lovely time and a great meal, thank you so much.’



They married 64 years ago in St Mary’s church, and then by coincidence, had the wedding reception (well you guessed it didn’t you) at the Bluebell. The two other pictures are of them emerging from the church, and of the bill from the pub itself. Look at those prices!

Thank you to everyone in the village who got in touch with DNL to say that they had been married for 50 years or more. Special thanks also to Robin and Lucy at the Bluebell for their wonderful generosity.

## Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)

The first, more restrictive, phase of lockdown affected people in different ways. Some suffered from being housebound and missing friends and family, whilst others enjoyed the time and space for walks, and appreciation of our local habitats and wildlife. So it was, in the sunny March and April of this year, when many people were out and about on Bealeswood Common. Whilst meeting and chatting it became apparent that there was a lot of local expertise in identifying, recording and photographing our wildlife so the BWRG was formed. An informal group reporting to the Parish Council and to Waverley Borough Council, who manage the Common as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest or SNCI.



At present we have 10 people involved who have varied interests and expertise; Alison Bosence (butterflies, flowers), Dan Bosence (flowers), Alan Cox (birds, butterflies, orthoptera, flowers, photography and data recording), Pauline Cox (flowers), Colin Hall (trees), Philippa Hall (butterflies, moths), Steve Luckett (birds, bats, countryside access), Alex Potts (photography, butterflies, insects and birds), Christina Rasmussen (flowers, birds, photography) and Anne Tutt (butterflies). And here we are, appropriately spaced, in discussion with Vicky Keller (left) our WBC Warden.

Each month, over the past 5 years, the wildlife highlights of the Common have been posted on the noticeboard for the Common, and they have attracted quite a wide readership. This years notices are all available on the Parish Council Website at <http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/index.php/bealeswood-common-wildlife>; it’s worth looking at for the superb photographs alone!

A complete list of all the species recorded through the year will also be posted on the new “Bealeswood Common Wildlife” section of the DPC website. At present the totals for the different groups for this year are: mammals (8 different species), birds (59), dragonflies/damselflies (5), grasshoppers/crickets (5), moths (59), butterflies (24), flowering plants (128), trees (21). So, if you have seen something of interest but are not sure what it is, it is likely to be on that list. If it’s not, we would like to hear from you! Also, if you have additional expertise on groups, not mentioned above, then please contact us.

Who would have thought that our small common has such a diversity of wildlife, and aren’t we lucky having it right in the heart of the village?

**Dan Bosence** ([dwbosence@btinternet.com](mailto:dwbosence@btinternet.com), or 792442) for Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group

## Next Bealeswood Common Working Party

Covid restrictions forced the postponement of the Bealeswood Common Working Party in November. The new date is set for Saturday **13 February 2021** at 10am. More details in the next DNL.

**Jill Trout**

## News from your churches

We are planning some exciting services and activities for December and hope that you will join with us. As I write it has just been confirmed that our area is in Tier 2 Covid restrictions after the lockdown on 2 December. We are thankful that churches are permitted to open and we can now safely proceed with the outdoor Carol Service at St Mary's and the Village Carol Sing-a-long at the British Legion. Due to limited resources, the Good Shepherd will continue to be closed.

**Carol Service:** This year we have had to plan differently because of Covid and for the first time we are holding the Carol Service at St Mary's on Sunday 20 December outside in the churchyard so everybody can be involved (and sing!) Bring torches, chairs, blankets and hot drinks and pray for dry weather! We will need to keep within our household 'bubble' and maintain 2 metre distancing at all times, not mingling with other households. Numbers will be limited in case we have to move indoors (where sadly there won't be any singing by the congregation). \*

**Village Carol Sing-a-long:** The choir will be singing carols at our first Village Carol Sing-a-long at the Royal British Legion club in Frensham on Friday 18 December at 7pm and we encourage all villagers from Dockenfield and Frensham to come along. We will gather in the car park and in line with the Covid regulations. In order to manage this safely, we are asking you to book your spaces. \*

**Bookings:** We hope these activities and services will bring some joy after such a difficult year. We will be carrying out comprehensive risk assessments and are confident that we can keep everybody safe. We have limited numbers we can safely accommodate, so we have a booking system for those services/activities that attract larger numbers. Please contact Eunice on 790690 or [eunice.king@frenshamchurches.org.uk](mailto:eunice.king@frenshamchurches.org.uk) to reserve your space(s).

**Nativity Nature Trail:** Because we are not able to hold Crib services this year in the usual format, we are organising a Nativity Nature Trail that anybody can do at any time from Saturday 19 December up to and including Christmas Eve. The trail will start at The Good Shepherd church in Dockenfield and finish at St Mary's in Frensham with 12 'stations' along the route following the Star. The Trail not only tells the story of the Nativity but offers exciting activities to do along the way. All socially distanced, so you can do this safely - a great way to exercise in your 'bubbles' or groups of 6 and enjoy yourselves at the same time! This is something that everybody can do, young and older, families and individuals.

Children will love the jokes (think Christmas crackers!), treats and songs (crib sheets - excuse the pun - will be provided) and activities. The more mature of us will have the opportunity for a leisurely walk through the beautiful countryside (approximately 1 3/4 miles, virtually all of the walk is off-road) whilst reflecting on the Christmas message of hope. This really is more important than ever in the current situation. If you can perhaps park at either end of the walk and arrange transport back (or walk back to the start for the more energetic) that would be wonderful. There is no charge - comprehensive maps of the route, activity sheets and treats will be provided. If you enjoy the Trail, we would ask you to consider making a donation to the church.

<b>29 November</b>	Advent Sunday Live Stream at 10.30am	A beautiful service of carols and readings will be recorded and posted online.
<b>6 December</b>	10.30am Christingle	Christingle 'DIY kits' for people of all ages. Booking necessary
<b>13 December</b>	10.30am Holy Communion	Normal service. No booking necessary.
<b>18 December</b>	7.00pm Village Carol Sing-a-long	At the British Legion. Booking necessary
<b>19 – 24 December</b>	Nativity Nature Trail from Nazareth to Bethlehem	Start at The Good Shepherd and finish at St Mary's. No booking necessary just turn up.
<b>20 December</b>	10.30am Matins	Traditional service. No booking necessary.
	6.00pm Carol service in the churchyard	Magical service outside. Booking necessary
<b>24 December</b>	11.30pm Midnight Mass	Booking necessary
<b>25 December</b>	10.30am Christmas Family service	Booking necessary
<b>27 December</b>	Holy Communion online recording	Rev'd Jane will be taking a rest!

We will continue to post recordings of services on our YouTube channel with links on the website and social media. Some services will also be live streamed. Do check the church website where we will post any changes to the above.

**Eunice King, Churchwarden**

\* Please check government, Frensham PCC, and DPC websites for latest guidance before setting out.

## News from Frensham Village Shop

**Hello everyone**, we are pleased to announce that Ollie Robertson has joined us as the new manager of the Frensham Village Shop this month. Whilst we look forward to welcoming Ollie and hope you all get to meet him soon, it's a shame we can't say thank you and goodbye properly to Paul due to the current circumstances. We wish Paul and Sharon our best wishes on their new adventure in Wales! We will introduce Ollie in the next edition of the newsletter through a short Q&A, so let us know if you have any questions you would like to ask or suggestions for the shop!

Whilst this has been a year like no other, it's been a huge privilege for everyone involved in the shop to see the response of our staff and our volunteers to events. Although we have now stopped the home delivery service, we reached almost 1,000 deliveries across the time the service ran which was hugely impressive from a standing start. I think we are all looking forward to 2021 for various reasons, and as we reach our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January we look forward to the next stage of the FVS and its role in serving the Frensham and Dockenfield communities.

### Shop and Post Office Opening Hours:

We are back to our normal hours. Please check the website for the most up to date information.

**Monday to Friday:** 8.30am – 7pm

**Saturday:** 8.30am – 5.30pm

**Sunday & Bank Holidays:** 9 – 11am

### Shop and Post Office Christmas holiday opening hours:

Please see below the current plan for our opening hours over the Festive period: the website will have the most current information.

Thurs 24 December:	<b>Shop and Post Office</b>	8.30am – 1pm
Fri 25 December:	CHRISTMAS DAY	CLOSED ALL DAY
Sat 26 December:	BOXING DAY <b>Shop only</b>	9 – 11am
Sun 27 December:	<b>Shop only</b>	9 – 11am
Mon 28 December:	BANK HOLIDAY <b>Shop only</b>	9 – 11am
Tues 29 December:**		8.30am – 7pm
Wed 30 December:**		8.30am – 7pm
Thurs 31 December:**	NEW YEAR'S EVE	8.30am – 5.30pm
Fri 1 January:**	NEW YEAR <b>Shop only</b>	9 – 11am

### Return to Normal hours:

Saturday 2 January:\*\* **Shop and Post Office** 8.30am – 5.30pm

*\*\*Please note the Post Office will be closed 1pm – 2pm on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec and 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan, returning to normal 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan.\*\**

### News from the Post Office:

Tips to help with your visit, and stay socially distanced:

- Post early in December to avoid the rush
- Visit at a quieter time, after 5.30pm

### UK latest recommended posting dates: -

18 December: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and Royal Mail Signed For (2<sup>nd</sup>)

21 December: 1<sup>st</sup> Class and Royal Mail Signed For (1<sup>st</sup>)

23 December: Special Delivery Guaranteed

*For overseas postage dates, please come and collect a leaflet from the Post Office.*

Please stay safe and support your local shop by shopping locally! We hope to see you soon

**Callum Keaveny** [www.frensham-village-shop.co.uk](http://www.frensham-village-shop.co.uk) **Tel: 01252 795240**

## Home-made Christmas Wreaths for sale

Every year, the Christmas Wreath making classes at St Mary's are sold out. It is one of the most sought-after tickets of the festive season. And for good reason; the wreaths that emerge are just beautiful. But never fear, you can still get your wreath. Barbara Potter is kindly making them herself this year in aid of church funds. They cost just £15 and will be on sale at 'Acacia' (the house immediately to the left of the British Legion) on the following dates:

- Monday 14 December 9am-1pm
- Wednesday 16 December 9am-1pm
- Friday 18 December, 9am-1pm

Or call Barbara for more information on Tel: 01252 794727.

## The Bluebell reopens

We made it through (another) lockdown! It's definitely a very hard time for so many businesses at the moment and there will be some pubs that don't survive. We feel positive that we will survive and that's largely thanks to the support we receive from Dockenfield and surrounding villages. Through our takeaways, we have got to know so many lovely people, who we may not have always had the time to get to know before! So, despite all the doom and gloom there are positives that we would never have seen, if we weren't all thrown into this awful situation.

We will be opening from Wednesday 2 December and continuing with takeaways, during opening hours except on Sundays. We haven't got as far as Christmas hours yet... because we are wondering if they review the tiers on the 16th, like planned, they may move us down... or maybe that's just wishful thinking! And that would have a big impact on our hours. Anyway- here's our current opening hours:

### Opening Hours

*Monday:* closed

*Tuesday:* closed

*Wednesday:* 12-3pm, 5.30-10pm (food 12-2.30pm, 5.30-9pm)

*Thursday:* 12-3pm, 5.30-10pm (food 12-2.30pm, 5.30-9pm)

*Friday:* 12-3pm, 5.30-10pm (food 12-2.30pm, 5.30-9pm)

*Saturday:* 12-10pm (food 12-9pm)

*Sunday:* 12-5pm (food 12-4pm)

*(given the current circumstances these are subject to change)*

### Tier 2 update

*(This information was accurate at the time of writing)*

**Inside:** One household/ support bubble per table

**Outside:** Mixed households allowed, up to 6

Alcohol can only be served with a substantial meal

Looking forward to the future (and a vaccination!)

**Lucy, Robin and The Bluebell Team x**

Tel: 792801; [www.bluebell-dockenfield.com](http://www.bluebell-dockenfield.com)

## Please support *all* our local pubs, clubs

Please support them in the coming weeks and months. It's been such a hard and worrying time for them, and they are such a vital part of community life.

### The Holly Bush, Frensham (Tel: 447060

[www.thehollybush.co.uk](http://www.thehollybush.co.uk)) A huge thank you to all our customers for their support following lockdown No1. We look forward to welcoming you all back. We have created a heated outdoor area that is now looking very festive. We wish a Merry Christmas to all from Team HB.

Our Xmas opening hours are: **Christmas Eve:** Pub 8.30am-10pm, Kitchen 8.30am-8pm; **Christmas Day:** Pub 11am-2pm; **Boxing Day:** Pub 9.30am-6pm, Kitchen 9.30am-5pm; **27-30 December:** usual opening hours; **New Year's Eve:** Pub 8.30am-6pm, Kitchen 8.30am-5pm; **New Year's Day:** Pub 9.30am-11pm, Kitchen 9.30am-9pm.

### Frensham Royal British Legion Club and Branch

(Tel: 793014, [www.frenshamrbl.org.uk](http://www.frenshamrbl.org.uk)) Sadly the Legion will not be able to reopen under the Tier 2 rules - hopefully there will be better news after the review in 2 weeks' time.

## The Bluebell Menu

### Starters

#### Whitebait £6

garlic mayonnaise

**Halloumi Bites £4.5 ...** add chorizo £2  
sweet chilli sauce

#### Minted Pea Arancini £7.5

balsamic glaze

#### Salt & Pepper Squid £6.5

sweet chilli sauce

#### Soup of the Day £5

crusty bread

#### Baked Camembert for Two £9.5

crusty bread

#### Mushrooms on Toast £7

creamy white wine sauce, watercress

### Mains

#### Pappardelle Pasta £12.5

creamy mushroom OR spicy tomato  
add chicken breast £3

#### Chicken & Tarragon Pie £13.5

Mash, gravy & broccoli

#### 5oz/10oz Sirloin Steak £14/£21

triple cooked chips, coleslaw, onion rings,  
grilled tomato & salad

#### Beer Battered Fish & Chips £14

triple cooked chips, peas, tartar sauce & salad

#### Ancient Rowledge Sausages & Mash £14.5

gravy, fried onions, broccoli OR peas

#### Thai Green Vegetable curry £12

rice & naan bread

add chicken breast £3

add king prawns £4

#### Chicken Katsu Curry £14

rice & chukka-fu cabbage

### Burgers

All burgers served in a sourdough bun, with fries, sweet potato fries or our homemade triple cooked chips (homemade chips £1 extra)

#### Bluebell Burger £13.5

Beef burger, whisky glazed onions, relish, cheese,  
bacon, lettuce & tomato

#### Chicken Burger £13.5

breaded chicken breast, mayonnaise, sweet chilli  
sauce, lettuce & tomato

add Cheese £1

add Bacon £1

#### Halloumi Burger £12.5

fried halloumi, sweet chilli sauce, lettuce & tomato

### Substantial Meals

(perfect with a pint)

#### Pie and Mash £7

#### Scotch Egg & Fries £7

#### Fish & Chips £7

### Specials

#### Bacon Wrapped Roasted Pheasant £15.5

potato rosti, savoy cabbage & chestnut sauce

#### Herb Stuffed Sea Bass Fillet £14.5

crushed baby potato, green vegetables  
& saffron sauce

#### Stuffed Harlequin Squash £11... add Stilton £2

roasted red pepper & paprika quinoa, homemade  
sauerkraut

(menu subject to availability)

## Parish Council News

All Parish Council meetings are being held via video conference meetings (Zoom) at present due to Covid 19 restrictions. This will continue until safe to resume meetings in a public place. If any residents wish to speak at a meeting there is a slot in the agenda. The agenda can be found on the Parish Council website a week before the meeting. [www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk). Alternatively email any questions you would like to be discussed at the meeting. Please contact the clerk at [dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

**Meeting Dates:** Tuesdays 19 January and 16 February 2021. All at 8pm via Zoom.

**Parish Council contacts:** Clerk (Jessica Hobday): [dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk); Chairman (Paul Wood): [dockenfieldchairman@hotmail.com](mailto:dockenfieldchairman@hotmail.com); Jill Trout: [troutdpc@gmail.com](mailto:troutdpc@gmail.com); Ian McLean: [mcleandpc@gmail.com](mailto:mcleandpc@gmail.com); Chris Sutton: [suttondpc@gmail.com](mailto:suttondpc@gmail.com); Richard Blackburn: [blackburndpc@gmail.com](mailto:blackburndpc@gmail.com)

**Bealeswood Common:** Thanks to our Waverley Borough Council Ranger, Vicky Keller, we now have a new oak bench on Bealeswood Common - perfect to sit on and enjoy the morning sunshine on autumn tree colours. There is an active Bealeswood Common Wildlife Group who record the flowers, butterflies and birds observed on the Common (*see page 2*). Each month a report is prepared which is published on the noticeboard near the bench and is now available on the village website: <http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/index.php/bealeswood-common-wildlife> Do check out the diversity of wildlife observed and excellent photography.

**Footpaths:** Walkers will have noticed that the Lake Lane to Bluebell pub and Lake Lane to Sandy Lane footpaths have been renovated with scalping stones. Hopefully these footpaths will be less muddy through the wet winter season.

**Hatch Pond:** You may have noticed on the eastern approach to the village that Hatch Pond has been cleared and restored to a pond as part of the management plan to attract wildlife. The pond will shortly be fenced from the road with chestnut post and rail fencing (*see also page 15*).

**Preparing for winter in Dockenfield:** Please see pages 10 and 11.

**Planning for the Future:** The Parish Council met with Jeremy Hunt on 25 September to convey our concerns on the "Planning for the Future" proposals, in particular: loss of local democracy, the housing target algorithm which disproportionately impacts areas such as South West Surrey and the need to do more to encourage/force developers to make more use of brownfield sites. The meeting with Jeremy Hunt went very well, he understood and agreed with our concerns, which reinforce similar feedback from other council leaders he has met with. Jeremy has met with Robert Jenrick, the Housing Secretary of State, to express concerns about the proposals. The Parish Council also responded to the public consultation.

**Paul Wood and Jessica Hobday**

## Let's hear it please for DNL's unsung heroes and heroines

To say this has been an unusual year is something of an understatement. But throughout it all DNL has done its best to keep you informed and entertained. And that is only possible because we have the most wonderful, reliable band of distributors. So this is my annual 'Shout Out' for them and comes with a big thank you for everything they do. During the last 12 months your DNL has been delivered to you, come rain or shine, by:

Mark and Sally Vardy, Jack and Marjorie Bessant, Gerry Davy, Anne Tutt, Jean Elkes, Diana and Harold Parratt, Gail Atkinson, Debbie Foster, Karen Wake, Suzanne McLean, Mark and Karen Giles and Janette Platt.

A thank you also to DNL's contributors who write so wonderfully and who make it such a good read; and to my wife Debbie who is a huge help when it comes to laying it all out. Also to Ian McLean and Richard and Fliss Blackburn who proof read my final effort and remove any mistakes and typos. And last but not least, to the Parish Council for stumping up the money to make all this possible.

This year DNL has once again been printed by Treloar Print and I am grateful to everyone there for all the help they give. They give just the most wonderful service.

## Shop with zero waste

If you are serious about limiting your use of plastic, you might like to know that a new zero waste shop has opened, just down the road in Alton. FillUp, as the store is known, will enable customers to reduce their single-use plastic as you can take your own reusable containers, or buy them in the shop, whilst at the same time stocking up on everything from pasta to shampoo. You can even watch peanut butter being made fresh before your eyes, which sounds a really tempting idea. You can find FillUp at 15, High Street Alton, next door to Home Hardware.

## **Farnham Food Bank needs your help more than ever**

Since we started as a collection point for the Parish back in May, DNL readers have donated a fabulous 1896 items for the Farnham Foodbank, which is wonderfully generous of you. Sadly, the need for a Foodbank, even in an apparently prosperous area such as Farnham, is not going to go away any time soon. The second lockdown added to the pain inflicted by the first, so the amount of people in need continues to grow.

And let's not forget, Christmas is coming. A Christmas unlike any other other perhaps, but Christmas nonetheless. And nobody wants to go hungry then during the festive season. So, we would like to ask you all to continue to donate items as and when you are able so that we can keep these valuable supplies going. If you are able to help, please leave any contributions on the table in our (open) front porch at Farm Cottage, Bealeswood Lane, Dockenfield GU10 4HS. We will be sure to check the porch at least twice a day and take food in for safe storage until we deliver each Sunday morning. If you live at or near Great Holt, then please take your donations to Heather Britton, The Coach House, Great Holt, Old Lane, GU10 4HQ, who will then deliver on to us.

All contributions of non-perishable items are hugely welcome provided they are within code. At the moment though they are particularly looking for donations of instant mash, instant coffee, UHT fruit juice, instant noodles and sponge puddings. Also at Christmas, chocolate treats, Xmas cakes and puddings, boxes of biscuits and other festive items are especially welcome.

Your help is hugely appreciated. Thank you.

**Michael and Debbie Foster**

PS. A message just received from a Farnham Foodbank organiser after this Sunday's delivery from us. *"Just finished my collections and loaded yours into the car. How incredibly generous Dockenfield and Frensham have been and imaginative. Please pass on our thanks to them."* Fiona Everett.

## **Recycle your Christmas tree with Phyllis Tuckwell**

Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice is offering a Christmas tree recycling service. To dispose of your tree after the festive season, you need to register to have your tree collected with a suggested donation of £5 to the charity. Phyllis Tuckwell's staff and volunteers will be out collecting the trees on 6, 7 and 8 January, so make sure you've taken the decorations off your tree and left it outside your house by 9am on your collection day.

The service is being offered to houses in the GU1, GU2, GU9, GU10, GU51 and GU52 postcode areas. When you sign up, you'll be sent an email confirming your collection day.

## **So, you think this Christmas is going to be different?**

Sure, this is going to be a Christmas like no other in living memory, except perhaps during the war. But let's not forget that in 1644, following the overthrow of the monarchy and the beheading of Charles I, the new puritanical parliament banned any kind of Christmas celebrations and in June 1647, the Long Parliament passed an ordinance confirming the abolition of the feast of Christmas. This ban remained in force until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

## **Christmas under Covid....**

*....as imagined in a WhatsApp posting*

There will be no Nativity this year because the Three Wise Men face a travel ban, the shepherds have been furloughed and the innkeeper has shut under Tier 3 regulations. Santa won't be working as he would break the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. As for Rudolph, with that red nose, he has had to isolate and take a test.

## **Christmas Farmers Market**

What is being described as a 'Covid-compliant' Farmers Market is being held in the Central Car Park, Farnham (the one near Borelli's Yard) on Sunday **13 December** between 10am and 1.20pm.

## **Acorns, acorns, everywhere**

Have you noticed a bumper crop of acorns this year? Across the UK, oak trees are having what's known as a mast year. The bountiful harvest is a clever strategy to ensure the future generation of oak trees and its welcome food for wildlife too. An oak tree can drop several hundred acorns in a single square metre.....you'll have noticed your feet crunching on them as you walk around the village.

## Never a still moment

In the natural world things rarely stand still. Most of us are aware that some of our summer birds, such as Swallows, Martins, Swifts and Cuckoos leave in late summer or early autumn to spend the winter months in warmer places. What is less well known is that huge numbers of other birds fly in to Britain to winter in the milder climate here. Flocks of Goldfinches fly in from Europe, so you may notice more of them in and around your garden. Chaffinches from Scandinavia and other areas of western Europe also migrate here. The females arrive before the males, and some of them fly on to Wales and across to Ireland. You may see a large flock of Chaffinches in a field or park, and you may notice that most of them are males. These immigrant Chaffinches usually stay in single-sex flocks during their winter stay, and they tend not to mix with their British cousins.

During the colder months thousands of Starlings arrive in Britain from Russia and Poland. They gather to feed in open grassland, on refuse tips, and sometimes in gardens. At dusk these feeding flocks join with others in spectacular numbers near their chosen roosting grounds in woods or reed beds. Before they settle into their roosts they often put on spectacular flying displays, wheeling about the sky. Between November and February is the best period to see this wonderful sight. The west pier in Brighton can attract up to 40,000 Starlings in what is called a murmuration. Much smaller flocks are sometimes seen over Frensham Pond and Tice's Meadow.

Large numbers of European Blackbirds migrate to Britain for the winter, so you may notice more Blackbirds locally. European Robins, too, arrive in numbers. Like the Chaffinches, they tend to prefer to feed in open country, but if you spot a Robin in your garden which has a more orange-coloured breast and is less confiding than our Robin Redbreast, you may have a European Robin.

Surprisingly, some of the small birds migrate across the North Sea for milder conditions here. Great Tits and Blue Tits are known to do so. Even tiny Goldcrests do it. One November morning on the north Norfolk coast I saw an exhausted flock of Goldcrests feeding voraciously off insects in a hedge. These tiny birds had made the journey across the North Sea and urgently needed to feed. Bramblings and Siskins migrate from northern England to the milder climate in the south, and may be joined by others which have migrated from Europe.

Flocks of Redwings, cousins of our Thrushes, migrate here. They fly at night, and you might hear their '*seep, seep*' calls as they fly overhead. Fieldfares, larger Thrush relatives, also arrive, sometimes among the Redwing flocks. They may stay here, foraging for berries and other fruits, or some may continue their migration to France and Spain.

Waxwings sometimes fly in from Scandinavia and even Russia, when the berry harvest is insufficient in their home territories. Watch out for them in supermarket car-parks, where rowans, cotoneasters and other berried trees are often planted. The Waxwing is a pink-brown bird, about the size of a Starling, with a little swept-back crest and shiny red and yellow tips to its wing feathers which look like sealing wax – hence the name.

With all this movement you never know what you might see this winter!

**Val Lewis**

## Full Moon dates 2021

If, like me, you like looking at the beauty of the full moon, then here are the dates you can see them next year, along with their respective names given to them originally by North American Indians. The information is supplied by The Royal Observatory.

28 January (7.16pm): Wolf Moon  
27 February (8.17am): Snow Moon  
28 March (7.48pm): Worm Moon  
27 April (4.31am): Pink Moon (supermoon)  
26 May (12.13pm): Flower Moon (supermoon)  
24 June (7.39pm): Strawberry Moon  
24 July (3.36am): Buck Moon  
22 August (1.01pm): Sturgeon Moon  
21 September (12.54am): Full Corn/Harvest Moon  
20 October (3.56pm): Hunter's Moon  
19 November (8.57am): Beaver Moon  
19 December (4.35am): Cold Moon

No 'Blue Moons' in 2021. They only happen when there are two full moons in a month, in years when there are 13 full moons in total.

## Gems from the Herald

The following are extracts from articles in recent editions of the Farnham Herald that I thought might interest you:

- The future of Tice's Meadow Nature Reserve, beloved of birdwatchers and others, is once again under threat following the decision by its owners to put the site up for sale on the open market to the highest bidder. There is an online petition you can sign to help preserve the Meadow: <http://chng.it/nSsSvHCJ>.
- The critically endangered Great Fox-Spider, one of Britain's largest and most endangered spiders has been discovered at Hankley Common after more than 25 years without a UK sighting.
- The 10-acre 'Shepherd and Flock' is Europe's largest inhabited roundabout. Think about that the next time you drive around it.

## Letters to the Editor

### Stamps for charity

This last year has been very good for the amount of stamps that have come through our letterbox. We don't know who most of them are from, but we do thank you all so very much. Christmas is coming so please continue to save the stamps.

**Jack & Marjorie Bessant, 1 Beales Cottages  
The Street GU10 4JH**

### An old crofter's trick

Just a reminder of the old crofter's trick that has worked in my one-hectare wood, now full of native ferns instead: cut/pull/bash bracken down 3 times per year for 6 years. Job done! All I have to do now is walk my bounds every few days in the spring and summer to pull the ones encroaching from the fields next door. Forestry Commission officers recommend this.

**Glen Plant**

*This letter has been received in response to the article 'A Tale of Two Meadows' that appeared on page 8 of the last issue of DNL, edition number 281.*

### Thank you for your sponsorship

We would like to thank everyone who sponsored us in the recent walk to raise funds for St Mary's and the Good Shepherd churches. We are thrilled to be able to tell you that you helped us raise £929, which will be increased when gift aid is applied. Thank you so much for your generosity.

**Michael and Debbie Foster**

*DNL understands that the total sum raised from this walk was £10,000 including gift aid, which is a phenomenal result*

### Poppies: house to house collection in the Street

This year I was not able to knock on your doors because of Covid; collections were not allowed. I missed seeing you all and having a chat. Hopefully things will be back to normal next year. So will see you then and be after your money again. (you'll have to save up!). Thank you for your past support. Best wishes.

**Jack Bessant**

*See pages 14 & 15 for the full 'Poppy Report'.*

### Comings...

- A warm welcome to Dockenfield to Stephanie Robinson and Andrew Ciague who have moved into Penns Grove in High Thicket Road.

### ...goings...

None that I have been told about for this edition

### ...and congratulations to

- Hannah and James Wigfull are over the moon to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Ava Jane, born at home in Batts Corner on Monday 19 October and weighing in at 9lb 6.5 oz. A little sister for Mark Joshua (MJ).
- And to Alice and Peter White of Alton on the birth of their second daughter Maeve, who arrived on 27 October and weighed in at 9lb 1oz. Maeve is sister to Ayda, and apparently is a 'totally contented little girl'. Alice is daughter to Jill and Roger Trout of Batts Corner and was brought up in the village. And Jill adds, 'it's lovely that Alice and Hannah are having their children close together: Batts Corner Girls'

*If you are new to the village, then please let the Newsletter know and we can welcome you in the next edition. Or if you want to offer congratulations on a wedding, birthday or anniversary again let the Newsletter know and they can be mentioned in this section. And if you want to stay in touch once you have left Dockenfield, ask for an email copy of the Newsletter to be sent to you. Just email michael.foster66@btinternet.com*

### Would you like a log burning stove?

Feeling chilly? We have a Yeoman 'Devon Flat Top' log burning stove that has become excess to our requirements. Although it's 30 years old, it really hasn't been used a great deal, burns very brightly and reliably and has been easy to run. It predates any 'Clearview' technology of course but other than that it's in good shape, although if you wanted it indoors you would have to get a flue etc installed. We aren't asking for any money, we just want it to continue to have an active life (indoors or out), although if you wanted to make a donation to either Phyllis Tuckwell or Helen Arkell that would be lovely of you. For more information or a picture just email: Michael.foster66@btinternet.com

### Have you got crystal balls?

If, this time last year, you had predicted how 2020 was going to unfold you would have got yourself carted off in a padded van. So, who will be brave enough to look into their crystal ball and predict what 2021 has in store? I'll start things off with just one: next year the world population is predicted to reach 7,837,078,000. That's an awful lot of people; so whoever is responsible will they please take a few nights off?

## Preparing for winter in Dockenfield

Winter will shortly be with us, so it is sensible to pause and think again about what winter may bring – remembering it may not necessarily only be deep snow and ice.

High winds, falling trees and puddles in potholes pose threats to the unwary, and there is a sensible advice on caring for yourself and your friends if you are “out and about” over the festive season.

Please take care and report any trouble spots to the Parish Council or the Emergency Contacts shown under the “Coronavirus” tab on the Parish Council website.

### Being prepared

As if the pandemic restrictions did not already require you to think of problems caused by isolation and lack of mobility, you might care to:-

1. Stock up on a few essential provisions to tide you over a few days, including enough essential prescription medicines and toiletries;
2. Count your candles and torches (and check the health of your batteries);
3. Dust off and test your non-digital telephone for when your wireless/mobile battery dies;
4. Check you have fuel for a fire (and if you have a working fire-place, has your chimney been swept lately?);
5. Dig out your warm weather gear for those forays outside to clear the snow – and do you have a snow shovel and a supply of personal-use grit?
6. To remain warm, wear several layers rather than one thick layer;
7. Wear a hat (woolly or other) when outside, as most body heat is lost from the head;
8. Wear gloves with a good grip;
9. Check your outside water pipes and taps are mothballed (lagged) for the winter;
10. Locate and test your mains water stop-cock;
11. Check your gas boiler has been tested recently and your carbon monoxide detector is functional and in date;
12. If at all possible, keep heating on a lower setting, but all the time. This tends to be more efficient than re-heating from cold every day, and it will contribute to preventing roof and loft area piping from freezing;
13. Animals which usually have thin fur, or are poorly, may need animal coats or jackets if outside for long;
14. Other outdoor pets (for example, rabbits and the like) may need extra food, extra bedding or their housing draughtproofing. Please check their drinking water frequently. If in doubt, consider moving them indoors (garage, etc). Larger animals may also need covering and shelter;
15. Check your car has the right fluid in its radiator and your screen wash is correctly diluted – and when did you last replace your wipers?;
16. Check your car tyre pressures (which will drop dramatically in cold weather) and ensure you have an emergency survival kit in your car;
17. Consider buying winter tyres;
18. When driving, make sure your windows and windscreen are clear **before** setting off;
19. If going out, let someone know where you are going and when you should get there (or be back);
20. Bookmark localised weather forecasting pages for those parts of the country you will be visiting over winter.

### Going out?

When outdoors, you can be at risk of hypothermia, firstly by not dressing appropriately, and secondly, not appreciating the extent to which alcohol (or other recreational aids!) blunt their awareness of loss of body heat. If looking cool is very critical, at least stash a warm cheap jacket, scarf, gloves and leggings, or similar, in the car or in a backpack so you can slip into them on the way home when no-one is looking!

*Most of all*, look out for each other - and if your companion doesn't look too good, stay with them and seek help.

### Grit Bins

Surrey County Council (Highways) (“SCCH”) make the following points on their website. Whilst SCC recognises that the provision of grit bins is very popular with the public there is no legal duty for SCCH to provide grit bins or maintain them. However, SCCH recognises that, although encouraging self-help, they can further assist local communities, particularly those not on the P1 precautionary salting network, by siting and stocking some grit bins at strategic locations, prioritised as:-

1. Difficult road junctions
2. Dangerous slopes
3. Acute bends
4. Large numbers of pedestrians

**cont/**

## **Preparing for winter in Dockenfield (cont/)**

The majority of those grit bins were inspected over the summer months and the remaining surveys completed in October. SCCH filled any bins that were less than 75% full by the end of November. If you are concerned that a bin is still empty after this time, please report it to SCCH.

There are three Dockenfield Parish Council grit bins and six SCCH bins in the Parish, all in the same places as before. Please do not use the contents for domestic purposes.

### **On the road**

SCCH have also issued clarification on their policies for dealing with snow and ice on the roads. Please bear in mind that “gritting” is designed to prevent ice forming, or, if practical, to assist melting of existing ice. It does not include snow clearance.

### **Gritting Policy**

#### **Priority 1 roads**

Priority 1 roads are the first to be treated in advance of any forecast frost, ice or snow. Priority 1 roads include:

1. All A roads, all B roads and roads carrying more than 8,000 vehicles per day
2. Main access routes to hospitals
3. Major bus routes
4. Roads that link salting routes with those of adjoining counties
5. Any priority 2 road which meets three or more of the criteria for priority 2 roads.

#### **Priority 2 roads**

During periods of prolonged and persistent frost, ice or snow, SCCH extend salting to include these roads, but only once priority 1 roads have been cleared. Priority 2 roads include:

1. Roads carrying more than 4,000 vehicles per day
2. Main access routes to important industrial areas and secondary education establishments
3. Single access points to villages
4. Access roads leading to railway stations
5. Roads used by other bus routes and depots
6. Steep hazardous gradients and on bridges where local icing conditions are known to occur.

#### **Priority 3 roads**

During periods of snow clearing, the Priority 2 network will be extended to include access routes to primary schools.

Finally, don't forget that emergency messages will be sent via our Emergency Email List (our “EEL”), via the Parish Clerk (Jessica Hobday Tel: 07881 932363 or email: dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk

Have a safe and problem free winter!

**Ian McLean**  
**on behalf of Dockenfield Parish Council**

## **Act your age**

There was just one man in front of me at the supermarket checkout, eagerly clutching his single purchase of a 6 pack of beer. The lady on the till looked at him and said, ‘*I will need to see ID before I can sell you that*’. He lowered his mask and replied ‘*What do you mean ID? I’m 51 years old*’.

## **Don’t you just wish...**

...that this time last year you had the foresight to buy shares in shares in Zoom, Amazon, Microsoft, Tesla, bicycle manufacturers, gym equipment, outdoor furniture, firepits and all the other things you had either never heard of or didn't know you needed quite so much until this year? Retrospective wisdom is a fine thing, isn't it?

## **Macmillan Coffee morning**

Sadly, due to Covid restrictions this year, we were unable to do the yearly Macmillan coffee morning at the Frensham cricket pavilion. However, thanks to the generosity of people visiting the village shop and a few households holding restricted numbered meetings, we still managed to raise £455.48. So, a big thank you to all those that very kindly donated to this worthwhile charity. Keep safe.

**Sue Wicks**

## **What is the meaning of a crisis?**

The noun ‘crisis’ comes from the Latinised form of the Greek word *krisis*, meaning ‘turning point in a disease’ or ‘crossroads’. Did you know that? No, me neither.

## **The ‘Tier system’ as explained on WhatsApp**

Tier 1: Pints

Tier 2: Pints with ‘substantial’ chips

Tier 3: No pints

## **The words on our lips...**

How many times, during 2019, do you suppose we used the words Covid, pandemic, lockdown, virus, vaccine, antibodies, herd immunity, self-isolation, circuit-breaker, quarantine, tiers, PPE, bubbling, furlough, mass testing, social distancing, remote, staycation, travel corridor, Zoom, Teams and many more? Our language changes to fit the needs of the moment.

## **Thought for the day**

What on earth did we find to talk about before Coronavirus?

## **News from down the road at Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity...**

As I write, we are in the midst of another national lockdown. (Maybe it will have come and gone by the time you read this). The main difference for us at Helen Arkell in this second lockdown, as a charity working in the field of education, is that we have been given a clear mandate to stay open for business down Arkell Lane, albeit with extra safety precautions.

And goodness me, we're busy! Just in the last two months alone, we've provided 1:1 support to over 200 children and adults with dyslexia. Over 170 of these required assessments for their dyslexia, and many others received coaching. Over 100 of these people visited us down Arkell Lane, while the others attended whichever of our new hubs was easiest for them to get to. Our brand new Oxford hub is making our services available to people who live further north. (This week we are seeing someone from North Yorkshire). Meanwhile our Salisbury hub is picking up people from the south-west, with clients coming from as far as Devon and Cornwall. Our London hub is busy too, with clients travelling from all over Greater London. A little-known fact for you: Helen actually set up the charity in London first, before moving the Centre to Frensham, in the grounds of her family home. So, it feels right to get back up and running in the capital again, in her memory.

A big thing for us is to particularly reach out to lower-income families. We are seeing twice as many applications for bursary-funded support as normal, due to the financial difficulties caused by Covid. These include a whole host of children from broken homes, whose single-parents or foster-parents are struggling to make ends meet and are frequently in debt. All of these children (and adults) are having difficulties. A case that particularly sticks in my mind is of a young 'cared-for' child from Basingstoke, who is only nine and has already had seven foster homes. Dyslexia seems to be a big factor in what's holding him back. It's also highly likely that it was dyslexia that contributed to his birth-mother taking negative paths in life in the first place, leading to drug addiction. It is heart-breaking to hear these stories but reinforces our determination to do whatever we can to help. For starters, we can do something for all these children (we will see over a thousand this year). A next ambition will be to launch some projects to help young offenders and adults with dyslexia, something that was very close to our founder Helen's heart. (There are twice as many people in prison with dyslexia than in the population at large – dyslexia plays a large part in determining the life-opportunities that are open to people when leaving school).

All the above inspires us to take the charity forward in Helen's name, and to make her proud. We would love as many people as possible to join the big 'Helen Arkell family', by becoming 'Friends of Helen Arkell' this Christmas. (Just drop me a line at [andyc@helenarkell.org.uk](mailto:andyc@helenarkell.org.uk) if you're interested). We're sad that our annual Christmas Drinks won't be possible this year, when we open our doors to all our neighbours and fill you in on what we've been doing. Fingers crossed we can all get back to normal next Spring and Summer.

In other news, we hope that you'll be proud to learn that we are getting involved in the government's National Tutoring Programme. (We've joined forces with four other like-minded organisations to help support 4,500 disadvantaged children across the UK, who have fallen behind during Covid).

In other, OTHER, news – I thought you'd like to hear that one day on my daily cycling-commute from one end of Frensham to the other, I passed an unusual site: a buzzard, a heron and a pair of Egyptian Geese all drinking side by side from the flooded fields by the River Wey, along Pitt Lane.

**Andy Cook**

## **So, how old are you exactly?**

Around this time of year we buy a new wall calendar and put in dates of birthdays of friends and family, with their ages suitably updated from the previous year. We are normally pretty good at transferring them across accurately, too. That is until this year, when Covid brain set in.

First it was the 6<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Goddaughter's twins, so naturally we sent them a 'Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday' card, as that's what our calendar told us to do. Shortly after we knocked on the door of a friend in the village to deliver his card. Not just any card either, but a specially selected 70<sup>th</sup> birthday card. Only to be told by his wife that it wasn't his 70<sup>th</sup> at all, but his 71<sup>st</sup>. Well, we reasoned, at least we made him younger. That will please him.

That ruse didn't work a couple of weeks later with another friend to whom we posted a 70<sup>th</sup> card, again carefully selected and complete with congratulatory note announcing his age. Not long after we had an email from his wife: '*Brian thanks you for his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday card. He's 69.*' Oops!

## **And another thought....**

.....The lockdowns have meant less traffic on the road, which has meant more speeding, which in turn has meant more speeding fines.

## **Frensham and Dockenfield Horticultural Society**

The bad news for 2020 is that very few Society events could take place, but the good news is that your subscription will be held over for next year. Despite the restrictions we were able to hold the following activities:

- An online Spring Flower and Vegetable Show with photographs of our gardening achievements
- Sale of a large range of vegetable plants and seedlings to raise money for the Vine Centre Covid-support activities
- A Compost Making Workshop during the September period of easing of restrictions
- An online AGM to finish the year in October.

Next year we cannot print a confirmed schedule of events but keep your membership handbooks as the show classes will be essentially the same for the Spring and Autumn Shows, and only the central page spread of activities will change. These will depend on what we are able to do under the ever-changing ambient guidelines. As things stand at present, we are planning the following events for early next year. These will be confirmed in Newsletters to Members:

- 28 January and 25 February - Either a talk on herb growing for the table or Members' Seed Swap
- 27 March - Spring Flower and Vegetable Show

In addition, and dependant on ambient restrictions, we plan to organise: gardening workshops, garden outings, open gardens and plant sales.

Many people have got more interested in their gardens during lockdown this year. For obvious reasons. If you wish to join a lively and friendly village Society to feed that interest then please contact Sharon Bleach (Membership Secretary) at [bleachsharon@gmail.com](mailto:bleachsharon@gmail.com) or phone 792993. Membership is only £20 (£35 for couple or family) a year and can easily be paid back as Members obtain discounts at most local gardening businesses. **Dan Bosence**

## **Did you know you could buy 100% Dockenfield honey?**

We were first introduced to 'Little Green Bees' Farnham Honey by our friends John and Sabine Reyersbach, themselves beekeepers. I tried it, really liked it and have subsequently bought more jars, happy to support a local business. I then discovered that the honey comes exclusively from hives in Wrecclesham, Lower Froyle, Moore Park and Dockenfield. Better yet, it is possible to specify Dockenfield honey when ordering should you want to. So, I got in touch with Greg Cobb of Wrecclesham whose honey it is and asked him how to do this.

It seems he has an apiary in Dockenfield with 3 very productive colonies. If you want to buy honey specifically from Dockenfield, you are best advised to purchase from the website ([www.littlegreenbees.co.uk](http://www.littlegreenbees.co.uk)) and add a note to your order requesting this. Greg delivers to any GU9 and GU10 postcodes for a £1 per order fee (typically within 24 hours). Alternatively, you can collect from the house (once the order has been acknowledged) but it's best to set up a time to do this to avoid a wasted journey. It's also possible to just turn up and pay at the door (card or cash) without pre-ordering, but there is always a risk of finding no one at home.

You can find all details of the honey plus other products such as candles, cut comb and polish as well as stockists and details of how to order on the website as above.

Just thought this might be a nice idea as a genuinely local Christmas present. Or of course you can just tuck in and enjoy the honey yourselves!

## **Bealeswood Common Butterfly Survey**

26 August-1 Sept	2 x Small Copper, 2 x Common Blue, 1 x Brown Argus
2-8 September	1 x Speckled Wood, 1 x Red Admiral
9-15 September	2 x Small Copper, 1 x Common Blue, 1 x Red Admiral, 2 x Speckled Wood
23-29 September	2 x Speckled Wood, 3 x Small Copper

**Alison Bosence, Philippa Hall, Anne Tutt**

## **Rainfall? Two of the wettest months since Dockenfield records began**

**Jack Bessant** reports that the rainfall figures for late summer and autumn have been:

2019: August 40.5mm; September 107.7mm; October 107.7mm

2020: August 125.4mm September 30mm October 149.4mm

This year has seen the wettest August and October since Dockenfield records began in 2003.

## **Covid restrictions couldn't prevent Dockenfield and Frensham honouring their War Dead**

Traditions are important in Dockenfield and Frensham, and none more so than the annual Remembrance Sunday services. Every year come rain or shine, residents of both villages come to their War Memorials in great numbers to remember and honour the men of their Parish that gave their lives in both World Wars.

And then came 2020, and the renewed Covid lockdown. But The Reverend Jane Walker (vicar of Frensham and Dockenfield) and Peter James (British Legion Area Organiser and Dockenfield resident) knew that, despite this, the Parish would want to remember those who sacrificed their lives for us all. So, whilst the St Mary's Church service itself was cancelled, the Memorial Services were moved forward at short notice to Wednesday 4 November.

There were three services in all, all of them outside and each with a restricted attendance who socially-distanced in accordance with the Covid restrictions in place before the new lockdown which began the following day. All had The Reverend Jane Walker officiating, with Barry Byng as the Standard Bearer and Tony Adie the Bugler.

Local residents had been alerted in advance that, sadly, it was not possible to attend. Despite this, the services lost none of their poignancy, helped by it being quite the most glorious autumn morning, with an early frost giving way to bright blue skies. The little traffic that passed by did nothing to disturb the perfection of the two minutes' silence or the mournful refrain of the Last Post. In Dockenfield, the bugler moved a short distance away to stand at the top of the hill in The Street above the War Memorial so that the Reveille could be heard echoing through the village.

A beautiful day to give thanks and remember those in the villages who gave their lives so we could live in peace; and one that will live long in the memory of those fortunate enough to be there.

The service at Dockenfield War Memorial took place at 10.45am. The wreaths were laid by Paul Wood, Chairman of Dockenfield Parish Council and John Stirling on behalf of the Royal British Legion, whilst the exhortation was read by Morag James. Grateful thanks to Carl Bentley for tidying and cleaning the Dockenfield Memorial, Dan Bosence (the Flag Master) for lowering the Dockenfield flag to half-mast on Wednesday and on Remembrance Sunday. Thanks also to Charles Pamment and Chris Bonner who acted as Safety Marshals.

With regard to the Poppy Appeal we do not yet know the amount raised this year as the counting has been centralised, however, many thanks to all of you who donated to the Poppy Appeal in whichever way you chose to remember.

**Peter James and Michael Foster**

## **Some things you may not know about Christmas**

- The word Christmas comes from the Old English 'Cristes Maesse' meaning 'Christ's Mass'
- 'Jingle Bells' was the first song broadcast from space when the astronauts of Gemini 6 sang it on 16 December, 1965
- Before turkey, the traditional Christmas meal in England was a pig's head
- The chances of a white Christmas are just 1 in 10 in England and Wales and 1 in 6 for Scotland and N Ireland
- Carols originally began as an old English custom called wassailing, toasting neighbours to a long life
- The world's tallest snowman was built in Maine, USA, and stood at 113 feet tall
- The first Christmas cards were commissioned in 1843, and the first crackers were created in 1847, both in London
- Hanging presents on trees may come from the Druids who believed the tree was the giver of all good things
- Christmas pudding was originally a soup made with raisins and wine
- Meanwhile mince pies were originally made with beef and spices. Hence the name
- The holly in a wreath symbolises Christ's crown of thorns while the red berries are drops of His blood
- Hanging out stockings comes from the Dutch custom of leaving shoes packed with food for St Nicholas's donkeys
- Carols weren't sung in churches until they were introduced by St Francis of Assisi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century
- The word Noel derives from the French expression 'les bonnes nouvelles' or 'the good news'
- The abbreviation Xmas isn't irreligious. The letter X is a Greek abbreviation for Christ
- Since 1947 Oslo has sent a Christmas tree to London to thank us for our help in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War
- Many parts of the Christmas tree can actually be eaten, with the needles being a good source of Vitamin C



## Going down river

The National Trust report that *'The health of UK's rivers is declining. Only 14% of rivers in England and 37% in Wales are now considered to be in good health.'*

*'The remainder have suffered as intensive farming, pressures from development and the effects of climate change take their toll.'*

In certain parts of the country, beavers are being re-introduced to help alleviate the problem.

## Words of wisdom

When asked in a recent TV interview what advice he would give the younger generation, Sir David Attenborough said simply *'Don't waste anything'*.

**Paul Wood, Chairman of Dockenfield Parish Council, laying a wreath seen here together with Reverend Jane Walker and Barry Byng, Standard Bearer. Pictures by Simon Claiden and Michael Foster**

## Hatch Pond Reclamation

With impeccable timing a section of Hatch Pond was excavated on Monday 28 September and, with torrential rain on the Thursday, it filled to overflowing. Last winter a large working party cut and cleared willow and blackthorn from this part of the silted-up pond. With the hot and dry weather of this summer the pond had dried, so late summer was to be the ideal time to excavate part of the pond. However, there were still legal procedures to finish concerning the transfer of the pond area into village ownership. These weren't completed until September and luckily the dry weather was holding out.

With the legal transfer completed the digger moved in and the pictures show an upper crumbly dark brown layer which is the pond silt that has accumulated over the years. Some old glass bottles came out, together with a nice ceramic ginger beer bottle from Fenn and Co. Farnham. At the bottom of the excavation we went into the lighter coloured Gault Clay, which makes a good seal for the pond.

Just part of the pond was excavated. This was to limit the damage to the pond life that should then survive in the undisturbed portion. In a few years time the remaining half of the pond might be cleared and maybe excavated.

Post and rail fencing, with a board to give its name and ownership, will hopefully deter more rubbish from being thrown into the pond. Already we have been donated an old tyre. Please keep an eye open for fly-tippers, it has been a long-term problem at this site. Also please keep an eye open for any wildlife you see visiting the pond and let us know what you see. Does anyone have any memories about the pond? David Poulson tells us it is known as Hatch Pond because it used to be inhabited by wildfowl which, presumably, hatched there?

**Dan Bosence (for Open Spaces Group, Dockenfield Parish Council)**





**Robins on Xmas cards were originally a joke when postmen in their red tunics were named after them**

### **Thanks, from the rescue pigs**

In the last edition of DNL there was an appeal for windfall apples to feed the rescue pigs at Orchard Farm. Anita at the Farm sends thanks to everyone who has kindly made the effort to supply her pigs with these windfall apples this autumn. Your generosity has made them all extremely happy.

There are eight rescue pigs at Orchard Farm. Winston and Wilma were their first. A chap who had them since piglets had to go abroad for work and needed a home for them where they wouldn't be slaughtered. Then there are Marley, Margo, Martha and Maddie who were abandoned by the side of the road in a terrible state; severely under-weight and with mange and worms. The Forestry Commission staff who found them raised enough money for all their vet bills. Finally, there are Dotty and Ernie whose previous owner was disabled and due to a change in circumstances couldn't manage to look after them anymore.



### **The Cup-a-Soup fights back**

I'm told that the way to make sure that the dry mixture of a Cup-a-Soup doesn't end up all lumpy is to stir in a little cold water before adding the hot. I added the cold and stirred away merrily but there were still lumps in the mixture. So, I used the back of the spoon to crush them hard against the side of the cup. Big mistake, as the mixture took issue with this and propelled a quantity of thick cold soup upwards to land across my face. 'Ah' said Debbie helpfully, *'those aren't lumps at all are they? You are trying to crush the croutons.'*

The moral of this story is that I would recommend this manoeuvre if you want to break a tense moment with a good laugh. Otherwise, frankly, it's not a good look.

### **Marathon run? Or Marathon bar?**

Another from WhatsApp: This is the first year I haven't done the London marathon because of Covid. I usually don't do it because I am fat and can't run.

### **Why is it called a 'pandemic'?**

And another: On average a panda feeds for about 12 hours a day. This is the same as an adult human during quarantine, which is how we get the term 'pandemic'.

### **The joy of the typo...**

We received a letter last month that, instead of being addressed to us in the usual way as Mr and Mrs M and D Foster, instead said Mr and Mrs MAD Foster, which is possibly nearer the truth. This reminded me of a letter sent by the Production Manager of an advertising company I worked for some years back. He had intended to write *'The Accounts Department have passed over your letter of...'*, but unfortunately he had used an 'i' rather than an 'a' in the word 'passed'.

Nor are typos purely the province of individuals. For years the national newspaper 'The Guardian' had such a reputation for uncorrected spelling errors that it became known, in the trade at least, as 'The Grauniad'.

### **...and of predictive text**

I wanted to send a WhatsApp that read *'Well, that's excellent'*. Clearly I had typed something incorrectly, and then predictive text took over. Happily, I proof checked it before pressing send because it had been converted to *'We eat excrement'*.

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