

# **The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter**



**December 2020 – January 2021**

## FROM REVEREND TERESA STEWART-SYKES

During this second lockdown, my husband Jon and I have been binge watching the Vicar of Dibley! My goodness what a tonic it has been, making us laugh out loud and helping us to forget for a moment the dark evenings and the latest gloom and doom on the news. Last week we watched the Christmas special in which Alice Tinker, dressed up as the Virgin Mary, gives birth to her first baby during the parish nativity service! Hilarious!

This year we are all trying to find things to amuse ourselves, to lift our mood and to distract us from the reality of the pandemic and how we will be able to celebrate Christmas. As human beings we are hardwired to find solutions, we change the way we do things in order to improve our situation, and we work together because we are inherently social creatures. This is how we are all coping with preparing for Christmas and everything else as we continue to live with COVID; we are being ourselves, doing what comes naturally and living in hope!

Many religions and world faiths echo this natural human instinct towards hopefulness. In November Hindus celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights which celebrates the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness. In December the Jewish festival of Hannukah is kept and the story of the miracle that happened during a time of Jewish persecution, where just a day's supply of oil allowed the menorah in the rededicated Temple in Jerusalem to remain lit for eight days, is remembered. For Christians the seasons of Advent and Christmas reflect on the coming of God among us in the person of the child Jesus, the mystery of the incarnation, God made flesh; and this gives us hope that a better future is around the corner, because God is living amongst us and working in us to bring all things to fulfilment.

Human beings need to hope as badly as they need food and oxygen. God has created within each of us this hardwired intuition for hope, a hope that is realised in the birth of Jesus. My prayer for myself and for you all this Christmas and New Year is that we will live with hope in hearts and enjoy all the festive season has to offer us.

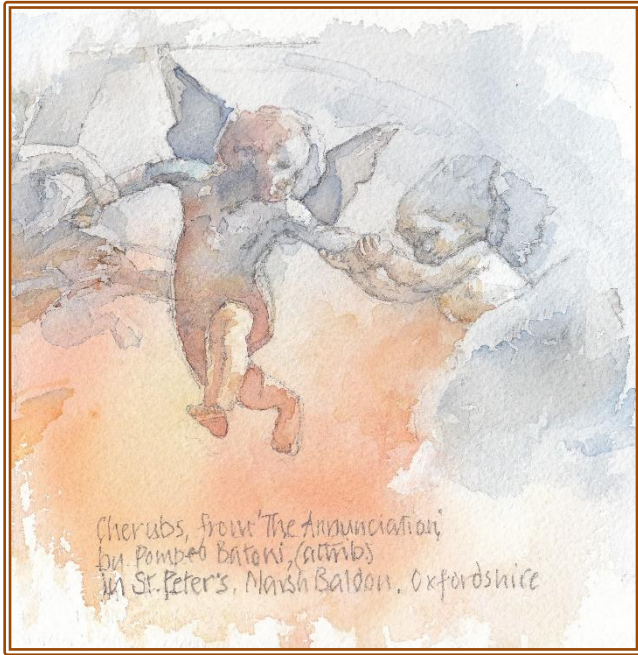
I will end as the Vicar of Dibley always ends with a joke, "Two nuns are driving through Transylvania when a great big vampire jumps on the bonnet. One nun says to the other 'show him your cross'. So the nun opens the window and yells: 'get off my bonnet you toothy git!'"

*The Revd Teresa Stewart-Sykes is Team vicar for The Baldons with Nuneham Courtenay, Berinsfield and Drayton St Leonard.*

e-mail: RevTeresa@outlook.com and tel: 07823 809112

**A clergy person can always be reached in a pastoral emergency by ringing the Dorchester Team Office 01865 340007**

## CHRISTMAS CARDS NOW ON SALE



*This beautiful watercolour by Caddy Attewill has been turned into Christmas Cards which will be on sale in aid of church funds.*

*To order yours, please contact  
Veronica (343367 or  
vsandilands@btinternet.com)  
or Natasha (343478 or  
tashaandjames@btopenworld.com)  
or any PCC member.*

### BERINSFIELD TOY BANK

I am writing this in the middle of November so by the time you read this I may be even more thankful for your generosity!

Your response to the Toy Bank Appeal has been incredible with 78 donations of toys and gifts for children of all ages coming into the Toy Bank so far. With these donations we hope to provide Christmas gifts to the children and young people of up to 20 families from Berinsfield and the surrounding villages who are struggling this year because of job losses or loss of income. You may think you have done a small thing, but I know that you have made a huge difference to these families this Christmas. So on their behalf I say a massive **'Thank you'**

Are you able to help by providing donations of brand new, kite marked toys/gifts for young children and teenagers this Christmas? I can collect a donation left on your doorstep if you would contact me with an address and a time, or you can drop donations off at my house, The Vicarage, Cherwell Road, Berinsfield OX10 7PB.

I will be taking the toys to the Berin Centre for distribution on **6th December** so please get your donation in before then!

Rev Teresa: 07765 930285 revteresa@outlook.com

## **BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS**

May we wish all our villagers a very Peaceful Healthy and Happy Christmas after what has been a difficult 2020. We hope that 2021 also brings health and happiness and, even if gradually, a return to normal family life, friendships, and social life.

### **Baldon Cricket club**

Councillors are delighted at the resurrection of the cricket club and the effort and enthusiasm being shown to get it re-established. The club has in the past contributed to the cost of mowing the cricket pitch but the council in trying to help has decided to ask for no contribution to mowing costs in 2021 to enable the new club to get on a stronger base financially.

### **Southern Electric Power Outages**

On the 28th October the villages suffered yet another power outage following a relatively short spell of squally weather. Whilst parts of the village were off for only short periods a part of Marsh Baldon was off for 7 hours with the electricity company giving confusing messages as to the cause. It was eventually reported as a tree in Little Baldon.

There are concerns at the frequency of outages and their length and a number of individuals have complained to Southern Electric. The council has now supported the clerk in making a formal complaint on behalf of the villages hoping that it might lead to an improvement in the service.

### **Village Green**

Many may have noticed the expanding area of poplar sapling root growth on the green along the side of the ditch at the eastern end. The council has now had professional advice that these are best removed by the selective application of herbicide root killer following the removal of the adjacent poplar tree. The council has agreed to undertake this next spring as the growth resumes. The council has also approved the clearing of another short stretch of ditch at the eastern end of the green.

The council has also agreed to try and clarify with Savills, as land agents, the various responsibilities for maintaining the green and the management and replacement trees where increasing cost to the council are occurring.

### **Parish Council budget for 2021**

Following an initial discussion, councillors agreed to defer a decision on the adoption of the budget precept to the next meeting in January.

### **Solar Farm**

The Parish Council have now received information that Enso Energy will shortly be submitting their planning application to SODC for a Solar Farm on Nineveh Farm land at Toot Baldon.

The preliminary information indicates that they have taken on board comments that were made in the consultation in May including

- The repositioning on Site of the proposed substation and battery storage facility.
- The position of proposed Information Boards on public footpaths advising about solar energy and the biodiversity features of the proposals.
- Retention of the existing informal public footpath in addition to reinstating the definitive public footpath.
- The removal of solar panels on the more highly elevated sections of the fields to assist in reducing landscape, visual and heritage impacts.
- Increasing the distances between the solar panels/security fencing and public footpaths; and
- Strengthening of proposed new native planting in areas around the Site to improve visual screening.

The Parish Council will consider the planning application when we receive it and provide information to villagers on how to see the plan and give us your feedback as soon as we can via the village email.

### **Planning applications: New applications received by the council**

Hornbeam Cottage Marsh Baldon: P20/S3814/LDP. An application under permitted development to create parking space off road but within the property boundary. The council is not required to comment.

Orchard Cottage The Green Marsh Baldon: P20/S0738/HH. An amended application for a single storey rear extension with adjustment to the Gable. The council indicated no objections.

Date of next meeting January 11th, 2021 at 7.30 pm. Venue to be confirmed but may need to continue to be by Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. A number of villagers log into our meetings which we are pleased to see, usually more than attend when we are in the village hall. So please keep coming, it is good to know you are interested. If you want to raise questions not on the agenda there is an open session when we can take them.

### **ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

Items for the February 2021 newsletter  
**by 16<sup>th</sup> January please**

Any villager is welcome to send items for publication in the newsletter. Please send copy to Natasha Eliot: [tashaandjames@btopenworld.com](mailto:tashaandjames@btopenworld.com). Alternatively, I can be contacted on 343478 or at Baldon House East, Marsh Baldon.

For advertising queries, please contact Leanna Maggs on:  
[leanna.maggs@gmail.com](mailto:leanna.maggs@gmail.com) or on 01865 340 521

## **NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS**

Currently there are no activities being held in the hall due to government restrictions. There are two village WhatsApp groups which we are using to communicate widely in the village. We are all aware that some people are not part of these groups, either by choice or technology restrictions. Please do reach out if you need help or just to feel connected. My number is 01865 343459.

### **Yoga**

Yoga is continuing via skype although we will meet in person as soon as we can. If I have missed you off this list and you aren't getting reminders do let me know. This is a great time to give it a try - it's free via skype and everyone turns their video feed off during the session except me (Jenny) so no one can see you cheat. Call or text me (07787 507 304) if you would like to join in on Mondays!

### **Historic Church**

A group of us met at the historic church in Nuneham Park with Patrick Joel from the Historic Churches Conservation Trust for a spot of cleaning and a nose around. If you would like to be added to the group, do message me. We only meet for an hour or so and had a lovely social time whilst helping to preserve this interesting Church. Maybe we can have a carol service here next year. There is no electricity so it would be by candlelight!

### **Village Advent Calendar**

As we are not able to have our usual bingo or other celebrations, we are holding a village advent calendar. So far, we have 13 families involved with two families who cannot decorate their own windows due to restrictions but would like to decorate someone else's. Do get in touch if you would like to be involved. On different nights leading up to Christmas, each household will light up a window which they have decorated in a holiday theme of their choosing. This can be a traditional Christmas theme or one from another such as Diwali or Hannukah. Anyone who would like to join in is of course welcome to. Do contact me if you wish to be part of the official programme. I hope to send out a calendar of days so people know to keep eye out and enjoy. This does not have to be fancy of course - just whatever you feel is a celebration of the season.

On the Saturday before Christmas we are going to have a village walk along the lines of our VE day party. On the 19th of December from 5-7 pm you are invited to walk around the village and see the decorations. If you bring a mug, Jonathan's family at number 32 hopes to offer you some mulled wine or apple juice. There will be Christmas cookies at The Old School House. The Duffy family at number 30 hope to be able to invite everyone for a carol and mince pie in their garden afterwards, from 7pm. The last item is of course dependant on government restrictions. I apologise in advance if I got anyone's house number wrong!

Jenny Taylor: [jenny@datadaysolutions.com](mailto:jenny@datadaysolutions.com)

# **NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS**

## **Gravel extraction**

Our County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale has managed to set up a meeting on 24th November between Cllr Yvonne Constance, who is responsible for the County's minerals and waste strategy, and representatives of this parish council and Sandford.

Cllr Constance has also agreed to answer questions on other infrastructure proposals such as: up to 3,000 new houses on the Grenoble Road site; a new Park & Ride, either at Sandford or the Golden Balls roundabout; the vast solar farm; the inevitable increase in traffic which will result from the new river crossing at Culham; new houses at Culham; and the Clifton Hampden by-pass ending possibly with a flyover at the Golden Balls roundabout.

Taken together you may feel these proposals threaten our landscape, our quality of life and the setting of the historic village of Nuneham, not to mention the setting of Oxford itself. The parish council's representatives will publish a full report of the meeting with Cllr Constance on our website as soon as possible.

## **Solar farm**

Enso Energy says it is about to submit a planning application for its proposed solar farm. The company says it has made six changes to its plans in response to comments made by people during the last consultation:

- The repositioning of the proposed substation and battery storage facility;
- The position of proposed information boards on public footpaths advising about solar energy and the biodiversity features of the proposals;
- Retention of the existing informal public footpath in addition to reinstating the definitive public footpath;
- The removal of solar panels on the more highly elevated sections of the fields to assist in reducing landscape, visual and heritage impacts;
- Increasing the distances between the solar panels/security fencing and public footpaths; and
- Strengthening of proposed new native planting in areas around the site to improve visual screening.

We shall have to wait and see!

## **Last Council meeting**

The parish council met on 3rd November but without Madhvi, who chairs the council but was unwell. The meeting discussed the Playing Field, planning applications, enforcement of the Nuneham Courtenay Legal Agreement, gravel extraction, rights of way, supplies for the new defibrillator attached to the Village Hall, injured wildlife, and whether to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. So, the meeting covered a lot of topics but it did not overrun.

### **Christmas tree collection-point**

The parish council has asked the district council if we can have a Christmas tree collection-point, like last year. You will be able to leave your Christmas tree at the piece of land that is meant to serve as a car park for users of the Village Hall. Only a few of you left your tree there last year and, unfortunately, Biffa did not collect them until April or May but the council hopes it will be a greater success this year.

### **Dutch elm disease**

The Council has received the following request:

“I am a PhD student at Oxford University curating a new exhibit on Dutch elm disease for Harcourt Arboretum. Dutch elm disease wiped out most of Britain’s elms in two epidemics in the 1920s and the 1960s.

It seems that the Nuneham estate had a large number of elms before the epidemic. If you have any recollection of the events, stories about local elm trees and memories of the Dutch elm disease epidemic in Nuneham Courtenay, please do contact me by email at [julianna.piat@magd.ox.ac.uk](mailto:julianna.piat@magd.ox.ac.uk) or via the Parish Council.

We are also interested in photos and drawings of local scenes from before and/or during the epidemics.”

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Council is on Tuesday 5th January. It will be yet another remote one using Zoom, like the last four. If you have anything you want to say to the Council you can join the meeting by telephone if you don’t have a computer. Contact the Clerk for more information.

### **FROM JOHN HOWELL MP**

So many different issues affect our health and well-being, as individuals and collectively, and we are acutely aware of this in our current circumstances. One of the key issues is our environment. I have been very grateful this year to live in the rural setting that this constituency offers and have been particularly mindful of those who live in over-crowded urban situations. Being able to get out and walk in the countryside has been important to me in keeping fit and well. As I have walked over the months, I have enjoyed watching the changes in the landscape and been perhaps more conscious than in other years of the cycle of work for our farmers.

It is good news that the Agriculture Bill which has been progressing through Parliament this year has now passed into law. During the passage of the Bill some important changes were made particularly to tighten up on issues around the recognition of our farmers in food production and also on food security. I believe that the Act is a good robust piece of legislation that sets the way forward, ensuring that our farmers are not undercut, and that the high quality of our food is maintained. It also sets out how farmers and land managers will be rewarded for



the work they do towards protecting and encouraging wildlife, better air and water quality, and measures to reduce flooding. All of this contributes towards achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

I now look forward to the Environment Bill coming back to the House. This Bill is currently at the Committee Stage which is where a cross Party group of MPs scrutinise the Bill line by line. The Committee is due to report back by the beginning of December. The Agriculture Act has a specific focus on farming and land management and as such contributes towards wider environmental issues. The Environment Bill will put the environment at the heart of all policy making ensuring that this and future Governments are held to account on their wider environmental duties. Just as the Agriculture Act set the Trade and Agriculture Commission in statute so the Environment Bill will establish the Office for Environmental protection. This will be an independent regulator which will scrutinise environmental policy and law, investigate complaints and take enforcement action when necessary. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan will also be placed on a statutory footing, and a set of environmental principles will be introduced that will be used to guide future government policy making. I know that developing a Nature Recovery Network is important to many. The 25 Year Environment Plan sets a commitment to this and a framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be legislated for the Environment Bill. If you are interested in finding out more about these important pieces of legislation details can be found on the Parliament website. [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

I am aware that this newsletter will appear in December publications. I hope that by then we will be out of lockdown and all able to look forward to a festive break that is something like the normal break we would take at the end of the year. It has been a difficult year in many ways, but I am optimistic that the tide will soon turn thanks to the wonderful work of our scientists who have thrown so much effort at vaccine research. However I know that for many families COVID has taken the most dreadful toll and that loved ones are sorely missed all of the time and will be especially so during festivities. No words can ease that and I offer my deepest sympathies to all of you who face such loss.

John

If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:john.howell.mp@parliament.uk). If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

## **BALDONS FUEL CHARITY**

### **ARE YOU SUFFERING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AS A RESULT OF COVID-19?**

You may have lost your job or may be unable to work as usual because of Covid-related restrictions. You or one of your family, for whatever reason, may be facing additional and unexpected costs. If you are experiencing problems with paying the bills in these difficult times, the Baldons Fuel Charity may be able provide some financial assistance – and not necessarily just to cover fuel costs.

If you wish to apply for financial assistance, please request a simple application form from the clerk of the Baldons Fuel Charity (Emma Timms, Holman House, 14 The Croft, Marsh Baldon, tel: 01865 341461, email: emmy980@hotmail.com ) or speak to one of the Trustees (see below). Please be assured that all requests and any personal information provided are treated in strict confidence by the charity.

The Baldons Fuel Charity Trustees are:

Alison Porter (Chair) – 340405

Chris Nichols – 343388

David Greenaway – 343496

Ali Barne – 343624

Alan Johns – 343268

Bruce Don – 343330

### **EVENTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 6pm and 8pm** OSJ Unlocked – Karłowicz 'String Serenade', Hurd 'Love bade me welcome' motet for choir, Nathaniel Dett 'Ave Maria' motet for choir and Tchaikovsky 'String Serenade' with Strings of Orchestra of St John's and OSJ Ashmolean Voices Tickets £15 from [www.osj.org.uk](http://www.osj.org.uk) Prebooking essential.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 6pm and 8pm** OSJ Christmas Carols with OSJ Ashmolean Voices and John Lubbock conductor Tickets £15 from [www.osj.org.uk](http://www.osj.org.uk) Prebooking essential.

**Sat 19th December 6pm and 8pm** OSJ Messiah Highlights from Part I of Handel's Messiah plus the Hallelujah Chorus with Soloists Hannah Davey, Ellie Edmonds, Xavier Hetherington, Frazer Scott and OSJ Ashmolean Voices and Orchestra of St John's Tickets £15 from [www.osj.org.uk](http://www.osj.org.uk) Prebooking essential.

**Thurs 31st December 6pm and 8pm** OSJ New Year's Eve Overtures and Dances including pieces by Johann Strauss II, Chabrier, Smetana and Leroy Anderson with Orchestra of St John's with John Lubbock conductor Tickets £15 from [www.osj.org.uk](http://www.osj.org.uk) Prebooking essential.

## NUNEHAM COURTENAY LUNCHEON CLUB

*Dear All*

*It has been almost 9 months since we were all together, how strange and worrying this year has been, I do hope this message finds you all well, safe and finding your new normal!*

### *News I have received*

*I am sure you all remember Sue and Ray Hartley who moved to Abingdon.... Unfortunately, Sue passed away on Remembrance weekend having struggled for a long time with severe Alzheimer's....I have sent our condolences to Ray and Sue's daughters Georgina and Jo.*

*On a lighter note, Sonia and Graham have now moved into their new home in Wallingford, also Gloria has now moved to Cholsey with her daughter and we wish them all the very best, hoping they will still join us when we restart the Luncheon Club.*

*For all the birthdays we have missed and those still to come...A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY*

*We did not have our AGM this year and therefore, all committee members have the same positions.....and on this note I wish to thank the Committee Vice chair.... Carol, Secretary.... Sheila, Treasurer.... Judy, General help.... Sheila and Sally, and Flowers.... Ginny, for all their help throughout previous years, as quite honestly, we would not be able to run the club without them 🙌.*

*Not forgetting Graham who sorts out our Annual Accounts, Sonia who will always help on the front desk, Jenny and Rita our raffle queens. Ray who does a superb job on wine, Chris who is an overall organiser and our very own 🧑🏻🍳 and you the members that also help when you can and make our club.*

*I think I can say from all the committee that we really miss the chatter and laughter that we have always experienced at our monthly meetings. Let us hope that by the middle of next year we will be able to get together. Unfortunately, because of the vulnerable age group at our Luncheon Club, the Government may consider this type of Club to be the last sector to get together.... but fingers 🤞 I always have hope.*

*Wishing you all a very festive Christmas*

*Love and hugs*

*Georgia (Chair)*

## POPPY APPEAL

**In spite of Covid restrictions we raised £128.55 for the appeal.  
My grateful thanks to everyone who gave so generously.**

**Iris Wright**



## **MEMORIES OF JUNE SHEPHERD BY JENNIFER MORTON**

I met June through the Church when I joined the House Communion Group: she was part of this and often hosted services. This is my memory of June, her gift of hospitality. Immaculately turned out and welcoming us to her home. This group was just one who benefited from her many contributions to village life

For 8 or 9 years she was a very active and competent secretary to the social NB (Nuneham and Baldons) fellowship group. She organised many tea parties and outings for about 20 or more older men and women and the refreshments at many church fetes in the Rectory garden.

She also served as a Parish Councillor for 20 plus years and her endlessly patient listening was much appreciated by fellow councillors. It was with much sadness that, as her health deteriorated, she was no longer able to join in as much as she wanted, eventually having to move away from her home and the place she had been so much part of.

### **“EULOGY FOR AUNTY JUNE” BY HER NIECE MICHELE PAULE**

It feels like we're saying goodbye to our beloved June in the most cruel of circumstances. The pandemic not only robbed her of the presence of the people she loved in her final months, but her dementia took away her ability to recognise them once we could visit her again. Although when we came to say goodbye we were limited to 30 people, when we know that the people whose lives she touched and made better could probably fill a stadium.

June was one of the most energetic, positive and loving people most of us will ever meet. This was from a young age. As a daughter she had to leave school and help her mother when family circumstances changed. She was just 15 when she started work. I once asked her if she minded. Her reply was typical: Well of course I missed everyone at school, she said, but I was glad to help my mum because she was so wonderful to us.

June spent her career at the post office, later British Telecom. She worked her way to a senior management position and made many friends along the way, some of whom are here today. She helped organise so many activities at BT, especially for children. Among her papers was a news clipping telling how she got British Telecom to provide the first speech-to-text machines for deaf people. When she found out BT would not import them from America because they cost too much, she set about raising the funds herself, enough for the first two machines of their kind in England. BT then gave way and started to supply them. This was typical of June. She was a great community member, as was shown by her many contributions to village life when she moved to Marsh Baldon.

June had a huge enjoyment of life and a fantastic sense of humour. I can still hear her sudden roar of laughter when she found something ridiculous, or recognised

she'd done something funny herself. One of our favourite moments in a family wedding video is the sound of June's voice calling across the reception to a great aunt who had lost a handbag: it's between your legs Esme! She joined in the laughter with everyone else when she realised what she'd said.

My mother once said it was very sad that June had not had children because she seemed made for motherhood. Sorry mum, I can't agree with you entirely. June was made for aunthood. She was so loving, so patient and playful. Christmas Day didn't start for us until June arrived; we looked forward to Bonfire night at the Baldons every year. When our Canadian brother Russell was known to her that was it – she took him into the fold as if she had known him from babyhood, which indeed she told me she wished she had. He loved her on the spot too, and when she went into care would send her voice messages and videos from Canada which she loved to receive. I know she was just as special to the next generation, her great-nieces and nephews. Leonie shared her sense of style and love of lipstick. I loved seeing Daisy post on Facebook about her enjoyment of Baldons bonfire night, and I know June was as much a part of Sebastian and Reuben's Christmas as she has always been of my generation's.

Once on a trip for the children of BT employees, me, my siblings and cousins were sharing a train compartment. A slightly older girl (whom we had already decided was a bit full of herself) opened the door and asked, "Where is Aunty June? Has anyone seen Aunty June?" Nicholas, then about knee high, stood up and said furiously, She's not your Aunty June - she's our Aunty June!

It's true we did feel that she was absolutely ours, but it's also true that she was everyone's Aunty June. She had love and kindness to spare for all children.

June wasn't just an aunt though. She was a devoted wife and adored John from the day she married him to the day she lost him. She was also, very importantly, a sister. Her brothers and sister, and her sisters in law too, were a huge part of her life. In Chris she inspired a loyalty and care that meant so much to her. To Jan in particular she was the big sister. 15 years older, she carried her around, spoiled her and cared for her as a child. They were close friends once Jan grew up. I don't think a day ever went past when they didn't talk on the phone, and they loved their weekends away - even if June did lose the car keys then find them in her handbag.

As June's health deteriorated and dementia tightened its grip on her, Jan repaid her sister's loving care in so many ways. I can't sum up their relationship; all I can say is we know what you have lost Jan, and we will try to care for you as well as she did.

June made people love her right until the end – we especially thank Laura from Cumnor Hill House, who looked after June, who knew her ways, made her laugh, and found her lipstick when we couldn't.

We have all lost a vital, funny, warm, wonderful woman in June. I will miss her for the rest of my life.

## **THE BALDONS CRICKET CLUB: RULDOPH'S ROCKETS @ SANTA'S SLEIGHERS**

*Reported by Henry Williams*

*Mrs Claus (C), Santa, Fred Claus, Ghost of Christmas Past, Ghost of Christmas Present, Ghost of Christmas Future, Jack Frost, Frosty the Snowman, Head Elf (wk), Kevin McCallister, Tiny Tim*

*Rudolph (C), Krampus, Grinch (wk), Dasher, Blitzen, Dancer, Prancer, Comet, Vixen, Cupid, Scrooge*



Last Sunday saw the annual Finnish T20 Ice Blast come to its conclusion with 2 long-standing rival Laplandian teams clashing in the acrid chill. Players for years have complained about the uncomfortable seasonal calendar but fan-favourites - and ample benefactors - Santa's Sleighers continue to deploy Trump-like democracy. They argue that it is late enough in the year to ensure their team are all present and yet early enough to ensure the busyness of the factory floor has not yet made ordinary games-playing ironically infeasible.

Despite the fog of political turmoil enveloping the Sleighers' 10th consecutive final, spectators and pundits were eagerly anticipating the chance to watch the Rockets, arch rivals and outspoken critics of the Sleighers, have a crack at the reigning champions. This year, in a move that would have made Thatcher proud, captain Rudolph decided to extend beyond his usual talent pool of his peers, and appeal to fellow enemies of the Sleighers, thus assembling his own quasi Suicide-Squad. Enter Krampus, Ebenezer, and the Grinch. Exit Donner: unceremoniously dropped having spent the off season over indulging on his kebab namesake. The Sleighers continued with their tried-and-tested squad including charity case, Tiny Tim, again expected to bat number 11 and field at short leg throughout.

Inevitably, even the toss went the way of the Sleighers and the hearth-sharing powerhouse of Mr and Mrs Claus strode out to the icy middle. From one end, they tucked into Comet's scatter-gun missiles, while at the other, they cautiously played out another scrupulously economic spell from Scrooge. As Rudolph turned to his usually enchanting spin twins, Vixen and Cupid, it was clear to see conditions playing their part as, not just dew, but indeed surface water, made the ball impossibly difficult to grip for the hooped maestros. Eventually, Mr and Mrs Claus were both run out, as fitness, and inappropriately heavy clothing, appeared to be their Achilles heel. The middle innings looked promising for the Rockets with Fred Claus continuing to disappoint his brother with a duck; the Ghost of Christmas Future done by a slower ball; the Ghost of Christmas Past done by a quicker ball; and the Ghost of Christmas Present choosing to give his wicket away to those that needed it more. Unfortunately, the engine room of the Sleighers was yet to come as the un-related, but conveniently named, Frost twins flayed the bowling to all parts with ice cold calm. Even with a formidable score on the board, the Sleighers were criminally not able to complete their overs. Indeed, the innings ended in comical fashion with a mix-up in the middle and both batsmen scrambling to their ends. Tiny Tim sadly couldn't dive for his ground thus leaving Kevin McAllister home alone.

Facing a daunting chase, the Rockets opened with their middle-order pinch hitters, Dasher and Blitzen, in an effort to get ahead of the run rate. The gamble looked to be paying dividends as the Clauses threw up a few early (mince) pies to tuck into. The fielding did not support the bowlers either as a few misplaced drives literally went through Frosty the Snowman at short extra. Finally, McCallister outfoxed the dastardly duo with overs of such variety that even commentators were left dazed and confused. Superstar overseas players, Krampus and The Grinch, both contributed nicely in the ensuing overs, despite the barrage of extensive sledging which appeared to sound like children laughing. Still behind the rate but with Rudolph at the crease, it was bad light that now threatened to end the Rockets' slim chances in the game. Heroically, their captain retired in order to take up his customary role as emergency floodlights, affording the opportunity to his finishers, Dancer and Prancer, to seal the chase. The game waltzed its way to a nail-biting finale only for controversy to rear its ugly head once again. With only 2 runs required off Santa's final delivery, Dancer was given out for handling the ball as he inexplicably appeared to grab and sniff at it extravagantly. Cue wild celebrations for the Sleighers. Cue an avid search in Santa's bottomless sack for Frosty's ball tampering nose.

Merry Christmas from all at Baldons CC. We look forward to a full season with news of events and matches to come in 2021!



Street Tag is a new family-friendly game that rewards primary schools, families, individuals and communities for physical activities such as walking, running, and cycling.

Street Tag is turning streets and parks in Oxfordshire into a giant virtual playground. You can play to win rewards for your child's primary school, or as an individual or team of up to six people in Oxfordshire's community league.

Watch your total distance accumulate and see how you far you climb up the local leaderboard. Get ready to push yourself and start your journey to a healthy lifestyle with Street Tag. For more info on how to play, head to [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/streettag](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/streettag)

## OXFORDSHIRE LIBRARIES **IMPORTANT UPDATE**

- All Libraries will be **closed** from Thursday 5 November
- All **loans** have been **extended** to January 2021
- We are investigating the possibility of a Click and Collect service in addition to limited access to our public network PCs
- Home Library Service remains operational

*Visit our website for more information*



## NATURE IS CALLING US

In early November 2020, we headed into the second English national lockdown, and once again, nature came to our aid. Offering an escape, either on our socially distanced walks, in our gardens, or just that which we see out of the window. We realised it during the first lockdown, and we're appreciating it again this time too, but during the period of relative freedom between the lockdowns, I saw people easily forgetting the lessons we'd learnt from nature.

Until we truly learn something, lessons will often repeat, and keep knocking on our door. Will we remember to keep allowing nature into our lives when this second lockdown is over? Which it will be at some point, I assure you!

Many of us are now working from home more, and maybe more able to take regular breaks out in nature to recharge, which maybe wasn't so easy when office based? One homemaker said to me the other day that they are doing ridiculously long hours now they are based at home, with no breaks! Even longer hours than when they were working in the office it seems.

I suggested they take a walk in nature now and then, ensuring they get the break they so craved. They shrugged this off saying they didn't have time to go for walks and have breaks. There is always time though! Now, their employer wouldn't be expecting them to forgo their breaks, and reduce their productivity, would they?

It's our own responsibility to take breaks and look after ourselves when working from home, and factoring them in. There is always time for breaks, and for allowing nature into those periods of time. The fact this person who was now working from home was working, working, working, working, was largely down to their misaligned self-discipline, and obsessive tendencies, not their employers slave driving culture.

The nature in our parks, our streets, our gardens, out of our windows, it's calling us, we just need to allow ourselves to take a break, and hear it.

Mind how you go, and be sure to look after your wellbeing during these strange times. Maybe stop, ask yourself how you actually feel. If we know how we actually feel, we stand a chance of being able to do something about it, and enjoy the good moments more.

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**Once this current lockdown comes to an end we hope to be able to hold some Public Services again. However we expect these will still have restrictions and be subject to strict guidelines.**

## **THE CHURCH BUILDINGS REMAIN OPEN for Private Prayer**

**There will be a team Service online to join with the churches across the Dorchester Team. The Diocese and the National Church also offer online services. There are also dial in facilities for those without internet.**

Once lockdown has ended we will be hoping to gradually be making our way back to normal with services but of course in these uncertain times we do not know what the future holds. Once services of worship can happen again we expect that pre-lockdown 2 restrictions will apply in our Churches if they are Covid secure. One aspect of this is asking you to register in advance for services so that we can ensure there is space. Each week the Team sends out information about what Sunday services there are across the Team and who to contact if you would like to attend in person. If you would like to be included in that correspondence do let Rev Jennifer know at [jennifer@morton8.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@morton8.co.uk). Or ring the office on 340007.

As we know advice is changing all the time: as things are updated current information will be posted to the websites.

### **Christmas Music and Services**

At the time of going to press, we still await guidance about how we may be able to bring Music and Beauty to the Church over the Christmas Period, but we do have alternative plans to work with. We will publicise on the Village Email and put notices up on the Church doors.

We do not know what the government will be recommending in regard to church services over the Christmas period. Once we have received the government guidelines we will let the villages know the details of service dates and times via the village email and the church notice board.

Thank you for your patience.



A free Church of England phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers. Do share the number, 0800 804 8044, with those who may be feeling lonely and isolated.

***Don't forget that the Diocese of Oxford Church at home services are available to dial into too - find out more at [oxford.anglican.org/livestream](http://oxford.anglican.org/livestream)***