The Four Parishes News Magazine

BECKLEY FOREST HILL HORTON-cum-STUDLEY STANTON St JOHN



St Barnabas Church, Horton-cum-Studley

December 2020/January 2021

The editor writes:



Looking back over this past year, it is really hard to believe how much our lives have changed due to Covid-19. In December 2019, none of us could have predicted how suddenly we would be called on to adapt to completely new ways of doing everyday things like shopping, going (or not going) to work or school, socialising with friends and family etc., etc.

Some people have been working flat out without a break ever since March, while others are facing long empty days or catastrophic loss of income.

On the bright side, many of us have learned new skills and found creative ways of making the best of the current circumstances. As a community, we are doing our best to reach out to the less fortunate. If you need help, especially over the Christmas period, please don't hesitate to approach one of the many people whose contact details appear in this magazine.

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped with this publication in so many different ways. We wish everyone a safe and peaceful new year! *Julia Stutfield*

All contributions to this magazine are the sole responsibility of the author and do not imply or represent any official editorial view or endorsement.

Our cover photo ...

was taken by David Slingo to celebrate the removal of scaffolding after repairs to the roof and complete renewal of guttering

See pages 29-31 for a full account of 'Project Rainwater'

If you have taken a photo which you think might be suitable for the cover of the next magazine, please email it to 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

We welcome contributions or notices for future issues. Please send them to:

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The closing date for the Feb 2021 issue is 15 Jan 2021

The Four Parishes News Magazine is produced under the auspices of our four village churches for the benefit of the whole community. It is funded by advertising revenue, which is used to cover the printing costs.

We are dependent on volunteers to assemble the content, book and invoice the advertisers, compile and edit the magazine, collect it from the printers and distribute it throughout the four parishes. If you are interested in getting involved, please email Julia at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

Recent issues of the magazine are available to view online at www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine

Editor: Julia Stutfield Assistant Editors: Jonathan Barker

Anthea Beresford

The Four Parishes News Magazine has 10 issues per year and is distributed free of charge to approximately 850 addresses in Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley, Stanton St John and Beckley.

To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

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STOP PRESS** **STOP PRESS** **STOP PRESS

Christmas is NOT cancelled

There has been much speculation in the press, especially since the announcement of 'Lockdown 2', that Christmas might be or is cancelled due to Covid-19. This is an impossibility because of what Christmas is.

Christmas, as we have come to know it, will almost certainly be different this year, but rest assured, it cannot be cancelled, because it is the celebration of Jesus' birth over two thousand years ago. To say Christmas is cancelled is rather like saying that your birthday is cancelled: it cannot be so! Perhaps some of the usual celebrations and 'get togethers' cannot take place, or not in the way we would like, but Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the light of the world, the Word made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, will still happen!

We do not currently know what the rules are going to be, so planning is extremely difficult. Some of the wonderful traditions we have in our church and village communities may not be possible this year, but we will celebrate Christmas to the best of our ability, in worship and praise of the celebration of the birth of the saviour of the world, and we earnestly hope to make everyone feel included, whilst keeping our communities as safe as possible.

Anthea

Advent challenge

I wonder if you would like to join me in an Advent challenge. It is not overly onerous, and you might even quite enjoy it! Although Advent starts on 29 November, I suggest we start on 1 December, with the challenge being to read a chapter of the Gospel of Luke every day, ending on Christmas Eve. The Gospel of Luke rather conveniently has 24 chapters, so by finishing on Christmas Eve, we will have read the whole of the Gospel, and have it fresh in our minds as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world, the Word made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, on Christmas Day! As we contemplate the wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, it would be wonderful to have read the full story, as preparation. I look forward to hearing how you get on!

Anthea

Church Services in the Four Parishes, December 2020						
	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley		
6 Dec Advent 2	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer		
		6pm Taizé				
	* 7.30pm Looking for the Light Service via Zoom					
13 Dec Advent 3		9.30am Morning Prayer	* 9am Children's Society Online Christingle	11am Holy Communion		
	4pm Choral Evensong Book of Common Prayer)					
	* 7.30pm Carol Singing via Zoom					
20 Dec Advent 4	11am Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)	11am Morning Prayer		
			6pm Iona Service			
	* 7.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols via Zoom					
24 Dec Christmas Eve		* Crib Service (TBC)		* Crib Service (TBC)		
	11pm Holy Communion at Forest Hill		11pm Holy Communion at Horton			
25 Dec Christmas Day	9.30am Holy Communion at Stanton		9.30am Holy Communion at Beckley			
27 Dec	10am Benefice to join Diocese of Oxford 'Church at Home' Online Service					

^{*} See pages 9-13 for more detailsColour denotes Online Service

Church Services in the Four Parishes, January 2021						
	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley		
3 Jan	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer		
		6pm Taizé				
10 Jan		9.30am Family Service	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion		
	4pm Choral Evensong (Book of Common Prayer)					
17 Jan	11am Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)	11am Morning Prayer		
			6pm Iona Service			
24 Jan		9.30am Holy Communion				
	11am Joint Benefice Service via Zoom					
31 Jan	6pm Candlemas	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer		

Covid-19 Risk Assessments have been completed for all our churches and we are observing social distancing and recommended hygiene precautions. Wearing of face masks is mandatory in places of worship. If you would like to attend a service and have any questions or concerns, please contact Anthea.

Keep an eye on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk for any changes.

All are welcome to join our 'Zoom' online services. Simply get in touch with Anthea at anthea@fourparishes.org.uk or 01865 351869 to request an invitation.

CHURCH MATTERS

All Souls

All Souls is the time in the Church calendar when we remember and give thanks to God for loved ones no longer with us. Those remembered might



be those who gave us life, nurtured us in faith, or were marriage partners, for example. For each of us the person or people are different. This year, due to the Covid restrictions I celebrated the service alone in Stanton St John, naming all those I had been asked by people in the benefice to remember, as a candle was lit. The photo shows the resulting cross, each flame representing a loved one, named, remembered, still missed and whose memory is still treasured.

This was a precious time, which we will hopefully share together next year.

Remembrance Sunday

With constantly changing rules about what could be done for Remembrance Sunday this year, as a Benefice we decided to have our Service online, but were determined it should be a fitting tribute to those who had given their lives in the service of their country.

The service was a great example of togetherness of the four villages. The Rolls of Honour of each village were read by a representative of each village, with photos of each of the village memorials as the backdrop, whether a formal war memorial, or individual crosses representing each villager who had lost their life. John Stradling from Beckley created a splendid recording of the Last Post and Reveille; the Hinks family from Forest Hill recorded The National Anthem; a recording of Stanton Church clock striking 11am signalled the start of the 2 minutes silence; and Bethany Chicken from Horton-cum-Studley provided the young voice for: 'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them'. All were part of a fitting tribute in these unusual times.

Huge thanks to all who worked so hard in the preparation of and delivery of the wonderful Benefice Service.

Evening Services in December and January

The following services encompass a range of worship styles, which all are welcome to try. Only one of these regular services was able to take place in November, so please refer to our website for the latest situation.

Taizé

The Benefice wide Taizé service took place in Stanton St John Church on Sunday 1 November, immediately before 'Lockdown 2'. This was a precious time of silence, listening, contemplation, Bible reading and prayer. A peaceful haven in the busyness of life. Different in the current circumstances, but no less powerful. All are welcome to join us on 6 December at 6pm if churches are open. Wrap up warm, and come and feel the warmth of God's love.



Iona

Beckley hosts the Benefice Iona Service, using liturgy based on that used by the Iona Community, and all are welcome. Currently as we are unable to sing there is music to listen to and reflect on. There is focal point, possibly a picture, for us gaze upon. Somebody shares a short reflection based on the chosen theme. There is a time of silence, so rare in the busyness of our lives, and prayer. Please do join us on 20 December at 6pm, assuming churches are open. Wrap up warm, and come and feel the warmth of God's love.

Choral Evensong

Choral Evensong takes place at St Nicolas on the 2nd Sunday at 6pm in summer and 4pm in winter. The words of the service are from the Book of Common Prayer, which was in daily use in the Church of England for over 400 years. Normally, the congregation is encouraged to join in with the singing (music is provided) but at present only a small choir is permitted to sing. If Covid-19 rules allow, the St Nicolas Consort will sing music for Advent on 13 December and music for Epiphany on 10 January. All are welcome, but if you would like to know more, please contact julia.stutfield@gmail.com. The full music list is normally available on the St Nicolas website www.stnicolasforesthill.org.

Covid, and December and Christmas celebration church activities

As I mentioned in the 'Christmas is NOT cancelled' item, we do not yet know what will be allowed as we come out of 'Lockdown 2'. The December and January rotas in the magazine are based on the assumption that we could return to rules similar to the ones before the current lockdown. On this basis, assuming the requirement for social distancing (and hence the greatly reduced capacity of our churches), and bans on communal singing, provision of refreshments, touching and sharing of common items between people etc., it is clear that our usual crib services, carol singing, and social events will not be possible in church.

We are looking to do as much as we can, once rules are provided and clarified. We are planning a number of events online, but we also aim to be light of foot and to do other things, possibly outside, if at all possible.

We will advertise any changes to the rotas as best we can throughout December, and into January, through my regular church email list, village emails and FaceBook pages, and church and village noticeboards. We will also update the Four Parishes website https://www.fourparishes.org.uk/. Do please look out for changes, and join with us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, as best as we can amidst the world pandemic, keeping each other as safe as possible. And please look out for neighbours, families and friends who might be really struggling at this time.

Anthea

Children's Society Online Christingle

The Children's Society are holding their first ever National Christingle Service on Sunday 13 Dec at 9am. The service will be streamed on the Church of England's website, Facebook and YouTube channels.

The Benefice is joining this online Christingle for the December Family Service. The Children's Society provides support to young people whose hopes and happiness are hanging by a thread, and is a fantastic organisation. Please try to give generously as you would if we were in Church.

Register your interest to receive information on how to watch online, join in with Christingle making and download the Order of Service at https://register.childrenssociety.org.uk/page/70731/data/1.

Looking for the Light

Some of us may be facing the possibility of Christmas alone this year, depending on Covid rules at the time. Some perhaps will be alone as the result of a broken relationship, which Christmas brings to the fore. We may be dealing with Christmas for the first time without a loved one who has died in the year - there is a special person-shaped hole which is even bigger than we have previously noticed, and we dread the empty chair at the dinner table. Or this may be our umpteenth Christmas alone, either without a loved one we lost some years ago, or because we never have anyone to share Christmas with.

Generally, Christmas is seen as a season of joy, celebration, and happiness. But thinking about my own experiences, talking to others over the years, and especially in the current situation, I know that Christmas can be a time of pain and darkness, so I am introducing a service that we held in my previous benefice called 'Looking for the Light', which aims to recognise this and hopefully provide some comfort. We are looking for the light in the darkness of our situation or other personal pain.

This service will be online on 6 December at 7.30pm via Zoom, as I would not want to turn anyone away due to reaching capacity in any one of our churches. An invite will be sent out to my church email contacts. If you are not on that and would like to join us, please do ask for an invite via email at anthea@fourparishes.org.uk or by telephone on 01865 351839. Please note that all our online services can also be accessed via telephone at local rates, so please do ask. For privacy, you can keep your camera off throughout the service, so you will not have to face anyone should you wish not to. A recording of the service will be available afterwards, so please ask if you miss it live.

The service is 35-40 minutes long and is a time for quiet reflection in the lead up to Christmas. There are four short Bible readings and reflections, a time of silence for us to gather our thoughts, two carols and some short prayers.

It is aimed at everyone, but especially for those for which Christmas is a difficult time. This may be true for people under 'normal' circumstances, and may be even more so this year.

Anthea

Requests for carols

We are pressing ahead with our planning for Christmas activities on the assumption that we will not be able to sing in our church buildings, so we are planning two activities online, where we can sing carols to our hearts content. Invites will be sent out nearer the time. Please do make sure I have your email address if you would like to receive an invite. Please also put forward requests for your favourite carols to Julia Stutfield at julia.stutfield@gmail.com or 07766 103427. If you would like to be involved in the 'virtual choir' recordings of the carols also let Julia know. Singers of all ages can record themselves singing along to a 'Guide Track' that Julia provides and the individual voices are mixed together to form the 'choir'.

An evening of carol singing

Perhaps grab a glass of your favourite tipple and some snacks and join us for a relaxed evening of **Carol Singing on Zoom, at 7.30pm 13 December.** Wipe away the winter and Covid blues by joining us. Microphones will be muted, so you can sing as loud as you like, and will not deafen anyone other than your nearest neighbours! And of course you will get a chance to hear our 'virtual choir' in action, as well as some of the other excellent recordings that are generously provided to us by St Martin's Voices and others for use over the Christmas period.

Nine Lessons and Carols

Join us at **7.30pm on 20 December via Zoom** for a service of Nine Lessons and Carols. We are unable to sing in church, but we do not need to miss out on this service which is so much part of Christmas. Once again, microphones will be muted, so you can sing as loud as you like, and will not deafen anyone other than your nearest neighbours!

Family Service in December

Just in case you missed the item on page 10, this to clarify that there will be **no Family Service in church on Sunday 13 December**. Instead, we would encourage as many people as possible to register to join the Children's Society Online Christingle, which is sure to be uplifting. https://register.childrenssociety.org.uk/page/70731/data/1.

Crib Services

We do not know the rules that will be in place for Christmas Eve, but even so, the only way to have a Crib Service safely this year is to do it outside. Weather and Covid rules permitting, Horton-cum-Studley is planning to have a crib service at 3pm on 24 December outside the Millennium Hall, socially distanced. Please look out for updates as rules become clearer nearer the time. Stanton St John is also looking into the possibilities once the rules are published, and we will let people know what is planned as soon as we can.

chiaroscuro theatre

presents

SNOWBOUND

A Virtual Christmas Production

(and possibly more)

In aid of the Neonatal Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital

Details as they develop at

www.chiaroscurotheatre.com

Oxford's much-loved Christmas Celebration concert is joined by a stellar cast of celebrities and goes on-line for the first time this year to help Macmillan Cancer Support.



Filmed in Christ Church Cathedral and the homes of well known celebrities, the concert - aptly named 'Follow The Stars' - will premiere on Friday 11 December at 8pm and will remain on-line until 31 December. The concert is free to all.

Visit <u>macmillan.org.uk/followthestars</u> to preregister and receive an invitation to view.



A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,

We have done it! Bertie and I have now walked to all four of the benefice



churches, and back! I know it has taken us slightly longer than planned to achieve, but we have - so watch out, next year, social distancing permitting, I plan a benefice pilgrimage. Watch this space!

Part of what gave me the confidence to tackle the last obstacle, was the downloading of my map to an App on my phone, which meant I could map out the walk and confidently know exactly where I was, as my

progress was tracked by GPS. I did not have to look at the map, but look at the open space ahead of me, and hope I was on the right path. I could see exactly where I was on the map. I could see if I veered off to the left or to the right. That said, I still delayed setting out as I had not tested the App and was not confident I would make it work properly. Indeed, I put myself under huge pressure of getting back in the daylight as I dillied and dallied before setting out. Until I had put the App to the test I was not confident it would show me the right way and keep me on the right path.

We made it to our destination as the dreadful selfie attests. You can see why I rarely take selfies! Bertie looks far nicer!

On the return journey as we rushed back, I ended up up to my shins in water in a field as we avoided the cows, who, absent from the field on our way out, had returned from



milking, and looked slightly menacingly at us as we wandered (quickly!) through their field. Soaking wet feet, from water coming over the top of my boots rather than a leak in the sole, accompanied me on the return leg! Notice in the photo with sheep that the moon was in the sky as we progressed on the return journey. And the sunset was stunning! This was the first day after the clocks went forward.

As I reflect on my reticence of setting out as I was not sure of the route, and the delays until it was so nearly too late to travel safely, it made me think about our journeys of faith. I wonder whether at times, you, like me, have been too wary to set out. Wanting to be more certain of the journey you are about to travel. Wanting everything to be securely tied down. Wanting to know exactly where you are off to. Wanting to know each and every step before daring to put one step in front of the other at the outset.

With God in our lives it is safe to set out on our journeys. We do not need

everything mapped out before we dare step out. We have our own built-in 'GPS trackers', so to speak, and we can keep 'checking in', through prayer and through listening for God's still small voice, that we are on the right path. God's still small voice may not be an audible voice in our ear, but a sense deep within, the voice of a loved one, a sense of



'rightness', or deep inner peace, about what we are doing. There is no 'zapper' that we will get 'shocked' by if we veer off the path, one way or the other. We have complete free will. But we may sense something, and, if we choose to, can change track. If we get lost, God will welcome us back with loving open arms, and will guide us back, if we allow Him.

In these times of difficulty, we need not fear, as we are never alone. If we find ourselves feeling as if we are, metaphorically speaking, stuck in a bog or quick sands, seemingly walking aimlessly in the wrong direction, we can turn to God and He will lead us back. It is safe to go on a journey even though it may not always go well, but we have a guide to lead us back if we allow. So, let us all continue our journeys. As we approach this time of Advent, a season of preparation, as the church prepares to celebrate the coming of Christ at Christmas, maybe spend time in prayer seeking guidance for a route, listening patiently, confident in our guide, who is gentle and loving, and always wanting to hear from us.

Keep safe and God bless you.

Anthea

GENERAL

Botley Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery

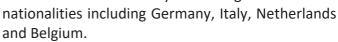
Andrew Pennington, from Horton-cum-Studley, was an RAF officer until retirement in 2005, and has been guiding school trips to WW1 battlefields in France and Belgium since 2006, plus Germany WW2 and Cold War.

Have you ever heard of Botley CWGC cemetery? Until 1914, the burying

and recording of military personnel killed in action was haphazard and not a formal aspect of military organisation. In 1914, Fabian Ware was working for the Red Cross in France, and realised that, unless some system was established, the many thousands of families of British and Empire troops who had died in action would not be able to



visit their graves or to know where they had died. Ware started to record all the details, and by 1917 the Imperial War Graves Commission was created by Royal Charter. Now called the Commonwealth War Graves Commission it has built and maintained cemeteries all over the world. The biggest, with almost 12,000 graves, is at Tyne Cot in Belgium, but in the UK there are over 172,000 graves in over 13,000 locations. Botley cemetery is the largest in Oxfordshire, with 739 graves, including 156 World War 1 and 516 World War 2 Commonwealth military. Plus 70 graves of other





Why such a large number of graves in Oxford? Simple, really. It has been UK policy not to repatriate the bodies of battlefield dead since 1914. However, a high proportion of the wounded, were evacuated to UK hospitals. Many new and temporary hospitals were set up all round the UK, including the Territorial Army (TA) 3rd Southern General Hospital, which was established in the Oxford University Examination

Schools. Those who did not survive their wounds needed to be buried, and so the War Office bought the land at Botley for a cemetery.

Private TE Eggleton, of the Wiltshire Regiment, died on 10 October 1914, the first date of death in the cemetery, but a reminder of our current pandemic is the grave of Staff Nurse Mabel Murray, a TA nurse, who died of the flu on 2 November 1918.

The majority of World War 2 graves are from the RAF, mainly because Oxfordshire and its surrounding counties were the home of many flying training stations.

The cemetery is well worth a visit. A list and guide to all the graves is available on site, and a basic knowledge of the history of the two World Wars will help put them all into context. It is easy to find, just follow the green CWGC signs that lead behind the McDonalds opposite the Seacourt Tower on the Botley Road.

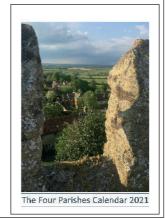
Andrew Pennington

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Four Parishes Calendar 2021

A4 size, one month per page with space for writing in engagements and a selection of old and new pictures by local photographers of our historic buildings and beautiful landscape.

Available from Stanton Shop or place your order online via the Four Parishes website www.fourparishes.org.uk.



Wheatley Library Refurbishment

Wheatley Library has had a make-over! After delays due to the pandemic we have completed the work and are back on track to an improved layout and décor in the library.



The new layout provides a more open and accessible space. The old metal shelving has been replaced with nearly new wooden shelving (previously used in a temporary Oxfordshire Library whilst the Westgate development was underway) including a dedicated wooden display unit to showcase books in a more attractive way to customers.

Moveable shelving means that the southern end of the library will be better suited to host community events, including those run by the Friends of Wheatley Library. Some other items of furniture have been replaced, including a more compact desk for staff which increases floor space, and new seating, including soft seating for the children's area. The library has been given a fresh coat of paint and a new carpet to complete the look.

We want the library to be welcoming and open to all; a place for connections and communication, pleasure and practicalities. The library should be somewhere that everyone can come with confidence to spend time in a safe and comfortable environment.

The library refurbishment has been funded by money allocated to the library from various housing developments in the area and a contribution towards the costs of the decoration made by the Friends of Wheatley Library.

We hoped to have a re-opening date to include in this article by time of going to print but due to national restrictions during November, we are not in a position to give an unequivocal date. Keep an eye out online or at the library itself for notices about an opening date.

Wheatley Library, The Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1XP Tel:01865 875267 For opening hours and other events see the relevant page at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Barton Community Library

Barton Library re-opened in October but had to close again due to government restrictions on 5 November. For up to date information see https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/find-library/barton-community-library.

BECKLEY

Beckley Church

Please see the front of this magazine for information about church services over Christmas, or visit our website www.fourparishes.org.uk. Due to the current uncertainty about Covid-19, all arrangements may need to change at short notice so do look out for updates as rules become clearer nearer the time.



Beckley Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Beckley, Oxford, OX3 9UT "Tel: 01865 351416" Email: office@beckleyschool.org Website: www.beckleyschool.org "Headteacher: Mr Mark Szortowski

International Day of Peace

The International Day of Peace is observed around the world each year. Established in 1981 by United Nations resolution, the day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and to contribute to building a lasting culture of Peace. Children across the school marked the occasion through a range of class activities and interesting discussions.

Harvest Celebration

As we were unable to go to Church for our usual harvest festival this year, we put together a short film showing how we celebrated harvest in school. From harvest poems and prayers, to artwork, fruit faces and even bread making activities, please visit the video gallery https://beckleyschool.com/galleries/video-page/ on our website to view. For best results, watch with sound and select video settings to change the quality to 1080pHD. A member of our community emailed me to say that the Harvest film wasn't so much a virtual celebration, as much as it was a real celebration. We are really proud of our wonderful children and staff and hope you enjoy this film as much as we enjoyed making it!

(continued over)

Bikeability Training

Bikeability is one of England's premier cycle training programmes. It is about



helping pupils to gain practical skills and understanding in how to cycle on today's roads. Bikeability gives children the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling. We were delighted to again be able to offer this fullyfunded opportunity to our Year 5 pupils. Undertaken outside, at social-distance and within class bubbles, children were taught

the basics of bike maintenance, road awareness and how to safely conduct manoeuvres on the road.

Reception Applications

If you know of any local prospective families looking for a place in Reception for next September, please point them in the direction of our website (https://beckleyschool.com/) where we have information about the admissions process and a brand new Virtual School Tour. Applications for Reception places for September 2021 can be made from now and must be received by OCC no later than 15 January 2021.

Hospital Artwork Exhibition

We were delighted to have been invited to provide children's artwork for the Outpatient Department of Neurosciences at the John Radcliffe Hospital. The brief was to add some brightness and colour to the waiting area which, I am sure you will agree from the following examples, the pupils achieved.













Beckley and Stowood Parish Council

The next PC meeting will be held on Thurs 3 Dec at 8pm either at Beckley Village Hall or remotely if we are still in lockdown. This may change at short notice if there are further Covid-19 restrictions. Parish Council information, including agendas and minutes, is available on the website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk. The Clerk's email address is clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk if you wish to contact the Parish Council to raise a question for the next meeting. The January PC meeting will be held on Thurs 7 Jan 2021 at 8pm – venue to be confirmed.

Christmas Tree Recycling at Folly Farm, Common Road, Beckley, OX3 9UR. Return your old tree to the farmyard by Sunday 10 Jan 2021 (trees left after this date will not be accepted) for collection by SODC on Monday 11 Jan 2021 for composting.

The Otmoor Flyer – The bus service has resumed on Tuesdays and Fridays in Beckley. Please see notices on the High Street and Village Hall noticeboards and on the Beckley website. Tickets available from the Abingdon Arms. Seats must be booked in advance.

For **Beckley Village Hall,** please see www.beckleyvillagehall.org. To enquire about a booking, contact Stuart Marshall at booking@beckleyvillagehall.org

Fix My Street: to report a road or street problem please go onto the County Council website at www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Reminder from the Parish Council: Please clean up after your dog and dispose of bagged waste and litter in the dual-waste litter bin on the playing field.

Temporary Road Closure – Otmoor Lane, Beckley - A request has been received from Thames Water for a temporary road closure to apply to a section of Otmoor Lane whilst water connection and disconnection works are carried out. A temporary Notice is being made to implement the temporary closures and will operate from the 26/01/2021 to and including the 29/01/2021 (full closure 24hrs each day). Access will be maintained for emergency service vehicles and for those frontages within the closure area, subject to the progress of the works and liaison with the works supervisor.

Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society More than a Pub programme - talks broadcast live by Zoom Further information including access details at bacbs.org/events

The monthly Sunday evening talks by Zoom continue, and have proved popular with 30-50 people 'zooming' in; often more than could fit in the pub's old barn area. Indeed people who could never make it to the pub have been able to enjoy them. They have ranged across many disciplines and we cannot be accused of not being eclectic! This is the current program:

Sunday 13 December, 6.30-7.30pm: The Secret World of Codes and Ciphers - a talk by Roger Heath-Brown FRS, Emeritus Fellow at both Worcester and Magdalen Colleges, Oxford. Professor of Pure Mathematics at the University of Oxford until his retirement in 2016, Roger's research interests centre on the study of prime numbers. His talk will look at the history of codes from ancient times to the internet age. It will be accessible to all, and will involve audience participation!

Sunday 10 January, 6.30-7.30pm: A Dorset Year: The poetry and prose of William Barnes and Thomas Hardy. 18:30-19:30 Sunday 10/1/2020. Presented by The William Barnes Society, the Thomas Hardy Society, Oxford's Stanza 2 poetry group and local contributors. Poets of the Victorian era, Barnes and Hardy wrote about rural Dorset and wider subjects in very different styles, and both had connections with Oxford.

Sunday 7 February, 6.30-7.30pm: Walls of sure and solid stone: Join Dr Tara Stubbs and Jane Haigh, co-founders of the 'Poetry and Structure' public engagement project run through Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education, in a discussion about the structure and content of the poem 'Scaffolding' by Seamus Heaney, in relation to The Abingdon Arms building and the community benefits it provides. It would be helpful if people could read the poem in advance, think about possible connections with The Abingdon Arms and the 'More than a Pub' events, and then Dr Stubbs and Jane Haigh will give a short introduction to the poem, and their responses to it (both verbal and visual), before opening up discussion.

Zoom access details are distributed nearer the time. If you would like to watch previous talks then email info@bacbs.org with your request.

FOREST HILL

News from St Nicolas

The Church is open for individual prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays, 11am until 4pm.

Please see the front of this magazine for information about church services over Christmas, or visit our website www.fourparishes.org.uk. Due to the current uncertainty about Covid-19, all arrangements may need to change at short notice so do look out for updates as rules become clearer nearer the time.

Who was St Nicolas?

On the Sunday nearest to 6 December, we would normally celebrate St Nicolas Day with Christmas Family Crafts and Games in our village hall, followed by a Carol Service in St Nicolas. Our beautiful church is usually filled with children, who hear stories about St Nicolas and light the Christingles that they have made in the village hall. This year, we will need to do things differently, but we will still find a way to celebrate. Check out www.stnicolasforesthill.org and the village Facebook page for details.

Saint Nicolas was an historic 4th-century Christian saint. He was born into



a well-off Christian home at Patara in Asia Minor, and became Bishop of Myra (modern-day Demre, in Turkey). Sadly, his loving, faithful parents died while he was still young and his early loss inspired him to follow their example. He used his wealth and other talents to help people who were less fortunate and there are many stories of kind and miraculous acts by Nicholas. You will find some of them in our church if you go in between 6

and 20 December (Wednesdays or Sundays, 11am - 4pm)

Saint Nicolas was very popular in the Middle Ages and he became the patron saint of children, the poor, sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, brewers, pawnbrokers and students, among others. Many churches have been named in his honour, including our own church at Forest Hill, which was dedicated to him over 800 years ago in 1273.

(continued over)

Because of his habit of secret gift-giving, Nicolas became associated with the Dutch Sinterklaas or Santa Claus, who we also know as Father Christmas. The image of Santa Claus as a portly, joyous, white-bearded man became popular in the United States and Canada in the 19th century due to the significant influence of a poem published anonymously in 1823 called *A Visit From St. Nicholas* (also known as 'Twas the Night before Christmas).

This image of Santa Claus has been maintained and reinforced through song, radio, television, children's books, films, and advertising but the kind and generous spirit of the original St Nicolas can still enlighten our modern commercial Christmas, if we only give ourselves time to feel it.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The recreation ground and children's play area remains open for use but please follow government guidelines when using the area.

The Parish Council has continued to conduct council business remotely during the COVID-19 restrictions. Residents are welcome to join the meetings. If you would like to attend a meeting via Zoom or have issues you would like raised on your behalf please contact the clerk.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Thursday 10 December**. Agendas, with planning application details and minutes will be posted on the main notice board outside the Village Hall and on the website, along with other Parish Council information:

www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover/index.asp

You can contact Helen Cross, the Parish Council Clerk, tel: 0844 884 3328, during the hours 09:00 – 17:00, or email: theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk.

Forest Hill Village Hall

The Hall has been under restricted use during the month of lockdown. Hopefully we will be able to return to holding more community and active events in December and January to reflect the Festive Season.

Provisional bookings can be made now via Dawn on 873885 or dunbardawn1@gmail.com.

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

News from St Barnabas

Sunday services in the building are currently not permitted under Covid-19 restrictions. However, we continue to meet via Zoom each week. Thank you to David Slingo, Peter and Julia Stutfield and Anthea for enabling this. After 2 December we hope to resume face to face services, but await government announcements. Anyone wishing to receive information about services or Zoom, please email stbarnabaspcchcs@gmail.com or phone 07850 004700. Please also see the village facebook group.

Christmas Services

Please see the front of this magazine for information about church services over Christmas, or visit our website www.fourparishes.org.uk. Due to the current uncertainty about Covid-19, all arrangements may change at short notice so do look out for updates as rules become clearer nearer the time

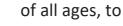
Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council

The Parish Council has received a grant from Cherwell District Council to fund equipment including a camera equipment and a laptop to support a village speed awareness campaign. Data collected from the camera will be shared with Thames Valley Police to enable them to issue fines and speed penalties to those caught speeding through the Village. The Parish Council is looking for between 6-8 volunteers who will be trained to use the equipment and support this campaign. If you are interested please email the Parish Clerk at hortoncumstudleyparishcouncil@gmail.com

Autumn is a time where we all tidy out gardens, and trim back hedges. The Parish Council would like to remind Parishioners to clear their own garden waste, and dispose of it appropriately and not discard rubbish in public space, or farmers' fields. The Parish Council meets remotely on the second Thursday of every month, if you would like to attend please email the Parish Clerk.

Christmas Angels in St Barnabas

Our lovely little church in Horton-cum-Studley has, like all of us, been feeling a little gloomy lately. We invite everyone,



make an angel to cheer up St Barnabas



They can be BIG or small...



...Painted, drawn, made out of doilies or card or even newspaper... ...Knitted, crocheted or sewn.

Please bring your angel into church any Sun (or Wed after 2 Dec) and leave it on the back pew. If you prefer to make/paint a king, a shepherd or even a donkey that will be great too. Anything to add some Christmas cheer.

There will be a small prize for the angel who makes Anthea smile the most. If you would like your angel to be considered for the Smile prize - please make sure your name/contact number is visible on your angel or you can email a photo of your angel plus your name to carol welch20@hotmail.com

Whether or not you contribute - we really hope that by Christmas we will be able to open the church doors more frequently so the St Barnabas angels can bring Christmas cheer to everyone.















Oxford Homeless Project Christmas 2020

Thank you so much for all the blankets and warm clothes donated for the Oxford Homeless Project last winter. Thankfully sufficient accommodation has been provided by the council for rough sleepers in Oxford this winter while the pandemic prevails. However, there is another way you can make a difference if you wish to.

The volunteers usually provide Christmas dinner for homeless individuals but not this year because of Covid-19. Instead they are filling 100 hampers with goodies to bring some Christmas cheer to individuals and struggling families in the East Oxford area. They would be very grateful for donations of items to include in the hampers. If you would like to be offer a contribution, the list of preferred items is below. Items to donate must be new.

Christmas Crackers, Xmas decorations
Mince pies (alcohol free), Christmas puddings
Non-perishable food items, chocolate and sweet treats
Small toys and teddies, books and games
Winter woollies for all ages

If you would like to contribute any items, please can you pop in the plastic box I have left in the Church porch by 15 Dec. (I will pass to my colleague, one of the volunteers on the 16th)

Very many thanks. Carol Welch.

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

Autumn colour and berries have been fantastic. Some trees hang onto their leaves much longer than others. Beech hedges retain their leaves right through the winter. A hornbeam hedge will also retain its leaves but not for quite as long. I am still waiting for a couple of particularly large and fine trees in this locality to shed their leaves so that I can collect them for my leaf mould bin.

The redwings have arrived. Look out for flocks of small thrushes, with a reddish underwing and a prominent creamy stripe above the eye, eating berries in the hedges or, if you are lucky, feasting on fallen apples in your garden.

We have had some frosts but the garden is ready for winter. I have protected tender herbaceous perennials with straw and hessian. The many snowdrops are tucked in with a little bonemeal and some of the aforementioned leaf mould. I have also prepared for spring by planting up my pots of tulips- a mix of oranges (very reliable Ballerina) with rich dark purples (Paul Sherer and Black Parrot).

Meetings in 2021 will be held remotely using Zoom at 8pm on the third Tuesday of the month. Do ensure that we have your email and please join us for the AGM on 19 January. For more information about our club contact the chairman, Susan Burge 01865 351310 or see the website: www.horton-cumstudley.org.uk/community/clubs/.

Millennium Hall Committee

My update on the hall in the last issue was very upbeat. Sadly, that optimism for a return to normality has been rudely dashed by the second wave of Covid-19. We have had to close the hall again having picked up a few bookings during the rest of the year. On a more cheerful note, the field and the play area can remain open so dog walkers, footballers and children can still enjoy the facility.

We are a little concerned about the play area. The annual inspection reported a few minor problems which Barry White has kindly rectified. While doing so he discovered that some of the wooden posts supporting some of the swings have rotted. This needs urgent attention and we will be investigating sources of grants to renew/replace much of the equipment. Users of the play area should be aware that the little gate on the footpath leading to the Green is swinging loose and will therefore be sealed.

Another light in the main hall needs replacing and other minor electrical matters need attention. I guess all the expenditure we have had over the last year is inevitable in a building that is now 20 years old and very little has been spent on it. The final point to report is that the septic tank needs emptying and this will be done shortly. We must avoid the overflow that occurred about 3 years ago. It rather proves the old adage of 'out of sight, out of mind '!

Derek P Jewell

Project Rainwater - St Barnabas

Early November saw the completion of Project Rainwater at St Barnabas, the result of three years of planning by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the generous efforts of many parishioners to raise funds.

The PCC is legally responsible for maintaining the 'fabric' of the church and every five years there is a formal inspection (a 'Quinquennial') of the building conducted by an approved architect. It was in 2017 that three main issues were identified:

- Roof tiles were damaged by moss covering, with missing or dislodged tiles in many areas leading to water ingress.
- The mixture of cast-iron and plastic guttering and downpipes was broken and incomplete with the detrimental effect of water spilling onto surrounding brickwork.
- The gullies into which downpipes should feed rainwater were dislodged and unconnected to the underground drainage system.

The project involved a detailed specification by an architect, a formal tendering process, approval by the Diocese of Oxford, seeking additional grants to supplement funds raised and managing building work safely during a pandemic! Scheduled to run over six weeks, it was extended by a week having identified additional repairs and with some interruptions caused by the weather. This may have resulted in a perception that at times little was happening.

Early stages of the work included the protection of all windows and burial stones near the church perimeter with board material, followed by the time-consuming erection of scaffolding and safety/security fencing. (The corrugated sheeting 3.5m high around the scaffolding to



ensure secure access is not yet shown in this photo.)

The benefit of roof clearance is shown as work was half-way across the north roof. Around 200 new hand-made tiles were used although every



effort was made to recycle existing tiles. During the roof clearance, the need for more repairs to ridge tiles and gable ends were identified. Once the roof clearance was finished, the scaffolding had to be removed in order to access and dismantle all the rainwater goods.

The most evident part of the project then began - removing all of the cast-iron and plastic 'rainwater goods' before replacing these with a complete set comprising cast-iron gutters, downpipes, swan neck connections, hoppers and shoes. Again, several items (three hoppers) were recycled after repainting. There was a choice of colours for the new rainwater goods. The beige colour was chosen by local artist Nick Mynheer, to complement the polychromatic brickwork of the original William Butterfield church design.

At ground level all the gullies into which rainwater should feed were replaced and then reconnected to the drainage system, ensuring that water is taken away from the church walls. Elsewhere, the real impact of the project



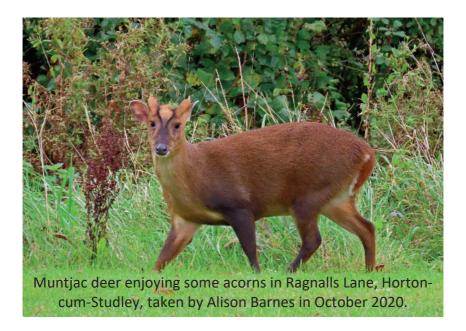
became noticeable as the new rainwater goods were put in place and some of the worst areas of brickwork damage were repointed. We have been fortunate to have the services of Caroline Edwards (Andrew Townsend Architects) and HNB Construction Services Ltd. in delivering the project.



It has been an expensive, but worthwhile and necessary investment in the fabric of our beautiful church. The PCC had budgeted for an overall cost (including Architect fees) of nearly £37k. This would not have been possible without grants from the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, the Diocese of Oxford and the very considerable contributions from villagers through donations and fund-raising over many years. The many fund-raising events include the Autumn Fair, Priory Carols, the Otmoor Challenge, Market on the Green, Safari lunch and many more village activities for which the PCC would like to express its appreciation. The PCC would also like to acknowledge the generous bequest of Bill and Jean Bailey, regular members of our congregation, whose bequest helped us to go ahead with the work together with donations from the Friends of St Barnabas.

Completing Project Rainwater now enables the PCC to turn its attention to other potential developments which may include the church organ, provision of kitchen and toilet facilities and the creation of a 'garden of rest' bringing into use an overgrown part of the churchyard. All of this is of course dependent on continued fund-raising success in the years ahead!

David Slingo, PCC Secretary



STANTON ST JOHN

Stanton Church

Please see the front of this magazine for information about church services over Christmas, or visit our website www.fourparishes.org.uk. Due to the current uncertainty about Covid-19, all arrangements may need to change at short notice so do look out for updates as rules become clearer nearer the time.

Stanton St John Parish Council

A heartfelt plea to residents

We are responding to residents from various parts of the village for the Parish Council to publicise a request for neighbours to be as considerate as possible to each other when:

- Parking and when moving your vehicles
- Contractors and visitors vehicles are parked or moved
- Placing rubbish bins outside of household boundaries

Apparently, in some roads parked vehicles and sometimes rubbish bins are compromising driver's sightlines and passage. Obstructed sightlines and roads can mean risk of injury for drivers, pedestrians of all ages and cyclists.

Verges are also being eroded and damaged as a consequence. Sadly, this makes the village less pleasant for all of us.

Please do try to park on your household parking spaces. Please give consideration to the above request, your neighbours will appreciate your efforts.

Stanton St John Village Support Network

Please don't forget that earlier in the year, the Parish Council set up a Village Support Network of volunteers to help anyone with essential shopping, prescription collections, essential lifts or to chat if you are worried or lonely. We distributed a leaflet with all the details but if you have lost it please just email stantonstjohnpc@gmail.com for a replacement or call 01865 351469.

Thank you everyone for all your help.

The traffic questionnaire

The Parish Council would like to thank all who returned their forms to us. Over 70 households responded out of c. 200. An additional thank you to all who gave permission to be contacted by e-mail or 'phone - you are now on a contact list. We have begun to analyse all comments and are seeking to understand the main concerns expressed by parishoners, before we start looking for solutions. Be assured, you will be informed and consulted before any proposals are finalised. Please be patient as any solutions will take time to identify, agree and implement.

We will be limited by what our income allows. Our OCC councillor Tim Bearder has advised us not to expect help from OCC with funding (they have taken another cut to funding this year (£15m). Tim may be able to award us a small amount from a discretionary fund he holds. We may also have to consult with OCC and other outside agencies as needed, this will require some work and time. Once again thank you for contributing to the survey.

Stanton St John Women's Institute

Unfortunately due to further tightening of restrictions we had to cancel plans to celebrate our annual birthday celebration in November. We are still unsure of what we will be able to organise in the coming months but are working to enable members to keep in touch. In the meantime please use our website stantonstjohnwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk to find out the latest news and to post any messages you might have. We hope that you are all keeping safe and wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Celebrating the Countryside

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December





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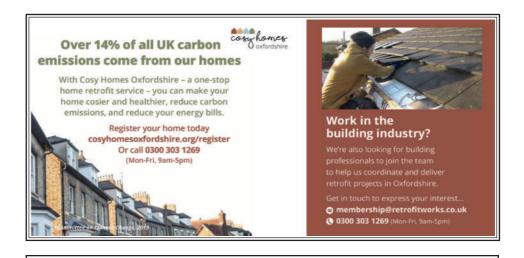


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The Editors of the Four Parishes Magazine would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who has helped to keep our publication going from strength to strength through this most difficult of years.

We could not do it without all the wonderful people who have

Provided regular monthly contributions

Co-ordinated the content of the village pages

Submitted articles on topics that interest them

Written articles specially for us and allowed us to edit them

Read and corrected our proofs

Sent us many wonderful photographs

Kept us informed of local events

Shared their concerns and campaigns on local issues

Advertised their business with us

Maintained distribution arrangements against all odds

Taken over from regular distributors who were shielding

And a final thank you to all our readers. Without you,

all this effort would be wasted!

With very best wishes for 2021 and beyond

Julia, Jonathan and Anthea





WE WISH YOU A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND

A SAFE AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!



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