

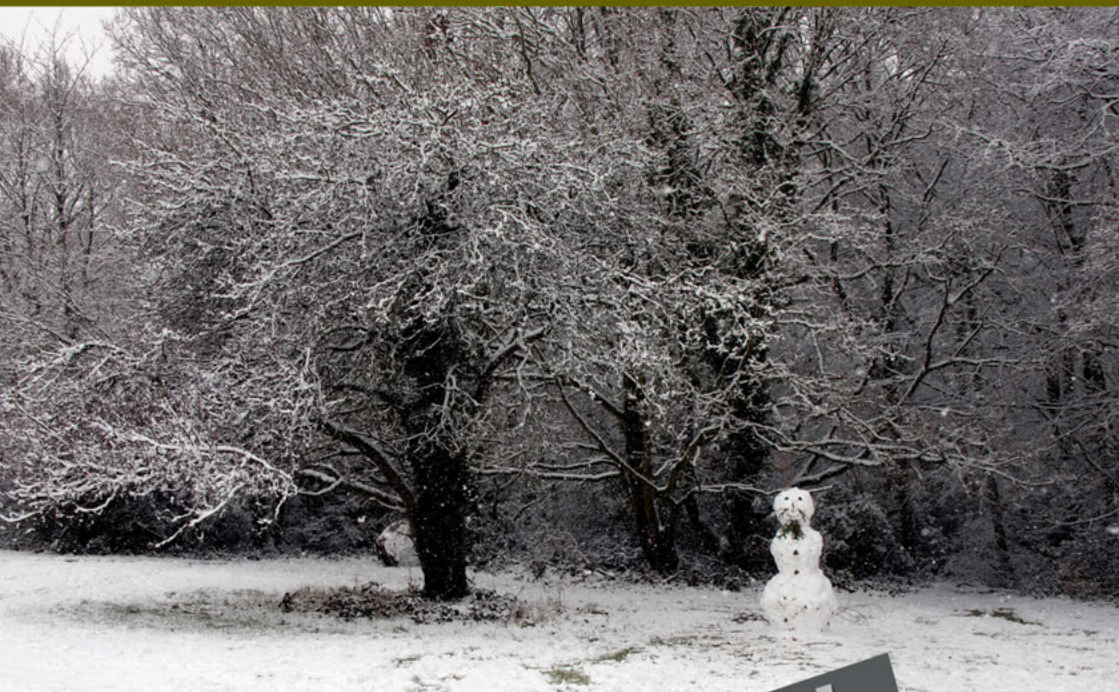


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# Village News

Issue 126/March 2021



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## Editorial

After what feels like the longest January and February ever, spring is finally in the air and hope is on the horizon of a lifting of COVID restrictions. The springlike weather and news of the roadmap out of lockdown have certainly lifted my spirits, and I hope that you and your neighbours, loved ones and friends are feeling the same. Somehow lockdown three has seemed even worse, with dark nights and cold weather to contend with, but we are battling through as a community and hopefully the end is in sight!

Unfortunately, I have to report some sad news in this edition – the deaths of 3 well-known Downley residents, Deborah Brewer, Eric Hardy and Anthea Hardy. All had lived in Downley for many years and took an active part in village life, with Deborah teaching at the middle school, editing this magazine and helping to set up the Resource Centre in Downley Community Centre, while Eric and Anthea were active in the Downley Common Preservation Society and the Parish and District Councils. You can read more about them in our tributes in the next few pages.

We delayed this issue of Downley Village News for a month in the hope that we would have more positive news to report, so the copy deadline for the next issue is quite soon, on 30 April. Please submit updates via the usual email address [editor@downley.org](mailto:editor@downley.org) and we look forward to hearing from you.

*Anne, Editor • [editor@downley.org](mailto:editor@downley.org)*

## Deborah Brewer

I've been asked to write something about my mum, Deborah Brewer, who died earlier this year, aged 95. She was heavily involved in village activities for over 50 years and loved this place dearly.



Before I start, I'd just like to say how touched we all were as a family by the overwhelming and lovely display of affection that was shown by villagers yesterday (26/2/21) who watched her hearse go by, or stood along Commonside or outside her cottage as she made her final journey. It was truly appreciated.

Ironically, Mum never wanted to move to High Wycombe – she didn't want to leave her Wiltshire birthplace at all. But my dad wanted a change, so he got a new job and moved the family here in the late sixties – that was how it was in those days. Ironically, in the end, she settled, and he didn't really, but at first she found it hard. This was in the days when the new estates (where we lived) were just springing up, and I remember her saying one day that she had overheard someone in the (old) village saying you had to live here thirty years to be considered a local! But that didn't last long: soon she was teaching at the village school and getting involved with church and other village activities.

A particular memory which I have from her teaching days was the school's centenary in 1973. It was normal then for every class to produce a play each year: these were often written by the teacher, and 1973 was no exception. Mum, Mrs Patience and Mrs Harris were, as I remember it, the main movers behind the celebration, writing a play reflecting the lives of the children who might have attended the school a hundred years earlier. I can remember Mum putting in long hours at the sewing machine each evening, as the day of the celebration approached, making costumes for all the children taking part.

On the day itself, there was great excitement and we had 1873-style lessons in the Old School - the Victorian building which is now the Community Centre on School Close. Mum actually got to act in the play this time, taking the part of the strict school Ma'am (I actually think she was strict as a teacher, though she wasn't like that at home). The Bucks Free Press came to take photos and their report took up at least two pages of the broadsheet. We have found copies of this in Mum's paperwork, so I think it was a happy and proud moment for her too.

I was never in Mum's class, but I remember her running the country dancing club, and being instrumental in getting the Old School Building, (which had been declared unsuitable for classroom teaching because it had partitions between rooms instead of proper walls), converted into a resource centre, with

facilities for cooking, woodwork, sewing and pottery. Very unusual for a primary school in those days.

She loved her job and must have been at The Middle School (formerly Downley County Primary School) for seventeen or eighteen years. I think it was the coming of the computer to education in the mid 80s which finally ended her stint at the school. She would have been over 60 by then and, possibly feeling too old to learn new tricks, decided it was time to pass the baton to the next generation.

Deborah was also one of the founding members of the Viilage News - I'm not sure exactly when this was, but someone had seen that Naphill (or some other, nearby, rival village) had a newsletter, and they were determined that Downley would not be outdone. They worked on it with Brenchwood (the secondary school in the village at the time, whose students, luckily, knew all about computers). Deborah edited this for many years, and it has gone from strength to strength.

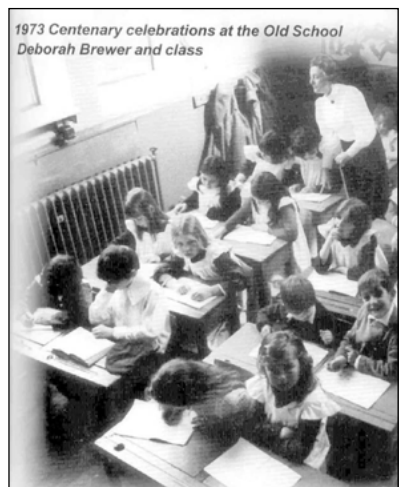
As Mum got older, she lost most of her sight and a lot of her hearing. She had lovely helpers, (including Sue, whom she had taught years before), but she remained fiercely independent and was often to be seen getting on the bus to pop to town right up until just before the first Covid lockdown. It was a very happy coincidence to see the bus chugging along behind her hearse at a respectful distance yesterday.

Even in very old age, Mum was heavily involved in other village projects, especially Coffee Stop, which she heartily enjoyed, both as a helper and later as an attendee. Links Lunches were also a highlight, as was Holiday at Home organised by Sunnybank: these activities, which she could access thanks to the kindness of other villagers, made all the difference to her later life. Downley looks after its elderly exceptionally well.

Finally, one little-known fact about Mum is that her christened name was not actually Deborah at all, but Amelia. She took the opportunity, when she moved to a place where no one knew her, to use her middle name, thinking that Deborah sounded more modern. (It probably did in the 60s). It's ironic that the name has become fashionable again, and that today there is probably many a young Amelia at the Downley school, where Mum taught all those years ago.

In loving memory.

Philippa Brewer 27/2/21





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# Eric and Anthea Hardy

Eric and Anthea Hardy, long-term residents of Downley, died within a week of one another in December 2020, both peacefully in their home of nearly 70 years on Downley Common. They were 94 and 92 respectively.



Both architects, Eric and Anthea came to Downley in the early days of their marriage seeking a piece of land on which to design and build their own house and bring up their family. Anthea was a native of the area. Eric came from Barnard Castle, Co. Durham. They met while students of architecture in London and both worked locally as professional architects – Eric as a partner of Brocklehurst Architects in West Wycombe; Anthea with a private practice and teaching at Buckinghamshire New University.

Eric and Anthea loved their home on Downley Common. They had been active over the years in the Downley Common Preservation Society and Anthea sustained her commitment to the environment as an armchair ‘eco warrior’ even when she wasn’t able to get out herself and take action. Those who have lived in the area for some time will recall their Welsh cob Sabrina regularly grazing on the Common, doing sterling work cropping the grass, and Eric applied all his architectural and artistic skills to his house-by-house recreation of the layout of Downley Village for the Downley Map Project in 1997.

They had a mutual passion for old English churches and Indian art, which anyone who visited them in their home would realise. They travelled widely in Europe, India and Canada. Eric recorded many of these trips in small notebooks illustrated by wonderful hand-drawn sketches. He was also a talented photographer and many of his photographs of churches and the natural world can be found on Flickr. More recently they had taken great delight in short drives into the local countryside seeking out the best early snowdrops and primroses and, later, the great swathes of bluebells with which the Chilterns are synonymous and which Eric loved to photograph.

Lifelong members of the Labour Party with a commitment to their community and the area, both played their part in local politics and community involvement. Eric on the Parish Council and as a JP; Anthea through her involvement in local youth work and as a District Councillor representing Downley.

One of their great joys in later life was their grandson, Benji, who they brought up from a baby. They celebrated their golden wedding at West Wycombe School where Benji had gone to school.

They leave behind three sons, Adam, Mark and Tom, 7 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

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## Downley Common News

The current lockdown has resulted in yet more vehicle and foot traffic to the Common with the resulting wear and tear to footpaths and verges. So much so that the DCPS has placed a few strategic logs around the Common to try and protect the worst-affected places. The photo shows the grass verge near the tank-crossing by the cricket pitch



Paths have also turned into muddy quagmires and are gradually getting wider as people try to avoid the mud. Hopefully some drier weather in the spring will allow footpaths to repairs themselves.

Another similar log has been placed across a newly-made cycle track by Mannings Pond. The bikers have been busy again during lockdown making more cycle tracks but the one by the pond is encroaching on a sensitive wildlife area. In addition, the track opens out onto a bridleway and there have been previous accidents to horse-riders caused by cyclists suddenly appearing. If you are a biker or you know those who use the Dells, please try and stay clear of Mannings Pond.

Sadly, the restrictions caused by Covid have put paid to any DCPS work parties since Christmas so there is very little activity to report. However, the rule of six is being reinstated on 29th March which means that the next DCPS work party on 4th April (which also happens to be Easter Sunday) will go ahead. We will be meeting outside the old Dairy at 10.00am as usual with the aim of planting some young saplings in the coppice area. Bring a spade.

*Bill Thompson, DCPS*

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## Downley War Memorial Hall

The latest news is that libraries may be able to open from 12 April. However, during last summer's relaxation the Local History section of High Wycombe Library was not included. Consequently, not only will I not be reporting on the Second World War in this edition, it isn't looking good for next time either!



We have had a few changes to the Committee, with Pamela Brooks stepping down as Bookings Secretary and being replaced by John Roden. He in turn is succeeded by Hazel Parnham as Chair.

Whilst on the subject of the Committee, we are in need of new Trustees so if any of you might be interested please let me know.

*Alan Baker, alanbaker49@btinternet.com, 07890 762527*

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# News from the Pharmacy

## it's not all about Covid

We have certainly had a busy year that has revolved greatly around restriction levels due to the coronavirus pandemic. Our thanks go once again to the local community who have supported us and sent tokens of appreciation throughout; we really do feel loved. Our flu vaccination service was extremely popular with both our regular clients and many new not wanting to spend time in the queues at the surgery clinics.

As the country went into lockdown once again over the Christmas period, a time when we are always busy, there was also the news of the vaccinations becoming available and being rolled out. We had many enquiries as to whether we would be providing the vaccine here. This was and still is not possible due to the sheer scale of the operation as many have now witnessed at Wycombe Town Hall, Adams Park or one of the local pharmacy led centres in Desborough Avenue or Marlow.

It has been a privilege to be able to offer some shifts as a vaccinator at the Marlow centre. The gratitude from old and young alike eager to receive their jab has been overwhelming at times. As and when the rollout moves forward to more age groups and phases as more vaccine is available, it may become possible for us to offer a service but until then book in response to your GP surgery call or via the government website if you receive a letter. It is worth noting that appointments on the website available at different centres change daily, so if you don't like what is offered try again later.

For the second dose it is important that you receive the same vaccine type. Those who went to Adams Park or the Town Hall will once again be contacted by their GP when vaccine is available for them. Others will most likely have their appointment already.

Moving forward into the Spring and Summer the role of pharmacy in the healthcare of the community is being expanded with various health promotion roles becoming part of our NHS contract. We will be starting to be more pro-active regarding health promotion and well-being. Schemes in focus for the next few months are preventing antibiotic resistance and weight management. We have also all done extra training in the areas of suicide prevention, Safe Space and Ask for Annie - the schemes supporting those in need of help due to domestic abuse - as well as the Dementia Friend scheme.

As always, we are here to offer advice and help for minor ailments and you may even find yourself referred to us via you GP or 111 under a new scheme to save GP appointments.

Hoping the route map out of lockdown means we can see you all again soon.

*Fiona and the team at Downley Pharmacy*

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# Downley Community Centre



Downley's Christmas Craft Market proved a great success, despite the rain. Social distancing with a queue of chairs and coloured discs outside was supported by a strict one-way system which ensured everyone was kept safe and had a good opportunity to view and shop for locally made handicrafts and Christmas gifts from 11 stall holders.

The idea was conceived back in the summer of 2020 by Dave and Emma Kendall when it seemed probable that the normal annual Downley Day was not going to be possible under Covid-19 rules.



Emma and Dave are local musicians and caretakers for the Centre who undertook the whole venture as a community gesture for Downley residents, with the support of the Downley Day Committee (on which they also sit.) The Centre made all 3 rooms available free of charge whilst stall holders were charged a small fee with all proceeds donated to Wycombe Homeless Connection.

A great community effort in place of Downley Day – thank you Emma and Dave!

Photos of the management committee team can be found at [downley.org](http://downley.org). Click the 'Venues' tab, then 'Downley Community Centre', and scroll down to 'Meet the Team'. Do please say 'hello' if you pass them in the village!

## GRANT FUNDING SCHEME

Since its inception in 2005, the Community Centre has become much more than just a meeting venue. In addition to major refurbishment works, over the past few years about 10 local charities have benefited from donations and sponsorships from part of the Centre's surplus income.

Already this year the Centre has donated £250 to local food charity One Can Trust and £100 to Downley School to mark World Book Day.

The Centre has now updated its grant funding scheme to support local community projects and this is summarised below.

**Who can apply?** Any Downley area club or association looking for financial support for a local, non-profit activity or initiative that directly benefits the local community. Agencies etc who are based outside the village will be considered if they provide services which benefit the village. In some cases, the Centre will make a grant to supplement another grant in the village, for example from the Parish Council.

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**Criteria:** to qualify for an award, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that any funding from the Centre will benefit the parish or residents of the parish.

**Process:** applications will be considered under the latest rules initially by the Grants Award Sub-Committee who will examine the evidence --both the validity and the merits of the application - and make a recommendation to the Centre's full management committee for a decision.

**Financial Limits:** in the event that the Centre receives more than one request for funding in any one financial year, it will have regard to its budget and only fund those which give the greatest benefit to Downley as a community. Grants within the village will normally be limited to below £500; those outside to £250. Grants to support qualifying projects already partially funded will be considered.

**Funding examples include**

- The purchase of equipment either in part or in full;
- The funding of transport that will enable group members to partake in a group outing or trip regardless of their incomes;
- Activities that raise the profile of the area;
- Running costs of a viable group that is experiencing a period of hardship;
- Hosting specific events or celebrations;
- The provision of recreational facilities.

**More details and conditions can be found by searching online for 'Downley Community Centre Grants'.**

**BACK HIRING!**

At the time of going to press, these regular hirers have indicated a possible return to the Centre in April: Hartbeeps, First Class Learning and Musical Mayhem.

*DOWNLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – Management Committee*

## **Downley Day 2021**

Downley Day Committee has set a provisional date of 18th September for Downley Day this year. Normally, it would be held on the third Saturday of June which this year falls on 19th June, but as this is before the intended end date for the Covid restrictions – which may well be extended – it was felt to be more prudent to push it to after the holiday period.

As the nights are starting to draw in at that time of year, there are no plans to hold either the Family Disco or Concert on the Common, to avoid the risk of children getting lost in the dark.

Further details on P25 and back cover.

**For stallholders wishing to reserve a pitch at Downley Day, you can contact [downleydaybookings@gmail.com](mailto:downleydaybookings@gmail.com).**

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# Downley Theatre Group

Theatres have been given the go ahead to open no earlier than 17 May with restrictions on audience numbers. This makes knowing what will happen for group bookings uncertain.

We will continue to monitor the situation but won't be booking any trips until the practicalities of coach travel, costs and seating arrangements are much clearer.

Members of the Theatre Group will be informed of developments once known, but do feel free to get in touch with any questions in the meantime. New members are also welcome for when we get to organise outings once more – let's hope that will be soon!

*Alan & Claire Baker, downleytheatregroup@gmail.com, 01494 437552*

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## Downley Cricket Club



The sun is breaking through in every sense as cricketers up and down the country look forward to a fresh season, with post-vaccine-roll-out optimism. The return of live free-to-air Test cricket to our screens has been very exciting, even if a bit of sleep has to be sacrificed when England play abroad.

As I write we are locked in an extraordinary battle with India, where the sight of (Covid-restricted) cheering crowds in sunny stadia beamed back to us in wintry England gladdens the heart and promises many pleasures in the season ahead. Hopefully we will be able to banish, to some extent, the sadness and devastation of the last twelve months.

Channel 4 reported 16 per cent of all children watching TV on the Saturday of the first Test were tuned to cricket. Hopefully this will translate into lots of kids and adults taking it up.

Here at Downley Cricket Club every effort will be made by our volunteer ground keepers to get the pitch and ground picture-perfect for the start of the new season. If you are able to assist with this please get in touch with us. In early April outdoor nets are planned to be held in Mannings Field, with league (Saturdays), and friendly (occasional Sundays, away) games starting in early May, all being well. Zoom meetings are being held, ideas for fund raising being discussed and work-parties being arranged to improve facilities as restrictions ease.

The Firsts play a high standard of cricket in the Championship Division of the combined BCMB League, with the Seconds playing a few divisions lower. Downley welcomes cricketers of all shapes, sizes, and ages along. New players are welcome to join us once pre-season nets start. We will put details on the club website [www.downleycc.co.uk](http://www.downleycc.co.uk).

On a few occasions in our last full season the age gap of the two batters occupying the crease was 50 years! Once, after a few speedy runs, a conference was held mid-pitch, the older asking the younger to remember that he was not - and had never been - an Olympic athlete.

There are opportunities for new players, especially now that the former 'Downley Young Guns', have become fathers with family and work responsibilities on Saturdays, and so play less frequently.

There's always plenty of fun and laughter on and off the pitch, with regular watchers from the benches dotted round the ground offering choice morsels of advice and encouragement.

If you would like to play for us, please email [webmaster@downleycc.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@downleycc.co.uk).

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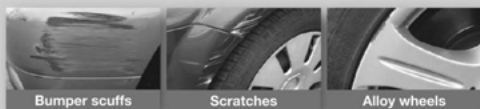
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# Downley Covid Action Group

First the good news – the roadmap back to normality can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>.

## In summary this consists of:

**Step 1: 8th March.** Children and students go back to school and college. People can socialise with one other person outside.

**29th March.** Up to 6 people (or 2 households) can socialise outdoors. Outdoor sports facilities open. Travel allowed within the UK.

**Step 2: Not before 12 April.** Non-essential retail, public buildings, leisure, self-contained accommodation and outdoor hospitality opens. Funerals up to 30 attendees, weddings up to 15 attendees allowed.

**Step 3: Not before 17th May.** Outdoor gatherings up to 30 people allowed. Rule of 6 or 2 households indoors. Indoor hospitality, cinemas, play areas, hotels, indoor sports and performances up to 1000 people are open.

**Step 4: Not before 21st June.** All restrictions removed.

More good news is that anyone over 65 (and probably younger by the time you get this) can now book a vaccination without waiting to be asked. Contact your GP or book online at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>

## Here's the bad news:

The South Africa strain of Covid-19 has been detected in Wooburn Green necessitating surge testing in that area. If you have been in contact with anyone in that area, you are advised to get a test. The Brazilian strain has also been detected elsewhere in the UK.

In the meantime, please continue with all current restrictions as the above dates are only provisional.

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# The Downley School



## Thank you for your support!

Thank you so much to everyone who supported our Christmas fund raising activities. Between our Christmas Raffle and our Elf Hunt we raised a total of £2,770. We were delighted with this amount which is really incredible considering what a tough year it has been. We really do appreciate the Community support and thanks also to Robertsons for sponsoring the event.

It looks as if our Summer Fayre will not be able to take place this year, but we are planning another couple of activities which will hopefully go ahead. We will advertise these on local Facebook pages and in future copies of DVN so please keep your eyes peeled.



Robertsons


*Many thanks!*  
*The Downley School Parents Association*



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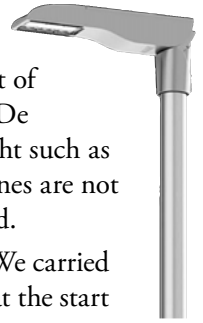
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# Downley Street Lighting



Downley Parish Council maintains 187 street lights, all in the top part of Downley. This is Plomer Hill Avenue and northwards as far as the Le De Spencer's Arms. These 187 consist of a number of different types of light such as sodium, white filament lights and LEDs. Unfortunately, the sodium ones are not only expensive to run, but are now obsolete and cannot just be repaired.

We have therefore started to replace all of these sodium ones by LEDs. We carried out a small replacement project on the 17 broken lights we knew about at the start of this year. We are now commencing the major task of replacing the remaining 117 sodium lights which should bring the illumination back up to scratch. It should be complete soon.

## **We do need your help in this work**

**It is important for our contractor to be able to access all of the lighting columns. In a few cases, columns cannot be reached because the hedge beside them has grown over the pavement and over the column. In some cases where the light is attached to a telegraph pole, the light has disappeared under the garden vegetation. These need to be trimmed back now please to allow the work to proceed.**

**Parking may also become an issue at some locations. 'No Parking' bollards will be placed around the lights which are being converted, on the day of the work. The bollards will only be there for a few hours. Please help us by allowing enough space for the contractor to work.**

One of the first tasks for the contractor will be to number all the lights we maintain with a unique lighting number (1 – 187). Then if any resident has an issue with a light in the future, they just need to contact the Parish Clerk quoting the column number and, if possible, the actual location, just for confirmation. The Clerk may be contacted on [clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org).

Further information on dates of the work will be advertised on our notice boards and on the website. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you.

*Richard Bowden  
Councillor, Downley Parish Council*



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# News from St James

Happy Easter from all at St James. It is encouraging to see the signs of spring in our gardens and our countryside, and alongside those the signs of coming through Covid which has been a so much longer haul than any of us expected.



To help lift our spirits, the churches in Downley have got together to organise an Easter Egg hunt for Downley residents in the form of Posters of Eggs, with code words on them, which will be placed around the village between 22nd March and 2nd April. There are entry forms with a map that will be sent out to pupils of Downley and

Disraeli schools. Forms will be available to pick up in Starlight Stores and can be downloaded from [www.stjamesdownley.org.uk](http://www.stjamesdownley.org.uk) or [www.thepastureschurch.org](http://www.thepastureschurch.org). Completed entries can be posted into the letterboxes at St James, Sunnybank or The Pastures churches and you will receive an Easter egg prize. Thanks to Downley Community Centre, Downley Festival Committee, the Co-op and Tara's Londis for their donations to this event.

I am struck by the parallels of the Easter story for us this year. There is that same journey of darkness into light as the disciples sink into despair seeing Jesus betrayed and crucified on Good Friday then are filled with joy as they meet the risen Christ again on Easter day. I know that all of us will be filled with such joy once this long period of isolation is over and we are again able to see and hug those we love, our family and friends. Right now, we are still on the journey towards that time, but just as the spring flowers bring with them the promise of Summer, the vaccine has given us the promise of returning to a more normal existence, so as we celebrate Easter this year

we can be filled with that hope and joy the disciples experienced as they understood for the first time the extent of God's love for them, expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Do join us for any or all of our services which will be on Zoom; the link is on our website.



We are also having an Easter social on Easter Saturday with craft, games, challenges and a competition to send in a photo of your own miniature Easter Garden beforehand, which everyone is welcome to join us for; more details are on our website.



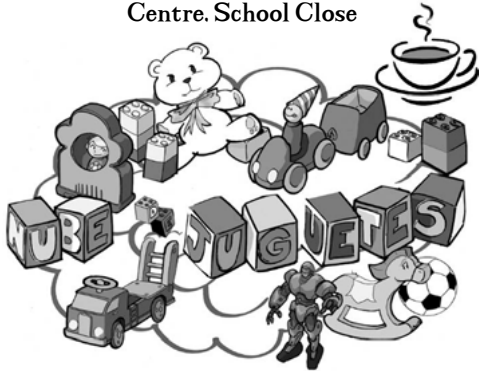
*Heather Graham, Vicar*

## Downley Toddler Group

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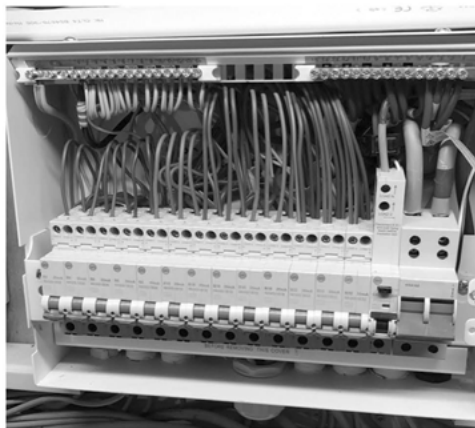
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# Downley Communications Forum (DCF)

## *Have you ever wondered who manages the 8 public notice boards in Downley?*

DCF manages and maintains most of the notice boards and has replaced several over the past few years. The clerk to the Downley Parish Council updates the paper notices either as required or on a monthly basis.

## *Have you ever wondered how the Downley Village News is organised?*

The Downley Village News originated at the old Brenchwood School in the 1970s. The current quarterly magazine was relaunched 10 years ago and has become essential reading for many Downley residents, clubs, societies and businesses. The operation is coordinated by DCF, an editor, a picture editor, a treasurer and other publishing specialists – all of whom give their time freely to ensure that this high standard publication is maintained.

Distribution involves considerable logistics in contacting about 35 volunteers, most of whom are retired, to venture out in all weathers as soon as the latest edition is delivered back from the printers. If a distributor is unwell or away, then alternative arrangements need to be made in advance to ensure that every household in the Downley Parish receives their free copy.

Unlike other “local” magazines, the editor ensures that most copy is local and relevant to Downley residents and invites all known organisations to contribute their news articles every quarter.

Advertisers are incredibly loyal because their publicity has been proven to work.

Surplus income is used to fund other Downley communications including the website [downley.org](http://downley.org). This is separate to the Downley Parish Council web site [downleyparishcouncil.org](http://downleyparishcouncil.org). Over the past few years numerous donations have been made to the Up Downley Festival, local charities and already this year to a road safety feasibility study.

## *If you are looking for comprehensive and unbiased information about Downley try [www.downley.org](http://www.downley.org).*

Almost everything you might need locally is included, from venue hire (choice of 6) with booking links, directories of local businesses and clubs, Coronavirus updates, What’s On, Festival updates, allotments info and so on. An occasional email newsletter is sent out and currently reaches several hundred residents. To be added to the list complete the details under “News” followed by “E-newsletter”. Your personal details will not be passed on or used for any commercial purpose.

# Support your local voluntary Library



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Buckinghamshire HP13 5TR  
Tel: 01494 528133

## Library Opening Times

Mondays 10-12 noon  
Thursdays 3-5 pm  
Saturdays 10-12 noon

Email: [enquiries@downleylibrary.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@downleylibrary.org.uk)



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'Groups'. See what's new on  
the library shelves!

## Library Update

From the Prime Ministers pandemic road map it looks as though we should be able to open the library from sometime in mid April, that is providing the road map doesn't change! There is still some work required to finalize the refurbishment of the library which has unfortunately been delayed due to the pandemic, however we hope to complete this in the near future once we can gain access to the Community Centre.

Please keep an eye on the library Facebook page and the Parish Council notice boards for the opening date.

---

# Up Downley Festival 2021

*With Spring fast approaching, here at Festival HQ our thoughts are focussed on Summer 2021.*

As last year's Festival was very low key due to Covid restrictions, our aim is to bring you a calendar of events to lift the spirits.

The ever popular Scarecrow competition is being expanded upon this year with 'Hunt the Scarecrow'.

The Sunflowers which popped up throughout the village during last year's lockdown provided a ray of sunshine so why not buy a packet of seeds and get planting for an even better display this year?

As social distancing measures will no doubt still be in place during early Summer, the Open Gardens event, unfortunately postponed last year, is back but with a twist.....front gardens! So pretty up your pots, borders, window boxes, hanging baskets etc and let's go all out for "Downley in Bloom!"

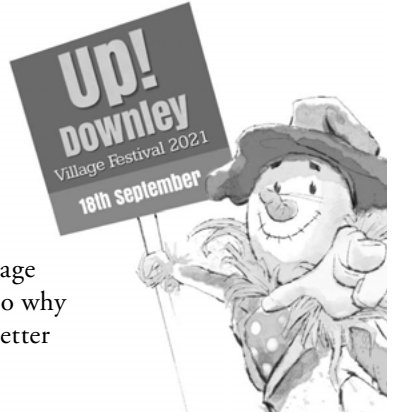
The Downley History Walk is planned to go ahead, as well as the Art Show which showcases the many talents of our residents and the Expo event where local clubs, societies, small businesses etc promote what's on offer in the village.

One of the highlights of the Festival, the usually raucous Comedy Night, is being planned for mid-September following the rescheduled Downley Day.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the Festival donated £600 from its funds to The Downley School for the purchase of IT equipment to assist pupils with home learning.

Look out for updates on this year's Festival on the Downley Community website: [www.downley.org](http://www.downley.org)

*Fran Lazenby, Festival Committee Chairman*



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# Littleworth's Christmas 2020 and onwards...

*by Shirley Ellis Street Rep*

We Street Reps on Littleworth Road, Jenny Douglas, Rayne Hillcoat-Williams and myself, wanted to give something to look forward to and make happy memories for our neighbours and others during the run up to Christmas. We organised a full Christmas Advent Calendar of Events which was received well and enjoyed by neighbours and others! The 'Calendar', with vague descriptions in some cases to retain the element of surprise, was shared with neighbours so that they knew when things would happen and what to look out for each day.

We began with our own Christmas tree with lights being put up at HillClimb garage, who kindly sponsored it and supported many of our other activities too. Next was a delivery of a Christmas card from the Reps with a Family Quiz enclosed. Woodlands Playschool group were invited to make a Nativity scene for display in the garage window and did a fantastic job. Neighbours made tree decorations and donated to fill the tree including a special one made by Jenny of Col Sir Tom Moore which will now be treasured by them. We recorded poems and stories, some with digital art works from Jenny and daughter Rebecca, and 'bad Christmas cracker jokes!' performed by neighbours. There was a 'doorstep delivery' (surprise gifts to every neighbour from the Street Reps), and the 'Christmas market' on the 6th which was a resounding success. It included several small businesses and Starlight Stores provided some lovely Asian foods and fresh fruits. Stalls were free to stallholders but, due to Downley News's contribution towards the mulled wine, we made a profit of £106 from the stalls we ran ourselves which we split between Bucks Angels and Connect



Charities. The Downley Crafters group also made profits to donate to their own charities. .

On the 12th we had a visit from Santa at HillClimb garage and the Co-op, collecting over £200 for Wycombe Food Hub. We held distanced Carol singing in groups of 6 spaced out along the road, ending at the Christmas tree, and

we shared photos of Christmas jumpers, house decorations, our tree decorations etc. The children's Nativity Parade sadly had to be reduced down to one evening from the planned three evenings due to Covid restriction changes. The gap was quickly back filled with me reading 'The Gruffalo's Child' posted online and Jenny giving a historical rendition from her own family's history; very amusing and entertaining. One of my personal favourites was a fabulous recording of 'A Visit from St Nicholas'

(or ‘The Night Before Christmas’). Each neighbour who took part read a verse. It was beautiful and moving, with ages ranging from 12 – 90yrs. Finally, ‘Silent Night’ was performed by Jenny and daughter Saskia, walking from Coates Lane to the tree in a lamp-lit procession on Christmas Eve.



We have not been idle since Christmas and have continued to support each other and those further afield. I set up a volunteers ‘Littleworth Cooks’ group of ladies and gents, and Jenny has been doing something similar as a family support. We’ve all made hot meals, and Rayne has been making school lunch bags for a family in need, in response to our shout out asking if anyone was struggling and in need of help.

Following a posting several weeks ago about some eggs that the Wycombe Food Hub had which needed using up, Lynda Neaves suggested we could bake with them for the Hub! This led to me setting up our ‘Littleworth Bakers’ group of volunteers who now bake weekly, using the residual food from the ‘Wycombe Food Hub’, and then deliver back to the Hub for distribution to those in need. They look delicious and are going down a storm! We even have some ladies outside of Littleworth Road baking and cooking with our groups. We managed to get through thirty dozen plus eggs!! This also helps those taking part as it has given focus to their weeks and more purpose to their days planning and baking. We have had a run on making banana breads of late using up a full tray of bananas that were otherwise going to be thrown away!

‘If we all work together good things can happen!’

---

## Green Leys Christmas Lights 2020

Residents of Green Leys once again managed to bring a ray of light to the end of a very difficult 2020. The annual Christmas lights glowed in the road for the month of December.

Our chosen charity for the event was Florence Nightingale Hospice. With the generous donations of residents and visitors who came to see the lights, we were able to hand over the amazing total of £866 to this very worthwhile charity.

Florence Nightingale were thrilled to receive this donation and send their grateful thanks to everyone involved.

Bigger and better next Christmas? Don’t forget to come and see us then.

*Residents of Green Leys*

# Downley Evening WI

E	M	B	G	A	R	D	E	N	S	C	L	K	O
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F	E	E	G	O	O	B	U	L	B	S	T	G	I
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A	U	S	M	I	L	E	S	R	E	B	M	E	M
N	O	I	T	U	T	I	T	S	N	O	C	A	I

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2830969/>

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## Downley Parish Notice Boards

Notices for the Parish notice boards should be left at the Community Centre. Notices must be received one month in advance of the event. Notice boards are updated on the first Thursday of each month. Please post notices into the letterbox at the Community Centre clearly marked for the Clerks attention. Please notify the Clerk if you have posted a notice at the centre by emailing to [clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org)

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- BANNER
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- REFRESHMENTS
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# Downley Evening WI

Hello everyone from all of us at Downley Evening WI.

I'm sure we're all thankful the cold snap has passed and we're welcoming the sight of snowdrops and crocuses in bloom, a happy harbinger of spring. We can count our blessings: it's a very cheery thing to do. And now, we are also beginning to look forward to moving out of lockdown over the coming months and we can feel encouraged as we anticipate being reunited with loved ones and friends and being able to do at least some of the things we used to do, even if not quite in the same way.

At Downley Evening WI, our monthly meetings have been taking place via Zoom and that has been working well for us, on the whole. We will be continuing with the online meeting format for the time being, of course, and so I would invite you to consider trying one out. I know not everyone has access to the necessary technology, but if you do, why not think about attending one of our talks, as a visitor? There is no charge! Our April meeting (April 13th) features a talk by John Tyler, entitled "**Life in a Nutshell**" and I believe John will be telling us about tiny elements of nature that can be found on our doorstep. The following month, we have a talk by Jeremy Holmes on the subject of **Ernest Shackleton and the Antarctic**. That is May 11th and should be fascinating. Then, on June 8th, we have Paul Whittle speaking about "**The Venetian Connection**". Intriguing. If any of these talks appeal to you and you would like to attend, please contact our President, Janet Durkin, for details of how to join. I'll put her contact number at the end of this piece.

When I spoke to Janet recently, she was looking forward to being able to once again have a cup of tea with our members in her garden when summer comes. It won't be the annual garden party that we so love and appreciate – that still will not be possible – but last year, Janet very kindly hosted very small groups of three or four in her lovely garden and she hopes to do something similar this year. Speaking personally, I was enormously grateful for her kindness in arranging these little get-togethers. It was great to actually see people who I hadn't seen for months (no Zoom meetings at that time) and, what's more, to see them in '3D'! I suspect there are a number of things that, going forward from this last traumatic and worrying year, we will not take for granted in future... And there may be things we are grateful for, unexpected things. As I write this, the funeral of Captain Sir Tom Moore is taking place. It's a moving occasion but full of gratitude. This was a man who reminded us of who we can be in times of extreme difficulty. He reminded us that being long in years does not mean no longer being able to contribute to the greater good. He reminded us that the resilience of 'the Blitz spirit' is still alive in us and by working together we can meet the challenge. So we go forward now remaining vigilant and respectful of the current restrictions as, in so doing, we protect each other and we anticipate better days.

So stay safe! And please contact Janet Durkin on HW 535662 for any enquiries or if you would like to join us for any of the talks mentioned here.

*Angela Taplin*

# Jill - Tutor



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# MEMORY (Recollections from Downley Descants)



Unfortunately, we still have nothing current to talk about so we can only think about our memories of the choir up to “Lockdown One” being imposed in March of last year.

One of our members (who prefers to remain anonymous) recalls recently listening to Elaine Paige on the radio and hearing a couple of songs from the show South Pacific, “There is Nothin’ Like a Dame” and “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa my Hair”. These both form part of the Descants repertoire and have been performed at past concerts, bringing a smile to the faces of our audiences, particularly the men performing the first of these complete with mops, buckets, sailors’ hats and even a real “dame” doll. Can you remember being able to go to a live concert? it seems so long ago now! When the pandemic started we said to ourselves that it would all be over by Easter and we would be back to normal by the summer. Covid had other ideas, but we are now in a position when we can see a chink of light at the end of the tunnel and can look forward to singing again, sometime soon (perhaps having jobs in our arms has helped!). We are in the hands of Boris!! (What a thought!)

Another memory involved our group of tenors rehearsing “The Longest Time” in front of the rest of the choir and making the ladies roar with laughter as they performed like American rock-stars.

My memory goes back to the summer of 2012 when, after watching a Gareth Malone series on television, Lyn decided it would be a good idea to start a community choir in Downley. An advert was placed, an initial meeting held, at which over thirty attended and the rest is history. Our first concert was our Christmas concert in 2012 (we were not particularly good but considering the choir had only been in existence for 13 or 14 weeks, I think we did very well). This was the start of a series of performances culminating in our Christmas Concert in 2019. Since then, nothing! I hope we can all remember how to sing when we are allowed to start again. Talking about Christmas concerts, we all remember our attempts at a short pantomime with Louise as Cinderella, Julian as the Handsome Prince and our two Bobs as the Ugly Sisters.

In August of 2019 we took part in our first competition in a pub garden in Piddington, which Kathie from the alto section remembers very well as she had to be virtually lifted onto the stage due to her mobility issues. A set of steps was promised for future competitions but since then the pub has closed so, sadly, no more competitions, not there at least.

On a more serious note, it is a well-known fact that music helps the memory and is sometimes used to great effect with Alzheimer’s sufferers, to help them recall things from their past, so memories are good, both light-hearted and serious.

*Bob Cook (Bass)*

---

# J. Heartycough's Horticultural Hints

Wal, hello orl me ole mates and orl you new readers, desperate for these vital hints in this very strange time eh! Wal, 'ave you survived? I'm hopin that bonny smoke and Bordeaux mixture I normally sprays on my spuds, will keep that dratted virus away.



So wot about the garden and the plot? Wal, sum of you knows this orlready but it's action time now, so you'll 'ave got it orl sorted out and ready for the new season, won't you? Maybe. 'You spend a lot of time dozing in front of the stove 'thinking 'about sorting it out', ses Mrs H to me when I opens my eyes.

Anyways, it's sowin and plantin time – just read the packets but remember that Downley catches orl the wind that's a'blowin, especially up at the plot.

They ses get yor spuds in by Good Friday but that's a joke as Easter varies by almost a month, don't it? You've just got to avoid those frosts in May.

I was chattin – at a distance of corse – to some very nice ladies up at the plot. I think they may be new to a'tillin of the soil and I ses to 'em, 'Orlways have summat on the go and if possible, orlways bring summat home' (sometimes, that means just blisters, eh!) Ha ha. ....

Wal, in the gardin get yor annuals sown in boxes in the greenhouse or a cold frame or windsill, but make sure you knows where yor a'goin to put 'em. It may not be too late (global warmin. .... ) to get yor tommytoes sown and why not try sum of they exotic ones you sees in fancy Italian packets in some gardin centres. Sow a progression of lettuces – maybe in grobags in the gardin or agin a sunny wall – with tommytoes in the same bags ....that's my experiment for 2021.

Then, did you prune yor roses and clematis like I said in the winter edition? If you didn't then it's pretty much too late now – orl they blossoms will be up too high. Runner or climbin beans are good; they gets frosted, so be careful about timing and get they canes in firmly. Up Stoken, everything grows at 45 degrees because of the wind. My old Uncle Syd from Stoken reckoned the growin season there started on the last day of June and finished on the first day of July, but he was orlways a bit grumpy that way. 'So that's where you get it from', says Mrs H.

I 'ave dug in mustard as my green muck (manure to you), to improve the humous like I did as an experiment last year. I knows one other plotter doin it too, so if you have a bit of spare ground then give it a go, it's easy. You ave to 'ave a sense of humous (or is it hummus) to do this eh (that's a joke by the way).

Now the last bit of vital information in this edition – get yor onions up and dried as soon as they're reddy. They can rot if we gets a wet summer, so get 'em up and spread 'em out to dry. You've probably got a picnic table in the gardin and you can take it over before anyone important notices!

My French cousin Jean d'Artichoke got back onto his terroir between lockdowns, but got stuck in his shed because of they froggy rules on curfews. But he didn't care, wot with the stored garlic and his bottles of red and makin potage on his campin gaz stove. His missus thought paradise had happened – a bit of peace and quiet and no home-grown tobacco smoke a'getting in the curtains – she's hopin he'll stay there.

So, cheerio and a bientot. Stay safe

*J. H. Sent from my iPad*

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# Downley Gardening Society

Unfortunately due to the lockdown we have had to suspend our Autumn/ Spring evening talks and Summer garden visits. However we have embraced technology and have had our evening talks via Zoom. So far we have had the following talks:

**November 2020:** Claire Primett, head gardener at Hughenden Manor, ‘How we looked after the gardens during the pandemic of 2020’.

**December 2020:** Ray Isted, National Trust volunteer at Cliveden, ‘Passions, Pleasure and politics’.

**January 2021:** Katherine Crouch, Chelsea gold medal winner, former BBC gardener of the year and decade ‘New tricks for old gardeners’.

**February 2021:** David Usher, “The restoration of Hestercombe gardens in Somerset’

**We have been able to access a wider group of speakers due to our use of Zoom. Our future talks, via Zoom, are:**

**Monday 15th March 7.30pm:** ‘Spring in the Garden’ by Timothy Walker. This will cover flowers and not vegetables.

**Tuesday 23rd March 11am:** Floral demonstration from a local florist – Easter floral arrangement.

**Monday 19th April 7.30pm:** Bob Flowerdew from Gardener’s Question Time.

We are keeping in touch with our members with an email newsletter with chat and pictures about our own gardens and helpful tips.

**If you would like to join the Gardening Society and our Zoom meetings please contact Alison on [donwleyveales67@gmail.com](mailto:donwleyveales67@gmail.com) or Julia on 01494 447323.**

**Membership costs just £5 single and £8 family per year.**

Please keep safe, enjoy your gardens and we hope to see members and non-members, who are always very welcome, at one of our events very soon.

## Downley Parish Council Meetings

Meetings are on 2nd Tuesday of the month • *Up to 30 minutes are allowed for public questions*

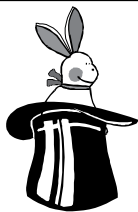
**War Memorial Hall** 7.45pm • January, March, May, July, September and November

**Downley Community Centre**, School Close 7.45pm February, April, June, August, October and December

Agendas are posted on the Parish Council notice boards at least 4 days in advance. Copies of the Parish Council’s Minutes are available at the Downley Community Library for residents to read. They are also included on the Parish Council Website.

**The Clerk can be contacted on 01494 25 77 11**

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# Chameleon Singles Group



If there is one year that will stand out in our almost 20-year history it will be 2020. This was the first time we were unable to produce a programme for two months and the first time we ventured into online events. The change was rapid and has now become the regular way for the time being.

Between the lockdowns we were able to make use of the “Rule of 6” to meet outside during the summer months. Even if that was still available it would prove to be very difficult in the colder and wetter conditions of winter. However, we are looking forward to summer when perhaps things will have eased and we will be able to return to holding some of the group events we all enjoy.

We have over the last few months enjoyed our regular events such as the Friday Lunch Club and Pub Night at home. It’s very much a case of supply your own food and drink and enjoy the conversation over Zoom. Other social media such as What’s App and Facebook have also helped us keep in touch with video and a very good icon music quiz that got us all thinking.

Our virtual pancake evening was a success too. Our expert pancake maker was on hand to show us how to make the perfect pancake along with a selection of toppings. Only difference this year was of course we all had to cook our own at home! Still, they were just as delicious and the conversation flowed amongst the eating.

Looking forward, we hope to be able to return to having meals out at pubs and restaurants, going for days out, visiting the cinema and theatre, going for walks and many of the other things we enjoy. It may still be a while yet before we can get back to doing some of these things. However, the wait will be worth it as we have lots of plans in the pipeline.

**We are still welcoming new members to our group even though some of our newer members have only met online. If you are single, 40-60’s, looking for a great social life and new friends then why not give us a try? There are no strangers at Chameleon, just new friends to be made both through our Zoom meet-ups and at regular events when these are possible. We have several local people from Downley, West Wycombe, Sands, Cressex and surrounding areas and you would be very welcome too. To find out more call our membership secretaries Terrie on 01494 445816, Trevor on 01494 529067 or e-mail: [info@chameleonsingles.org.uk](mailto:info@chameleonsingles.org.uk). Visit us online at [www.chameleonsingles.org.uk](http://www.chameleonsingles.org.uk) for more information and our current programme or connect with us through Facebook.**

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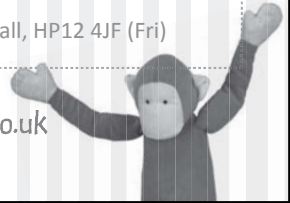
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# Top Notes Choir

We are a local women's choir that has been based at St James' Church for the past two years. Led by West End performer Emma Barr, our style of music is wide ranging with a repertoire exploring many genres from old time favourites to musicals, religious and spiritual numbers to popular music for all those who have an enthusiasm for singing.

Like for most choirs and amateur music groups, 2020 was tough! Top Notes were preparing for our annual summer concert when the pandemic struck and put a halt to rehearsals. We quickly discovered that rehearsing via Zoom was not for us and so instead, started work on some virtual singing projects. Our first foray into this was with, "Whispering Hope" back in April 2020 and our hope was that 'those who listened to it could enjoy a moment of peace and calm' in these uncertain times.

We went on to support One Can Trust with a new arrangement of "We Shall Overcome" and a subsequent joint effort of "You've Got A Friend In Me" with some of the street hero children. All available to view via our YouTube channel - search Top Notes Choir.

The success and joy in virtual projects and the fact that the virus was not going away, inspired Emma to put together a virtual concert in July 2020. It was a collaboration with other local performers/artists as well as some of Emma's West End colleagues. The concert raised £1,200.00 for Wycombe Mind, which was very gratefully received.

September brought in the new tier system and meant that socially distanced, COVID-19 secure rehearsals could resume - fantastic news! With staggered entry & exit times, all choir members at least 2m apart, "no mingling", temperature checks and gallons of hand sanitiser, we delighted in singing in the same room again. We were on course for a Christmas concert but unfortunately, COVID had other ideas! Thrust onto Zoom (but for hopefully only four weeks!) meant that we did continue to rehearse. We had our first full choir attendance of the term so far and Emma couldn't hear a single voice but her own! Tirelessly, we stuck at it with the hope that when we emerged from Lockdown 2.0, we would be able to film our concert, live and in person from Wycombe Arts Centre. This sadly was not the case and as such, another virtual project was on the cards!

With a fairly quick turnaround, a mini concert of 12 numbers was produced and released online with £1,364.00 raised for Child Bereavement UK. Rather surprisingly in our five years of singing together, last year we were able to raise the most money for our chosen charities ever, so there is at least one positive to be taken from all of this.

As of January, we are looking to the future, keeping everything crossed that we will at last be allowed to perform live together again this summer. Feel free to follow us on our social media channels or get in touch via [topnotestunes@gmail.com](mailto:topnotestunes@gmail.com) to keep track of what we're up to! Top Notes continues to be determined to create something which has joy & meaning for each person involved and is also committed to making positive contributions in the local community.

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Jill

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Patrick

*Top Notes* ★



# Florence Nightingale Hospice Ridgeway Hike



Three siblings are encouraging Buckinghamshire residents to join them in an 80-mile hike across the Chilterns from Swindon to Aylesbury on 3rd – 6th June 2021 to remember loved ones and raise much needed funds for Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity.

Adam, sisters Kelly and Hannah, and one of their partners David, will be undertaking the four-day guided hike along The Ridgeway, Britain's oldest road, on behalf of the Hospice, where their father Robin was cared for before he passed away.

Such was the compassion and care of hospice staff that the family are calling on fellow residents of the county to take part, whether to remember a loved one, raise much needed funds for a great cause, or just as a way to overcome the lockdown blues.

Robin spent his last two weeks at the Hospice and, thanks to the staff, he received an incredible level of care and compassion, even managing to marry his long-term partner.

“When my father was admitted to the Hospice, it was a shock and, at the time I was just so angry, as that was when we understood he was close to the end of his battle,” Adam explained. “However, I couldn't be angry with the nurses, I will never forget what they did for my father.”

“We will be eternally grateful and taking part in the Ridgeway Hike is something positive to do to remember our dad and a small way to support the Hospice to provide such an amazing service to anyone who needs it.”

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity has been badly affected by the pandemic and, with the announcement of further restrictions at the start of the year, has closed all its shops again and most fundraising activities have come to a halt.

However, the Hospice is continuing to provide high quality end-of-life care and support to patients and their families, either in the In-Patient Unit or at home.

**For more information about the Hike visit [fnhospice.org.uk/ridgewayhike](http://fnhospice.org.uk/ridgewayhike) or contact [fundraising@fnhospice.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@fnhospice.org.uk) with any questions. The 4 day hike is already fully booked, but you can still participate in the 40 mile 2 day (weekend) option.**



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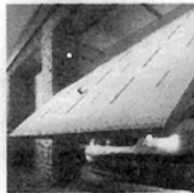
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# Downley Local History Group

## Tanks on the Common

At the start of World War II, the main manufacturer of Churchill Tanks was Vauxhall Motors, Luton. Mr HS Broom (founder, Chairman and Managing Director of Broom & Wade Ltd, High Wycombe) was also a director of Vauxhall Motors. This is the likely reason that the second tank-manufacturing facility was established at the company's Bellfield site.

In 1940 two large buildings were erected on the Bellfield site and these handled a total of 1,366 Churchill tanks. Under the initial contract, 219 of these were completely assembled from the bare hull to the finished and fully-armed vehicle. Apart from assembling new tanks, the company also refurbished numbers of damaged ones, which were returned from the battlefield in various states of repair.

Testing of new tanks initially took place on a concrete test track that was built around the hill at the rear of the factory. There were no houses in that area at the time. The tanks, being a tracked vehicle, churned up large amounts of concrete dust which got into everything, including the engines, and the test track was abandoned. Testing of both new and refurbished tanks was then conducted on public land at Naphill and

Downley Commons. The route selected was along the Hughenden Valley, up Coombe Lane and Hunts Hill Lane onto Naphill Common, and then onto Downley Common, the latter being chosen because of its more 'hilly' nature with its preponderance of large dells. Mr John Broom-Smith, who at the time lived at Naphill Farm, recalls as a 10/11-year-old being picked up and given a ride!!



*Churchill Tank T31748  
made at Broom & Wade's High Wycombe factory*

A further contract was later placed with Broom & Wade for fitting of improvements in accordance with the latest specification and standards for overseas warfare, including making the vehicles watertight. 1,147 tanks were completely dismantled, 'reworked', and tested under this programme.

**If you have any photos or background information relating to the history of Downley, the Downley Local History Group would love to hear from you. Please contact us via the website at <http://downleyhistory.uk> or send an email to [downleyhistory@btinternet.com](mailto:downleyhistory@btinternet.com) .**



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# Downley Ancestors

## Part 13 George Turner - A mystery solved (almost)

Going through a tin of old photographs, I came across a black and white photo of a young RAF Officer. On the back was written 'George Turner'.

From his uniform in the photograph, I could tell he was a Squadron Leader; the RAF records available online however are not extensive and from what I could find, there were several possibilities. George and Turner not being uncommon names.

All I knew was that this was 'young' George as my family referred to him, my Dad's Cousin, and that he was in the RAFVR during WW11. After the war had ended, he married and moved away, died relatively young and had no children. His story would therefore have ended there, so I started to investigate.

The first piece of information I found was a complete piece of luck. I found a photograph in a local newspaper advertising for recruits to the Metropolitan Police. The photo used in the poster was almost identical to the one I had found in the tin, albeit in a different uniform. The article mentioned George's name and said he was born in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland....? Assuming that all my Turner family had been born and lived in Wycombe and surrounding villages for generations, at first this seemed like another dead-end, one of many such encounters when researching family history. Having that piece of information, I looked up births in Ireland and surprise – it was him! His father who was listed on his birth certificate was 'old' George, my Grandad's brother, and subsequently on searching for a marriage certificate for his parents in Northern Ireland I found that one of the witnesses was my Grandad. All the other details relating back to Wycombe were correct, but 'old' George's wife had been born in Belfast. There was no way I could have guessed this, so but for a tiny piece in a local newspaper 70 years ago I would never have known. Why 'old' George was in Ireland or how he met his wife I have no idea, but they did meet and marry, and I could now move forward.

'Old' George and his wife moved back to Wycombe and ran the antiques centre in Bassetsbury Barn and eventually retired to Marlow.

Now I had 'young' George's confirmed date of birth in 1914.

With his date of birth, I was able to find and confirm his entry of death in 1976 and apply for his death certificate. I was also able to find the notice of his marriage in 1946 in the local newspaper which confirmed he was a Squadron Leader and had been awarded a DFC. The death certificate confirmed George was a retired police officer, which explained the first piece of information I found. The list of likely RAF personnel narrows and I am now fairly confident of his service number.

With a death certificate and no known living descendants I can now apply for his RAF service records and that will be the subject of my next instalment.

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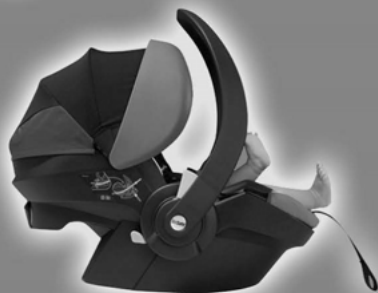
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# From Westminster

*Steve Baker - MP for Wycombe*



The Prime Minister has recently announced his plans to lift the coronavirus lockdown restrictions. I am pleased to see schools will return on 8th March. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents who have helped children with their schoolwork over the last weeks. I know it has not always been an easy task, with many having to balance being a home teacher with work commitments. I am conscious there will need to be support for those children who have fallen behind with their schoolwork and to address any mental health issues from not being in the classroom.

I have had very good feedback from constituents about the vaccination programme. I should imagine that most of the people who are reading this newsletter have had their vaccination at Adams Park or the Town Hall. I have been told the system works very efficiently, with most people being seen and vaccinated within 15 minutes. I would also like to pay tribute to the many volunteers who have been helping people at the vaccination centres, often standing outside in the cold for long hours. If you have been invited to have a vaccination, but not yet made an appointment, I urge you to have the vaccine as soon as possible.

As the vaccination programme continues and the R number falls, I would like to see our way of life restored as soon as possible. I know we would all like to begin seeing friends and family again. I have been working with people in the travel and hospitality industries to encourage the Government to open leisure facilities as soon as it is safe to do so. I am also sure there are many people who would like to begin planning their wedding and other family celebrations. The Prime Minister's road map will allow people to start putting arrangements in place.

I am conscious that Government schemes to support workers and business are planned to come to an end on 30th April. I am hopeful that once life begins to return to normal the economy will recover quickly, and job losses will be minimal, but I know there continues to be concern that some businesses will not survive. It is important Parliament does not forget those whose work is impacted most by the restrictions, who tend to be people employed in the hospitality, leisure and travel industries. With the Government now acknowledging the range of harms from lockdown and who will be hit hardest, we need to reform the standard of modelling used by the Government to consider when it is safe to lift restrictions, introduce competitive expert advice, and have a new public health act.

**If you would like to get in touch with me please email: [steve.baker.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:steve.baker.mp@parliament.uk). If you despair of bureaucracy and would like my help with a particular issue, please phone my constituency office on 01494 448408.**



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# News from Buckinghamshire Council

As I write this update, we have just heard news of the plans for the lifting of the current restrictions. Along with the promise of Spring, I very much hope we can all look forward with hope and confidence to a better 2021 than 2020.



## Thank you

We've all made sacrifices and are all missing out on doing many of the things we value during this lockdown. It's hard to single out any specific groups as everyone is doing their bit in their own way, from shop workers to delivery drivers, to the NHS, to police officers, to school and nursery staff, to volunteers, to unpaid carers, to grandparents not seeing their grandchildren, to people not seeing their friends and loved ones and the very many others too.

For up to date information from the Council in response to Covid, including help available to individuals, organisations and businesses, and the latest service provision please see <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/>. Regular news by email is available; to receive the emails, please sign up at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/signup>.

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet has confirmed its final proposals for a 1.99% increase in basic Council Tax and a 2% increase in the Adult Social Care Precept, resulting in a total increase of 3.99% for the new financial year starting in April. The detailed billion-pound proposals will go forward for discussion and final agreement by the full council. Despite the massive financial strain to keep vital services going, supporting local residents and businesses and battling against the effects of the ongoing pandemic, the council has been very conscious to keep the increase in council tax as affordable as possible for local residents. Whilst other councils around the country are struggling with potential bankruptcy, despite big Council Tax increases, here in Buckinghamshire we are a financially robust council due to careful financial management, which means we are still able to respond to our residents' priorities such as the major roads improvement programme, a new blitz on blocked drainage, and climate change, as well as continuing to provide vital services to the most vulnerable through Children's Services and Adult Social Care. In addition, it's also a budget that paves the way for longer term economic recovery post-Covid, which invests in local infrastructure and which puts us firmly in the starting blocks to help rebuild Buckinghamshire, and importantly jobs for our residents, after this dreadful pandemic ends.

## Road Repairs

The winter rain has brought the inevitable deterioration in our roads. Many are showing significant numbers of 'potholes' again. This year we will have spent £30m on road repairs. This is an all-time high for Buckinghamshire Highways Authority. Nevertheless, still much remains to be done. Some £6m of the budget for 21/22 has



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been kept in reserve for a ‘blitz’ on the roads to repair the damage as soon as the weather improves enough.

### **Drainage**

The past winters have seen exceptional rainfall and flooding in many areas. The budget for the gully (drains) clearing has been increased to £7.7m next year. This will allow us to commit to clearing every gully in the county at least once and many in key areas twice.

### **Tree Planting and Climate Change**

Over 500,000 new trees will be planted, creating a significant number of new woods. This will have many real benefits. It will help offset carbon produced in the county, will increase biodiversity and, when open for public recreation, improve mental health and wellbeing. This is just one action from the Council’s firm commitment to tackle climate change by adopting 60 different actions to become carbon neutral by 2050. The Climate Change strategy, which is made up of a range of actions worth nearly £10 million, will work at a local level to tackle environmental damage and improve the air quality right across the Buckinghamshire Council area. The long-term plan is to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the whole county by 2050. By setting out very specific actions it will take, the Council is committed to achieve net zero carbon emissions as early as possible. It has set a target to reduce emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040. There are no plans to introduce charging for domestic green waste collections in the Wycombe area, despite the ‘fake news’ items you may have seen on social media sites. The strategy we have agreed to follow is not an abstract ‘pie in the sky’ vision, it is firmly grounded in reality. It sets out not only what we want to achieve, but how we will reach net zero carbon emissions through real practical measures which are within our control to deliver. We owe it to the people we represent, and as inhabitants of the UK and the wider world to take a real-world approach and deliver on it. We’re taking action on climate change today so we can all benefit from a better tomorrow.

Besides the essential work supporting residents, communities and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic, Buckinghamshire Council has maintained its ‘business as usual’ services whenever possible. Testament to this is the 2020 result for the waste crime enforcement team, who achieved their third best year ever in terms of the amount fly tipping offenders have had to pay in fines, costs and other surcharges – even though there were no court hearings between 19 March and 5 August. If you witness fly tipping taking place and it’s safe to do so, it’s a great help to us if you can collect evidence - especially a vehicle registration number - that can allow us to trace the offender. But never put yourself at risk.

Best wishes and keep safe.

Paul

*Cllr Paul Turner: Buckinghamshire Councillor for Downley  
paul.turner@buckinghamshire.gov.uk 07825 842292*

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Anne at editor@downley.org

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### Rates

Half Page £30 | Quarter Page £20 | Eighth Page £15

### Deadlines

The Village News is published quarterly in November, February, May and August. The deadline for adverts and copy for the next issue is 30th April 2021.

### Website

news@downley.org

### Copy

Please send text in editable format such as \*.txt, \*.rtf, \*.doc, .docx. Photographs to accompany the text should be sent in as high a resolution as possible in any common graphics format. Copy should be sent to editor@downley.org. Any copy or photographs sent to this address may also be used on the downley.org website and facebook page: facebook.com/Downley.Community

### Steering Committee

The Downley Communications Forum set up as part of the Community Plan, provides oversight to the Village News, the Village enews and the downley.org website.

<b>Chairman</b>	Bill Thompson
<b>Secretary</b>	Peter Loadman
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