

# Cuddington Village Voice

May - 2020



## Christian Aid Week

This year, for obvious reasons, you will not be disturbed by our friendly team of collectors posting envelopes through your letterbox and unfortunately we will not be holding our usual fund raising cake sales

etc. However the need for your donations is actually more urgent than ever as some of the poorest countries in the world are grappling with extreme drought, plagues of locusts as well as coronavirus. Phil Groves will be launching the week with a family online service which can be accessed here <https://www.wychertvale.org/> and he will be talking about it in his school assemblies.

We are asking that you kindly donate what you would normally enclose in your envelope using this website <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give-money/make-donation>

or if you particularly wanted to support the recent appeal <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/coronavirus-emergency-appeal>

The children are already thinking of some sponsored challenges that they can do to raise their contribution and we are having some plant sales around the village — **see page 3 for more information on this**. We are open to any fund raising ideas from any members of the community. As these are being organised, details will appear on the village website. We would like to also promote red and white bunting for Christian aid, a bit like the lovely Easter displays.

If you have any suggestions or queries please contact Caroline Stonham [caroline@holymans.co.uk](mailto:caroline@holymans.co.uk)

## Cuddington Volunteers

In the true spirit of the Cuddington community, more than 80 households have registered their willingness to be contacted to provide support to neighbours who need some additional help in the current crisis. So far, there have been more than 20 requests for help in some way. This help has varied from doing shopping, delivering newspapers and magazines, collecting prescriptions and making telephone checks on people or just having a chat.

It is probably a measure of the self-sufficiency of Cuddington residents that there have not been more requests. However, there is already a strong culture in the village of people helping-out others and much of this activity will be already going on 'under the radar' and not otherwise accounted for.

So, very well done everyone in Cuddington and keep up the generosity and good work.

Just another reminder for anyone who does need some type of help, because they cannot get out themselves, use the coordinator's details below and a volunteer will be found.

Ken Birkby, 01844 292921  
[ken@vivsemmens.force9.co.uk](mailto:ken@vivsemmens.force9.co.uk)

## Fete Cancelled

*The Fete Committee regret to announce the cancellation of this year's Fete. Although we may be out of lockdown by mid July, unfortunately there is likely to be a restriction on gatherings and a requirement for social distancing.*

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Bears and other sightings!

In the few weeks since the last edition of Village Voice life in Cuddington has assumed a very different tempo and look.

So much quieter of traffic but who realised that so many people owned bicycles! Dusted down and helmets donned they have become a regular feature of the village, some as shown by the photograph of the Manders children, on their daily exercise pilgrimage to visit the bears of Lower Church Street—and what an institution they have become!



**Freddie, Percy and Martha Manders checking up on the bears!**

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Thought for the Month

Douglas Adams was an author probably best known for his series of books called 'The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy'. In his fifth book, 'Mostly Harmless', published in 1992, he wrote:

*"We live in strange times. We also live in strange places: each in a universe of our own. The people with whom we populate our universes are the shadows of whole other universes intersecting with our own."*

Thinking about the present situation in which we all find ourselves, I was prompted to reflect on these words for indeed we do live in strange times. We are in 'Lockdown'. We live in our own little universe, not stepping out from our homes except for approved reasons and even then we make sure that our universe does not interact with anyone else's universe by keeping to the recommended distance of two metres separation.

Living in our separate little universes, we can choose who to invite into them, to populate them, not with real people we can greet and hug but shadows of other peoples universes, connected through the medium of phone or internet, sometimes using Skype, Zoom or Hangouts to connect with our friends and loved ones in a somewhat disconnected shadow of reality.

At the time of writing we have just been informed that the 'Lockdown' has been extended for a further three weeks and talk of easing of the restrictions has taken a back seat for the time being. Hope of freedom of movement has been deferred, but we still hope!

Hope is what drives us forward and hope in adversity is a wonderful strength, bringing out the best in people. The wonderful people working in our health and social services, the volunteers in villages and towns, shopping for neighbours, delivering prescriptions and food parcels, keeping in touch with isolated individuals, all who are hoping for better times, for, as our Queen recently said: "We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again."

Hope is what flows from Easter Day. The day on which we remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, confirming that promise to each one of us of life after death, a resurrection life with our Lord and God.

My hope for everyone is that we all may keep safe, that we may be restored to our loved ones soon and that we may never lose hope in our God or each other. May God be with you and bless you.

Jonathan

## A message from our Vicar

*There are many reasons to be anxious during this extraordinary time - one concerns funerals. We at St Nicholas' Church want to assure you that we are ready to assist those who have been bereaved. We cannot visit, but we are on the end of the phone at any time. We cannot have large funeral services, but we are standing alongside families at gravesides and in crematoriums. These services are very painful, but they are also very intimate and special. We will follow the current rules which means a maximum of 10 mourners, but we hope all close relatives can be present and we encourage the use of Facetime, and so on, so that others can connect with you. St Nicholas Church will also be here for you, in the future, when we are able to gather together again and are ready to help you celebrate the life of those who we lose during this troubling time.*



**Jesus said - 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God and trust in me'.**

## Blue for the NHS



Each Thursday the church flood lights now turn blue in honour of the NHS. Following the 8.00pm clapping St Nicholas' gradually becomes bluer and bluer as darkness falls and the full effects of the floodlights can be seen. Thank you to Chris Long for the excellent photograph.



# April showers bring May flowers

Actually, the April flowers have been pretty spectacular so far. Daffodils, primroses, forget-me-nots, tulips and bluebells, mainly the Spanish (Armada!) variety that has taken over our borders. A big shout must go out for the English variety here, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, but how do we tell them apart? Spanish bluebells have bells around the stem which tends to be upright. English bluebells have bells hanging on one side of the stem, which droops over gracefully. The English bell also



tends to open out and curl back on itself, in true pixie hat style. I can't find a single English bell in our garden, sadly. If you have them, look after them and please only buy the English ones!

Gardening club members, being unable to meet, apart from passing in the street, have been sharing

photos of blooms in their gardens via WhatsApp. Some beautiful camellias appeared, along with tulips in every colour from white and pale pink, through to yellow, orange, red and the deep purple black of "Queen of the Night". We have exchanged information about where to find gardening supplies and shared a quiz. Some members recently took delivery of polo shirts and fleeces embroidered with our club logo by the very talented Lynne Devey. They are perfect for working in the garden.

Those of us with gardens have been extremely lucky to have them in recent weeks, and we are all now aware of the mental and physical health benefits of gardening. My heart goes out to those living in flats because three years ago it would have been me.

Our gardens should soon be show-worthy with the amount of time we've been able to spend in them, with one member still hoping for a weed to turn up so he has something to do. Really?!!!

## Topical tips for May

- Watch out for late frosts. Protect tender plants
- Earth up potatoes and promptly plant any remaining
- Plant out summer bedding at the end of the month (except in very cold areas)
- Water early and late to get the most out of your water, recycle where possible (washing up water is fine, even with the bubbles in)
- Regularly hoe off weeds
- Open greenhouse vents and doors on warm days and think about shade paint or netting.
- Prune Clematis montana after flowering to keep it under control
- Mow lawns weekly
- Check for nesting birds before clipping hedges. (This is best done in March)
- Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs.
- Divide spring-flowering perennials such as primroses and pulmonaria.
- Dahlias need protecting from slugs, and can be planted out at the end of the month.
- Keep protecting young growth of vulnerable plants from slugs and snails.

So a lot to think about in May!

## Christian Aid Week

### Plant Sale

Caroline Stonham has written a separate article about Christian Aid Week and how we can support this very worthy cause now that we are unable to have our house collections, and also the "Christian Aid Evening" which for the past few years has been held at Wellfield House.

However, Charles and I wish to "do our bit" again this year, so we will be holding a week-long plant sale in the front of our house, starting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May and finishing on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> from 10.00am to 6.00pm each day. Plants will be on tables on our front lawn, and there will be a Christian Aid collection box for donations towards the plants. Needless to say, only two or three people will be able to be inside the garden at any one time, and we would ask that visitors are good about social distancing.

I will have quite a few perennials including Hardy Geraniums, Penstemmons, Delphiniums and Hostas." I am asking those of you who would also like to give plants for the sale to leave them in our front porch, preferably the week before. However, if you wish to bring plants with you during Christian Aid week then please feel free to do so. This year it will not be possible to pass unsold plants on for other plant sales or to the Florence Nightingale Hospice, so if you bring plants and want any unsold ones returned please leave your name and contact details on the pots. The remainder will, sad to say, have to be composted.

We look forward to welcoming – from a distance - those who would like to come, with or without plants and would ask you please to give generously!

Angela Sanderson,  
Wellfield House, Spurt Street.

## Courts Closed

Please note that, in compliance with Government regulations relating to Covid-19, the Cuddington tennis courts will remain closed and should not be used until further notice

# Cuddington in Victorian Times

We can glimpse aspects of life in our village during the long reign of Queen Victoria which spanned over sixty years from 1837 to 1901. Henry Boddington (1813 – 1885) described Cuddington as a “small and very insignificant place, the community below in intelligence – they were so isolated and remote from ordinary society” Henry’s family ran The Mill in Cuddington. He left to make his fortune at the Strangeways Brewery in Manchester.

Cuddington was indeed a very inward-looking village during Victorian times. It was off the beaten track, no main highways passed through. A few left the village to seek work elsewhere and newcomers seldom appeared. Villagers, with few exceptions, had their schooling, work, food and leisure within the village and most of their groceries were purchased from village stores. The variety of trades – for example the millers, a shoemaker, three tailors, a duck breeder, builders, a blacksmith, a carpenter, a thatcher, a hedge cutter, and a gardener meant that most needs were met from within the village. Thame and Aylesbury seemed a long way away and were reached by walking or by the good offices of carters.

Families were often large and inter-related and had lived in the village or nearby for generations. Diseases such as tuberculosis, diphtheria and whooping cough were a constant threat. For example, the cholera epidemic at nearby Gibraltar in 1849 caused the deaths of nearly 50 people. There is a tablet on the south wall of the churchyard commemorating this tragic event. Infant mortality was very high.

In 1901 there were 111 houses in the village compared with well over twice that number today. The village population stood at 623 in 1851, but had fallen to 443 in 1891. Most dwellings were small rented cottages made of wickert and thatch owned by the Bernard family and housed more residents than is usual today. The school, which moved to its present site in 1863, was very crowded with sometimes as many as 100 children on roll. The villagers had few amenities that we take for granted – no gas, electricity, sewage systems or mains water.

Victorian Cuddington was basically an agricultural community. Most men worked as farm labourers, many being employed on the Winchendon estate, but there were also farms in our village, including Grove, Cowley, Dadbrook and Ridgebarn. The chief crops were wheat, barley and turnips. Livestock largely consisted of cattle, pigs, sheep and chickens.

We have an account of the annual October fair in Thame. Men from the surrounding villages went to find work. Those seeking employment would line up in rows near the Greyhound Inn trying to look as smart as possible in clean white smocks.

Shepherds placed a piece of wool in their hat-bands, would-be carters put a piece of whippcord in their hats and prospective cowherds sported a strand of cow-hair. The farmers would make their selection and hire new workers, who would usually live in their masters’ houses. For breakfast there would normally be a bowl of milk or beer, some bread and cheese or bacon. At noon the meal might be bacon and cabbage. For supper bread, cheese and beer would be available before bed at 9 o’clock. On Sunday the workers were expected to attend church or chapel, wearing their best, well-polished boots.

Many young village girls entered domestic service elsewhere or became milkmaids, which also entailed butter making, while other village women were lace makers. The lace makers assembled together at the house of a senior neighbour, who then acted as the superintendent for a small fee. In winter women would prepare a small vessel – a porringer – in which were placed wood ashes and live embers. This provided a little warmth for the feet on the cold floors. The lace-man called about every two or three weeks. Usually he provided pattern cards and fine thread from which lace was made. He deducted a charge for these and paid the balance to the workers. The small wages were a boon to the poor families.

Many families greatly prized their gardens where essential vegetables, especially potatoes, were cultivated. They also kept chickens and maybe a pig, or “grunter”. Local farmers permitted women and children to glean the cereal fields, which helped provide much needed grain.

A visit to a local public house provided one of the most popular leisure activities – largely for men. In 1899 there were four public houses in the

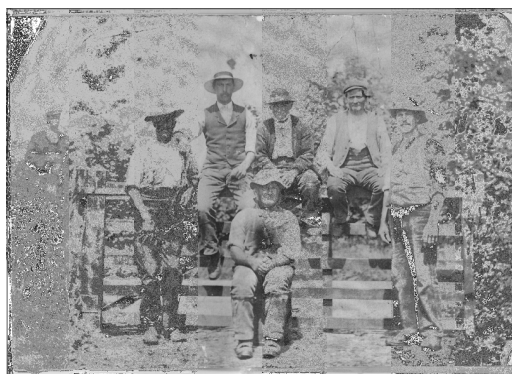
village in addition to the Bottle & Glass in Gibraltar – the White Swan and the Crown in Aylesbury Road, the Seven Stars in Spurt Street and the Red Lion in Upper Church Street.

During Victorian times the church and chapels provided a major focus for village activities and most people worshipped on Sunday. The Religious Census of Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup> 1851 listed the Church and the Baptist Chapel each with a congregation of 100 that evening, while at the same time the Wesleyan Chapel had 63

worshippers. Many villagers attended in the morning as well and for the children Sunday school attendance was expected. On that same Sunday St Nicholas’ had 70 children at morning Sunday school while 80 attended in the afternoon.

During Victorian times life in the village changed relatively little. It was later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that a fundamental transformation was to take place.

*Peter Wenham*



# Round Chess!

When sorting out a cupboard, I came across a round chess board designed by a computer programmer friend in the 1980s.

It comes with instructions in German – I can provide a translation if needed. Chess pieces not included.



**What to do with your time? Of course, learn and play Rund-Schach! – Round Chess**

Alan Marsh



**Fundraising for smaller charities --**

**The Miscarriage Association;**

My daughter Honour was to raise money for the Miscarriage Association, however, this event has been cancelled and a smaller event organised for people to run or cycle at home. Honour is supporting the Miscarriage Association, an excellent charity which gives help and support to mothers-to-be who have sadly had to go through the devastation and trauma of losing a child through a miscarriage.

At this worrying time, smaller charities are facing financial difficulties. I realise many, many people are being asked for charitable donations for other brilliant charities. Honour recently suffered a miscarriage and the Miscarriage Association is one that is a charity very close to our hearts.

I would be extremely grateful if you could make even a small donation through **The Just Giving Internet Site.**

Please Keep safe and God Bless you all.

With many thanks,  
Jennifer Schram de Jong

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/honour-s-2-6-challenge>

# Easter in Italy

*For the past 30 years I have spent Easter in Italy – a reunion with friends and family after a long winter apart.*

*In Umbria in the 1990s I was surprised to find shops open on Good Friday (a trend since established in the UK). In fact they were crowded – shelves were empty of eggs and cheese. The reason? Not COVID-19 but Torta di Pasqua, a cheese bread baked in the pizza ovens. If I could:*

*a) find the photos in those boxes still waiting to be unpacked, or*

*b) understand how to scan them*

*...I have delightful ones showing my neighbour, the village school teacher and his son, carrying seven of these high domed confections across the square on a plank of wood. Over the next week we were presented with whole or slices of this rather dry cake, which became even drier as the days progressed until my husband declared he never again wanted to see Torta di Pasqua.*

*In the evening of Good Friday a single rotating blue light of a police car could be seen down in the valley. This was the start of a long procession of villagers from Menagaccini carrying a heavy wooden cross into Mercatale for the "Burning of the Cross".*

*Every house of the hillside (no street lights here) lit a candle in their windows. The silence was eerie.*

*Easter Saturday took on a different mantle: queues again, most certainly no social distancing, but this time outside the butchers for agnello (lamb). The popular cuts were wafer thin cutlets, the less meat the better. One literally had a plate of bones. I was told unceremoniously that what we ate in England was much too old an animal to be described as lamb.*

*Easter Sunday was feast day: every restaurant packed full of families having a traditional festive lunch which in Umbria had at least eight courses and could take three hours to complete.*

*Pasquetta / Easter Monday and the kids tucked into their Easter Eggs. I had never seen such gigantic specimens... two feet high without exaggeration.*

*Roll on the years and from 2005, Easter was spent in the more sophisticated region of Lombardy, a name synonymous with disaster in 2020.*

*The religious celebrations were more muted and the confection changed: less home-made "Torta di Pasqua", more shop bought La Colomba / The Dove signalling Peace. Like most things, the original Panettone recipe now comes with numerous adaptations: chocolate and fillings ... Dulche di Latte? Awful if you must know.*

*And so what does Easter 2020 bring: my first in England in thirty years, my first without family, my first in Cuddington!*

*I shall be obeying all the vital restrictions put in place to overcome this coronavirus plague, by resisting the urge to drive into the hills, to go walking in groups. However, I shall FaceTime friends and family AFTER I've eaten my solitary Sunday feast (don't like all these virtual reality meals – too many interruptions!) and weather permitting take tea on the front terrace at Griffin House, waving to my new friends on skateboards and cycles, dog walkers and passers-by.*



Buona Pasqua  
Carole Frodsham

# 20's Plenty for Cuddington

is part of the national campaign to get 20mph limits where people live.



During this very difficult time for everyone, there are a few people out there who seem to think that speeding is allowed. There have been very high speeds recorded around the country where some drivers have travelled at over 100mph in 30mph or 40mph areas.

Although we haven't witnessed that through our village, thank goodness, it has been noted that there is an increase in the speed of lots of through traffic. Less traffic might mean less accidents but when they happen it means that they can be more serious. This might then involve several members of the 'Blue Light Brigade' i.e. police, ambulance and the fire service. As many as a dozen people could turn out to such an accident and if the driver or passengers test positive to Covid-19, they would all have to be isolated. This then takes out all those frontline people which has an even bigger impact on the NHS.

90 doctors have written to the Times urging the Government to reduce all speed limits in urban areas by 10mph during this pandemic to try and encourage people who have to drive, to take more care. This would mean drivers travelling through our village would have to travel at 20mph, which is what the 20's Plenty campaign is all about. This would make life so much better for all of us. Please support this campaign and if you still have wheelie bin stickers lurking in a drawer, put them on your bins.

Whilst I'm sure that most people in



Cuddington are polite and sensible drivers, we do have many people passing through who are not. Included in this

are some cyclists too who are also riding far too fast at present. It doesn't bear thinking about what would happen to them if they met a vehicle at the crossroads having cycled at speed down Aylesbury Road!

Let's hope this present situation doesn't last too long, but in the meantime....

## TAKE CARE and HELP THE NHS

Pauline Spence  
Co-ordinator 20's Plenty for Cuddington  
[cuddington@20splentyforus.org.uk](mailto:cuddington@20splentyforus.org.uk)  
01844 291711

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There have clearly been many more home deliveries taking place, of late amongst all the exercise takers. But forget the white van. With echoes of a French onion seller and his bicycle, a woman was seen on Thursday wheeling a red sack trolley around the village, complete with very large sack! Closer inspection revealed it was Viv Birkby with a commercial-size sack of hard to obtain bread flour, visiting the other 'share-holders' to divv out the spoils! Cuddington is keeping the bread ovens hot!!

But we must be grateful for the weather which has made Cuddington's lock down so much more bearable and our thoughts must go out to so many for whom it is a most challenging time .

**The item below , the poem and some photographs on page 7 are just a small record of the village during the last few weeks.**

## Book Share

As you have probably been spring cleaning, having a 'sort out' you have probably got a bag (or bags) of books awaiting donation – I certainly have! Instead of waiting for the 'lockdown' to end, and life to return to normal there is something we can do now: Book Share.



Nether Winchendon (started as an initiative of their Fete Committee) currently has a book share for residents of the village, and passing walkers. It is run by Becky Skingle (she works in The Book House, Thame – currently closed, but definitely worth visiting in the future) and is outside her house – Wanwood; we all pass when dog-walking! It is open from 9-6, Friday to Sunday (if the weather is good, then it is there every day).

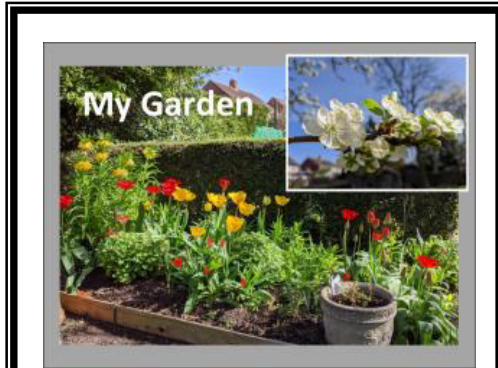
The boxes and tables are wiped daily; and we ask that people wipe the books they donate (and wipe again at home before reading). You may borrow as many books as you wish. Please observe social distancing, and if you or a family member are showing signs of Covid 19 please do not visit. Detailed instructions are available at the Share.

If you wish your book to be returned write your name and address inside. Otherwise at the end of the lockdown all remaining books will be donated to charity.



And, now Cuddington has its own Book Share – started by the Powell family – in the phone box, by the church.

Enjoy reading!



There is a little patch of green  
Of dappled sun and windy shade  
Where tulips nod and birds preen  
In showy blossoms overhead.

Frost's grip forgotten in early warmth,  
Buds jutting from winter's cold  
A single ladybird sallies forth  
A tiny adventurer, brave and bold.

I share this place with a myriad host  
Of creatures mostly unseen  
Inhabiting dark places moist  
With the snail's silver sheen.

These heroes of the earth  
Perform a miracle every year  
Silently recycling, enabling rebirth  
Of Spring's magnificent cheer.

Nature's choir in all its glory  
Fills the air with buzz and tweet.  
I do not think I will ever hear  
Any sound so exquisitely sweet.

This is my solace and grace  
Where my lonely heart belongs  
Flutterbies in my green space  
And skies full of twittery songs.

*JEM Hindmarsh  
Lockdown 2020*



***Clockwise from top left around poem:  
Blossom in Lower Church Street,  
rainbow balloons in Spurt Street,  
Easter banner in Spurt Street,  
teddies in Lower Church Street,  
Easter decoration in Lower Church Street,  
Herdwick sheep with lambs and blossom Ridgebarn Farm track and the teddies again!***

# Planning Ahead

## TAG 2020 Cuddington Traffic Action Group

The enforced shut down doesn't mean nothing is happening with TAG. One day we'll break out and begin making a difference. But at the moment we are restricted to planning the actions that need to be taken.

Speedwatch remains suspended, the irony not lost on us. We observe increased speeds through the village and there are media reports of extraordinary speeding transgressions across the country. More on that separately in the item under 20's Plenty.

One of the reasons for establishing TAG is to address road safety. Below are 10 road safety issues on the principal road through the village.

- Low Lane - restricted visibility when turning right from Aylesbury Road
- Rectory Homes development - there will be more vehicles accessing Aylesbury Road
- Holly Tree Lane - visibility poor when turning right on to Aylesbury Road
- Aylesbury Road is particularly narrow from Holly Tree Lane all the way to the crossroads
- The bend in Aylesbury Road at cottages 2 - 6 creates restricted views for motorists
- The cottages are extremely close to the road; narrow and low pavements lead to frequent pavement mountings by heavy vehicles (*see photo below left*)
- Pub access - vehicles exiting pub car park
- Crossroads at the Green - hidden by bend, traffic coming out of Dadbrook cannot see oncoming traffic from the right (*see photo below right*)
- Pedestrians crossing at the crossroads for school and shop etc
- Children crossing road in Bridgeway - to and from buses

You may be able to identify more; if so let me know. If you'd like to share your possible solutions, don't be reticent. The issues arising from numbers 5-7 are currently subject to review by TAG.

Once things return to something like normality TAG will be taking these matters up with the new Buckinghamshire Council via the Parish Council.

### **Peter Spence**

Leader, TAG 2020. 01844 291711

[prspence@btinternet.com](mailto:prspence@btinternet.com)



# Correction

*Nan Cattell has contacted the Village Voice team to say that, although she was part of the Editorial Team for many years, the publication was actually started by her sister, Peggy Cattell and Roger Frazer.*

## Maria Allen

Maria Allen lived in Chearsley and joined the Cuddington Gardening Club about five or six years ago, maybe more; but still found it rather difficult even after five years, to get to know other more established members. I found this rather sad and so Thelma brought her to Larden for tea. This was the first time I really got to know Maria properly and was struck by her quiet gentleness. I asked her if she would like to join the committee and she agreed; this was one of my better ideas? She became an invaluable committee member. She was a great help to me personally, had some great ideas for speakers and outings, and if she said she would do something she did it with no fuss or bother - you could totally rely on her. In fact, to my mind, she was the ideal committee member, but more importantly, a lovely friend whom many will sadly miss.

It was well over a year to two years ago that Maria became ill, but she always seemed to remain so very positive and things did seem to be going well. Then she became ill again, but we continued to make plans for tea together. Sadly I had to have an operation which left me unable to drive or do very much at all for a while. I saw her in March, as always smiling but then quite suddenly she left us! I will miss her very much and she will also be missed by the club in Cuddington, and her other friends in Chearsley. I feel so very sad for her husband and family. With coronavirus restrictions still hanging over us, funerals seem to be off the agenda, at least for the moment. However, Garden Club members will be able to ask Carol Hayward for information.

Jennifer Schram de Jong



# Dates for your Diary

The spring is fresh and fearless  
And every leaf is new,  
The world is brimmed with moonlight,  
The lilac brimmed with dew.

Here in the moving shadows  
I catch my breath and sing--  
My heart is fresh and fearless  
And over-brimmed with spring.

*May Night Poem, by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)*



**Please note – all the following events – except the Parish Council meeting - have now been cancelled, or postponed.**

## May

Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2.00pm	Sunshine Club Tea, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2.30pm	Tuesday Group, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> , 8.00	Book Club at Playing Fields Clubhouse
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8.00pm	Village Picture House 'Little Women'
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9.30am	Madrigals
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2.00pm	Sunshine Club Tea, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting, Bernard Hall (via video conference); please contact Parish Clerk ( <a href="mailto:cuddingtonpc@gmail.com">cuddingtonpc@gmail.com</a> ) for ID number and password)
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> , 7.00pm	Village Picture House, NTLive 'The Welkin'
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> , 7.30pm	Christian Aid Concert, St Nicholas Church

## June

Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2.00pm	Sunshine Club Tea, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2.30pm	Tuesday Group, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 8.00	Book Club at Playing Fields Clubhouse
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2.00pm	Sunshine Club Tea, Playing Fields Clubhouse
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> , 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting, Bernard Hall (see May's meeting above for access details)

(Continued from page 1)



*Furthermore, the virus will still be circulating and we could potentially be putting our regular organisers and stall holders at risk by running an event which encourages visitors to the village.*

*We have debated if this should be a postponement rather than cancellation but realise that many of the summer events that are postponed until the autumn will now clash with a re-scheduled event. We feel that cancelling is the most pragmatic option.*

*The Fete raises significant funds for our village assets and clubs and the revenue will be missed by all this year. Please do contact us on [cuddington.fete@gmail.com](mailto:cuddington.fete@gmail.com) if you have suggestions, concerns or can support in any way.*

*Until Saturday 10th July 2021.....*

**Stay Safe, Best wishes, The Fete Committee**

# Hog Roast

It is really disappointing that this year's fete will not be taking place due to Covid-19 and as this edition of *Village Voice* is being published we don't know when things might start to get back to normal (if they ever do!).



St Nicholas' church does however hope very much that it might be possible to hold the Harvest Hog Roast again this year. We had already pencilled in Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September as being a possible date for this year and at our recent Operations Group meeting (via Zoom!) we agreed to confirm it.

The church decided two years ago to replace the traditional Harvest Supper in the Bernard Hall with a Hog Roast on the playing fields and its first two years were very successful in making the event much more accessible to the village as a whole and to families in particular, both being key aims of introducing the change. (see photo of last years')

We hope very much that restrictions will have been lifted sufficiently by then and, as it turns out, it is quite probable (all things being equal and with current projections) that it will be the first occasion, following Covid-19 and the lock down, when the village has been able to get together for an event.

So please make a note of the date – 12<sup>th</sup> September – and we hope that we will be able to go ahead and plan the event!

# Survey

*As we have changed from print to mainly e-copies the Village Voice team are planning, in the June edition, to include a questionnaire asking for people's opinions and suggestions regarding how the newsletter is published and distributed in the future. Please give it some thought.*



*This must be the most unusual but also rewarding few weeks I could ever have imagined to have had as a Headteacher!*

*The school continues to stay open and the Critical Care Club is growing - it looks as though we will have 12 children at the beginning of our 6th week'. Mrs Clements is doing an amazing job of keeping them entertained!*



*Please see the photograph to see the fantastic banner they produced. It is now in Stoke Mandeville village, so the NHS workers can see it on their way to and from work. . In these ever-changing times of employment we are*

*keep us informed as to whether or not they are eligible for support; we are only too pleased to provide it when it is needed.*

*It has been wonderful to see all the photos and video clips of the things you are doing at home as a family. It has been wonderful to see how creative the children are being. All staff have really enjoyed seeing what they have been up to from baking to camp making, microscopes to YouTube videos: my personal favourite is the year 1 child who has set up the school 'peg' behaviour system for all the family- Mum and Dad included! And Jessica F wrote-'This week we made a donkey out of clay because Jesus travelled on a donkey. We also painted them. On Tuesday we baked cakes and decorated them. There was also maths in baking cakes as we had to weigh things out. We really enjoyed being at school this week.'*

*The other good news is that 97% of the children at school have made contact with us. This is through online school learning, emails to staff, work or comments sent in. Thank you so much for keeping in touch with us- a teacher's job is very odd in a virtual world!*

Kim Price, Headteacher

## Church Services

Obviously, we are not able to 'go to church' but, it can come to us!

Locally we can access services designed for us at <https://www.wychertvale.org>.

And we can also watch services from Oxford Diocese which are live-streamed from across the benefice, at 10.00 am at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org>



## Greener Cuddington

**Blue Skies, nothing but blue skies...**

Long periods of blue skies with easterly winds have become normal April weather over the past 20 years as 'April showers' have been pushed out by enormous high -pressure systems the size of Europe. This year, we were fortunate to have had a wet winter so that the ground water was replenished after three successive rather dry winters, but the paucity of rain and the dry winds do parch the soil surface, particularly on open arable land.

The other result is that flowers are blooming weeks earlier than they used to. I learned a poem at school called The Flower-Seller by Eleanor Farjeon which listed what was sold in each season: it included 'Daffodils in April, purple flags in May'. These days early varieties of daffodil flower in February, and many were finished flowering by the beginning of April, while the purple flags in our garden are already in flower as I write this (20th April). In the wild, bluebells were a flower of late April and May, but have been carpeting some Chiltern forests from quite early April this year.

It has produced a very colourful spring for us during lock-down, for instance if you have walked up Holly Tree Lane since mid-March you will have seen the host of wildflowers gracing the verges such that we seem to have all the spring flowers at once. including winter aconites, primroses, vetch, comfrey, (non-native) bluebells, celandines, coltsfoot, green alkanes, violets, cowslips, forget-me-nots, aubretia, garlic mustard, speedwell, daisies, dandelions, red and white dead-nettle, and a few garden escapees.

Butterflies have also been quite numerous, and on several days I have recorded five or six species on the wing, such as peacock, brimstone, orange tip (lots), small tortoiseshell, small white, holly blue (again, lots this year and earlier than usual).

The dawn chorus has been quite vibrant, but I am yet to see a thrush and have had one report of, but not heard, any cuckoos which I find very sad. There are robins, blackbirds, dunnocks, blue-great- and long-tailed tits, goldfinches but very few green finches, fewer sparrows than previously and very few starlings. There are chuff-chaffs and some yellowhammers in the hedgerows whilst pigeons, collared doves and jackdaws are in abundance of course.

There is tree planting going on in and around the village (thanks to those responsible for this!) and, if these new copses are allowed to reach maturity and not kept too tidy, wouldn't it be lovely if we were able to welcome back the birds we have lost, like thrushes, cuckoos, nightingales and even turtle doves? This would need some areas to be left to get scrubby (thick thorn scrub is excellent) and for garden poisons, particularly slug pellets, to be discontinued.

Talking of birds.....

### Cuddington Vertebrate Watch 2020.

Although we may still be avoiding each other, the 9<sup>th</sup> Cuddington Vertebrate Watch will take place over the weekend of May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. For those who have not heard about this, every year residents in each part of the village undertake to spend an hour watching their garden or another location of their choice and note any vertebrate animals (amphibians, reptiles, birds or mammals) that they see. They send this, along with any notes about what they normally come across in the same area, to me and I compile their results into a report. Through this we are learning about biodiversity in Cuddington and are able to watch trends as they develop.

If you know your garden birds, you can apply to take part by sending me an email, **and we do need more participants in the upper part of the village** (Dadbrook area south of Aylesbury Road).

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