

Christ Church

Hilderstone

Parish Magazine

A SPECIAL FESTIVE

WINTER EDITION

2020

USEFUL NUMBERS

Christ Church, Hilderstone:

Vicar	Rev. Marion Reynolds	Tel: 01782 397073
Churchwarden	Audrey Stringer	Tel: 01889 505638

Parish Council:

Parish Clerk	Amanda Kingston	Tel: 07185 661550
	Email: clerk@hilderstone.staffslc.gov.uk	

Meetings held 7.30pm on 4th Wednesday of each month in the Village Hall.

Hilderstone Women's Institute:

President	Mrs Pat Saul	Tel: 01785 812580
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Meetings held 7.30pm on 2nd Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall.

Hilderstone Village Hall:

Bookings	Debbie Britton	Tel: 07810 332559
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Bookings now taken on the new website: www.hilderstonevillagehall.com

Neighbourhood watch:

Stone	Ash Connor	Tel: 01785 234129
Hilderstone	Sue Stubbs	Tel: 01889 505203

Staffs. County Councillor:

Ian Parry	Tel: 07831 510381
Email: ian.parry@staffordshire.gov.uk	

Stafford Borough Councillor:

Andrew Harp	Tel: 01889 505400
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*Front Cover and illustration RIGHT by
Marian Baldwin*



A FESTIVE WELCOME FROM THE MAGAZINE TEAM

As my fingers hover over the keyboard, I can see grey clouds looming large overhead, threatening rain; It is a typical bleak November day. For many, it sums up just how we all feel as we face the 'new norm' this Christmas. Add politicians, journalists and doom-mongering into the mix and most of us would agree that we are heartily fed up with having to endure bad news, scaremongering and moaning.



Well, dear reader, here is your remedy: this special Winter Edition will blow away those grey clouds and, we hope, silence those who repeatedly tell us we should be 'down', desperate and despondent. We have filled this magazine with upbeat stories *from* our community, *about* our community: All the good and uplifting things we have been doing, and are planning on doing in the coming months, to ensure everyone in our

village is cared for, entertained and reassured that they are not alone – no matter how long they have to endure lockdown and self-isolation. We hope this magazine makes you smile, reflect on just how fortunate we are here in Hilderstone, and give you something to look forward to.

We would also like to thank Sue Stubbs who has been Editor of the Parish Magazine for many years. We are very grateful for all the hard work she has put into this publication over the years. Sue, you are a marvel and we thank you very much indeed. Thanks also to all the budding artists who have kindly sent us their pictures; you will find them popping up throughout the magazine! They are a lovely addition.

And finally, if you are in need of some Christmas retail therapy, I can confirm that the Village Hall Christmas Market has now been confirmed for Saturday 19th December, 9am-12pm. Mulled wine and mince pies, plus a great array of lovely gifts.

Hilderstone Parish Council

Virtual Meetings

What a strange year it has been! Despite the challenges of the Coronavirus global pandemic, we have continued to operate almost normally with one or two fairly significant changes. The need to socially distance and keep Councillors and members of the public safe has led us into the virtual world of video conferencing. The accessibility of Zoom has enabled us to continue to meet monthly and to remain open to members of the public who can come along and have their say, or just log in to observe the work of the council.

Joining instructions and details are published each month on the Agenda which can be found on the new website at www.hilderstone.org.uk.

Speed Indicator Device



In July we installed the new Speed Indicator Device at Eastholme. This was purchased using grant funding from the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership. Early results are extremely positive and you only have to stand on the grass at Eastholme to see the impact as traffic visibly slows on approach to the sign. It is very much hoped this will make our roads safer. The device also records the speed of passing vehicles in both directions, enabling comparison between vehicles approaching the sign and those travelling in the opposite

direction. The data is downloaded monthly and reports are published on the website. The data will be used to build an evidence base of traffic speed and volume in the area. This will help the Parish Council work with Staffordshire County Council and the Police to improve the safety of our roads.

New Website

We have set up and launched a new website at www.hilderstone.org.uk The new website has a section for local news stories and events. If you organise any local events and would like them included on the website, please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@hilderstone.staffslc.gov.uk.

Blocked Gullies and Drains

As we move into Autumn and the volume of rainfall increases, the issue of blocked gullies and drains can lead to localised flooding. Any flooding, or large areas of standing water, caused by blocked drains should be photographed and either reported on line to Staffordshire County Council Highways at <https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/web/reportfault/#divSelectionHeader> or emailed to the Parish Clerk at clerk@hilderstone.staffslc.gov.uk.

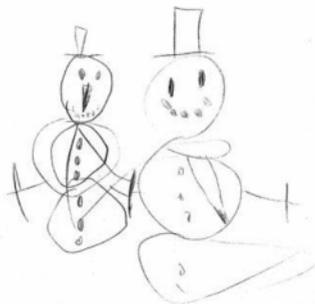
Winter Highways Maintenance

Winter gritting routes and general winter safe driving information is available on the County Council website at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Highways/winterdriving/Winter-service-operations.aspx>.

The village salt bins will be refilled throughout the winter period with the exception of the bin in Dingle Lane which will be filled at the start of the winter period only. Please note that this salt is for use on the **public highways only**. It is **not** for use on private drives.

And finally! The Parish Council would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Picture (RIGHT) by Bella Hughes, aged 4.



HILDERSTONE WI NEWS

What a strange year 2020 has been for everyone, including Hilderstone WI.

Meeting together in friendship is central to Hilderstone WI and this has been impossible since March when we haven't been able to hold our monthly meetings, no celebration party for our 86th Birthday which should have been held in October and no Christmas Party to look forward to.

Our Committee sincerely hopes that 2021 will see us all getting together once more to enjoy our monthly meetings. We **WILL** meet again!

Good health and best wishes to you all for a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Pat Saul
President of Hilderstone WI



*Hilderstone Women's Institute meets at
7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month
in Hilderstone Village Hall.*

See inside front cover for contact details.

KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW:

The Village Information Network (VIN)

The Village Information Network (VIN) is an 'opt in' system which provides a platform to circulate information, such as Police Alerts/Warnings and general information on forthcoming events such as Social Events, First Aid Training etc. It is now also successfully distributed through social media with 150 subscribers outside the core messaging network.

The Village Hall (HVH), Parochial Church Council (PCC) and Parish Council have direct access to the system and can post their own messages, while everybody else has access by a simple request system. For instance, if you are organising a 'Children in Need' event and wish to promote it, just send me the copy and it will be circulated to all on the list and through social media. The **VIN** has become the primary information distribution system for the community. It has proved to be the most effective and efficient method of keeping people informed of what is going on – sometimes at very short notice.

It has also become a platform for wider based initiatives, such as a local support group in our community, to assist the elderly, the sick and those self-isolating during the 1st phase of the Covid-19 Lockdown.

Our volunteers, working with other agencies, set up and published advice for those in our local community in need of support services. This was hand delivered to every property in the Parish. Before the nation got to grips with food and medicine distribution, VIN volunteers were shopping for food, collecting and distributing medicines - both within the village and to the outlying areas.

If you are not already a subscriber (as an individual or household) and would like to join, e-mail richard.pilcher1@btinternet.com with a request to subscribe to the VIN. Your name and e-mail address are the only information necessary to run the notifications and this is used for circulation of relevant information only.

The system is GDPR compliant and your details are not shared with any other organisation. You may 'unsubscribe' at any time.

The V.I.N.: Community spirit working seamlessly and at its best.

Getting Fresh in the Village Hall

Each Thursday – 9am-12pm

It seems so long ago, back on Thursday 14 May, when we held our first market during the Spring lockdown. We had one stall holder - Sean Taylor - selling fresh fruit and vegetables.

We started in June with six stalls - fruit and veg, butcher, baker, dairy, cakes, tea/coffee and preserves. Later, we added bee & honey products, flowers & plants, take-away bacon-and-cheese oatcakes and this month, part-cooked pies. By the end of November, we'll have held 29 Thursday markets and three 'Pop-Up' Saturday markets ('crafts and gifts' theme).

Thank you to Sarah Estiberio, Little Green Veg, for supplying fruit and veg, plus Clive and Polly who stepped into the breach after Sarah. Thanks also to our customers, especially the weekly regulars.

- Sean Taylor - Fruit and Veg - 07593 813935
- Barbara Griffiths - Milk4Life - dairy and home-made oatcakes - 07857 671160. email barbara.griffiths@dairylink-uk.org
- Michelle Walker - Lee Walker Family Butcher - meat and fish - 07939 057972, 01785 812809, or email lee@leewalkerfamilybutcher.co.uk
- Clive and Polly Stewart - Westart Apiaries - honey and bee products - 07907 729136 or email westart10@btinternet.com
- Dave Austen - Parkside Bakery - 07399 532985 (text only), 01785 247331, or email sales@parksidebakery.co.uk
- Zara Hutson - The Draycott Arms - part-cooked pies - 01782 911030 or email info@thedraycottarms.co.uk
- Alison Nicoll - Alison's Kitchen - cakes, puddings, and preserves - 07521 999124 or email alisons.oven@gmail.com

Join us for a glass of mulled wine and plenty of lovely gift ideas at our Christmas Market on Saturday 19th December, 9am-1pm.

Let's keep this market going long-term - we need it!

Hilderstone Village Hall - what a lockdown!

If there's one thing the lockdown has taught us, it's that Hilderstone needs a thriving, active, community centre at Hilderstone Village Hall. The lockdown gave us important opportunities.

We have been very fortunate to obtain a grant from Staffordshire County Council, with a second on the way from Stafford Borough Council. We also received a generous grant from Councillor Ian Parry. We use grants wisely. After all, the Parable of the Talents tells us not to hide them in the ground! So what have we done with these funds?

Our first challenge was upgrading the facilities, to enhance the hall's appeal to potential users: a new, disabled-friendly front door; double-glazed windows and CCTV. We also looked to widen its appeal by obtaining a Premises License to serve alcohol and can now accept electronic payments.

We have listened to your comments about booking the hall also. With our dedicated new web site (www.hilderstonevillagehall.com) booking the hall is just a simple click away. This is supported by the more traditional telephone booking option. Now you can see the facilities we offer, pricing and availability all in one place. This will help showcase the lovely village hall and all it has to offer.

With Covid came the need to provide a state-of-the art hand sanitizer with Councillor Parry's grant, enabling us to hold our Village Market safely and provide a service to our community. This, together with the wearing of face masks and social distancing measures, ensures we are Covid-compliant.

Also, we now have a much-needed Youth Group. As for what is next - watch this space! The Hall may be closed for all but the market, but we are keeping busy planning for its future. My thanks to all the committee - past and present - and to all who use the hall. Let's make 2021 a big year for Hilderstone Village Hall!

Tim Handley - Chairman

Hilderstone Youth Group



Picture by George Hughes, aged 8.

Our first Youth Group was held in October half term with a Halloween theme. The children had lots of fun with their friends playing games and crafting. We also had a tuck shop available which the children ran themselves. This will now feature at every Youth Group – it was such a success.

All the children had a lovely evening and were excited to come back. Unfortunately, lockdown 2 meant we couldn't open in November but will hopefully be able to open soon!

At the time of print and looking at the new tier system, Youth Group will be able to run under all the tiers. The next planned Youth Group is the 10th December. Keep an eye out on a Facebook page for any changes. Or contact Debbie Britton for information.

Youth group is for children 4+ it runs 5.00pm -6.30 pm, fortnightly on a Thursday (2nd and 4th) week in Hilderstone Village Hall. All staff have DBS checks and have experience working with children. It's £2 per child but any siblings that come will be an extra £1 each.



Picture by Lucy Clark, aged 4.

If you have any questions or you would like updates on Youth Group, please contact Debbie Britton on Tel: 07989130014 or email on hilderstonevhbookings@gmail.com.

Cooks Tips: Christmas Gingerbread

Here's a nice recipe to keep the children occupied. And remember, the more mess they make the more they are enjoying themselves!



INGREDIENTS:

6 oz soft light brown sugar
4 oz butter
4 tbsps golden syrup
2 tbspn black treacle
1lb plain flour
2 good tspns ground ginger
½ tspn bicarbonate of soda
1 beaten egg

Picture (LEFT) by William Evans, aged 9)

METHOD:

Put the butter sugar and syrups into a saucepan and stir over a gentle heat until dissolved. Sieve together the flour, bicarb and ginger, into a bowl. Mix in the contents of the saucepan and then the egg to form a smooth dough.

Turn out on to a floured surface. Roll out to a ¼ inch thick and cut with shape cutter of your choice.

When your shapes are ready, put them on non-stick baking sheets and cook for 20 mins (gas 4 or 170-180°C). When cooked, transfer to cooling wires until cool.

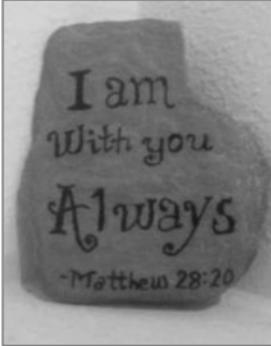
Decorate with water icing and sweets.

This recipe makes quite a lot of gingerbread so you may only want to do half the quantity but there again it is Christmas, so **enjoy!**

Alternatively, why not make a gingerbread house? Use the cardboard from an old cereal box to make the templates for the walls and roof.

Positive Pebbles Creative Ideas for Children

Many of us may be struggling to motivate ourselves to get out and do a bit of exercise. It was easy when the sun was shining but the village walkway is not quite so inviting when the sky is grey.

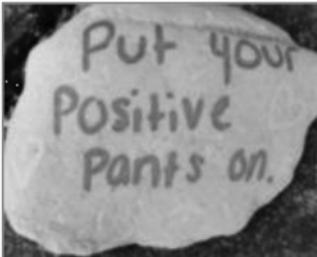


During the first lockdown, many children painted messages of support for NHS workers on pebbles. We would love to take this one step further and challenge people, young and old, to paint a message of hope or friendship on a pebble and leave it for others to see somewhere on the village walkway.

Make your message as positive as you can. It might brighten someone's day.

Thank you to Caroline Stanley for sharing this project with us. If you look around our village, you will actually see some of these lovely pebbles. Very colourful and uplifting.

And if your garden is anything like mine, you will have plenty of pebbles and stones to chose from.



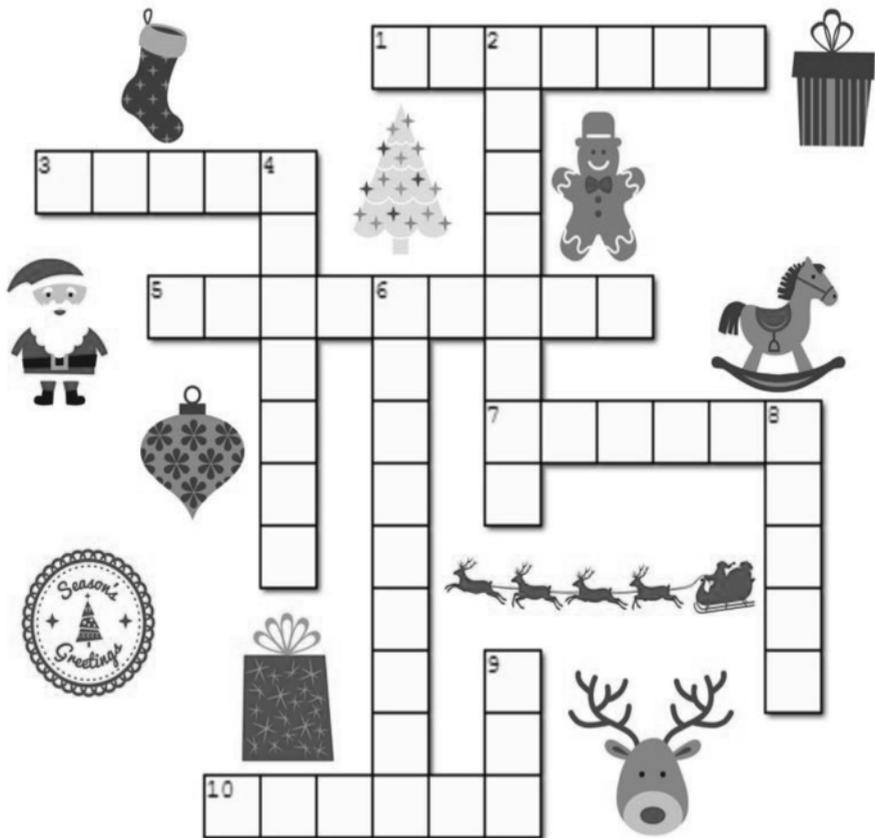
WHAT WILL YOURS LOOK LIKE?

Send us a picture and we'll put it in our next magazine!

So get painting.

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

USE THE CLUES TO COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE.



Across

1. One of Santa's Reindeer
3. Santa's Helpers
5. December 25th is _____.
7. Christmas Drink
10. The name of a popular snowman.

Down

2. Christmas Month
4. He hates Christmas!
6. You hang them by the chimney.
8. On Christmas morning we unwrap our _____.
9. ___ to the world!



One for the children

*Poem and illustration
By Marian Baldwin*

Is our chimney big enough for Santa?
Is our roof strong enough for his sleigh?
He's a very big man is Santa,
He's bringing us presents one day.

But I'm worried as I look up the chimney
I've watched birds as they land on the roof.

So I'm sending a letter to Santa,
I think he should know the truth.
I've told him to park in the garden
And not to land on the roof.



Christmas Past

Christmas in my childhood is patterned with gentle memories. We did not have Shopping Centres; for us Christmas presents were tokens made with love and sometimes skill, simple home- made gifts. My Auntie Blanche made cardigans for everyone- knitting the same pattern in a variety of sizes and colours; she must have made hundreds in her lifetime but never acquired the skill of aligning the buttons with the button holes! We used to dislike having to wear these misshapen garments whenever we visited Auntie Blanche. Now I regret that I never appreciated or thanked her sincerely for the hours she spent by candle and firelight knitting and sewing her gifts after a long hard day's work on the farm, often in freezing conditions.

As a child, I always enjoyed getting on stage and 'entertaining' and I loved the Rector's Rehearsals for the Annual Christmas Concert. Sadly I was never chosen to be an Angel, a Fairy or Princess: because I had a bigger voice than anyone else (except the Rector) I was usually stuffed with cushions to be the Caliph of Bagdad or, with a Screeching Voice, the Wicked Witch from the Wild Wood. I remember, many years later, when my own little girl was five and at Infant School, she was telling me that there were Auditions at School for the Infant Nativity Play. Jenny had a halo of blond curly hair and was a balletic lissom light child. I convinced myself that she would be cast as the Angel Gabriel! She knew the lines "Behold I bring you tidings of great joy..." spoken with confidence.

I was waiting with all of the other mothers when the children came down the steps at the end of School. I spotted Jenny and did the unforgivable, I shouted out: "Hello darling! What part did you get?" Jenny shouts back: "Mummy, Mummy I'm so excited I've got the best part I'm going to be the SPIDER!" I have to admit it was a Nativity Play I had not read.!



Carol Singers no longer gather at our gates or on door steps, but some of my most vivid memories are of carolling with all of the children from Sunday School carrying our 'jam jar lanterns' and wrapped in scarves, woolly hats and wellingtons...trudging down farm tracks and up long dark drives, singing at the tops of our voices. We were rewarded with mince pies and hot milk and small coins!

There was no tree, no decorations to be seen when we climbed the stairs on Christmas Eve with our Christmas Stockings, knitted by Auntie Blanche.

But in the morning what surprises! Fires were blazing, lamps cast shadows on stairs and familiar surroundings were transformed: Mirrors, pictures, shelves, bannisters were lavishly adorned with sprigs of bay, cypress, rosemary, holly and, for the unsuspecting visitor, mistletoe. Most amazing of all a Tree - gloriously decorated with silver stars, glass birds with long tail feathers, goblins on fir cones ...and tiny candles in glittering holders clipped on the ends of the branches. It was a magical experience.

I hope that your Christmas will be filled with the Joy that has nothing to do with ' purchases made on line ' but everything to do with the Love of family and friends , however far away they may be this year ... and above all the reassurance of the Miracle of the Nativity.



Hilderstone Heritage:

Part 31

As Hilderstone Women's Institute marks its 86th birthday (October 2020), it seems fitting that we remember, and celebrate, one of its 'Leading Ladies' and all those characters who have made our village "a happy village to live in". Here is an extract from the 'The Advertiser', dated 17th August 1961:

A little orphan girl of 8 years, a kindly woman who became her 'Auntie' and reared her till the age of 14 and a farm conveniently near for her to work in and live with the family – until 26 years later she married the owner and became a happy farmer's wife. That's the life story of Mrs M E Philips, president of Hilderstone WI, of Bank Farm.

Following in his father's footsteps – he was a big horse-breeder – her husband Mr Bill Phillips won the Stone Annual Foal Show 'best foal of the Shire' in 1929 and 1930. And now about you, I said. "Well I'm founder member of the WI (they have recently celebrated their 27th birthday) and I have held every position – except that of press correspondent - in the branch".

The name's the same except for an 'l' and a small letter of different initials ...and very happy indeed I was to meet our correspondent in Hilderstone –Mrs R H Philips, her husband and small daughter, Julia, at Hillrise. Mr Philips was born and bred in the village and his family on his father's side settled in Smallrise over 80 years ago. He is chairman of Sandon British Legion which covers the surrounding villages and a member of the Village Hall Committee.

"It is a happy village to live in" smiled Mrs Philips. "Church and chapel folk work so well together." This contented little family of three had just finished re-decorating their 300 years old house which used to be the old police house. "We have been here about eight years. We rented it for a while and then decided to buy it. I used to live in Trent Vale" smiled Mrs Philips "but I have loved every moment of my life in Hilderstone".

The WI is very near her heart. "Although we have perhaps not 30 members we seem to achieve a great deal. We always enter for the competitions each year – The Knighton Challenge Shield and the County Shield and the County Show.

We won the double-event last year at the County Show, and two firsts in two events.” Mrs Philips is also a member of the Mothers’ Union and the church choir. She also loves cooking and makes the most delectable cakes.

Their little home is a veritable suntrap flanked by rose gardens which owe everything to their combined artistry and industry. All the alterations, painting and decorating have been carried out by her husband and his friend, Ken Boulton (Mr Philips is a painter and decorator by trade). When it comes to hobbies – “We’re both tremendously fond of walking and reading”. Gardening is his favourite pastime – and what a success he makes of it.

I had hoped to have seen Mrs G M Shelley who has lived at the farm up Hall Lane (sic) something like 40 years... but I found her indisposed and trust by now that she is much better. I did have the briefest of chats with Mr and Mrs R B Dobson, daughter and son-in-law, the date stone of whose house, Church View, reads “1757 Mrs Nelly Myatt”. Mrs Dobson was born there, ‘Mr’ came from Cheshire and they have three children – Stuart (8), Jean (4) and Keith (2). Their house used to be the Malt House or the Mill Farm where they used to grind corn.

My introduction to Mrs E Bowyer was through a miniature greenhouse massed with the loveliest begonias in quite the most brilliant corals and other shades, giving a gaiety to Yew Tree House which was a welcome in itself. Mrs Bowyer has lived in the village since she was two – “I came with my parents”.

“My husband came from an old Yeoman family” said Mrs Bowyer “and we have lived here 52 years. We came the day we were married.” They have three children – John Edward is the eldest, and is still at home. The youngest is married and there is a married daughter who lives near Market Drayton. “We have gone to church for many years” Mrs Bowyer mused, “and I have a lot of home interests. But I do enjoy reading detective stories. I am 76 you know.”

Up with the 6.0 o’clock lark and out in all weathers...but as merry as the proverbial cricket ...that’s Mr T G Ball, Hilderstone’s faithful newsagent for 30 years. “My wife was born here but I came to Hilderstone when I was about 16 or 17. Well yes,...it’s a hard life doing a country round because it is so scattered.”

There was a time - “1938 and 1947 when we had to do the round on foot, you just couldn’t get about on bicycle or by other vehicle. We tramped (my wife

and I) for close on 30 miles altogether over the fields. No phones. But the roads are better now, and one thing, we've better lighting in the village; yes, we're glad it's kept so rural."

Mr Ball is a member of the Village Hall Committee, a sidesman at the church..."and that about covers it" said he modestly. Mrs Ball helps him a great deal with the evening round – "she hasn't time to do anything else what with housekeeping and all that...she goes to church of course".

While we were talking young Janet Martin came in. She had cycled all the way from Smallrise – a matter of two miles – to get her favourite papers. She's just left Sandon School to go to Hixon Secondary Modern."

Whilst looking at Ordnance Survey maps of the village from 1878 and 1880, I noticed that there was another building next to the Horseshoe Cottages, where the seat now is. One map (after revisions) shows the building as still being there in 1923.

There is a postcard of the bottom of the village which features a photograph taken in 1907. The photographer would have been standing at the junction of Spot Lane and Sandon Road. On examination, there is indeed another building as noted above. As there are neither chimneys nor discernible windows, it appears to have been a brick-built barn/stables.

As the field where the Village Hall now stands was owned by the Horseshoe Inn until it closed in 1926, it is likely that this building belonged to the Inn as well. Both the Roebuck and Bird in Hand had outbuildings, and the Horseshoe Inn may have been a coaching inn at one time, so this would be a distinct possibility.

The road through Hilderstone was a main route between London and Manchester and was turnpiked from 1762, and subsequently became a mail coaching route. From the memories of older residents, past and present, the building was demolished shortly after the Horseshoe Inn closed, or certainly within a few years. The moral of this story is that there is always something waiting to be discovered!

CHURCH YARD TIDY UP NEWS



Dear Friends

Well, with all this 'extra' time we have had to tend our own gardens this year, unfortunately, the monthly church yard tidy up Saturday mornings didn't get started in March as 'lock down number one' came just before we were about to start. I must say it has been so nice to see that the church yard has been mown regularly and has given a sense that we do care for the church surroundings and this means a lot especially to those who come to tend their loved ones graves.

I would particularly like to thank those who have continued tending parts of the church yard – whilst in isolation – their time spent has been recognised.

We were also given a bag of daffodils which have been planted along the main footpath and will bring a lovely additional colourful display in the Spring.

The large yew tree, adjacent to the church (which had to be significantly reduced as it was beginning to damage the stone work of the church) is beginning to show signs of renewed life and it will provide a much needed cheerful sight to the village when the Christmas lights are turned on.

We have an additional flower box outside the North Door which will give an extra splash of colour during the year.

With best wishes for a very **HAPPY CHRISTMAS** and here's to looking forward to getting back to our monthly tidying up sessions in March 2021.

Christine Clark



Picture (ABOVE) by
Isobel Evans, aged 3

Christ Church Hilderstone

Parish Magazine Winter Edition 2020



Vicar

Revd Marion Reynolds
The Vicarage, 20 Tudor Hollow, Fulford
Tel: 01782 397073

Churchwarden

Mrs Audrey Stringer
Mistletoe House
Hilderstone
Tel: 01889 505638

From the Vicar

As I write this in the middle of Lockdown2, I am amazed at just how many Christmas adverts are on TV, in the press and, on the odd occasion we go out, on posters. Apparently, advertisers have made a conscious decision to start advertising Christmas earlier this year to spread some joy in what has been a pretty fraught year. All that comes after newspaper headlines (which really annoyed me) telling us that Christmas is cancelled this year! No, it isn't I say! Maybe some of the *distortions* of Christmas are not going to be present as they have in other years – too much food, too much alcohol, too much put on the credit card (you get my drift?) but Christmas, the Christian celebration, is very much not cancelled. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy my Christmas lunch, a good bottle of wine, sharing presents with family and friends and meeting loved ones just as much as anyone else. If that can't happen this year, then I will grieve but that won't mean that I love and care for them any less.

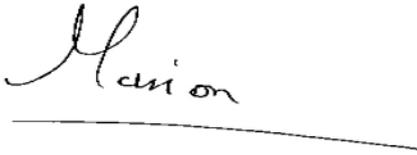
Amid all the sadness, anxiety, negativity of this year there have been many signs of love and care for others shown by so many people in so many different ways, some very noticeable (who can forget Col Sir Tom's walk?), some in small, local, mostly unnoticed ways (apart from those who have benefitted from them). For me, these are all signs that there is hope for the future, that we do care for others and the world around us. We will come through this pandemic together.

At the end of November the church begins its new year with the season of Advent, one of two penitential seasons in the church (the other being Lent) when Christians particularly think about how far we fall short of what God would like us to be and we ask for His forgiveness. At the end of Advent, we have one of the two joyful seasons of the church – Christmas (just as we have Easter at the end of Lent). It's the time when Christians remember, and thank God, that He loved the world so much that He was prepared to send his only son to show us a role-model for life. Christmas Day is the time when we give thanks for the birth of Jesus as a human being, to a human family.

We will be celebrating Advent, the lead up to Christmas, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It won't be the same as in previous years but be assured Christmas is definitely not cancelled as the media may have us believe. There

is joy to the world as the Lord does come to us again as a baby born into a hostile, dangerous, world, just as he did all those years ago.

May God bless you and all you love at this special time of year.



Services Christ Church - December 2020 & January 2021

NOTE: until further notice from the Government, our services are all said with no organ or hymns. The churches can take a maximum of 18 people to comply with social distancing rules and sanitizing stations are at both churches. A one-way system in church is in operation.

20 th Dec	11:15am	Holy Communion
24 th Dec	9:30pm	Midnight Holy Communion
25 th Dec	10:00am	Christmas Family Communion at Fulford
27 th Dec	NO SERVICE	
Each Sunday in January	11:15am	Holy Communion

Dates for your diary - Advent 2020

9 th Dec	10:30am	St Nicholas - Stations of the Nativity
16 th Dec	10:30am	Christ Church - O Come Emmanuel

Prayers

If anyone has a prayer request, please contact Audrey or the Vicar. Unfortunately, home visits are not permitted at this time due to Covid restrictions.

In the Quiet of Lockdown, we remember them

Much has been said, and will continue to be said, about the very real challenges and hardships that have impacted our lives so harshly over these many months. Perhaps one of the most poignant, however, was Remembrance Day: gone were the row upon row of ex-service men and women walking with pride past the Cenotaph; despite the band playing, and the honoured few in attendance, there was a quietness not witnessed before. The same was true throughout the country; the few who stood, in silence, by their War Memorials and the many who found an alternative means to honour our war dead. But honour them they did.



Pictured: The current and 'retired' Watchman at Christ Church



Despite the quiet dignity of 2020 Remembrance Day, others were busy ensuring Remembrance Day was marked in the time-honoured way, but this year out of sight of so many of us.

One such event was a visit by The Watchman from the Staffordshire Regiment, which came to visit one of the war graves. Greg Hedges, of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier & mascot of Staffordshire Regimental Association, comments: "On arrival there was such a welcoming attitude and it was personally very moving to see the same names repeated, with gaps between entries indicating the fact that the pain of loss was protracted in such a small community, I also wonder with no social services network in place at that time, just what

became of some of the widows who had tied Cottages, all very much food for deep thought." We would like to thank Greg and the Watchman for their trip. **Visit their Facebook page: [WatchmanStaffordshire](#).**

We take great care of our War Memorials, both the one that sits sentinel by the main gates into the churchyard, and the internal War Memorial. We hope those of you who wished, were able to visit the Memorials and the churchyard for your own private remembrances during these difficult times.

Christ Church - 'The Project' - Access for All - (AfA)

Approximately 20 years ago Roy Clark had the concept of making the church more accessible for young families with pushchairs and for the disabled and those in wheelchairs, plus developing the Baptistry (*main entrance to the church*) as a meeting place for children's activities during the service, general meeting area, alongside a space for serving refreshments after services, concerts and other activities. Rough sketches of possibilities were presented but were seen to be too ambitious at the time.

Just before the arrival of the Reverend Marion Reynolds, however, the idea was revisited with the Church Planning & Finance Team as the church faced the reality that, as mentioned by visiting clergy, our church would not survive in the future unless we had toilet facilities. And so the project came to life.

An overall project document was constructed showing access for disabled people and those with walking difficulties by coming into Church via the car park to the North door. The next step was to gain access through the Bell Tower to the Baptistry. The plan was to install a toilet and Tea Bar. This was when *The Project* obtained its name '*Access for All*' – AfA. This project would give us the much-needed '*entertainment*' area for Concerts, Meetings, Coffee Mornings plus other events in the church's calendar other than Sunday Services, whilst allowing access to everyone, not just the able-bodied.



Once the concept had been agreed with the PCC (*Parochial Church Council*) detailed drawings were produced by the Architects. This was then submitted to the Lichfield Diocese DAC (*Diocese Administration Committee*) for approval. The DAC is a body of 10 people at the Cathedral who meet to discuss proposals such as these for acceptance of changes to any church in the Diocese. It was suggested, at this stage, that the project be 'broken down' to smaller, more affordable small projects.

Phase 1 - Relocate the War Memorial
Phase 2 - Relocate the Font

Phase 3a - Access for the disabled
Phase 3b - Toilet and Tea Bar

Phase 1 and 2 have now been completed and we are delighted with the very positive feedback they have received.



Phase 3a – Access for the Disabled: Approved in 2019, this project is all but complete and you will see the difference it has made. There is only the final decorating to be completed, which is on-going: Despite Covid 19, we have installed a resin path between the car park and North door; the door was converted from two doors to a single door which makes access much easier (especially for wheelchairs and prams); there is now an arch way between the Bell Tower and the Baptistry. Then came the most difficult and messy stage - carried out by

the Contractors – the removal of the old plaster from the walls of the Bell Tower. These walls were then coated with mortar and then covered with lime plaster, in keeping with the original. Thanks to Roy Clark and Audrey Stringer, the Project Management Team, this phase was actually at almost half the cost of the original tenders – actual cost £15,000.

Phase 3b – Toilet and Tea Bar: After much consultation between the P&F Team, DAC and Architects during the winter of 2019/20 a final Faculty was approved and Tenders gained, of between £63,500 & £74,032. Much of the cost lies in having to remove the raised floor and iron central heating pipe in the Baptistry. The central heating will then have to be re-routed and all waste re-routed to a septic tank, to be situated in the car park. *(All Plans and Specifications are available in Church)*

At the present time the AfA Project is delayed due to lack of access to funding streams and the restrictions of Covid 19. Funding for the earlier Phases was raised through local donations totalling £22,500 and we are very grateful for the support of the community in helping us realise so many of our plans.

Approaches have been made to various organisations for funding but, any funding, needs to be matched funded. These will be challenging times.

Roy Clark & Audrey Stringer. Pictured: (left) entrance ramp; (above) entrance to Bell Tower.

CARING FOR OUR WORLD:

Trees

Our churchyards are an important sanctuary for our wildlife and the plants that they need to survive. In each edition of the Parish Magazine, we will be looking at the animals, insects and plants we find in our churchyards, starting with our lovely trees.

HOW OLD IS YOUR TREE?

Give your tree a hug. It may take more than one of you to reach right around.

The distance between the tips of your fingers when your arms are outstretched is approximately the same as your height. How many hugs do you need to give the tree in order to reach right round?



Multiply the number of hugs by your height in cms. Then multiply this number by two as this gives you the age of your tree in years.

Your height =
X number of hugs =
X 2 = age of the tree in years

CAN YOU FIND THESE LEAVES?



Oak



Yew



Ash



Holly

Hilderstone Gardeners

In 2007, when we came to live in Hilderstone, the Village held an Open Gardens Day. It was an event to cherish in our memories; not only because the sun



shone all day, but it offered so many opportunities to meet new friends and share each other's garden ideas. We took such pleasure exploring rose and honeysuckle arches, decorative patios, terraces, manicured lawns, topiaried hedges and all things herbaceous. I remember teas and sundials at Little Day Hills and Gateway Cottage and, at Priors Ley, elegant stone greyhounds surveying the view beyond the ha ha.

So much care had been given to these beautifully created gardens, often over many years. None were the result of magical 'wand-waving' but of hard hand-calling labour. There was so much to learn from each other.

Since March we have all been living very different lives and for some the experience has been solitary and sheltered. I have been reminded of that 2007 Garden Tour when noting how many in the Village have found solace in their gardens. Some residents have found a renewed enthusiasm (in my case bordering on obsession) for life in the Garden. Throughout these months I have discovered that each day has required a new regime of dead-heading roses, weeding, cutting back, replanting...in fact there are friends in the Village who delight in exchanging illustrated emails of garden progress, reminding me of the competitive spirit of Village Flower and Vegetable Shows when I was a child.

Now, within another Lockdown, the Autumn leaves are being swept up and 'bagged' to make good Spring compost, bulbs are being planted, sheds tidied and tools oiled and packed away. As we all prepare for the Winter ahead may we all look forward to a flower-filled Spring.

In the words of the poet Shelley –

'If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind'

Hilderstone Hall care home would like to wish the whole community a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The wellbeing of our residents is important to the care that they receive, and we take time to understand what great care means to them, as well as to understand their individual likes and dislikes, to ensure that life in our home is as comfortable and filled with happiness as it can be. This careful planning normally begins with an assessment of overall needs by our highly trained team and this in turn, ensures that we are confident that we can meet the needs of new residents. Our in-house chefs are also part of this as we know how important good food and nutrition is.

We continue to embrace a full and comprehensive life enrichment program providing three meaningful activities everyday including art and craft, quizzes, church services, poetry and exercises. Residents are looking forward to a virtual Nativity play produced by Fulford Primary School who are friends of Hilderstone Hall enjoying the intergenerational engagement thoroughly. We are pen pals with pupils from a local school, which brings much joy to both our residents and the children at the school



We are so fortunate that we have always had a full supply of PPE, and our staff training is the best of any care home provider. We recognise that safety is of paramount importance, now more than ever, and we are proud to say that Barchester is the only care home provider to hold the RoSPA award for Health and Safety.

ABOVE: NHS Rainbow pictures adorn the windows of the Hall. RIGHT: the donations box for the Trussell Trust at the Hall's Main Entrance.

Rest assured, we are open for admissions for those needing care, and truly so thankful to be able to provide that necessary care and support to those that really need us now.

We can reassure you that people living with dementia are cared for by a team who are all highly trained in dementia care. Our Memory Lane community is specifically designed to alleviate anxiety and support navigation for those residents living with dementia. Our training ensures that all staff are well versed in ensuring that our residents are cared for appropriately and our ongoing assessments ensure that appropriate activities support the wellbeing of our residents with such things as pet therapy and music therapy as well as our magic table which is an interactive light projector which promotes stimulation through specialised games, and supports increased physical and social interactions

Our home is filled with joy, and particularly at this time we are all really excited about our plans for Christmas where we are all set to make it a Christmas like no other, with pantomimes planned, Christmas cake making competitions, and a Christmas performance and live Q&A from the *English National Ballet*, as well as a virtual tour and live Christmas webinar Q&A at Blenheim Palace, amongst a whole host of other plan. We of course make sure our plans are inclusive and for residents who don't celebrate Christmas, there are a number of activities and events for everyone to enjoy throughout December as well.

HELPING ITS COMMUNITY:

Hilderstone Hall remains a drop off collection point for the Trussell Trust and would welcome any donations (visit www.trusselltrust.org). Simply leave in the box at the Entrance.

The Hall is also kindly arranging delivery of care packs to lonely or vulnerable people in the community and if anyone would like to refer someone to receive a pack, please call Tel: 01889 505468.



News from The Roebuck

When Dave and I first looked at this pub I didn't want to come: It was unloved, neglected - nobody wanted the only pub in the village - except my Dave. His dream was to turn it into a proper old-fashioned community pub, where people could meet and enjoy good conversation with friends; no tele, no food.

That was three years ago. Sadly, Dave died a year after we took 'The Buck' on. I have kept the pub going through hard work and determination and I have now bought The Buck, so as long as I live, The Buck will be a pub. But that does depend on the village using it. Most of my customers come from outside the village and have become regulars; without their custom the pub would have closed.



Then Covid 19 happened and customers from the village started using The Buck, old and young alike. Strangely this pandemic had brought customers to our door. Since then, however, we have had to close due to Covid restrictions and life has become very quiet – although there has been plenty of time for walking the dog, so Roebuck my dog is happy.

The Buck sits in the heart of this village and is a true treasure. I am determined to keep its doors open for all – visitors and locals alike. Real fires, snooker and good beer (and great gin too) – what's not to love? And yes, a warm welcome, from the Landlady and her resident pub pooch, 'Roebuck', of course.

Those of you who know me, know I love this village. I am grateful to the Village Hall Committee for supporting me and my customers. I look forward to brighter days ahead, working together in our village.

Once all this is over (COVID 19) I hope to see old and new friends again in the pub. Come and celebrate our lovely village with friends at The Buck – the friends you know and the friends you have yet to meet.

The Moon in December

December's Full Cold Moon is the highest and brightest of the year. It shines high, bright and strong over the winter countryside, as the sun stays low and weak. But December brings the Winter Solstice, the moment at which the pendulum starts to swing back.

Neopagans believed that in pre-Christian times, the year was ruled over by two kings, the Holly King from the Summer Solstice to the Winter Solstice, and the Oak King, from winter to summer. They had to do battle for supremacy, and the Winter Solstice was the moment at which the Oak King slayed the Holly King and - like the sun – started to build strength.

Perhaps this is a clue to the origin of the name Oak Moon. This December's full moon falls after the solstice, and so it also takes the name Moon After Yule.

Gardening by the moon's phases:

- Full moon to 3rd quarter (1st-8th and 30th-31st). Harvest crops for immediate eating. Harvest fruit.
- 3rd quarter to new moon (8th-14th). Prune. Harvest for storage. Fertilise and mulch the soil.
- New moon to 1st quarter (14th-21st). Sow crops that develop below ground. Dig the soil.
- 1st quarter to full moon (21st-30th). Sow crops that develop above ground. Plant seedlings and young plants.

14th and 30th – new moon and full moon: best fishing days. Some fishermen believe that fish bite best in the 45 minutes either side of moonrise and set on the new and full moons.

The solstice:

The Winter Solstice on 21st December falls at 10:02 when the North Pole is at its maximum tilt (23.44°) away from the sun. The sun reaches an altitude of 15° in the London sky and 11° in the Glasgow sky at solar midday.

By Hayley Miller, from The Almanac by Lia Leendertz

Together we can make a Difference!

This special Winter Edition has been crammed to the rafters with articles about how we, as a village, have made a real difference to the community we call home – in the past, the present and well into the future.

But making a difference is something we can ALL do - whatever your skills, spare time or age. Here are just a few things to consider:

- *Litter picking.*
- *Churchyard Tidy-up Group.*
- *Be like George and send your pictures and articles for our Magazine.*
- *Donations for the upkeep of the Parish Magazine.*
- *Recycle your old ink cartridges (see overleaf)*
- *Support our annual Best Kept Village initiative and keep our paths, driveways etc clean, tidy and attractive.*



We are fortunate to have an army of volunteers who are busy keeping our village so welcoming and clean. We would like to thank Margaret and Robin of Mount Nurseries. Their beautiful plants really do brighten up the village, especially when displayed in the wooden planters, built by Bill Holmes. Bill always goes 'the extra mile' to make sure the 'kerb side appearance' throughout the village is maintained and he also takes care of the other flower boxes throughout the village.

Thanks must also be given to Hazel Timmis, who arranges the annual supply of daffodils, funded by the Parish Council, for volunteers to plant along the roadside in the village. Our thanks also to Sue James-Heath for her maintenance of the flower bed around the seat on the embankment. This lovely display around the bench, provides a welcome place to sit and rest halfway up the hill!

Thank you, too, to all those who have helped make this Winter Edition happen: the contributors of articles and pictures; the proof-readers and, of course, the advertisers. **We are grateful to you all.**

Recycle your empty Inkjet Cartridges. Help us raise money for our village church and reduce landfill. There is a box inside church for your donations. If you need your donation to be collected please call Phil Davies on Tel: 01785 747836.

Please note we can no longer recycle phones

Parish Magazine Donations

Last year, the advertisers and readers of the magazine generously donated enough money to keep our publication running. This year we all face difficult times, but if you could help towards the cost of printing this magazine, we would be very grateful. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Phil Davies in the first instance.

Fundraising Events 2021

After a year in which we couldn't have any fundraising events, we need fresh ideas and help for 2021. If you can help, please contact Phil Davies (details above).

Advertising in the Parish Magazine

Our Parish Magazine offers advertisers a valuable opportunity to reach new and existing local customers and support their community. It also offers real value for money and we are most grateful to all those who continue to advertise in this magazine.

If you are interested in placing an advert, please contact Audrey Stringer (Tel: 01889 505638). Annual Advertising rates are as follows:

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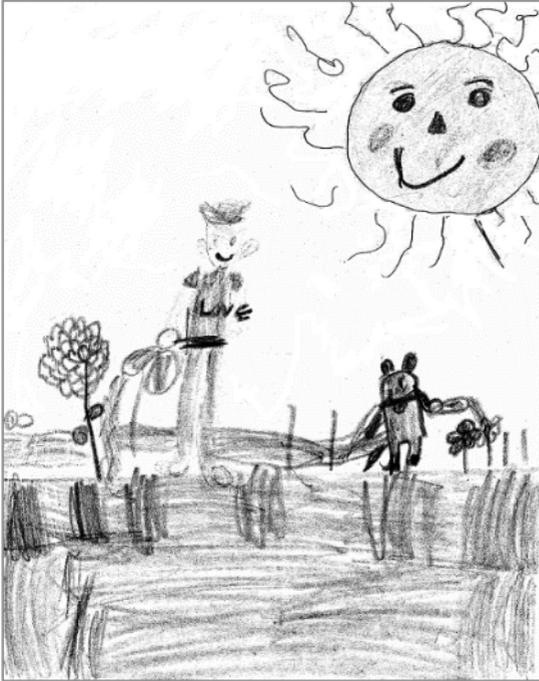
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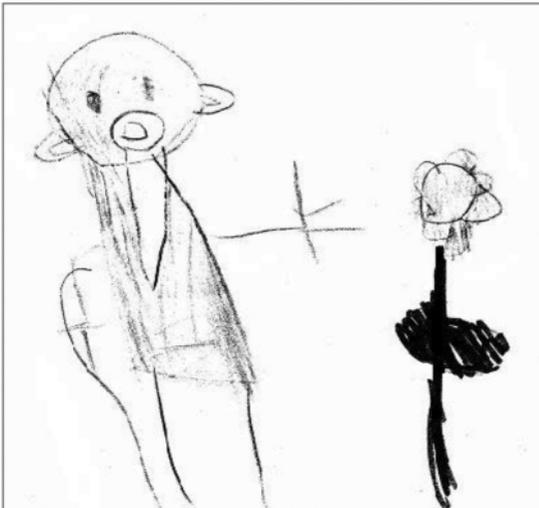
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We have had so many really lovely pictures from children that we decided we had to put them all into the magazine.

Pictured Left: This lovely sunny picture is guaranteed to put a smile on your face. His dog is MUCH keener on gardening than mine! Well done!



Pictured below left: What a beautiful flower this little girl is holding! Clearly a gardener in the making.

Thank you to Bella Hughes, aged 4, for sending us this cheerful picture.

All you budding artists out there, why not send us your lovely pictures and we will put them in the magazine for everyone to enjoy!

Send them to:
Eleanor.bane@safersystems.co.uk

This lovely festive picture by Oliver Simpson (aged 4) sums up all that is wonderful about Christmas. Thank you Oliver – we just had to put this on our back page!



From the team on the Parish Magazine,
we wish you all

**A very Merry Christmas
& a Happy New Year**

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