

## Christmas 2020 'Bumper' Edition



# The Bickleigh Bugle

Here is the last edition of 2020. The next one will be for February 2021. This year we are thinking of staying up on New Year's Eve, not to see the New Year in but to make sure this one leaves.

And we don't know about our readers but one of the dumbest things ever purchased was a 2020 year planner - not a lot in it!

Let's hope we will see 2021 herald a return to a more normal way of life and it certainly looks more promising than for some time over the last few months. Will we be changing some of our habits? Perhaps giving some thought to our

New Year resolutions? Assuming of course you make them.

Whatever you do over the holiday season we hope you will make the best of it and let's wish for a good 2021.

And don't forget, keep in mind even during a pandemic, no matter how much you eat over Christmas your earrings will still fit.

A Happy Christmas to you all with our very best wishes for the New Year.

**Your editors,  
Steve and Michael**

# Bickleigh School Association's Christmas Fair 2020

The Bickleigh School Association's (BSA) Christmas fair for 2020 is an online event held on Facebook. It has been created to replace our traditional Christmas fair, allowing the BSA to raise some much needed funds for our school, whilst bringing local businesses together. The aim is to give them the opportunity to show their amazing products and services and get a much needed pre Christmas boost.

Christmas shopping in 2020 is certainly going to be very different so we thank you in

advance for supporting us, the school and our wonderful stall holders. To join the fair please search on facebook Bickleigh School Associations Christmas Fair.

There is still time to join our fair, please contact Cat on the BSA email address. joining fee is £10 per business. The Fair is open until Christmas Eve.

We look forward to you joining us!

**Cat Down**

## Bickleigh Village Hall



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# Thoughts from Clive

Whilst at the time of writing this article the Government has yet to announce what will and will not be allowed, we all know that this will be a very different Christmas from those of previous years. There is some hope that families can meet up on Christmas Day at the very least although there seem certain to be limitations on numbers.

This year's work celebrations seem certain to take place on Zoom or not at all as the rules on large groups meeting up in pubs or restaurants are unlikely to be eased in December, so seeing friends for a pre-Christmas drink or meal will probably not be allowed. I also note that turkey farmers have put their turkeys on diets on the basis that smaller birds will be in demand this year as many people will be having fewer guests. And who doesn't like a trip to the local panto but that's unlikely to happen this year unless you fancy a drive-in show – the Car Park Panto is set to tour the UK with audiences watching from inside their cars!

Many of us are saddened to see our churches unable to hold services and whilst here in Bickleigh a noble effort was made prior to the current lockdown to keep going with as normal a service as possible, the rules preventing congregational singing and mask wearing make it all very frustrating. The St Mary's Carol Service normally held on or close to Christmas Eve is always well-attended and one of the highlights of the year and will be greatly missed this year. A number of villagers are hoping to arrange an alternative socially distanced event or you may want to consider one of the many virtual Christmas carol concerts on offer. Both Canterbury and Salisbury Cathedrals are streaming their much-loved carol services online or you might prefer those arranged by

Shelter, The Alzheimer's Society or Marie Curie. Details of these services and many others are easily obtained by searching online. The one advantage of the online concerts is that you can grab a mince pie and a favourite tippie, sit down next to the fire and not have someone like me belting out 'O Holy Night' sat next to you!

The Bickleigh Bible Study group are studying Daniel (the one in the lions' den) and we came across this verse last week, "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, will shine like the stars for ever and ever". This led us to discuss how fortunate we are to be living in a village without streetlights where you can explore the night sky and marvel at the sheer number of stars. Did you know there are more stars in the sky than grains of sand on the earth! Being stuck at home, lockdown is an ideal time to look at the stars, which led me recently to purchase an astronomical telescope. I'm loving exploring the planets, the stars, comets and even the International Space Station – although I still can't get my head around some of the numbers involved!

Parish Council meetings will continue to be held on Zoom for the foreseeable future. The agenda for each meeting, which includes the Zoom access details, and minutes are published on the Bickleigh Village website and placed on the Parish Council Noticeboard each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 8th December at 6:00 pm.

Wishing you all a very joyous and happy Christmas and hoping that 2021 will bring me some actual village activities to write about!

**Clive**

# Letter from the Rector

Christmas 2020 will be like none we have previously experienced. Our social and family gatherings will probably be much curtailed. The traditional ways we have celebrated and told the story of Jesus' birth – carol services, Christingles, Nativity plays, and 'Midnight Mass' – will not take place – or at least not in the way we would want.

It can all seem a very gloomy prospect. But maybe this year will give us all an opportunity to reconsider what is important about the message of Christmas and the birth of Jesus.

It begins with a young couple expecting a baby. The parents expected the birth to happen in the comfort of their Nazareth home, surrounded by, and with the support of, their families.

Then suddenly events outside their control throw everything off course. The dictates of imperial bureaucrats mean they have to make a tiring and gruelling journey many miles from home and end up with nowhere to stay for the imminent confinement. Pacing the streets with a heavily pregnant mum-to-be and homeless is not how Mary and Joseph planned starting their family.

The stories of the stable birth, shepherds, angels and wise-men are the stuff of our traditional nativity plays. But how does the story end? – a return to a safe and comfortable life in Nazareth?

Matthew's Gospel tells us: 'Now after the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.'

Jesus began his life knowing what it is to suffer intolerance towards those who are perceived as a threat, becoming a refugee and by finding hospitality and welcome in a strange land.

St John wrote of the birth of Jesus: 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The true light that enlightens EVERYONE, was coming into the world'.

In the uncertain and dark days of the first Christmas of the War (1939), King George VI chose to use the words of Minnie Louise Haskins to echo the thoughts of his own heart at that time:

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'

To know the real Christmas story, we must expect to see the face of Jesus in unexpected times, in unexpected places and in unexpected people and to reach out to him. The Jesus whose early life was dramatically affected by unexpected events. Jesus the helpless innocent baby whom others despised and wished to kill, Jesus the refugee seeking safety in the hospitality of distant lands.

The real magic of Christmas is the hope that the light that came into the world through the love of God will change us and will change all mankind.

I wish you all, however you are able celebrate, a very blessed Christmas and New Year.

**Paul**

# Something Clicked

Then something clicked  
and the day quivered and rang like a question mark!

Why grit your teeth in the gridlock now the commute's  
a superfast hop and a skip from toothbrush to keyboard,  
from bed-hair to screen-call?

Why wrestle with glitches and gremlins  
or tussle with gubbins and gismos, or idle and churn  
in the swirling pit of the buffering wheel  
now you're fine-tuning the senses, enrolling for real life,  
getting to grips with arts and crafts  
that were only a keystroke away all along -  
you're a rhythm guitar, a poem, a garden, a song.

You've learned to cook -  
you're a Sunday roast, a multigrain loaf, a recipe book!  
Why be garbled and scrambled again  
now you're mindful, resourceful, neighbourly, human?  
Now you're curious. Fruitful. Meaningful. Tuneful.  
And why twiddle your thumbs, though sometimes it's good  
to kick back, to noodle and doodle  
letting dreams swim into pin-sharp-focus,  
meander through luminous moments. Why stall,  
why settle for knowledge arriving granule by granule?

No more fishing for news with a butterfly net,  
doing the human aerial. You're bright of late, ideas hitching  
and switching from one domain to the next,  
thoughts swiping from subject to subject, planet to planet,  
globetrotting the universe. And you're riding a bike -  
you're a walk, a hike, a mountain, a lake.  
It's a new world - you're at school in the kitchen,  
at work in the attic, in Ancient Rome in the lounge,  
on Mars in the basement. Why tear out your hair  
while the present dithers and loads, you deserve  
to lean on the airwaves and not fall over,  
to feel the hub of your heart's heart  
pulsating and purring with life's signal.  
So you're right here this minute being your best being.

And now you've hooked up  
with the all-thinking all-feeling all-doing version of you  
why sit in the future's waiting-room  
drumming your fingers,  
why lose the connection  
when you could be your own greatest invention?

**Simon Armitage**

# Churchyard conservation

Last month Isaac Scaife told us about the catastrophic decline in insects - as much as 70%. This matters for many reasons; insects are important as the lower end of the food chain and many other species are declining as a result.

Scientists are imploring us to leave wild areas and we are doing our (small) bit in the churchyard. We are sometimes asked why we leave "untidy" areas and wood piles. They form an important web of life:

## **A WEB OF LIFE**

The various large animals that depend on dead and dying wood for food or nesting sites are well known - just think of woodpeckers, owls and a whole host of other birds and mammals. Less well known are the

smaller animals that are completely dependent on dead wood for all or part of their lives.

In the UK alone, around 2,000 invertebrate species and counting are associated with dead wood, from tiny beings just about visible with the naked eye to some of our most spectacular insects.

Many species are actually there for fungi; and fungi are the engines that break down wood, freeing up nutrients and returning them to the soil to fuel more plant growth. So the circle goes round - nutrients feed plants, more wood is produced, more insects feed on each other, animals in turn feed on them.

Let's have an insect friendly New Year!

**Matt Melksham, Steve Batt and Adam Scaife**

# Remembrance day



Rev Thom Thompson with Cllr Clive Williams lay a wreath on Remembrance Day on behalf of the village

# Mobile Library Timetable 2021

Stopping at Bickleigh School on the following Thursdays:

January 21st  
February 18th  
March 18th  
April 15th  
May 13th  
June 10th  
July 8th  
August 5th  
September 2nd  
September 30th  
October 28th  
November 25th



## Bickleigh Bridge

A local resident writes...

*"Any idea who we need to talk to in order to resolve the bridge situation? I know it's an ongoing saga, but the damage on both Bickleigh and Little Dart bridge is horrendous and probably dangerous, As long as articulated vehicles are allowed, the bridges will continue to be damaged. It seems an easy and fairly cheap solution - just prohibit articulated vehicles! Who will listen?"*

**Email us [bickleighbugle@outlook.com](mailto:bickleighbugle@outlook.com) with any bright ideas!**

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## **Kerry Peters**

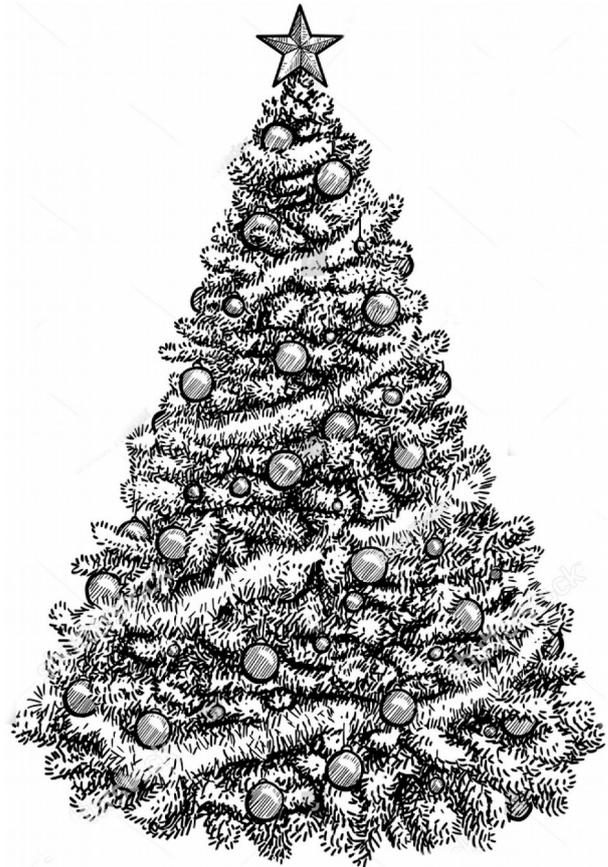
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**We wish you a  
Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year!**



**Submissions to the  
Bickleigh Bugle are  
very welcome!**

**Email us by the  
20th of the month**

**[bickleighbugle@outlook.com](mailto:bickleighbugle@outlook.com)**