



Keep Connected! - Community Matters
Serving the Parish and Wider Mottingham

Issue 27, 14 February 2021

Dear Reader: Welcome to this Valentine's Day issue, which I hope will bring a little extra warmth in this continuing and currently snowy lockdown. Recent heavy rain and snow have had quite an impact on our local environment. This issue illustrates some of that, meaning that those of you who have been unable to go out don't miss out completely!

Community Matters
Mary Sylvester

contacted us several days ago to report the arrival of an Egyptian goose in Mottingham Gardens! Mary writes, "About 8.30am on Friday 29th January 2021 my doorbell was being rung frantically and repeatedly. When I opened the door there was a bird looking up at me. I did not recognise the type but thought it was a duck or a goose. My next door neighbour, Kerry, was about to take her daughter to school when she spotted the bird which then walked up my drive. I could see that one wing was abnormal and seemed damaged. It reached the gate into my garden and then turned and waddled away finally going into the garden of number 9. For a time it walked about happily in there but a few hours later it was seen trying to fly over the back garden fence. It has not been seen since. Kerry told me about similar birds in the Tarn and Alison told me about Alfie and his Angel wing."



Alfie has since gone and hasn't been seen since. It's a matter of conjecture as to how Alfie arrived in Mottingham Gardens, but it seems likely that he managed to fly there, despite his deformed wing. We wish you well, Alfie, wherever you are.

Sue & Mick Wood became grandparents again last November, but were unable to help during the prevailing restrictions. Sue writes, "As many of you know, Mick and I had our bags packed ready last November to rush up to Cambridge to look after grandson Hunter, as the birth of his brother was imminent. When the phone rang we thought 'We're on our way'. However, son Trevor had phoned to say we couldn't go as his wife Helen had tested positive for Covid-19 and that Harrison was showing no sign of making an early appearance, so we could remain on stand by! Some of you know I was so worried at the time; thank you all for your prayers. The following night we received a call to say baby was on his way and he was born within two hours. Helen delivered him with midwives in full PPE and to our surprise and great relief, both were fine and back home the next day. I have no doubt that your prayers helped our grandson arrive Covid-free; thank you all.



Two weeks later we finally met him for an hour in a very cold park in Cambridge. Now, after three months, I still can't believe how lucky we are that both Helen and Harrison are well and fine."

Ray Andrew regularly sends me member briefings from Silver Voices, a campaign platform for the over sixties. Current campaigns underway include Social Care Action, Free TV Licences (over 70s) and Vaccinations. More information and details are available at <https://silvervoices.co.uk>. (Thanks for keeping us in the picture Ray - Ed).

Eliza Robinson has been busy building a snowman in their garden. Dad, Digby, helped her build it, I'm told. Perhaps he was also the model! Well done both.



Valentine's Day!

Yes, it's Valentine's Day today, as I'm sure most of you will know. Celebrations this year will be limited by the ongoing lockdown. If you have nothing special planned for the day read on!

Iris Osborne wrote to me recently with five facts about Valentine's Day. The first of these is reproduced below. The other four will follow over the next couple of issues due to limited available space in this issue.

'The course of true love never runs smooth' - "That's a truth the original St Valentine knew all too well. He was a Christian priest who lived in Rome in the 3rd Century AD. When the Emperor Claudius II forbade men to marry during wartime, St Valentine went against the emperor's wishes and performed secret weddings, for which he was imprisoned. Whilst there, he fell in love with the daughter of the jailer and after healing her he sent her a letter signed 'your Valentine'. He was beheaded soon after.

St Valentine isn't just the patron saint of lovers; he's also the patron saint of epilepsy, plague, greeting, travellers, young people and beekeepers (*Thank you Iris; we look forward to seeing the other facts. Does Covid-19 come under the heading of plague? - Ed*)

Joan & Les Huxley celebrated their recent diamond wedding anniversary with a fish & chip lunch and a bottle of bubbly, kindly donated by David & Thelma, 'in the presence of' Her Majesty, The Queen, as you can see! The happy couple would like to thank all who sent cards, beautiful flowers and gifts, which helped to make it a very special day in this ongoing lockdown.



Diane Hudson emailed me with this message on the subject of love; "I recently read an article by Jonathan Holland, an Anglican Bishop from Brisbane. He wonders what the future will hold for his two small grandchildren in 50 years' time. So much has changed over the last five decades, it is impossible to predict. A tablet used to mean a slate-board with chalk; now it means an iPad! So, how can we help children in our families meet whatever the future holds?"

The Bishop suggests two thoughts. First, give your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews etc a solid sense of their lovableness; we love them simply because they are there, not because of their achievements or otherwise. The Bishop illustrates this in the example of a politician who when asked how he coped with bruising political and union battles in his early career, responded by saying that in his early childhood he knew he had been loved, especially by his grandmother. He went on to say "when you know you are loved, you can deal with anything."

The Bishop's second thought is "that we need to point children's eyes towards God, whose love is all important; the model and source of all human love. Knowing that you are loved and lovable, and finding in God a foundation upon which to build life, are two of the best ways we can help the youngest generation meet whatever the future holds." So, perhaps we need to share our faith with the children in our church family, if we are asked of course, by letting them know how we have coped with the challenges in our lives.

Church Matters

Beverley Howard & Alison Lawrie, joint financial stewards for St Andrew's, have written to all on the electoral roll and other donors. In giving thanks for their ongoing support throughout last year and in the continuing lockdown, they provided a summary of the 2020 year end financial position. Although prospects for the coming year are uncertain the outlook is hopeful. More information will be available at the next Annual Parochial Church Meeting, which has been scheduled for 25 April 2021. Your attention is drawn to the following privacy statement ; *St Andrew with St Alban would like to contact you from time to time with parish news, events and*

special services. We promise to respect any personal data and keep it safe. We will not share it with any third party.

If you do not wish for any further communication from us please phone Beverley Howard on 020 8857 3366 or email Janet Akehurst, Electoral Roll Officer at gingerjanet02@gmail.com.

Revd Ian Welch - composed his Candlemas message for the parish website in the form of a poem, which is reproduced here for those of you who are unable to access the website or social media.

Candlemas

*As now the hours of daylight slowly lengthen, And dauntless snowdrops peep through frost-glazed earth,
Aged hearts once hailed the wondrous, shining vision, For forty days had passed since the destined birth,*

*Long years they'd watched in patient hope and praising, Convinced their ancient faith was not in vain;
This frail and treasured babe in teen arms cradled, The promised light to oppose a cruel world's pain.*

*Fulfilled now Israel's prophecy and vision, At peace, the souls of prophetess and priest,
For through the babe in Temple courts presented, From sway of flint-heart law the world is released.*

*So hold aloft with joy your festive candle, To greet the purging light from realms above,
And shed the rays on kindred, friend and neighbour, To bathe the world in a rising tide of love.*

"Wishing you all the great hope and joy experienced by Simeon and Anna!" - Revd Ian Welch.

David Mouqué reminded me that hymns, reflections and prayers are available from the C of E by phone if you are unable to access the internet. Details shown here -



Parish Services are accessible online only during the ongoing lockdown. For more information please contact Revd Ian. For those with internet access you will find links on our website's home page to the latest C of E guidance, local rules and area Covid-19 occurrence. These are all automatically updated.

Environment Matters

Bob & Alison - No doubt many of you have been able to go out for exercise and to enjoy our local area. For some, that hasn't been possible for various reasons. It's timely therefore to use this opportunity to share some of our recent walks and wildlife experiences with you - in words and photos.

A Five Mile Walk: Heavy, persistent rain at the end of January prompted us to visit Sutcliffe Park to see the river Quaggy and its flood meadow. The weather on Friday 5 February was lovely, so we decided to walk there - and back, of course! Our route took us through the 'village', along Mottingham Lane and King John's Walk (KJW) to the Sidcup Bypass. Crossing that and then the railway line, we continued along KJW admiring the views of London as well as taking time to 'spot' birds, including some redwings, too far away to photograph (see next page).



After a chance encounter and chat with a fellow chorister from Eltham Choral Society we joined Kingsground and entered Queenscroft Park, which evoked memories of me playing there as a child - too long ago to mention! Then it had a roller skating rink, a paddling pool, swings and other things for kids to climb on, That's all been updated, but the park looked lovely in the winter sun. Exiting the park we walked down Eltham Hill into Eltham Road to enter a wet and soggy Sutcliffe Park, noting the 'roaring' Quaggy!

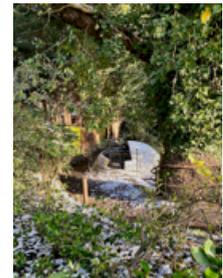


The park was very wet and soggy and it was evident that the water level had been much higher a few days earlier! The Friends of Sutcliffe Park (volunteer group) were out in force, clearing debris from under bridges and also collecting litter (much like the Friends of the Tarn). The strange objects hanging from one of the large trees are 'bat boxes' and home to some resident pipistrelle bats, we believe.



Our return journey took us past the newly renovated 'Dutch House' which looks rather nice and should be 'Coming Soon' according to the red banner attached to the frontage. We look forward to sampling breakfast, lunch or dinner in the not too distant future, we hope! A quick walk back along the A20 and up West Hallows to see if there was any sign of Alfie the goose (no luck) saw us home and back in time for lunch and in my case, aching feet as well! Lovely day and a real breath of fresh air- highly recommended.

The Tarn and Fairy Hill: The Tarn is currently closed due to snow and icy conditions, but should reopen early next week when conditions improve. These photos were taken over the last fortnight - from overflowing lake to closure!



The ice well could be mistaken for an igloo from the right angle! We went to Fairy Hill after discovering the Tarn was closed. Beautiful in the sun as you can see. The pyracantha hedge to the left of the gate was covered in berries and yes, there were redwings feeding there! We've seen them in our garden several times recently, including this morning when they were checking that there were no berries on our pyracantha! This one perched on our apple tree long enough for me to take some photos on my camera! Beautiful birds!



In Closing We are all looking forward to the day we'll be able to gather together again. When that will be is still unclear, but no doubt we'll know

more when the PM announces plans on 22 February. The particular issue of freedom to travel and go on holiday is to the fore at the moment. Unsurprising in that we've been more or less locked up for nearly a year and recent wintry weather conditions stimulate thoughts of holidays later in the year. These two cartoons by Matt amusingly illustrate the current situation and I hope they make you smile!



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