



New Year Greetings! and welcome to this first, albeit brief, issue of 2021. Christmas 2020 was unlike any other for us. The absence of family and friends meant it was a much quieter occasion, although like many people, we were able to have ‘virtual’ family get togethers. Of course, some of us weren’t able to do that. So, it was kind-hearted that community members were able to reach out to those without online facilities and provide some comfort and joy at this time. Now, more than ever perhaps, has been a time for reflection on the true meaning of Christmas. Let’s hope then, that 2021 will bring freedom from this debilitating pandemic and Zoom-only services. Most importantly, let’s pray that we will be able to congregate in person again before too long!

Community Matters **P**at Hubbard’s plans to spend Christmas Day with the her family didn’t materialise because the family weren’t well. A neighbour heard this news and kindly brought Pat a plated Christmas turkey and all the trimmings dinner. There was even enough turkey for a sandwich on Boxing Day! The day after, she sent me a variation of ‘The 12 Days of Christmas’ from ‘Garden News’ entitled ‘The 12 Veg of Christmas’. So, it starts with a Bramley in an apple tree, followed by two garlic cloves, three french beans, four cauliflowers, five Brussels sprouts, six sweetcorn swaying, seven tomatoes ripening, eight turnips turning, nine carrots cavorting, ten leeks a leaping, eleven big potatoes and (to finish), twelve perfect parsnips. I hope you didn’t have all of those on your plate, Pat!

Jim Thomas was delighted to be treated to a Christmas dinner from his next-door neighbour.

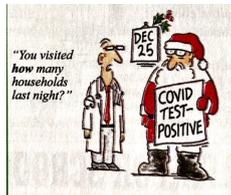
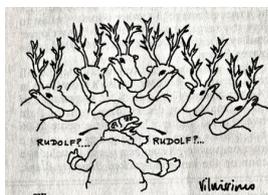
Many of you have been in touch over the Christmas season. We have also phoned and met many in socially-distanced person, when delivering cards and the Christmas issue of KC! On one such mission to **Mary Houlston**’s in Mottingham Lane, I met **Ian Lang** in passing and then

Mary Sylvester as she returned in her car. The arrival of rain curtailed my plan to see the River Quaggy in spate, but **Imogen** and family saw an outcome of that when they visited Sutcliffe Park soon after the heavy rain!



Then on New Year’s Eve, twins **Rafe** and **Theo** discovered ice on the pool in Queenscroft Park (*I used to play there as a child and it really was a paddling pool - Ed!*).

Seasonal Smiles!
(With thanks to Private Eye: Ed)



Feed the birds! We knew cold weather was on its way when a flock of redwings (small thrushes with a red streak under the wing/shoulder joint) appeared on the cherry tree beyond the end of our garden a couple of days after Christmas. It's their lookout post for food; in this instance, bright red, tempting, holly berries in our neighbour's garden. They returned yesterday and are here again to finish the job. There are plenty of berry-laden holly trees around and no doubt they will soon be receiving a visitation!



Church Matters

The move into Tier 4 before Christmas resulted in services due to be held in St Andrew's being live-streamed over Zoom only. It was fortunate, therefore, that the Carol Service on 17 December was able to proceed. If you have internet access you can see a video of the small, but select choir, singing 'There is No Rose'. This, and the nine-minute video compilation of the service, can be viewed on the parish website - both are accessible from the home page. Please do use the Donate facility to give to Crisis and Kisumu, charities the church always supports at this time of the year.

The videos were recorded on my phone in non-ideal conditions and expertly edited by neighbour and collaborator, **Ray Andrew** - together we are **R2R Videography** and look forward to future productions when Covid-free times return. CD copies are available for those without internet access.



Do keep an eye on the website, as it is regularly updated and contains a wealth of information - parish, diocese and Church of England, including the Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year message.

You will also find this and every other copy of Keep Connected there - if and when you wish to revisit them.

Environment Matters

A recent visit to the Tarn revealed strong water flow and a healthier looking lake, not to mention an abundance of water fowl and people. The former can be forgiven for coming close, but it's disappointing to see how many people do not follow social distancing etiquette. Notwithstanding this, it is good to see our local nature reserve being so well used at this time of need. These two photos show some interesting reflections and a view of a deserted golf course from the bridge.

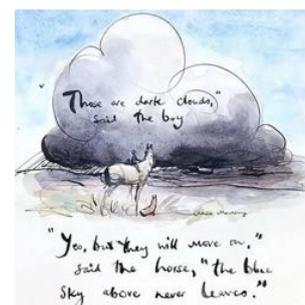


Mottingham Matters

Librarian **Chris Davis** has provided news on the Library, which she says is closed until at least 11 January. After then it may be open for click and collect reservations by appointment, although the situation is changing every day! In the meantime, all items on loan have been extended until 1 February. Please contact her at christine.Davis@gll.org for more information.

In closing - If you have not already read or heard Charlie Mackesy's moving audio recording of his wonderful book, *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, please do. It is an inspirational book that brings people together and he reads it in a way that expresses friendship so beautifully. The book is a celebration of kindness, compassion and understanding, conveying an essential message for our time. Right now, we need that message of hope. The audio recording is available on BBC Sounds.

I leave you with this message of hope and will 'see' you again in issue 26 later this month. Please keep connected and do send me your input.



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