



The Stoke Climsland Newsletter

Issue 25 December 2020

You better watch out,
You better not cry,
You better not pout,
We're telling you why.
Santa Claus is coming to Stoke Climsland.

He's making a list,
And checking it twice,
He's going to find out
who's been naughty or nice.
Santa Claus is coming to Stoke Climsland.

(We all hope!)

Have you been up on Kit Hill recently? Did you see Santa spying out Stoke Climsland again? We last saw him in 2015 but we guess that he comes every year, checking out the parish all the way from Beals Mill to Luckett to Kelly Bray, presumably looking for those worthy of gifts this Christmas. We managed to get some pictures of Santa taking a sneaky look at everything that's going on.

This issue of the Newsletter is distributed in print within Stoke Climsland parish and published on The Old School page on Facebook and on www.theoldschoolnews.co.uk where it is easier to download. The next issue, which will only be published online, is due out on January 5th 2021

ABOUT THIS
NEWSLETTER

This Newsletter is being produced by Old School volunteers in collaboration with the Parish Council. Please use our contacts to provide information or with questions about the Newsletter. Please do not leave information at The Old School office which at present is not always regularly staffed. Editorial and information for inclusion: Deri Parsons 01579 370319 or derrick.parsons@btinternet.com Advertising enquiries: Linda Ainsworth 01579 370632 or newsletteroldschool@gmail.com Compilation by John Wilmut on 01579 370736 or johnwilmut@btinternet.com

THE EDITORIAL TEAM WRITES ...

Welcome to our special Christmas issue of the Stoke Climsland Newsletter. For the first time, and thanks to generous support from the Parish and Cornwall Councils, we are able to distribute this in printed form to all households in Stoke Climsland parish. But, as usual, it's also available online, and you can link to it or download and email it or just tell others to view it on Facebook - see the note on page 1. And if you haven't received your copy you can pick one up at the shop or at The Old School.

We started this Newsletter in March and here we are at Issue 26. It has displaced the Old School News which had been the monthly publication circulated widely in printed form in the parish and surrounding area. It has been designed to give Covid-related information but also to give details of what has been happening in and around the parish.

Everyone is saying how extraordinary 2020 has become and we're astonished that we've not yet managed to get back to the Old School News. But Stoke Climsland has looked after itself well in the last 9 months. The community has come together to support its vulnerable members and has managed to keep a wide range of activities going in difficult circumstances.

So, while this Newsletter does contain some Covid information, it is also a celebration of the fact that we're still working together and able to wish each other a Happy Christmas and to look forward together to a wholly better New Year, even though many difficulties still remain.

Our thanks to everyone who has contributed to this and earlier issues of our Newsletter and can we say **HAPPY CHRISTMAS STOKE CLIMSLAND** and Happy Christmas to anyone outside the parish who has the good fortune to be reading this.

Deri Parsons, John Wilmut and Linda Ainsworth

If this copy of your Christmas Newsletter has come through your letter box you should thank one of the small army of people who have volunteered to deliver it throughout the parish. In response to our calls for help we have had offers from no less than 39 people and, at the time of writing, offers are still coming in. This was considerably more people than we actually needed but it has given us the luxury of having reserves who have been there to step in to cover last-minute problems. So please join us in thanking everyone who has helped or who has been available to help. It's good to know that Stoke Climsland rallies round when these tasks need to be done.



KIT HILL SUNRISE

Photograph
by Sandy
Cowan



CHRISTMAS PASSED AND PAST AT STOKE CLIMSLAND SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

and, due to lockdown rules, were unable to open for the big events. Luke has worked hard to replace some of the quiz evenings which are so popular, and at the same time raise money for Charity. His virtual quizzes were both innovative and enjoyable. Thank you, Luke.

We have missed all the meals apart from the Fish and Chip evening which we held on the Field. It is too cold for that now! Our Christmas festivities will be sadly missed as well so I just thought I would remind you of some of the popular Christmas evenings we have had.

Of course, the Christmas Quiz is always popular, closely followed by the Raffle Evening, which is one of our main fundraisers. Sandy has been running this for the past few years and it has developed it into a massive supersized prize raffle. It takes her all year to organise it and is extremely popular. Donations come from all over the parish and many people who sell at the Saturday market. People buy multiple tickets and gain multiple prizes. But the main prize for buying the most squares is the opportunity to have the magnificent "Pollock" picture on display in their house for a year!

But even that is not the main reason for coming to the Club on the last Sunday evening before Christmas. That is when we have the Christmas Carol singing. I remember one year someone commenting on how many in the parish come to this event, and how heart-warming it is. It is usually lead by David Bundy in his own inimitable way, ably helped by other singers in the audience. Young and old come along for a good old-fashioned sing along to favourite carols. We sing to the popular tunes from all over the country, and on one occasion sang 'While shepherds watched' to the tune of supercalifragalistic! All this is accompanied by home cooked mince pies with lashings of cream and mulled wine.

Roll on next year when we can celebrate in true style again!

Louise Power

The Club has been quiet and sad over the past nine months. We do not have enough people coming into the Club on a regular basis to justify opening

DECEMBER AND JANUARY AT THE OLD SCHOOL

The Old School will be open until after Friday lunch on 18th December and then closed until Monday 4th January.

During the open period the office will be staffed on weekdays (assuming no changes in our Covid status) from 9-30 until 12-30 am. Messages can be left on 01579 370493 or at theoldschool78@gmail.com

THE ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC

continues on Mondays at The Old School but only by prior appointment. Contact Michael Clements on 01752 770998 or 07711 934845.

THE CHIROPODIST will hold appointments-only clinics on Thursday 17th December and 7th January.

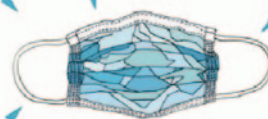
THE LIBRARY is open on weekdays from 9-30 until 12-30 am whilst The Old School is open (see above).

FRIDAY LUNCHES will continue to 18th December and then resume on 8th January. You do need to book if you wish to attend; please call the office (details above).

THE MARKET will next be held on 9th January (for details see page 6).

For all events at The Old School you will need to maintain social distancing, use the hand gels provided, wear a face covering and provide your contact details. Please help us to keep everyone as safe as possible - it's a small price to pay.

LAST CHRISTMAS
I GAVE YOU MY HEART
THIS YEAR
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CHURCH SERVICES IN THE PARISH

PARISH CHURCH

Our remaining December Calendar will be:

20th December - Holy Communion @ 10:00

25th December - Family Service @ 10:30

27th December - No service, but St Mary's Callington is holding a service

All of the Services will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube for those who cannot make it. You can get advance notice of the streamed Services by either liking our Facebook Page or subscribing to our YouTube Channel - search for Stoke Climsland Parish Church and hit the relevant button.

Individual Private Prayer will continue and we will be open from 1 pm - 4 pm on Wednesdays.

METHODIST CHURCH



Friends at Stoke Climsland Methodist Church send you all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

We are currently meeting every other Sunday morning and by the time you read this we will have had our Carol Service (on the 13th) but in very different circumstances from our usual Christmas services and social events. There is no service on Christmas Day and people are invited to join Callington Methodist Church at their service at 10 am on Christmas Day.

Please have a look at the Methodist Church Christmas Campaign 'God is with us' where you will find inspiring stories of individuals and their experiences of this extraordinary year www.methodist.org.uk/christmas

ERRYN'S CHARITY CHRISTMAS RIDE

In our last issue we told you that Erryn Guy and her pony, Leon, would be doing a sponsored ride on the 13th December. This would be about 3½ to 4½ miles around the Stoke Climsland and Downgate areas and Erryn would be raising money for The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and The Cornwall Air Ambulance.

By the time you read this Erryn and Leon should have completed the ride but you could still donate to her causes by calling Gemma on 07970 573165 or email on gemma.guy@me.com



The Mare And Foal Sanctuary, Newton Abbot, Devon

'At our Sanctuary, we love and value horses and ponies. As sentient beings, they deserve our kindness and care. Unfortunately, there is still a need to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome horses and ponies – and to educate people about how to care for them.

We've rescued over 1,000 horses and ponies and brought them back to health.'

Cornwall Air Ambulance - may affect any one of us.

Illness and injury haven't gone into lockdown and, despite the pandemic, the need for critical care by air has continued to rise. With a brand new helicopter, the crew of Cornwall Air Ambulance attended hundreds of patients in 2020, saving countless lives and keeping families together.



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Thank you to all of the B&B guests who have stayed with us over the last 20 years.

We are closed until we feel it is safe to re-open and can offer the level of service we pride ourselves on.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the NHS, our local key workers and the volunteers who have worked to keep our community secure throughout this pandemic.

We wish you and the Old School Team a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Caroline & Peter Hammond
www.updown-cottage.co.uk Tel: 01579 370474
 e-mail: updowncott@btinternet.com

GRAB BAGS AT THE READY!

As the nights continue to get longer and colder, we might expect some winter weather that could be worse than we have experienced over the last few years. We never know so here are a few tips that are worth considering. A little forethought could save you a lot of grief if the unexpected happens.

In some countries, households have 'grab bags' filled with essentials ready for a rushed evacuation. Fortunately, here in Stoke Climsland, we are very unlikely to experience such emergencies, but that is not to say we should not be prepared for an emergency of some kind.

It might be that you know where any essential medicines are stored or the location of important documents, sentimental photos etc. Given the risk of power cuts, we might need to have several long-life torches, some running on alkaline batteries and some rechargeable with many hours of illuminated life. Also, those small battery packs that can be used to keep a mobile phone charged up over several days. Remember to keep rechargeable units fully charged and have a small bag of alkaline batteries handy. Also, if you have cordless phones it is a good idea to have an old analogue phone plugged directly into the main phone socket – these work in a power cut. If your cooking facilities go down, then maybe a small camping gas grill will be handy plus a suitable metal jug or pot to heat up water for a good cuppa. If you have a petrol engine powered generator remember to place it outside in an open space when it is running.

Avoid using candles in the house where they may fall over and start a fire (better have a fire extinguisher handy as well as a fireproof blanket!).

If you are going out in adverse weather, then take a couple of blankets and sweets and chocolate just in case, together with a flask of hot drink and, of course, a powerful flashlight. Hi-Viz jackets are an essential. A pair of Hi-Viz over-trousers is handy in wet weather and a pair of 'wellies' or waterproof shoes if you have to get out in the snow, plus a warm woolly hat. Also keep the fuel tank reasonably well filled: you may need to have the engine running intermittently to help keep you warm and to power the lights if you need help. Also, a shovel to move snow or dirt and a couple of old pieces of carpet with long, thick, string attached. Then, if you lose grip on the road, placing the carpet pieces under the driven wheels can help get some grip. With the strings attached to the rear of the car, you can keep going until you are back on a good surface, stop when it is safe to do so and retrieve your carpet pieces ready for the next time.

Please remember the Police are not a rescue service, given bad weather they are likely to be involved elsewhere is traffic is affected.

Maybe this is a bit like 'teaching grandma to suck eggs', but any reminder might be helpful one day. Stay safe and enjoy the winter.



THE VILLAGE STORE AND POST OFFICE OPENING TIMES

DECEMBER

21st & 22nd 8.00 am until 6.00 pm

23rd* 8.00 am until 7.00 pm

*orders ready to collect after 3 pm

24th 8.00 am until 1.00 pm

25th - 28th CLOSED (no papers)

29th - 31st 8.00 am until 12.30 pm

JANUARY

1st CLOSED (no papers)

2nd 7.00 am until 12.30 pm

3rd 9.00 am until 11.00 am

If you want to ensure that your cards and gifts arrive in plenty of time your choices are now limited and you need to get your skates on.

Sue and David wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

OVERSEAS:

December 16th for Austria, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland
December 18th for Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg

UK:

December 18th for second class mail
December 21st for first class mail
December 23rd for special delivery

BACK TO 2000!

It is 20 years since the Millennium. Like so many places, Stoke Climsland decided to commemorate this, and chose to produce a book about the parish. Its production was down to the considerable efforts of a small team of people who pushed the project through with some difficulty.

Brigitte Cox had a copy on display at the recent Old School Market and it turned out that copies were still available. Perhaps there are newcomers (and maybe some not so new comers) in the parish who have never seen a copy but would like to. It's a substantial document, a good read and a snip at £4 with profits being divided equally between The Old School and the Parish Archive. If you'd like a copy contact Brigitte on 01579 370373

THE OLD SCHOOL MARKET

Following the success of the Market in December there will be a special Market on January 9th 2021. It will mostly be indoors at The Old School, with suitable precautions in place. At the time of writing we know that the stallholders listed below will be present but we will try to update this list in the next Newsletter, due on January 5th. As before there will be a light snacks and drinks service from the tables by the outside kitchen door.

Karen Cooper - Gifts and cards 01579 370536

Jeremy Dawe - Butcher 01579 350410

Michael Harford - Wood crafts 01579 370663

Val Kidman - Preserves, jams, cakes 01579 370297

Linda Losty - Aprons, masks etc 07733 298969

Ian Macdonald - Cross-stitch, tapestry, picture framing 01579 351221

Di Nash - Gifts and hand-knitted etc 01579 384155

Neil Robyns - Yogurts, cream cheese, cheesecakes, pies 07831 625159

Derek Ross - Show Calendars

Derek Schofield - Apple and other juices, vinegar, cordials 01579 350594

Dale Wood - Honey 01579 362458

The Market will be held indoors but a few stalls may be outside. Car parking will be available as usual; please take care of pedestrians.

Windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation so come wrapped up warmly, wear a face covering and observe proper social distancing at all times.

Please enter the building through the main door and follow the signs, keeping a proper distance from others. The exit will be via the kitchen corridor. Please do not double back on this route - walk round the building.

Since all three rooms will be used for stalls only a limited range of snacks and drinks will be available to be consumed outside. Please follow the signs - do not enter the kitchen or open the kitchen hatch.

If you need help please ask - volunteer helpers will be present for the whole time.

SUCCESS WITH THE SHOW CALENDAR

The idea of a Show calendar was first discussed earlier in the year before the black clouds of the Covid 19 virus started to impact on our lives.

With the support of our printer Rosstournoff, we have been able to

produce a beautiful calendar using photographs taken from previous Shows, the pizza event and the Virtual Show Facebook page which was so wonderfully supported back in the Summer.

The calendar has hopefully kept the show alive in people's minds and is providing vital funds to support next year's Show on August 7th 2021. The Show is very much reliant on income from the Show itself, the Pizza event and the two Jumble Sales all of which had to be cancelled this year.

We would like to thank the sponsors who have helped finance the production of the calendar, the many people who have already bought a calendar (over 130 sold to date) and for those who agreed to our using their photographs.

The Old School Market has provided a good opportunity to promote sales of the calendar and the Village Shop has been very supportive in the sales of calendars.

Stocks of calendars are still available through the Village Shop.

Thank you for supporting your Stoke Climsland Show.

Derek Ross



NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

STOKE CLIMSLAND'S NEW WEBSITE



In Newsletter 25 we announced the new website that was commissioned by the Parish Council and that has now gone live. As well as providing basic information about the Parish the website is specifically designed to offer a free page for any local club, group, or facility to advertise their events and attract members. The usefulness of the website will only be realised if these free pages are widely used so, if you belong to a local group or club, help to run a local facility, or any other resource in Stoke Climsland which could make good use of a free webpage, please contact the Parish Clerk and ask to be included: parishclerkscpc@gmail.com



GIN CHRISTMAS CAKE

We thought we'd share one great Christmas cake recipe with you. It is foolproof and we're sure you will love it! Here's how to make it.

100ml water

1 tsp baking soda

100g granulated sugar

250g plain white flour

50g unsalted butter

1 tsp salt

100g brown sugar

Juice from one large lemon

4 large eggs

50g mixed chopped nuts

1 bottle gin

150g of dried fruit

Sample the gin to check quality.

Take a large bowl and then check the gin again. A medium sized glass full would be best.

Repeat.

Turn on the electric mixer.

Beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar. Beat again.

At this point it's best to make sure the gin is still OK.

Try another glass ... just in case.

Turn off the mixer thingy. Break 2 leggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the dried fruit. Pick the fruit up off floor. Mix on the turner. If the fried fruit gets stuck in the beaters just pry it loose with a drowscriver.

Sample the gin to check for tonsistency.

Next, sift the salt. Or something.

Check the gin.

Now shift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. No wait..shtrain the lemon juice and shift your nuts.

Add one table. Add a spoon of sugar, or somefink.

Whatever you can find.

Greash the oven. Turn the cake tin 360 degrees and try not to fall over.

Don't forget to beat off the turner.

Finally, throw the bowl through the window.

Finish the gin and wipe counter with the cat.

Recipe courtesy of Pen Davies-Gregory



BRIDGE CLUB IS BACK

Following the enforced break in November, The Stoke Climsland Bridge Club is now back to its normal Friday evening slot in the Parish Hall. OK, we are restricted by the rule of six, so only four people can play and we are having to operate on a booking system

but at least we are able to meet in person which is better than playing bridge online.



FROM OUR MP SCOTT MANN

The past year has been the most difficult in living memory for many of us and as we pass into 2021, I wanted to offer an optimistic message about

the future. Although the previous twelve months have been a great challenge, we have all found strength in the way individuals, groups and communities have reacted and adapted to the circumstances. I never doubted that when the Cornish people were confronted with this challenge we would deliver. One year ago, none of us could have expected to have gone through a once in a lifetime global event such as the pandemic, but we have light at the end of the tunnel with the rollout of a vaccine.

When coronavirus is behind us, we will look back, but I want all constituents to remember how well North Cornwall worked together during 2020 and keep that renewed spirit of support and cooperation. I must take this opportunity to thank all the people who helped others during the year. Our front-line NHS staff, who worked so hard around the clock to support the constituency deserve a great deal of credit, but so do our carers both professional and voluntary, who endured a very difficult year and our fantastic key workers in other sectors who kept going when others couldn't.

Looking ahead to next year, I decided to use my final Prime Minister's Questions of the year to ask the PM about the replacement for EU administered regional development funding after Brexit. Some in the media discuss levelling up only through the prism of the north-south divide. However, Cornwall has pockets of deprivation, and many communities in our constituency also need investment and support. I welcomed the Government's announcement of the £4 billion levelling-up fund and the decision to review the Green Book so that projects outside London and the south-east are more likely to benefit from Government investment. However, in the light of the new spending commitments, I felt it was only right to ask the PM to confirm that the shared prosperity fund – which will replace EU administered funding - is separate to the levelling-up fund, and that there will be an announcement on that soon. I have also been consistent that the new fund must be simpler and less time consuming for small businesses to access than the onerous EU schemes it is replacing. The Prime Minister acknowledged that people in Cornwall are right about the importance of the new UK shared prosperity fund and confirmed it will be different from the levelling-up programme. The PM also said that he looked forward to working closely with me and with people in Cornwall to ensure that we use the additional funding best for the needs of people and communities in our constituency.

As this is the last time I will write to you before January 2021, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

THE GREAT STOKE CLIMSLAND CHRISTMAS CLIMATE CHANGE QUIZ



Welcome to the Stoke Climsland Climate Change Action Group fun quiz

If you have any questions don't call the editors - just email
SCCCAG1@gmail.com

- 1 What year was the greenhouse effect first calculated?
 - a 1734
 - b 1896
 - c 1957
 - d 1970
- 2 The Paris Accord in 2015 was a success. What was its headline agreement?
 - a To stop burning fossil fuels immediately
 - b Limit global warming to 2C
 - c Ban the use of CFC's (Chlorofluorocarbons)
 - d Limit global warming to 1.5C
- 3 Which region is experiencing the greatest increase in global warming and why?
 - a The Sahara, as it is the hottest place on earth
 - b The Arctic, due to the ice-albedo effect
 - c The Amazon rainforest, due to droughts
 - d The Tibetan plateau, due to El Nino
- 4 China tops the list for countries with high greenhouse gas emissions. What percentage of global emissions does it produce?
 - a 8.5%
 - b 17.8%
 - c 26.6%
- 5 Which of these countries has the highest per capita CO₂ emissions?
 - a China
 - b USA
 - c India
 - d UK
- 6 What is the difference between weather and climate?
- 7 Which of the following is a natural cause of climate change?
 - a Changes in the Earth's orbit around the sun
 - b Deforestation for timber use
 - c Rice paddies emitting methane
- 8 Which of the following gases are greenhouse gases?
 - a Oxygen
 - b Nitrogen
 - c Carbon Dioxide
 - d Methane
 - e Argon
 - f Nitrous Oxide
- 9 Which of the following are fossil fuels?
 - a Coal
 - b Natural Gas
 - c Oil
 - d Wood
- 10 How much Carbon does a tree capture in a year?
 - a 5.9kg
 - b 21kg
 - c 50kg
- 11 How many tonnes of CO₂ does Stoke Climsland emit each year according to the recent Carbon Audit?
- 12 Name three renewable energy resource measures used on a farm.
- 13 Name three areas farmers can capture and store (sequester) Carbon.
- 14 Name four types of renewable energy.
- 15 What is the link between chocolate and climate change?
- 16 What parts of your Christmas cards or wrapping paper can you recycle?
- 17 Which of the following ways are effective in reducing your personal carbon footprint?
 - a Reducing the amount of meat you eat
 - b Walking instead of driving
 - c Switching off the lights when not in use
 - d Generating your own renewable energy
 - e Insulating the loft
 - f Installing double glazing and draught proofing



Answers (don't look yet!) are on page 11

LOOK! IT'S THE LOOK GROUP



The Look Group is like a Book Club, but we look at and discuss art instead of books. Look Groups were initiated by Tate St Ives in 2009 with the aim of widening art appreciation and learning throughout Cornwall in an informal and enjoyable way. The Group is self-directed, informal, and friendly. We decide on a topic for the following month and then members share anything they have found about it. No knowledge of art is necessary. We do have some members who are knowledgeable and the rest of us rely on the internet, books or just our subjective opinions! There are no wrong opinions or answers, and we get some very lively discussions.

During lockdown we managed to carry on discussions via our Whats App group. We are planning on making a display of those discussions with illustrations of the paintings and pieces of art. We are hoping to exhibit that when life is more normal. In the summer we managed three meetings outside in the fresh air and held October's back in The Old School well-spaced and sanitised. We also managed to meet up in Moretonhampstead to view a fascinating exhibition at Greenhill Arts called 'Hinterland' by textile artist Gladys Paulus. She had created beautiful costumes to do with her theme using a variety of textiles

December's meeting saw a discussion on Russian Post-Revolutionary Art and topics for future meetings are Sculptures, Indigenous Art, Controversial Art, Kitsch and Churches. If anyone is interested to join us or find out more, please contact Helen Adams on 01566 782129 or Joanna Pescod on 01579 370200

DRAWN TO THE VALLEY

Drawn to the Valley now has an online Christmas shop as well as its gallery on its website <https://drawntothevalley.com/> And you just have time to visit an exhibition of the work of local artists in Devon. It is at the Harbour House Gallery, The Promenade, Kingsbridge TQ7 1JD until 18th December from 10 am - 5 pm.



The **BOOK CLUB** continues as a Zoom meeting on the third Tuesday of each month at 9-30 am at The Old School. The book for discussion is *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald. Copies are now available; please email Helen Cadiot on helen.cadiot@outlook.com who will let you know where to collect a copy of the book and will arrange for you to get the logon details for the Zoom meeting.



ON COMMUNITY COMPOSTING

Composting need not be serious – just think of making a delicious birthday trifle for the worms! So we're following on from the article in the last Newsletter which mentioned that "food waste can be composted at source". It's layer upon layer of a variety of vegetable peelings and left-overs and grass cuttings and weeds and what you do with your left-over Brussels sprouts this Christmas – if you do not make bubble and squeak on Boxing Day. The worms will love them!

Within the parish we are looking for sites that could be suitable for community composting. Now could be the time to start up your own composting area or, perhaps one in the locality and available to all your neighbours. For convenience it would be best to be easily accessible and always open. Contact Sarah Ross (srossscpc@gmail.com) if you have a space that you are prepared to offer. To roll this out, Venterdon is likely to be the first of several Community Composting sites within the parish.

Advice on 'how' to do it will follow in future ... watch this space!

Mel Guy and Sarah Ross



I was an eight-year old Brownie towards the end of the War. Like the WI with Jerusalem, we started each meeting with the Brownie Promise: "I promise to do my best, to help other people and do my duty to God and the King" as we saluted with the middle three fingers of our left hand.

I cannot remember if a task given me by my Sixer, the leader of my Six, the Fairies, was towards earning a badge, or whether it was a 'duty'. In my best handwriting, I was to copy out the Christmas Carols in our very tattered book into a brand-new notebook given me by Brown Owl, our Pack Leader. I remember it was a very laborious task, with goodness knows how many carols, some of which I had never heard of. The first one was The Holly and the Ivy, and it seemed to have no end of verses and choruses.

In due course the complete book was handed over. It must have been at our weekly Friday meeting in the Guide Hut just before Christmas, because the Guides had decorated the hut that Tuesday with hand-made paper chains. Brown Owl took the book, showed it to the Pack, and opening the first page, suggested I sang the first verse. I quavered it out, squeakily and out of tune. Brown Owl must have felt sorry for me because, flailing her arms, she got everyone to join in and Tawny Owl at the piano thumped more loudly.

Biscuits – such a treat! - followed, with games and more carols.

The Holly and the Ivy
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

CHORUS:

The rising of the sun,
and the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

Mary Atkinson

Photographs: Top, Holly berries near Blunts on 19th October 2020; Bottom, Ivy berries ripening;



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THE ORIGIN OF 'THE HOLLY AND THE IVY'

'The Holly and the Ivy' must be one of the most popular Christmas carols and one that everyone enjoys singing. It has got a nice tune, an easy chorus and has words that conjure up ancient and bucolic traditions. But the current version, which clearly celebrates the Nativity ("And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ/ To be our sweet Saviour"), is probably not that old. The words we now use were published by Cecil Sharp, a great collector and conservator of the English folk tradition, in 1911. He was known to do some tactful rewriting of the lustier elements of the folk songs he found, to suit his more decorous post-Edwardian audience. And it seems that the Christian elements of the carol might have been grafted on to a very different version. In fact, the song might have its roots deep in the pagan past.

According to some, the clue to its antiquity is in the lines that say: "Of all the trees that are in the wood/ the holly bears the crown". This is thought to be a reference to the Druidical figure of the Holly King, the lord of the winter wildwood. In the deciduous forests of medieval Britain, three green plants shone through the bare winter branches: the holly, the ivy, and the mistletoe. Greenness in midwinter was cherished for its symbolic value: the assurance that spring would come. Long before the Victorian custom of the Christmas tree, those three plants were the standard winter decorations for both houses and churches and the holly, with its glossy brilliant green and its brash red berries, was the brightest and best of all. It was a masculine symbol, a proud emblem of virility. And the ivy? A symbol of womanhood. And we all know where the mistletoe comes in.

So, probably over unknown centuries, a bawdy folk song evolved into one of the gentlest Christmas carols. The theme of renewal in midwinter evolving into the parable of birth and rebirth that is the Christmas story.



Quiz answers

1. 1896 (Svante August Arrhenius)
2. d
3. b
4. c
5. b
6. Weather is the elements we see daily such as temperature, rain and wind. These can change by hour and day by day. Climate looks at how the weather changes over long periods of time. (30 years)
7. a
8. c d f
9. a b c
10. b
11. 8403 tonnes,
12. Biogas from Methane, Biomass from Energy Crops, Biofuels from Cereal & Oilseed
13. Maintaining Soil Structure, Enhancing Hedgerow Growth, Increasing Farmland Woodland
14. Wind, solar, hydroelectric, Air/ground sourced heat pumps, tidal and wave
15. 70% of the world's chocolate grows in Ghana or the Ivory Coast where the likely rise in temperature due to climate change will make it too hot and dry to grow the crop,
16. The parts which do not have glitter on them.
17. a, b, c, d, e, f



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FROM THE PARISH ARCHIVE: A LUCKETT STORY

Caroline Vulliamy has recently had some email correspondence with Lon Wallis, now living in Darwin in Australia. Lon is the great-grandson of Francis Wallis, a Luckett miner of the 1860s. Here are two of his emails.

When I visited Luckett from Australia in 2009 you drew my attention to the attached photo of the Searle family of shoemakers, from George Bishop's A Parish Album of Stokeclimsland p. 55. Can you help me identify the people in the photo? I presume that the woman standing with her hand on Zachariah Searle's shoulder is his wife – my relative Grace Ball Wallis. I am hoping that my relative William Wallis – also a shoemaker of Luckett – is also in the photo. Grace is his half-sister. He died a year before Zachariah. Is there a better copy of this photo available somewhere?

Also find attached a paper on my ancestor Francis Wallis who grew up in Luckett and is related to the Searles, Rapson and Gartrell families.

Thanks for your swift reply to my email out of the blue. I do realize that other people's family histories are eye-glazingly dull, so most of the paper on my ancestor won't be of much interest. However, in researching his life I did become aware of the disastrous effects of miners' phthisis – which affected Cornish miners wherever they went around the world.

I am keen to track down the identities in the Luckett shoemaker photo – said to be c 1885. Find attached a version of the photo with numbers to enable discussion. Also find attached the shoemakers listed in the 1881 census for Luckett.

Clearly Zacharia Searle Snr is No. 4

His wife Grace Searle [nee Wallis] is presumably No. 7 – with her hand on his shoulder.

No. 9 sitting at the sewing machine is presumably Kitty Searle listed as Machinest (Sewing)

I note that No. 12 male is nursing a baby.

Zachariah Searle died in 1885

I am hoping that this photo is at least a year earlier because my relative William Wallis -shoemaker- died in April 1884.

You asked me to give you a nudge regarding my inquiry about the photo of Luckett shoemakers in 'A Parish Album of Stokeclimsland'. Can I suggest that it be included in the next Old School newsletter. Surely when the book came out several local people would have identified ancestors they are aware of.

I regularly get the Old Climsland School newsletter email so I have kept track of Luckett events over the last 10 years.



Extract from the 1881 Luckett Census showing shoemakers and their families

46	Zachariah	Searle	Head	M	39	Shoemaker
	Jane	Searle	Wife	M	39	Wife
	William	Searle	Son	S	16	Son
48	Zachariah	Searle	Head	M	74	Shoemaker Employ 5 Men
	Grace	Searle	Wife	M	68	Wife
	William	Searle	Son	S	27	Shoemaker
	Kitty	Searle	Dau	S	21	Machinest (Sewing)
49	William	Wallace	Head	M	49	Shoemaker Journey Man
50	George D.	Wills	Head	M	41	Shoemaker Journeyman
	Mary A.	Wills	Wife	M	40	Wife
51	William	Stephens	Head	M	59	Shoemaker Journeyman
	Joanna	Stephens	Wife	M	54	Wife



William Wallace died 1884; Zachariah Searle snr died 1885; Grace Searle died 1886



Lon Wallis standing on Mrs Williams' doorstep (from where his great grandfather emigrated)



As a year like no other draws to a close and thoughts turn to Christmas Festivities within whatever limitations may apply: a welcome return to simple family games around a roaring log fire whilst roasting your chestnuts. Perhaps this year the celebrations may well include a round or two of 'What 3 Words?', as in 'What 3 Words sum up 2020'? So, for starters here is an exclusive list from us all 'Down on t'Farm' – 3 words to help you get the idea!

2020 began with 'Get Brexit Done', then by mid-summer it was 'Build, Build, Build', to finish with an 'Agricultural Transition Plan' for a new 'Domestic Agricultural Policy'. We now are expected to embrace the 'Brave New World' with an 'Environmental Land Management' scheme, whilst making a 'Space for Nature' and meeting a 'Net Zero Target' by 2040. All without falling through the 'Hungry Gap Years' during the transition!

For everyone else, here is your chance to sum up this 'year of years'. For many it has been full of 'trials and tribulations' due to the suffering from the 'Covid-19 Pandemic'. Many new words and phrases

have sprung forth from discarded dictionaries during these past 12 months. From the initial outbreak we have had 'Daily Press Conferences' and 'Downing Street Briefings', each with three lecterns all with a clear message of 'Stay at Home, Save Lives and Protect NHS', to be replaced with 'Hands, Face, Space'. And who can forget the reminder of 'Next Slide Please'

We went into 'Lockdown', 'Socially Distanced' and 'Washed Our Hands'. We 'Worked from Home' if not 'Furloughed'. We thanked our 'NHS Key Workers' when we stood at our doorsteps and 'Clapped for Carers' each Thursday night at 8pm. A new form of communication via the internet saw us 'Zoom or Teams' our friends and work colleagues, with probably the most overused and frustrating phrase of 'You're on Mute' creeping into our vocabulary.

We celebrated the inspiring charity fund raising of unsung heroes such as 'Captain Sir Tom' who walked 100 times around his house and garden for his 100th birthday and raised £30million. We will all remember his eternal optimism of a 'Good Day Tomorrow'. Whilst we despaired at the US Police sparking the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign, when 'All Lives Matter'.

Moving to the present when we've been 'placed in bubbles', been 'limited by zones', lived by the 'Rule of 6', only to end the year in 'Tiers' – three of them of course! Our one hope for the future and a return to normal

or 'the new normal' revolves around the three new vaccines on their way to 'save the world'. However, we must continue to 'wash our hands, wear our masks and leave some space'. Do not forget, if you feel ill, to 'test and trace' and always remember that 'you're not alone'. There is always someone 'there to help' in times of need.

Finally, remember to install the real 'what3words' app onto your mobile phone. It provides a vital network of unique 3-word mapping of every 3-metre square across the World. It is used by all the Emergency Services and could well be a life saver – 2020 vision technology at its best.

Merry Christmas Everyone – from us all 'Down on t'Farm'!

STOKE CLIMSLAND CHARITABLE TRUST HARDSHIP FUND

We would like to give a big 'thank you' to anyone who has donated to the Hardship Fund.

We will take this opportunity to remind you, with Christmas coming up, that the fund is still available and all applications will be dealt with in complete confidence; contact the parish clerk on parishclerkscpc@gmail.com



Your SCARPER team wish you a very Happy Christmas as restrictions are eased but not entirely removed. Remember the invisible Covid-19 is still among us somewhere. As we move towards the end of 2020, we will all look forward to a 2021 that allows us to slowly reach whatever our new 'normal' becomes. We have all had a challenging year affecting us at a personal, family and maybe business level. We have had to be resilient to get through this and well done to all those who have been helping us be it within our healthcare sector, caring, retail, logistics all keeping us supplied with essential groceries and the manufacturing and farming businesses helping to keep the supply chain flowing. Many thanks also to our volunteers and co-ordinators who have been there to help when asked. Thanks again and we hope we can count on your support in 2021.

Some of us will have lost loved ones through the year, for whatever reason, but will leave an empty chair at the Christmas table, a time to reflect and remember what 2020 will mean to us. Places of worship should have new opening times and services with appropriate restrictions,



THE SCARPER UPDATE

STOKE CLIMSLAND AREA RESILIENCE PLAN AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

check with your local church or chapel. If we are allowed to sing, a few rousing Christmas carols would be uplifting! We continue to try and stay in contact with loved ones and friends and family, probably using virtual platforms such as Zoom, Facetime and WhatsApp or that old stalwart, the telephone.

Some in our community continue to receive doorstep grocery deliveries and keep themselves to themselves. This has been going on for many months and so, if you see them out walking, a cheery (socially distanced) wave we are sure would be welcomed. If meeting up with loved ones over the 23rd-27th December window, then please be careful with handling things between you all and your hugs and kisses. We all need these after so many months, but there is a risk. Small or large we would not know; it is a personal choice. If you are travelling to see loved ones, please drive carefully, and let us hope the Christmas weather is kind to us. If you travel from a Tier 1 place to a Tier 2 place, then you must follow their Tier 2 restrictions. Similarly, if you travel from a Tier 2 area to visit friends in a Tier 1 area you must continue to follow your Tier 2 restrictions. Tough if you just want to join friends for a drink and not for any food!!

SCARPER have continued to work towards developing our emergency plans and would still like to hear from you if you can offer help to us as volunteers with special equipment or skills such as first aid, dealing with evacuations, traffic control,

catering (in the event we have to provide substance to the emergency services or those who are evacuated). Please contact our Parish Clerk on parishclerkscpc@gmail.com where your interest will be recorded and passed to one of our group to be registered and your contact details requested and saved within the GDPR requirements.

National and regional restrictions will continue to be reviewed and maybe revised. Cornwall Council continue to publish information on their website and Facebook if you are OK with these digital media platforms. If not, then ask or 'phone a friend'!

Keep up to date by looking at: www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health-cornwall/information-about-coronavirus-Covid-19/

Remember SCARPER has a list of our co-ordinators below to contact if you need some help. Do not hold back, whilst we cannot guarantee to help resolve all your questions, we will have a good go, if not we probably know someone who can!!

We continue to offer the prescription collection service. If you need collections due to your medical conditions, or if the situation here gets worse the collection service will be there for you. Please check your prescriptions and quantity of medicines you will need over the Christmas and New Year period, also check on the pharmacy (and doctor) opening times over this period.

continued on next page >>

Just let us know when your prescription is ready, and we will collect for anyone that needs us; please contact Sarah Ross – see details below.

Ren Jackaman (contact: parishclerkscpc@gmail.com or 07878 368857), our 'vulnerable and self-isolating' co-ordinator. Contact Ren if you want to be added to our list or if you know of a neighbour who might be in need of some support.

Sarah Ross (contact: srossscpc@gmail.com or 01579 370521), our prescriptions and medicines co-ordinator. Please contact her if you need help.

Nigel Cooper (contact: njcooperscpc@gmail.com or 07525 351628), our volunteer co-ordinator. Please contact Nigel if you want to help us.

Village Store: Sue Watts (contact: sue-watts@btconnect.com or call 01579 370201). Please contact Sue if you want home deliveries of your groceries.

Stay safe, please try, and keep well. Please continue to follow the Government and Cornwall Council guidelines.

**AND WHILE
WE'RE ON
THE SUBJECT,
DON'T
FORGET THE
NHS COVID
APP**



The NHS Covid App is an important part of the Government's strategy to limit the spread of the virus.. For it to work effectively it needs the majority of the population to download it to their mobile phones. If you have not downloaded it yet please do so - it only takes a few seconds and downloading it will be an important step in getting the virus under control. You can get it free from the Apple Store or Google Play.

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The Christmas Day Cook's Ode To Joy

This poem from an anonymous reader came with a couple of other suggestions:

I could also offer you Memories of Christmas When Young. I remember these well, but you and your readers would probably be so depressed at the Victorian/Edwardian conduct of the day, that you would not wish to include so depressing an account. Finally, I could offer you (as you ask!) Plans for Christmas 2020. This is simple, as mine will be the same as they have been almost every year for the last XX years, and I wouldn't change them now. Again I think that your readers would really not wish to devote time to 'my' Christmas Day which, as always, is merely a day of deliberate isolation and solitude – ideal for me, but boring as Hell for them to read. Nonetheless, I shall be happy to send my plans to you if you wish, and you're desperate!

On your behalf, dear readers, we declined Orpheus's kind offers of more but here's his poem.

The day began, it may be said
With couples having joy in bed
But now the kids all want to play
Thus, ending adult fun today.

And so to lunch, the menu's read,
The cook is up, the rest in bed
But shouldn't they, you ask, help too?
Oh no, dear cook, it's down to you.

At noon the turkey catches fire
Then roast potatoes join the pyre
The sprouts are rank, the gravy too
A tasty Christmas lunch for you.

The Christmas pudding wasn't done
And most was left by everyone
But wine was fine, and port was great
It made up for the lunch you ate.

And now it's time for washing up
The plates from which you all did sup
Ditch bits left over – petit fours
Oh yes, dear cook – the job is yours.

This same damned lunch is back next year.

Orpheus xx



DO YOU REMEMBER THE 60's?

Of course not! We know that most of our readers are in the prime of life, many without experience even of Margaret Thatcher's occupation of Downing Street. But a few of us are encumbered with longer memories, though these are sometimes faulty and not of much interest to anyone else.

But there are exceptions and Viv and I have just been trapped by our daughter into an online encounter with her twin children's class of 6-year olds who are working on a topic of the 1960s and needed evidence from those who had experienced those years. We are proud to be the sources of primary evidence that these children will use as they learn how to think like historians.

We had the usual clumsiness with Microsoft Teams but, after some fiddling about at both ends, there they were – this group of neatly attentive and (we think) eager Oxford children, our

two grandchildren amongst them, clearly chuffed to have their grandparents up on a screen.

And the class was primed with questions – hands went up and they wanted to know about our experiences of this long-lost era.

There were clearly some misunderstandings about the alignment between us and the 1960s – a lot of

the questions were about our experiences of our own schools (which, by 1960 we had left behind us). Others were about the received view of the 1960s – what did we wear, what music did we listen to? Other questions reflected some confusion between the 1960s and the Dark Ages: did we have electricity and how did they punish us at school? But they lit up when we said that we'd seen the 1966 World Cup final on TV though they were concerned that it wasn't in colour. And we, who are almost completely ignorant of pop music and culture, were able to point to the Beatles and Rolling Stones and this was clearly a point of connection between their era and ours.

The matter of our own schooling was of great interest, perhaps confused with the 1960s because we had said that this was when we had both started in our first jobs as teachers. They asked how we got to school, what did we wear? They looked very solemn when we said that class sizes were in the high 30s and mentioned the use of the cane as the ultimate punishment, so we felt suitably Dickensian. But they were not alone in believing that the time before one's personal experience of the world was dark, unenlightened and deprived, viewed through reminiscences of the elderly, faded mono pictures or archaic language.

We hope that they enjoyed the half hour. We had been a bit anxious about it but found it a delightful experience – not quite as good as a face-to-face encounter but not too far short. We're told that our grandchildren came home and said that it was great. But I guess that they were still basking in the glow of fame and I do wonder how they will interpret what we said.

John Wilmut

THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE COMETH

You will be aware that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for use in the UK and, by the time you read this, its distribution has probably started. We can be confident that the vaccine has met the very strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Other vaccines are being developed and they will only be available once they, too, have been through the same rigorous assessment process. The UK has some of the highest safety standards in the world and the MHRA has been monitoring every stage of coronavirus vaccine development. So far, thousands of people have been given a coronavirus vaccine and no serious side effects or complications have been reported. For some individuals there will be genuine reasons for not having the vaccine, but these should not include the, quite frankly, ludicrous anti-vaccination claims you might come across on social media. Check the veracity of what you read before making the decision which is best for you.

The NHS will start giving the coronavirus vaccine as soon as it is available, and you will be contacted when it is your turn. It is important not to contact the NHS (via Callington Health Centre?) for a vaccination before then. At first, the vaccine will be offered to people who are most at risk from the virus (people who live in care homes and care home workers, people aged 80 and over, health and social care workers etc), before being offered more widely. The final decision on who will get the vaccine first is arrived at by a careful assessment of vulnerability and will follow advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

It is important to realise that, while the vaccine will help protect you, it is still essential that you follow social distancing guidance and any other restrictions to keep each other safe. Hands, face, space!



THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING PALAVER OF 1952

The National Archives has for many years offered a steady stream of online information that includes odd and interesting snippets revealed in their stored documents. Here is one such, in a slightly edited form.

With an array of different Christmas puddings now available, you probably didn't have any problem getting hold of one this year. However, 60 years ago, you might have had a problem getting the 'correct' Christmas pudding, files in The National Archives reveal.



The origins of the Christmas pudding can be traced back to medieval times but it wasn't until the Victorian era that the Christmas pudding we know and love took on the recognisable form that continues to this day. But the debate about what makes a Christmas pudding continued into the 1940s and 50s, with committees and policy on Christmas Pudding Labelling ... brought in after the war to ensure that Christmas puddings, also known as 'The Empire Christmas Pudding', did not go below the net weight of 17oz (with 1oz leeway) and contained the right ingredients:

Minimum oils and fats – not less than 9%

Sugar (added) – not less than 15%

Mixed dried vine fruits – not less than 40%

If Christmas puddings that had been imported did not have a label specifying the weight and ingredients listed by 31 March 1952, they could not be sold and could potentially result in prosecution, although it appears no-one was. Concern in 1952 about the licensing for making Christmas puddings, and the labelling to ensure ingredients were correctly listed, prompted a survey of Christmas puddings across the country. Plymouth was at the top of the Christmas pudding league table with 1,617



THE EMPIRE CHRISTMAS PUDDING

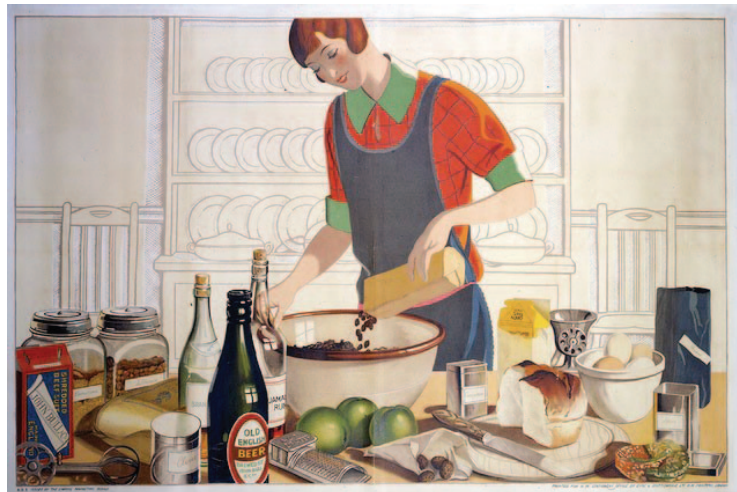
according to the recipe supplied by the King's Chef, Mr. CEDARD, with Their Majesties' Gracious Consent

1 lb Currants	Australia
1 lb Sultanas	Australia or South Africa
1 lb Stoned Raisins	Australia or South Africa
5 ozs Minced Apple	United Kingdom or Canada
1 lb Bread Crumbs	United Kingdom
1 lb Beef Suet	United Kingdom
6 ozs Cut Candied Peel	South Africa
8 ozs Flour	United Kingdom
8 ozs Demerara Sugar	British West Indies or British Guiana
5 Eggs	United Kingdom or Irish Free State
½ oz Ground Cinnamon	India or Ceylon
½ oz Ground Cloves	Zanzibar
½ oz Ground Nutmegs	British West Indies
½ teaspoon Pudding Spice	India or British West Indies
½ gill Brandy	Australia, S. Africa, Cyprus or Palestine
½ gill Rum	Jamaica or British Guiana
1 pint Beer	England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland

WRITE TO THE EMPIRE MARKETING BOARD, WESTMINSTER, FOR A FREE BOOKLET ON EMPIRE CHRISTMAS FAIR GIVING THIS AND OTHER RECIPES.

homemade Christmas puddings and 1,536 imported Christmas puddings, but they were all listed with ingredients. It was Lancaster in the 'Christmas pudding spotlight' with 1,152 unlabelled, imported Christmas puddings.

There was particular concern about Christmas puddings imported from other countries in the Empire without the correct labelling that were appearing across the country, sparking discussions between the Parliamentary Committee and the Ministry of Food. It just goes to show that the proof is not only in the pudding; it must be clearly and correctly displayed on it as well.



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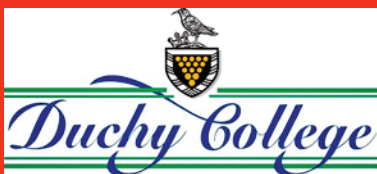


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FUTURE FARM AT DUCHY COLLEGE WELCOMES ITS FIRST RESIDENTS

The ground-breaking Future Farm has reached a major milestone with its first cows and the installation of some of the latest technological innovations in modern farming. Located at Duchy College and used in conjunction with Bicton College, Future Farm has been built to help improve efficiency, welfare, and technological advancement in dairy farming.

At just over a year since Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice MP, cut the turf to start the build, the facility is now "leading the way in research and innovation within the dairy and environment sector,"

according to Jamie Crisp, Head of Duchy College. "With new

technical and scientifically demanding qualifications, to be able to boast a cutting-edge facility and associated resources that will allow for the top level of teaching, is wonderful. There is solid investment into Duchy College and Bicton College, and staff and learners are extremely excited about their Colleges' futures."

The cutting-edge facility, home to 200 cows that can be grouped into three mini-herds, boasts impressive new technologies to research the latest innovations in dairy.

"Opportunities for research and a focus on cow welfare are at the forefront of this new venture," continued Jamie. "The innovative design will not only improve efficiency but aid cow welfare and comfort. The needs of animals, as well as the requirements of modern-day livestock farmers, have been integrated into the design of the building itself. We are really looking forward to welcoming farmers to visit the new unit once Covid restrictions lift, to be able to support training, research and development of our students, employers and industry stakeholders."



Merry Christmas From All Of Us At



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Christmas Day & Boxing Day Closed, Dec. 27th & 28th 9am - 5pm

*restaurant opening subject to latest Government restrictions, please check our website for updates

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CHRISTMASES WITH JOHN, BILL AND 2 DAVIDS

I have to say that I don't clearly remember many past Christmases. But looking back at some old diaries I'm struck by how fleeting they used to be – just Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing day and then back to work. Recent Christmases have become so very protracted: there's the autumnal build-up, the commercial Black Friday blitz, the schmaltz and then the ten days of the holiday at a time of year when I don't really want to be on holiday. I don't need all of this in order to celebrate Christ's birth.

But there was a short sequence of youthful Christmas holidays that have stuck in my memory. My first job was teaching physics in a school in Watford and I had become one of the staff who was involved in outdoor pursuits. In my case it was as a scout leader; others ran an outdoor club. I can't remember who first proposed that we should spend part of the Christmas holiday in the Lake District but, in the end, we went there 4 or 5 years running.

There was no question about using hotels – we couldn't afford that. So we borrowed the scout group tents and, having each seen our families on Christmas Day, we converged on Langdale. We were a small group – not the same mix each year. David R drove across from Baildon in Yorkshire, John's family was in Windsor and mine in Bristol, Bill came up from Hampshire and David K from somewhere else in the north. David R knew the people who owned the Langdale Hotel and they told him that we'd be welcome to join their New Year's Eve dinner. So we camped within walking distance of the hotel.

We all knew the Lake District from previous visits so we had our shopping lists of peaks that we wanted to

climb. But most of our previous experience was not in winter conditions and we were enthralled by the beauty of snow-covered mountains, sufficiently equipped and experienced not to take risks and young enough not to mind the cold too much. The trick was to keep moving so we set out each morning to climb places like Bowfell, Scafell Pike, Conistone Old Man, High Street, Helvellyn, the Langdale Pikes and others. It was glorious and utterly memorable and was quite the best way to spend at least a part of the Christmas holiday with almost no-one else in sight.

The dinner at the hotel was, of course, our chance to warm up though we were scruffy compared with most of the guests so were parked in a corner of the dining room. Inevitably, we had afterwards to walk the half mile back to the tents which, on one occasion were snowed in to a depth of a foot or two. We probably complained at the time but I do recall at least one amazing starlit night.

Then it was back to Watford and the start of a new term. Whether we were better teachers as a result of the experience I don't know. But I still keep in touch with some of those Lake District friends. We're widely scattered now though all of us continued our careers in education. David R is a retired professor living in Japan, David K became an HMI while John became head of science in a Cumbrian school and has lived in the Lake District for many years. I understand that Bill still lives in Watford – the only one of us who spent his whole career at the same school. The Langdale Hotel has long since changed hands.

I have been back to the Lake District many times since those days, but only once in deep winter. Rather smugly, John keeps reminding me how great it is to live on the lower slopes of Blencathra though his knees now make it hard for him to get to the top whereas mine are (nearly) as good as new.

John Wilmut

Photographs are from slides taken in different years, and are (from the top): above Langdale; Stickle Tarn and Pavey Ark; Crinkle Crags



HOW MANY MEN DOES IT TAKE TO ERECT A CHRISTMAS TREE?



Well, in the case of Stoke Climsland, nine. One to hold a rope, one to hold another rope, one to direct, one to check that the direction was correct, one to check that the assistant director was doing his bit, one to hold another rope, one to dig a hole, one to measure the hole, one to guide the tree into the hole and one to check that the tree was upright. Oh, let's not forget the one who drove the telehandler. More seriously, a big 'thank you' to the doughty team of willing volunteers who manoeuvred the tree into position 'twixt Social Club, who are providing the electricity, and Church. And without the mechanical assistance of the telehandler from the Duchy College (thank you, James Coumbe), it would have not been possible. Well, it might have been possible but we would have lost several of the nine along the way. Not forgetting thanks the Jackamans for the tree, Sue Watts for planting the seed of an idea, Barbara and Richard Bennett for the lights, Dave Crawley for the electrics and Nigel Cooper for the transportation. A true community effort. All that's left to do is to admire it as it provides some light relief from the Covid darkness.



Photographs from Rob Stewart, Jan Parsons and Deri Parsons