

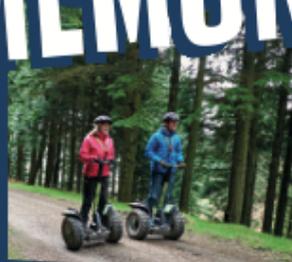
# FULMER NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2020 | ISSUE 67



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## WELCOME TO THE 67<sup>th</sup> ISSUE OF THE FULMER NEWSLETTER

We are delighted to be back with the Newsletter and were very sorry not to have had a June edition.

Fulmer seems to have coped well in these extraordinary times and the advent of a number of What's App groups in different parts of the village have been very welcome as a method of getting to know neighbours and passing on all sorts of local information. We are sure they are here to stay and they serve a good purpose.

A few thank yous, as always: to our advertisers, some of whom are very long standing; all our contributors who always manage to write interesting articles for us; the team who help us distribute the copies to each household and the readers who so often say how much they appreciate the presence of the Newsletter.

If anyone would like to contribute to a future issue or has any comments, do get in touch – [susiemsimkins@gmail.com](mailto:susiemsimkins@gmail.com)

Best wishes for Christmas and a more normal New Year  
Susie & Ronnie Simkins Editors

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## UPDATE ON SUPPLY OF ULTRAFAST BROADBAND TO FULMER

Firstly, thanks to everyone who responded to the proposals for this.

It was towards the beginning of the Covid outbreak, so things have taken a bit longer than we thought, but I'm delighted to say that good progress has been made. Home Counties Fibre have been awarded the contract and are setting things in motion at the moment. Obviously, the current restrictions mean that they haven't been able to conduct their survey properly or talk to residents who may still have questions.

The good news is that Fulmer – unlike Gerrards Cross – falls under the Government Rural Broadband Support scheme, which means that there are no infrastructure costs for us to pay to have fibre to the premises (FTTP). As you probably know, much of the village has fibre to the cabinet, but copper wire to the houses, which gives much slower speeds. With more and more people working from home, broadband speed is essential and Home Counties are offering a choice of 100, 300 or 900MB. Many of you have shown your interest in this already, but I would remind you there is no commitment at this stage to sign up with them. If you do, however, you will get a far better connection, and maybe even add value to your home. Their monthly rates are as good as, and often better than other service providers. The only cost to you is about £50 for the router.

We have asked them about timings for this and, Covid included, they think that they could start the cabling and infrastructure hopefully in February. The total time needed for the installation is about 4 months, so the service will start going live for the first premises sometime in April and should be completed a couple of months after that for everyone else.

If you haven't registered your interest, please do so using the link below and we'll keep you fully updated with any progress.

[www.homecountiesfibre.co.uk/contact](http://www.homecountiesfibre.co.uk/contact)

CHRIS DENZA

## FROM OUR PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

They say that man plans and God laughs. It is hard to remember back to January of this year, when most of us had still not heard of coronavirus and think what we had planned for 2020, not reckoning on the risks to our health, wealth and mental wellbeing of then silently growing pandemic. It has been a challenging year with much fear, hardship and suffering, but even so, I think we have much to give thanks for in Fulmer. That we are blessed to live in such a beautiful area, with choices of walks through the countryside and down country lanes, was a stark contrast to those in the cities when the first lockdown came. With probably the finest spring weather of decades, getting my daily exercise became a joyful excursion into nature with the roads and flightpaths silent as they hadn't been for generations. But the thing that we should give most thanks for is not the natural setting of Fulmer, but the strength of the community that lies within it. People helping out, checking in, doing a little shopping, hunting down essential supplies – were all daily ways in which I saw people in the village being there for one another. Whatsapp groups sprung up to connect groups in the village and such was the volume of information to be shared I started the daily (now weekly) email briefing: it was an especial pleasure to receive photos from everyone around the village.

The Parish Council has continued to meet regularly. We have got to grips with zoom calls, and while I greatly miss the human contact of being able to sit in a room together and see each other face-to-face, in some ways it's possibly even a little easier to drop in with zoom to raise a point in one part of the agenda or to listen to a discussion – and I'm really pleased that so many people have made the effort to dial-in and contribute to what the council does. At the start of the year, Michael Saxby stepped down as a councillor, having served as Chairman before me. I would like to thank him for his long service to the Parish. Liz Finan, who lives in Cherry Tree Lane, has joined us to bring us back up to full strength. This year we've discussed Policing (I'm delighted to report an excellent growing relationship with our new Police Sergeant, Dan Ryder), CCTV in the village, development plans at King George's Field, Pinewood expansion plans (twice!), speeding and road safety, broadband upgrades, planning and enforcement and myriad other issues. I have also represented Fulmer at dozens of area meetings and corresponded in over 1,100 email threads since January. And there is still much more to do. I enjoy speaking with and hearing from anyone who would help improve Fulmer and keep our village special.

In April the old County and District councils were merged into a single Unitary Authority. With the May elections cancelled, councillors at both old councils are still in situ, and at an administrative level, all local authority services (such as roads, bin collections, schools, adult social care, planning) are finally provided by a single body – although it is fair to say that Bucks Council came into the world at a tricky time and is still very much finding its feet. Hopefully 2021 elections to slim down the council and the withdrawal of covid restrictions will allow the merged authority to eventually bring efficiency gains. However, these do come at a cost of being more remote, less connected to local issues, and less accountable to local residents. This means the Parish Council needs to be even more effective than ever to make sure our voice is heard in Aylesbury. In the first instance always report issues online, but if a ticket is closed without fixing or you do not hear back, please let us know so we can follow up. As we head into Christmas, I can only hope that the new year sees a return to a more normal existence and wish each and everyone a healthy festive period and 2021.

DAVID BRACKIN - Chairman Fulmer Parish Council

## THE FUTURE OF KINGS GEORGE'S FIELD – HAVE YOUR SAY

Those of us who live in Fulmer have been incredibly lucky to call this our home during the past year. Many of us were able to enjoy regular walks in Black Park, Stoke Common and our local footpaths and instead of being cooped up in a small urban space, we were able to make the most of living in a semi-rural area with nature right on our doorstep. This cannot be taken for granted when there is so much development and urbanisation pressure all around us.

The challenges of the past year have also given us the time to reflect on the importance of community. It has highlighted how much we all need each other in a world of increasing isolation. It has shown how much we all, young and old, can benefit from getting to know and engage with our neighbours.

It is against this background that the open space of King George's Field in Fulmer (KGFF) is so important. These five acres left to us in memory of King George V after his death in 1936 is the closest thing Fulmer has to a village green. It has enormous potential to bring the community together and to offer an array of experiences, activities and events for the benefit of everyone living here.

It is now twenty years since the KGFF has been registered as a charity with the aim to provide and encourage sporting, recreation and community activities in this area. It is also almost twenty years since the pavilion was built and ten years since the all-weather pitch was resurfaced. The facilities at the KGFF have become old and in need of updating. Parking has also become a pressing issue.

The time has come to take another look at the KGFF and to start a community discussion on what the Fulmer community would like to see at this space.

The Fulmer Sports and Community Association (FSCA), as management trustees of the KGFF charity, has embarked on the creation of a long-term vision and development plan which should involve everyone in the local community.

As a first step, we are asking you today to have your say in the survey accompanying the Fulmer Newsletter. We want to find out what you would like to see at the KGFF and how you think it could be used to the benefit of our whole community. We would appreciate if you could fill this in and post it back in the enclosed addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Please get involved and help us to make the most of this green space we have, not only for today, but also for future generations who might need it even more.

## PERSONALIA

BIRTHS – we congratulate

Edward & Al Fagan on the birth of Hugo Edward Feltrim on 28th January. A brother for Tatiana and a second grandchild for John & Sue Fagan

Sophie & Lee Grant on the birth of Orla on 16 November. A third grandchild for Fiona Gray.

MARRIAGES – we congratulate

James Reid and Francesca Bliss on their marriage in St James Church Fulmer on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

DEATHS - We send condolences to the families of

John Yardley Sanders who died on 3 November 2019. His funeral took place on 21 November 2019.

Brenda Scott who died on 15 November 2019 and her funeral was held on 5 December 2019

Richard Trigg who died on 7 December 2019. A thanksgiving service was held on 23 December

Joan Jackson who died on 16 December 2019. A memorial service was held on 10 January

Isobel Dorling who died on 17 December 2019. A thanksgiving service was held on 23 January

Marian Laing who died on 20 January. A memorial service was held on 29 January

Bob Mason who died on 22 February. Loving Memory 28 February

Philip Rushton who died on 5 March and his burial of ashes took place on 10 July.

Nancy Millar who died on 4 May. A thanksgiving service was held on 26 May.

Fiona Trigg who died on 10 May. A thanksgiving service was held on 8 June.

Brenda Moram who died on 10 August. A service in celebration of Brenda's life was held at Chiltern Crematorium on 24 August

Michael Arthur who died on 4 September. A burial of ashes took place on 3 November

## MICHAEL ARTHUR 1935 - 2020

Michael Arthur was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1935 in Christchurch, Bournemouth. When he was 10, the family moved to Oswestry, Shropshire, to take over the running of the family garage, which had been founded by Michael's grandfather in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and which is still going under the name of Arthur's. He studied Commerce at Birmingham University in the early 1950s and then completed a training in accountancy. He started his career with the Hawker Siddeley aircraft company, one of the top ten manufacturing engineering companies in the world at the time. After a few years he moved to PA Consulting in the Midlands as a management consultant and gained some valuable experience in how and how not to run a company, as he studied various firms' working practices.

In 1972, he joined Halma, a small group of businesses in North London mostly making safety products. He continued to work there until his retirement as Finance Director and then from 1978, as Deputy Chairman. During his time at Halma, the Group expanded to become a very successful company. Today it has 50 businesses in 20 countries; although not a household name, it is one of the 50 largest businesses in the UK. When Michael retired in 2000, the Chairman wrote: "He has surely been one of the most able UK Finance Directors of his generation".

Michael and Ann moved to Gerrards Cross in the late 1980s, almost immediately joining the congregation at Fulmer and becoming increasingly involved with the two St James's churches in Fulmer and Gerrards Cross. Michael was Treasurer for 10 years and he was very active in both the Deanery and the Diocese of Oxford. Most of their many local friends were made over the 30 happy years as part of the church family.

Friends and family remember Michael as a gentle, warm man, thoughtful with great integrity. He was easy to talk to, encouraging to others and a good listener. He loved spending time with family and friends and enjoyed cricket, rugby, gardening, walking, travelling, music and theatre. He was a very kind, selfless man, always concerned for others above himself. Michael sadly passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020, after a short illness. He will be missed very much by Ann, and by his two daughters and two step-sons - Caroline, Sue, Phil and Tim - and nine grandchildren - Patrick, Miranda, Adam, Matthew, Elodie, Abi, Bethany, Ella and Jess.



## ISOBEL DORLING 1940 - 2019

*Isobel lived in Fulmer for over 40 years and died a year ago in December 2019. Her husband Peter has written this wonderful tribute to her life and work in our village, drawn partly from memories Isobel herself contributed to an earlier edition of the Newsletter, and partly from the tribute Peter gave at her Memorial Service in Fulmer Church last January. Fulmer Village owes so much to Isobel with the contributions she gave so graciously over many years and we miss her kindness and cheerful demeanour – Editors*

I first met Isobel in circumstances that could never have foretold the quite extraordinary tide of events which would follow – for both of us. I did a lot of skiing in my younger days and it wasn't unusual to go with a group of people who'd never met each other before. With luck we were sometimes able to meet beforehand to introduce ourselves. One year a girl coming on one of these holidays offered her flat in Barnes as a rendezvous for a pre-skiing get-together. When I arrived, I was immediately struck, not so much by the girl whose flat we were commandeering, as by one of her fellow flatmates. My immediate enquiries revealed that sadly, she would not be coming on the holiday with us. Her job that particular evening was in the kitchen, preparing food for us all. She was a strikingly pretty 24-year-old maths teacher. Her name was Isobel Anne Orr and she was teaching at Haberdashers Girls' School in nearby Acton. While the others in the room discussed the finer points of slaloms and snow ploughing, I surreptitiously fixed a date with her for the day we got back. It was certainly something to look forward to, but little did I realise what this almost chance encounter would lead to. Not to put too fine a point on it, Isobel was to change my life completely - and most certainly for the better. Our meeting was to lead to the very happiest of marriages, which would last until her death 52 years later, and to her becoming my best and greatest friend.

After four years in a flat in Ealing, and the birth of our first daughter Tamsin, we settled in a house in Gerrards Cross which was to be our very happy home for 42 years. Very soon, Isobel discovered just down our road was the little village of Fulmer, whose magic was to win love and respect and support from Isobel for the next 40 years. It started as she made new friends when her own family began to become directly involved in the village life. Soon we were learning new names and faces that were to become very familiar over those first years and were to become our first local friends.

In 1974 our elder daughter, Tamsin, started at the Beehive (in Audrey Wright's time) to be followed three years later by her sister, Karen. (Isobel discovered she'd also had an unknown link in the 1960s when she played lacrosse with the then rector Rex Lloyd's daughter Alison). Tamsin moved on to Fulmer County First School, as it was then, when there were only 22 pupils in total! And Isobel remembered that the first Harvest Festival service she went to at the school was taken by the next rector Bill Taylor. These were the days when the village was its own little parish with its own rector, all quite separate from Gerrards Cross a mile away. Glenys Turner was the headteacher at Fulmer First School and in charge of the 'big class', while Mrs Nancy Everard taught the infants.

Not long afterwards we got to know the new rector Bill Browne when his youngest son Patrick joined the school and he and Tamsin became great friends - Patrick even asked if he could take her to the pictures to celebrate his birthday at the ripe old age of 6! Bill was instrumental in persuading us - and many other young local families - to come to Fulmer Church, where

there was a monthly Family Service and a Sunday School in the Village Hall run by Mrs Grimsdale, with Val Lawson as one of the helpers.

We were in the congregation one Sunday when the lady in front of us turned to me at the end of the service and said "You should join the choir with my husband Gilbert". This was of course Pam Runnicles who with her husband Gilbert was even then a long-serving member of the choir. He and Pam became probably our oldest friends in Fulmer. I did as I was told and joined the choir and so started many happy years of singing and worship in the lovely church, with our own little family, and with Julia Hooper as organist and choir-mistress.

Those of us in the church choir at the time can still remember our performances of 'Baboushka' two years running. And then 'Caedmon', with Kate Gurney, Jay Murphy or Jane Axtell singing leading roles. It all seemed to be a lot of fun. And of course there were the adults, with me, Gilbert, Bridget Gurney and Jill Axtell. There was even a nativity play one year when 'Mary' rode into the church on the Axtell's donkey!

Isobel started teaching in the Sunday School at about the same time, when the venue moved to the village school, and she joined a great team including people like Mollie Leggett, Pam Runnicles, Polly Crisp, Marion Dye and Diana Mann. After a year or two this arrangement closed for a term and Norman Russell, the first rector of the new joint parish with Gerrards Cross, preached a sermon about using one's gifts: Mollie and Isobel both volunteered to take on the task of running the children's work. Isobel continued running the Sunday School - later Junior Church - until she'd clocked up 25 years and had great memories of the Lamb, Fagan and Simkins twins as well as the Oldfield, Thomas and Spittle girls amongst many other village families.

Though teaching was her undoubted calling, I sensed she felt she could offer more to help the community. Teaching it was to be for the moment but she soon found that Fulmer had a lot more to offer besides, and the work she loved began to take her in all sorts of other directions as well. In the mid-70s there wasn't much for children to do in the long summer holidays so Isobel and a friend, Lynne Willis, approached Bill Browne to discuss running a holiday club. He gave his enthusiastic support and persuaded the guides and the scouts to let them use their huts free of charge, and the cricket and tennis clubs agreed to let them use the pavilion and the tennis courts - and 'Fulmer Fun' was born. The age range was from 3 - 11 years, the helpers were other mothers and older teenagers, the charge was 50p per child (to buy the odd toys and bits and pieces for the various games) and the numbers attending on every Wednesday morning from the first week of the holiday through to the end of the summer were between 60 and 120! Fulmer Fun ran for 7 years under Lynne and Isobel's guidance and afterwards for a further 3 years. But by then there were so many more things for children to do - the Chalfont Leisure Centre had opened and there were lots of holiday courses being run all over the county and volunteers were increasingly hard to find.

When the Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1977, the village produced a weekend of celebrations with Bill Browne and Edward Guinness being the lynch pins of the organising committee. Isobel and Lynne organised a fancy dress parade from the Village Hall to the Recreation Ground where there were lots of activities on the Saturday - James Bond's car on loan from Pinewood, a dancing display by Miss Hembrow's dancing school and positively the last appearance of one of the pianos from the village hall, which was dropped and fell apart

while being carried from the middle of the Rec to the marquee for the evening's hog roast supper and dancing. The road was closed through the village - perhaps this event sowed the seeds for the present Fulmer Day? Fireworks at the Black Horse, organised by the pub landlords Di and Paul Lott, provided a fitting final celebration.

So many events around this time were to stay with Isobel as very special happy memories – and challenges too. Many of them were in connection with Fulmer School itself where she marked up 40 years as a governor. Her work for the school became a huge chunk of her life: getting to know, and introduce, eight new head teachers as they came and went (she found one of them herself); the school's 100th anniversary to be planned and produced; tough grillings from OFSTED inspectors; and somehow raising £50,000 for an extension building (and arranging its opening by Princess Alexandra). After her 40<sup>th</sup> year as governor Isobel and I and our girls were guests of honour at a special party for her, held in the new school hall and attended by the staff, former teachers, former head teachers, governors and past governors, parents and friends, all saying nice things about Isobel and her hard work at the school over the 40 years.

And at the same time was her work for the church, helping with the celebrations marking the Queen's Silver, Gold and Diamond Jubilees, the Millennium and the church's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She organised Flower Festivals in the church with displays provided by all the village organisations. And shows in the church or the Village Hall (organised first by Merry Rushton and then by Fiona Gray) such as Words and Music to Celebrate a Summer's Evening, and a recreation of the drama associated with Trafalgar Day. And, of course, there were the entertainments at the Harvest Festival Suppers and the village Christmas parties. It was all a lot of work but work she loved.

Isobel always said that high on her list of favourite occasions in the church were the beautiful services for both daughters' weddings - Tamsin's being Paul Williams' first wedding in Fulmer, and Karen's being Martin Williams' first as rector. At Karen's wedding, the reception afterwards was a fabulous tea party in the Village Hall. (The blue painted floor in the ladies toilet involved Isobel on her knees scrubbing years of dirt off the old maroon paint before our son-in-law-to-be repaired one of the loos and painted the floor to match the smart new flooring in the men's toilet!)

These were happy and busy times indeed. But then came a big gear-change in both our lives. The change happened as we were both on the verge of retirement. For Isobel it meant stretching her horizons wider and further. I actually retired from the BBC in 1992 and was immediately invited to go out to Singapore (of all places) to sort out the island's television journalism - and Isobel was invited too. So, amazingly, for the next ten years, on and off, she and I would disappear to the Far East for a few months at a time where Isobel quickly established a reputation for her version of eastern cooking at our luxury penthouse apartment, making and entertaining new friends and my colleagues from the TV station. But unlike many an ex-pat, as well as all the cooking, Isobel did all the food shopping herself in the local markets. She became a much-loved ex-pat and, over the years while I was slaving away in the TV studio, she made herself very knowledgeable about Singapore itself and its amazing history and eventually wrote the official guidebook to the island. At holiday times during our stays in the Far East, she organised fantastic holidays for us both, taking in

Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, and many other corners of South East Asia. They would never have been possible without the fares getting us to Singapore in the first place being paid by the Singapore government!

But there was yet another string to Isobel's bow. The most remarkable of all, she used to say. It was an invitation this time from Cunard, the famous shipping company, but which would eventually involve many other cruise lines. I was to become an on-board lecturer, talking about the BBC, complete with my own agent who organised for us three or four cruises a year for 25 years, while Isobel was awarded a role as a 'ship's escort', counting passengers on and off the coaches, rounding them up on tours, wearing a blazer decked in the cruise lines' colours and waving a big stick with a number on it. Her key role was looking after passengers when they got into trouble, like on one occasion being ill at the top of the leaning tower of Pisa. Isobel's job was to organise taxis to get them safely back to the ship.

This truly extraordinary life of luxury was to include visiting (while of course working) some of the most famous and incredible natural spectacles the world has to offer. Again, Isobel's talents as a teacher were in great demand. Though she was fed the necessary background information she was then on her own, struggling with her often aged clientele, once just after being fitted with a new hip herself! But there she was, masterminding the tours and directing visitors to the chosen places of interest, helping them along the rugged pathways on Easter Island, introducing the families of one-time mutineers from the Bounty on Pitcairn Island, visiting Petra in Jordan, the Great Barrier Reef off Australia's Queensland coast, and climbing over the glaciers in Alaska.

She was in charge of one tour round the Winter Palace in St Petersburg when the promised bottles of vodka for her party were nowhere to be found. It was her responsibility to find them, and quickly, or she would have some very unhappy tourists on her hands. After a lengthy search of the passages and corridors and nooks and crannies, she at last found some cobweb-covered bottles secreted away in a cupboard. Probably the leftovers, I suggested, from a clandestine farewell party for the ill-fated Romanovs. Anything untoward had to be reported to the Tours Organiser back onboard, so she had quite a long report to write that night (but a familiar job for Isobel!). Over the years we crossed all the world's great oceans: the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the South China Sea, the Baltic, crossing the Equator and the Arctic Circle more times than Isobel she could remember. And all the while I was lecturing away about the dear old BBC when it was a day at sea and I could hurriedly set up my lectern and laptop in the ballroom.

For Isobel these were tremendously enjoyable times. And she did it all so well. She really loved talking to people, cajoling them, interesting them, and just sharing with them so many wonders of our amazing planet. She lost count of the number of the world's heritage sites she'd guided her passengers in and out of and was a welcoming familiar figure on many a quayside around the world. I reckoned she and I had visited over 80 countries. In fact we reckoned we'd been right round the world three times on over 50 cruises, spread over the 25 years. Our Christmas cards from all over the world testified to the love she seemed to generate with all sorts of families all over the world.

These then were some of the quite remarkable adventures that came Isobel's way when we started our wonderful partnership at that pre-skiing party in her flat 50 years earlier. I must say that in all these various endeavours, I watched with constantly growing love and pride, as I saw Isobel's kindness and concern for others so obviously at the heart of everything she did. But though the world may well have been her oyster, I'm pretty sure it was her work for Fulmer village, for its church, and perhaps most of all, for the years of hard work at the little village school, that gave Isobel her greatest happiness and fulfilment.

But sadly a few years later her health began to give way, as one illness followed another, with a series of major operations taking their toll. From then on to the end, this very brave wonderful girl (as I always saw her) bore them with a fortitude that astonished her friends and family, and me. To such an extent we could almost forget she was ill at all. Never did she want to inconvenience or worry us, while she struggled quietly on to the end. Throughout our long-married life, I feel we had loved each other in such full measure as knew no bounds. My darling Isobel. Farewell. God bless and thank you.

**Peter Dorling**



## Lieutenant Colonel John Yardley Sanders

John was born in a large Victorian house in Wood Green, North London to William and Hilda (nee Finnimore) Sanders. He recalled, as a small boy, spending nights during the war in the substantial air raid shelter next to the house. He was educated at St Albans Catholic School. The family were devoted Catholics and David, his younger brother, became a Dominican priest. John had the distinction of being commissioned twice, first as a National Service Officer into the Royal Signals from Mons, and then, after attending the Regular Commissions Board, from Sandhurst where Gil Hickey, (later Comd 48 Gur Inf Bde) as the Brigade Rep, persuaded John to join the Brigade of Gurkhas. John joined 1/10 GR in 1957 at Norwegian Farm Camp in Hong Kong, but a few months later the battalion moved to Majedee Barracks in Johore where he was involved in the final years of the Malayan Emergency. In 1959 he was the Intelligence Officer when the battalion deployed to Sandakan on an airportability test and flag waving exercise in Sabah, North-East Borneo. The Indonesians made clear their opposition to the formation of Malaysia. He did not get to deploy by air as he had the task of commanding the contingent of men that took the battalion's heavy equipment and vehicles by LST from Singapore to Sandakan, via Kuching and Jesselton, a journey that took 10 days. Over a four-week period the battalion patrolled the Kalabakan area and apprehended 39 illegal immigrants and two wanted murderers when tasked to look out for a dangerous criminal called Hendrick. Little did they realise the exercise was a useful recce of an area the battalion was to operate in 4 years later, nor did they know that Hendrick would be involved then as well.

He was ADC to the Colonel of the Regiment, General 'Tottie' Anderson, when the Colonel was GOC Middle East Land Forces, based in Cyprus. B&K (1962) records that en route to the appointment John visited Nott Seagrim in Paris and on a night out had his pocket picked. It was on a visit to Norway during his time as ADC that John met Marianne Monrad. He fell instantly and deeply in love, writing some 700 letters to Marianne during a long-distance courtship. After handing over as ADC to Garry Johnson, John returned to the battalion in May 1962 as OC A Coy, which he commanded at Engkilili during 1/10GR's first Borneo tour. On return from a short leave to get engaged in Oslo, he served briefly on the staff at the Jungle Warfare School at Kota Tinggi. On completion of that duty, he re-joined the Battalion in Kalabakan where he commanded the Tawau Assault Group (TAG), an ad hoc grouping of assault boats and other marine craft manned by two platoons of D Coy and men from 3RMR and the Royal Navy for a short period. His HQ and the mothership was the governor of North Borneo's private launch 'Petrel'. On the battalion's return from Kalabakan, he and Marianne were married in Oslo on 18 July 1964. Jonathan Edwardes was the bestman. Shortly after his marriage he resumed command of A Coy again just in time for the Labis operation. Based on information provided by a local informant, A Coy assaulted on an enemy position only to find the enemy had never been there: embarrassingly the only casualty was an owl. Shortly after that he contracted a nasty virus and was casevaced to Sungei Udang. A brief spell with 2/10GR in Sarawak followed, and in May 1965 he went on long leave during which he decided to transfer to a British Regiment. After a brief spell with the Royal Ulster Rifles, he joined the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (RRF).

He served in Osnabruck, then Shorncliffe from where his battalion did a nine-month unaccompanied tour in Shajah. An SO3 staff appointment in 24 Bde based at Plymouth

followed and he deployed with the brigade to Northern Ireland in May 1969 and again a short while later. He returned to 3RRF as a Coy Comd and to his dismay the battalion was sent to Northern Ireland, his third tour. The family then drove to Gibraltar, where they enjoyed a two-year posting and John brushed up on his love of sailing. He was then told he would get a 'plumb, exciting' SO2 appointment after Arabic language training. He was horrified when he learned it was in Baghdad for three years. He drove to the appointment with the family. After a year he had become something of an expert on Iraq and he was appointed Defence Attaché and given the acting rank of Lt Col. On completion of his time in Baghdad he was posted to the Ulster Defence Regiment as a Bn 2IC with the prospect of commanding 11 UDR. As a devout Catholic he had found serving in Northern Ireland a challenge and it was not what he wanted, so, at the age of 40, with a wife and two children, at the time, he resigned and left the Army.

He worked for an Arab Group, 'British Research and Trading Organisation' for five years. During that time, he and Marianne were in loco parentis to two Palestinian/Jordanian teenagers, one of whom required repeated medical care. He subsequently set up solo, when he represented Landrover and Sinclair computers. There were two difficult years when business dried up during the Iran-Iraq War, but he joined BAe as Head of Marketing Middle East. In a reshuffle he was moved to BAe's subsidiary Royal Ordnance. Within two weeks of the recapture of Kuwait, he led a small team into that devastated country and secured a £60 million contract through his contacts in the region. Internal issues within BAe caused frustration and stress and he left after securing a good package and pension. He briefly worked for GEC but it was not a happy company so he left and spent a couple of years as an 'investment angel' in property which proved to be very lucrative. He then bought a yacht and in the process was appointed to the part-time appointment of Marketing Director of Opal Marine which he held from 1995 to 2006. Throughout that period, John kept up with his Middle East contacts and continued to do business there until the end of his life.

Over the years, he became more and more concerned that war with Iraq was looming. With his high level contacts he was instrumental in securing secret talks with the aim of averting the invasion of Iraq. He knew that all weapons of Mass Destruction had been taken out after the first Gulf War. His line being that not talking to an opponent other than public rhetoric was not an option. A secret meeting in a third country was set up and was productive, sadly, the powers that be under Bush and Blair had already made up their minds to go to war. John and his team were devastated. By now failing health was taking its toll, but that did not stop him from buying a farm in France in 2005 and going on a three-week holiday to China. The farm required a great deal of building work and proved to be a project too far and it was reluctantly sold in 2014. Not only did John travel extensively and frequently in both his military and business life, but he and Marianne set out on many an adventure be it by car, yacht or by plane. Norway was their second home but adventures further afield appealed to John's inquisitive and adventurous spirit.

His family meant everything to him and Marianne gave him loyal and steadfast support. After his funeral which was attended by a large congregation, in a brief but moving speech Marianne described her life with John as a roller coaster. Almost an under-statement! She introduced an Iraqi friend of John's who recounted the efforts to broker a peace agreement with Iraqi in 2002. He was John's 'other half' at the talks and described him as a true friend

and a 'man of peace'. Marianne and John had three children. Patrick, who is General Sir Patrick Sanders, KCB, CBE, DSO currently Commander Strategic Command, Patrick is married to Fiona and they have a son, Kit. Gabrielle, the child who was the most like John, set up a branch in Beijing for Convergys, the American outsourcing company. She met her German husband, Jens Ruebbert, there; he heads up a private German Bank in the Far East and they live in Singapore; and Hugo, who is a Managing Director and Global Head of Corporate Access, Data and Research at Wellington Asset Management (a USA Company), he is married to Milly and has 3 children Ida, Magnus & Otto.



**John Yardley Sanders 1936 – 2019**

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## BRENDA MORAM 1931 - 2020

Long-time resident of Fulmer, Brenda Moram, (nee Palmer) died peacefully at Wexham Park Hospital on 10 August 2020 with her husband Colin and younger daughter Paula by her side. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, her older daughter Joanne (Jo) was unable to travel from Brisbane, Australia but was with the family every day in spirit via technology with cameras. The family is grateful that her demise was swift and pain-free after a severe stroke 4 weeks earlier that wreaked havoc with her body to an extent that she couldn't recover. It was challenging initially being at hospital in Wycombe where visitors weren't allowed so everyone was happier when she was brought closer to home for her farewell.

Brenda attended St Bernard's Convent in Slough then became a draughtsman at Mc Michael Radio before marrying Colin in 1963. The couple moved to the village from Slough in spring 1964, living in the same house in Hay Lane for all those years... the house with the shutters and tubs overflowing with seasonal flowers as Brenda was a keen gardener. She excelled at home cooking – especially baking terrific cakes and preserves. She also enjoyed sewing - making curtains and most of the children's clothes when they were young.

At almost 89, Brenda set a wonderful example of how to live and love a long life. Of how to be a supportive caring individual, a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She will be dearly missed by many and especially by Colin, Paula, Jo and their families.



## BOB MASON 1954 - 2020

*“A gentleman, kind to a fault, loving beyond words and generous beyond his means. Bob was a man of God and we don’t know anyone more deserving of the better place he now calls home.”*

*Ashley and Adam Mason, February 2020*

Robert was many things to many people. He was a modest and private man, who loved his family above anything else and was the rock to whom everyone would turn. He was the loving husband to Lynn for over 40 years and devoted father to Ashley and Adam, followed in time as doting grandfather. His life was full of love and both his family and his unfaltering faith brought him great comfort and peace.

Robert, as he was baptized, but Bob as everyone knew him, was born in Liverpool on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1954, the first child to Bob & Ruth Mason. He often talked with affection of the special and happy childhood he enjoyed there and when he was six he became a brother to his little sister Jayne.

Following school he spent time at the Universities of Lancaster and Liverpool, where he completed his MBA, before becoming a rising star in the corporate world. His friendly affable nature coupled with an unbelievable work ethic took Bob to the position of Global HR Director for BT, a hugely demanding role but one which he enjoyed immensely before finally leaving BT at the age of 50. A brief spell as HR director for London Underground, where he had some infamous stand offs with the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and Union leader, Bob Crowe, was followed by some time as HR Director of the Wolseley Group before finally gaining his accreditation as an executive coach and a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD.

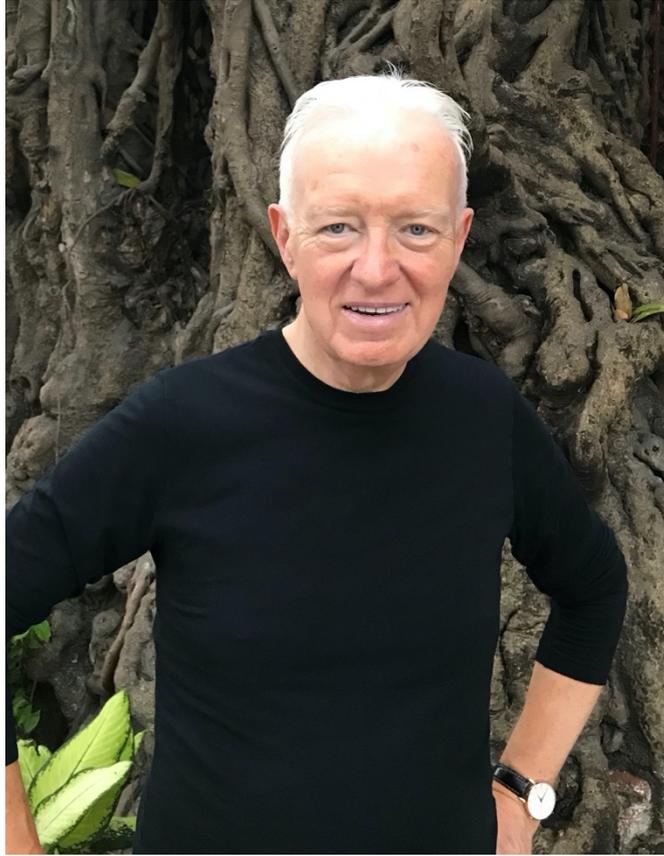
His work life was also filled with voluntary roles including being the Deputy Chairman of the Employers’ Forum on Disability and the Chairman of the Equal Pay Task Force, which reported back to the Equal Opportunities Commission with recommendations for closing the Gender Pay Gap in the UK.

St James’ Church was a very important part of Bob and Lynn’s life; his faith certainly helped him to come to terms with his illness over the last seven years of his life. He was about to become a Church Warden, before he died but his health didn’t permit him.

He was proud to be a Scouser and he embraced all things Liverpool especially The Beatles and his beloved Liverpool FC. He was himself a pianist and a part time guitarist, as well as a great tennis player and played at a very good club level for years before becoming an active member at Dukes Wood in Gerrards Cross, first as fierce competitor then heavily involved with the club’s administration. Although Bob always played golf it wasn’t until later in his life that he developed a love for it. In recent years he joined Harewood Downs Golf Club and enjoyed playing with the LAGS society as well as steadily chipping away at his handicap.

Bob and Lynn loved to travel, seeing the world together with their last trip to Vietnam only a few months before he died.

From the time that he moved to Orchard Cottage in 1991 Bob knew this was the place he wanted to see out his days. Sadly, he died at Wexham Park Hospital, never able to make the last journey back to his “lovely Orchard Cottage. He gently slipped away surrounded by those who loved him most and his loss will be felt by many for a very long time to come.



#### BEREAVEMENT

'Tis asked, "Death where is thy sting?"  
The truth is, it's a 'living' thing  
That hovers in our febrile minds,  
It darkens morn and reason blinds.  
When loved ones pass beyond Death's door  
Those left behind cannot ignore  
The hurt of loss Death foists on them.  
Through sorrow deep it does condemn  
The Quick to know they are bereft  
Of shared delights and love – none left.  
The sting is not when life is done  
It's there to pierce the mourning one.

KEN PETERS

## RICHARD & FIONA TRIGG

Richard and Fiona both grew up in Wimbledon and met at the local youth club.

After Richard completed his national service where he had been stationed in Singapore (which he was forever commenting on), they were married in 1954. Soon after they went to Ghana, West Africa and lived in Accra. During this time they had their first daughter and formed many great friendships that continued throughout their lives. On returning to the UK they lived in Ealing for a short time and then on the birth of their second daughter they moved to Broken Gate Lane, Denham, where they enjoyed many 'Lane parties' with new and old friends. It was during these years that they started their involvement with St James' Fulmer & Gerrards Cross; it was a great part of their daily lives. Richard took great pride in being able to continue his family tradition of becoming a church warden and Fiona loved being involved in the church groups for young and old.

After 30 years in Denham they moved to Gerrards Cross and became more involved with Fulmer church and spent many happy hours with the friends that they made over the years. Their final move was to Chalfont but Fulmer still played a large part in their lives. They had 2 beautiful grandchildren who added another dimension to their lives and helped keep them update with the younger generation.

NIKKI TRIGG



## LADY MARIAN LAING 1927 - 2020

Written by Mark Laing

However much we have been expecting Mum's death over the last few months and even years, nothing can quite prepare one for the event itself and it comes as a great sadness to all of us, despite the knowledge that it is what Mum has wanted for a little time now; and the understanding that she is now at peace after two and a half years of brave struggle. So, it is with a great mixture of feelings that we meet today to celebrate the very rich and fulfilled life that she lived and to treasure the many happy memories we have of her.

Marian Clare Laurie was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1927 a second daughter for John and Vive, a younger sister for Rosemary and partner in crime for brother Bay, who would arrive four years later. Her father was a regular soldier in the Seaforth Highlanders and as such the family went wherever he was posted. In 1934 he became Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and postings followed to Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow and to Dover Castle among other places. It was while they were at Dover that a young Scottish lass from Musselburgh was taken on as Nanny. Nanny Gaddie was a force to be reckoned with and made a very deep impression on the young Mim - She was a marvellous person and was responsible for raising not one but two generations of our family as you will hear later". By 1939 Sir John was Commanding Officer of the British Troops in the Concession of Tientsin in China during the Tientsin Incident when the Japanese were being very aggressive throughout the whole of China but particularly against the British, who they wanted out. Mim, aged 12, and Bay aged 8 went with their father and mother to this outpost of empire, while Osie had to stay in Scotland and go to school. It was a difficult and dangerous command, which made a deep impression on Mim and Bay. Told sternly never to cross the border into Chinese territory, they revelled in competitions to see which of them could spit furthest into Chinese territory. Mim and Bay returned to Britain with their mother in a troopship in early 1940 via Hong Kong. Perhaps the most lasting effect of this immersion into a very different culture was an enduring passion for Mah Jong. Mum was a demon at it and we played often in the holidays at Dunphail. She was a stickler for the rules – Laurie rules of course! And woe betide you if you failed to whistle at the right time or picked from the wrong wall or got your Mac Wac mixed up with your Muddle.

During the second half of the war Sir John was in charge of training operations in the north and west of Scotland. Dunphail had been requisitioned by the Army for training purposes and formed part of our grandfather's responsibilities – little did he know the important part it would play in the life of his second daughter in years to come. The family lived at Inverary, Dulnain Bridge, Nairn and Fort George amongst many other places. The Fort held particularly happy memories for them, and it was here that Bay had been born in 1931 to complete the team. They returned there often with the Seaforth's and Mum formed a deep attachment to the regimental family, which lasted throughout her life. Maxwellton in Dumfriesshire was her beloved home. It was at Max that Mim spent the happiest days of her childhood and developed so many of her interests – in birds and wildflowers and gardening and walking in the hills. She was an avid tree climber, and her favourite tree was a tall cut leaf beech in which she spent a great deal of time; much to the disapproval of her Mother.

The war came to an end and Mim began to spread her wings. She had a job as secretary at a local school at Crawfordton, which she enjoyed. In 1949 she went up to Edinburgh for the

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a Lady-in-Waiting. She went with some trepidation, but when she got there, she thoroughly enjoyed the parties and the balls as well as the glamour of it all. It was there in the Throne Room of the Palace of Holyroodhouse that she met a young ADC. The young man was immediately struck by Marian. He was a man who made decisions fast and wanted to put them into action quickly. Mim was intrigued by the young Hector Laing but was rather more circumspect than he and led Hector a merry dance. At one stage she packed him off to cool his heels in the States and Canada after he had proposed to her. However, his perseverance paid off and Hector and Marian were married in the Chapel at Max on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1950 and they embarked on a married life that was to last for 60 years before Hector died in 2010.

They were a very successful combination. Hector was dynamic, forceful and charismatic and was always quite clear that whatever happened, the business would come first. By contrast Mim was a great homemaker. She built a very solid base from which the family could operate with confidence and security. Wherever she went she created a wonderfully welcoming home, beautifully decorated, extremely comfortable and always full of wonderful flowers. She had a marvellous eye for colour. More importantly she was a very strong personality in her own right and was able to temper Hector's wilder ideas and had a great ability to cut short some of his more 23risqué dinner party anecdotes with what Paddington would have called a 'hard stare'. Despite being sorely provoked on occasions, she was unstintingly loyal in her support of Hector – clearly demonstrating the truth of the saying that “behind every successful man lies a strong woman.” The deeply held values that were instilled in her by her parents and her military upbringing shone through and kept the show on the road through thick and thin.

We three boys appeared at regular intervals over the first 6 years of married life. Mum recognised that she was not really cut out for nursery routine and knew that she needed someone to help her bring up her three boys. She turned to the person who had made such an impression on her in her childhood and Nanny Gaddie interviewed our parents before agreeing to take on the challenge. Mum often said that the three of us would never have survived if it had not been for Nanny! Although not particularly maternal, Mum was very much a family person. She was always there for her boys and a continuing fount of love, stability and good down to earth advice – not always entirely appreciated by the three of us! She was especially fond of Bay and Osie. The three of them were a very close knit unit, who supported one another through trials and tribulations as well as great joy and happiness. She loved all her grandchildren and took a great interest in all that they were doing and great pride in all their achievements.

Her other great love of course were her Pokes, of which she had a long string over the years. They varied in our affections from Percy who was a very sporting character and came shooting with the three of us whenever he could, despite finding retrieving a bit of a challenge, to Sammy who invoked fear throughout the whole family particularly the grand children by sneaking up on them and biting their heels. Mum however loved them all equally and groomed them to look as immaculate as she did herself.

Both Mum and Dad loved gardening and built two beautiful gardens one at High Meadows and the other at Dunphail. Once again, the skills of husband and wife complemented each

other well. While Dad was the broad strategist, it was Mum who lovingly chose the right plant for the right location and ensured that the colours worked perfectly together. The results in both gardens were spectacular and provided enormous pleasure to all who saw them. Mum and Dad were perhaps at their happiest when working together in the garden pruning this shrub or dead heading that rhododendron or planning the next spring planting

Mum loved parties and was particularly fond of dancing. This was in great contrast to her husband and her three boys. She spent many hours in the hall at Dunphail attempting to teach her ungainly sons how to dance the pas de bas. We were a great disappointment to her in that respect. She had a completely natural graciousness and huge charm that made her a wonderful hostess with the natural ability to make everybody feel welcome and relaxed. There was a constant round of dinners in London and house parties at Dunphail, filled with fascinating people from Archbishops and Prime Ministers to captains of industry. But it was people from every walk of life that she charmed. Many who helped her in the house, garden and with their entertaining became lifelong friends. And she became very much involved in the community in Fulmer and Gerrards Cross. Her down to earth support for the Evergreens – her Old Ladies, as she referred to them – as well as the Red Cross and the Cheshire Home were very important to her.

After Dad died Mum enjoyed a great renaissance as she held court at Edinkillie and very much enjoyed visits from all her family, particularly her grandchildren and more recently her great grandchildren. Everybody enjoyed going to see Grandmim. And she enjoyed her regular visits to London to see her friends and to spend time with her brother Bay. We noticed strange changes in her behaviour – she would stay at a dinner party until long after ten o'clock and was often the last to leave. Stranger still she could quite often be seen wearing trousers. Both things that were almost unheard of when Dad was alive.

In June 2017 she suffered her stroke – a very cruel turn of fortune. Mum was extremely brave throughout it all and hid the terrible frustration she must have felt so often behind her lovely smile. Despite her speech difficulties, we had some wonderful conversations with her during this time and were rarely left wondering what she wanted to say – particularly when she was displeased with something we had said or done, when she expressed her views forcibly. During this difficult time, she continued to look immaculate and took great care of her appearance. She became very fond of several of her carers who in turn cherished her. The family are very grateful for all the care that she received. It has been a time when we have enjoyed repaying some of the love and care that she bestowed on us throughout our lives. We share her relief that she is now at peace. We will miss her enormously but have so many wonderful memories to treasure. That wonderful smile, the bark of a peke, Mum emerging from behind a shrub, having tended it carefully and inviting us into the house for a drink, a Hula Hoop, a chat and a laugh.

*John Morrell a close friend of the Laing family has sent this note from Mark Laing for us to share with readers – 'It was so kind of St James Fulmer to have organised a service and very moving to think of you all remembering Mum at the same time as we were holding her funeral at Dunphail. We had a very good service here with many family and friends present to give her a good send off. The service was followed by a good party at Dunphail. We thought the day went as well as it could have done and that Mum would have approved of the proceedings and would have been very touched by you all at Fulmer Church as well. We are left with very many happy memories of a long and fulfilled life to treasure and very many happy times to think about. She had a rotten last two and a half years which she bore with typical steadfastness and humour'.*

## PHILIP RUSHTON 1925 - 2020

Philip and his Family moved from London to “Meadow Springs”, Fulmer Road; Autumn 1965. The following week, St James Fulmer, which was to become so much part of their lives, celebrating Harvest Festival. They went to their first Service with 3 ½ year old Mark. Everything delighted them, not least when they were shown to seats in the bell tower and welcomed by the Guinness Family, already settled with their 3 little girls. Bill Taylor was the Rector. Philip became devoted to him. (There may be a few readers who still remember his wonderful Sermons.) Ultimately, and for 50 years, Philip became a Sidesman and Reader. After school, where he was Head Boy, and National Service as a commissioned officer in the RAF, Philip took a BSC in Civil Engineering at Kings College, London, in 2 years, instead of the usual 3, working sometimes throughout the night.

In 1950, he joined the Consulting Civil Engineering Firm of Brian Colquhoun and Partners, Mayfair, where he remained for the rest of his long professional life. It was one of constant interest and variety. His work began in the UK for the War Office and the Admiralty, but by 1953, as Resident Engineer, he was responsible for a tunnelling project in Gibraltar. It was the first of many projects he oversaw around the world. A power station in Karachi, naval bases in Kuwait, airports in Persia (Iran) and a shipyard and waterfront in Cuba, a port in Brazil and a dam in Morocco. By now a second son, Piers, had arrived. He commuted fortnightly to Saudi Arabia for 2 years, to oversee the building of airstrips for the Royal Saudi Air Force. One of his later UK projects included the last 12 miles of the M25. Always courteous, on one occasion, when called upon to address a Public Meeting about a bypass, he was hailed in the local press as “Knight of the Road. Later in 1982, appointed Head of his firm, he served on the Boards of several Companies. He joined Cranfield University’s Council, serving for 12 years, 3 as Deputy Chairman. Soon after eventually retiring in 1996, he was asked how long it had taken him to adjust to retirement. He replied, “Five minutes flat!” This was typical not only of his ever-present sense of humour but also that, devoid of vanity, he wore success lightly. He was known to be a stickler for detail, particularly when reading contracts. One Monday he mentioned to his Boss, that he had read a rather difficult Old Testament Lesson at Matins the previous day altering a word or two to clarify its meaning. Brian Colquhoun exclaimed, “he can’t even leave the Good Book alone!”

In his late 40’s Philip was confirmed, with teenage candidates, at St James’s, inspired by the theological scholarship and sheer goodness of Fulmer’s Rector, Ron Adeney. In Preparation they spent many rewarding hours together. The 2 passions in his life were his Carpentry, from which he frequently produced exquisite work, and flying. Having obtained his Pilot’s Licence at Denham it gave him joy for years, not least when he and Piers flew on long adventures abroad. He was never bored. He was contented, even when the limitations of old age began to catch up with him. He died in his sleep here, as he always planned, on April 5<sup>th</sup> this year, aged 93.

Of the kind tributes that were paid to him, many referred to his humour, his jokes and laughter, several commenting on his warm and often funny welcome when giving out the hymn books at the Church door.

The words most repeated have been, “He was a lovely man.”

Merrie Rushton

FROM OUR M.P. – JOY MORRISSEY

I was delighted, over the summer and autumn, to get out and see as much of the constituency as possible. I want to say thank you to all of you who I met over these months. You all deployed the kind of sensible outlook that we need to get our country back up and running again.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> September I have been in Westminster every week from Monday to Thursday, with the addition of a Friday sitting every now and then. I have been keeping busy in the House by asking questions, contributing to debates and championing the concerns of constituents. I hope that it is fair to say that Beaconsfield is now much more regularly referenced in Parliamentary business. I am particularly focused on getting the support we need for local small business, to see them through this crisis.

I have had the distinct privilege of sitting on the Public Bill Committee for the Overseas Operations Bill. This Bill is very important to me as it represents a huge step forward, not only in legislative protection for our brave armed forces personnel, but in deepening the commitment of this country to always protect those who are willing to sacrifice everything to protect us. I spoke about my passion for this issue in the election campaign last December and I am delighted to be able to do my part to help get this Bill passed and put a stop to the incessant lawfare that has plagued our veterans for far too long.

An ongoing issue that we are still facing is the impact of HS2 and the works associated with it. I have been campaigning for many months already to raise with Ministers and HS2 Ltd the direct impacts of the project. What I am now working to avoid is the negative impact of HGV traffic moving through the constituency en route to and from HS2 sites. In pursuit of this I have engaged with Buckinghamshire Council, HS2 Ltd, and Inland Homes. Through this I have already secured a commitment from HS2 that none of their vehicles will move South of the M40.

I know that there has been consternation caused recently by the emergence of the plans for another Pinewood expansion project. I was surprised to see this proposal launched without any real notice or consultation. My office will be keeping a very close eye on the process as it advances.

It is in these challenging and difficult times that we must look to those closest to us for love and support. I hope that we will all be able to enjoy a peaceful Christmas with our families and I will do whatever I can to help get us there. I wish you all a very happy Christmas!

joy.morrissey.mp@parliament.uk

FROM COUNCILLOR MALCOLM BRADFORD, Fulmer & Wexham Wards

This year has been very challenging for the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council which commenced in April 2020. Local elections were delayed by central government for 1 year due to the pandemic which means existing Councillors will continue until the elections take place in May 2021.

The transition into the new Council has in my view been a great success albeit there has been some disruption to our services. I've been working with the waste services team which delivers our bin collection and removes fly tipping from our streets to help get the service levels back to what they were before the migration of the Councils. Winter has arrived with lots of rain and flooding parts of Fulmer village which has suffered more than other villages. I would like to thank the Fulmer Parish Councillors for their hard work to help resolve the problems.

The Covid pandemic has been a huge strain on the Council resources and budget to deliver the best support to our residents in the community. The Council now works remotely using teams for all meetings.

The green belt remains top of my list to protect with several new planning applications requesting to build within the green belt. I will continue to support the request of the residents' wishes and planning polices for South Bucks. Pinewood Studios have submitted another application to build on adjacent land which will have a great impact on wildlife and open spaces and increase traffic for those visiting, if the application is approved. The new Council Community working group for Wexham, Stoke Poges and the Ivers recently established a working group to look at the Pinewood application of which I will be a member.

The Local plan produced by South Bucks Council has been withdrawn which means it will now become part of the Buckinghamshire new plan expected to be completed in 5 years' time. This means the existing plan will remain until the new plan is approved and the green belt will be covered under the government NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework).

The Council leader, Martin Tett, continues to review the budget on a regular basis whilst we are still in the pandemic. It has been very difficult to forecast and plan with so many unknowns. We must all work together to ensure the Council does provide the service we expect but understand the challenges we all face.

## Unitary Councillor's Report

Buckinghamshire Council was formally set up on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, replacing Buckinghamshire County Council, and the four District Councils within Buckinghamshire.

Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, there were no elections in May 2020 as has previously been scheduled. This resulted in all District Councillors and the 48 County Councillors, of which I was one, automatically being appointed as Unitary Councillors, which totalled 202. Of this number, 28 were ex South Bucks District, and 8 were ex County South Bucks Members, so South Bucks ended up being significantly under-represented.

In addition, a Cabinet of 18 Members was imposed by Government on Unitary Leader Martin Tett, with new Cabinet posts having to be created to accommodate them all.

Because of Government Covid-19 constraints, no physical meetings of Members have yet taken place, although 2 virtual meetings have taken place this year.

A Community Board has been set up to replace the Local Area Forum of which Fulmer was a part, together with Hedgerley, Denham and Gerrards Cross. The Community Board covers a significantly wider area, and now includes The Chalfonts.

I am delighted to be able to report that the flawed Draft South Bucks Local Plan has now been withdrawn by Buckinghamshire Council. As I have previously reported, I had consistently opposed the significant Green Belt Release proposed by South Bucks District Council in their Draft Local Plan which only encouraged Slough Town Council to demand Green Belt Release to meet their Housing Needs.

I regularly attend Fulmer Parish Council meetings and work closely with your Chairman and Councillors in the best interests of Fulmer. You are indeed fortunate to have such an engaged and committed Parish Council.

Councillor Roger Reed  
Buckinghamshire Councillor for  
Fulmer, Gerrards Cross East and Denham

## **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light ...**

Who knows what Christmas will look like this year? A COVID-Christmas is not something we've ever experienced before and hopefully will never have to again.

At the time of writing we're in Lockdown 2. It looks like the coronavirus will be with us for some time as we await the much-wanted vaccine to become available. Planning for a COVID-Christmas is very difficult as we await further Government guidelines on what restrictions will be in place. The uncertainty of not knowing what the future holds for our own personal situations can make us feel as if we're a people walking in great darkness. Being in darkness is also especially real in the sense that the days are growing shorter and the nights are getting longer. Have you ever looked up at the sky on a clear winter's night? I encourage you to do so but wrap up warm. Somehow the sky seems so much brighter on cold nights. Gaze upwards and what do you see - the twinkling of stars, the light of the new moon or even the full moon? Staring at the night sky like this can bring a sense of awe and wonder. God's firmament is so immense and the cosmos reminds us that there is something so much bigger than our small planet and so much greater than and beyond ourselves but of which we're a part.

Even though our future at the moment seems shrouded by the darkness of the virus and the uncertainty over our Christmas plans, and the possibility of being away from loved ones, we can take hope at this time from words of scripture found in Isaiah 9:2, often read in our Carols by Candlelight service in Fulmer: *'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.'* What is this great light? It is Jesus Christ, the one true light, the cosmic Lord who stepped down into darkness to open our eyes so that we can see God for ourselves.

If you're away from loved ones this Christmas, what do you do? You text them or phone them, send them a card or a letter with a message. If you can't be physically present with someone, then you try to be present with them through your words. In Jesus, the Word of God comes to us as the one true light to be among us on earth. Isaiah 9:6 tells us that: *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

So, as we approach our COVID-Christmas this year, with all its uncertainty and a sense of pervading darkness, we can hold on to these wonderful words and celebrate the birth of Jesus, the one true light which overcomes the darkness and uncertainties of this world. Here's a prayer you might like to use at this time:

*"Lord God, as we wait this advent with the darkness and uncertainties of this world, let us still our hearts and minds to make space to see the light shine through the darkness and allow Christ to enter into our hearts and lives this Christmas-time. Amen."*

Revd Jill Roth, Pastor – Saint James, Fulmer

## ST JAMES' FULMER.....

You will have missed the June publication this year! Due to Covid19 and the Spring lockdown it was considered best not to publish. So, this piece covers a year and what a year 2020 has been; one never to be forgotten. The 2019 Christmas services were well supported and enjoyed. Our "Carols by Candlelight" service attracted c180 people, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Village Hall. Building on the success of last year we held our "Community Carols at the Pub" with the Black Horse kindly serving mulled wine. Around 100 people gathered, Reverend Matt Beeby giving a short talk. Our Christingle Service was popular with young children and extended families attended by c170. At the Christmas Day services we welcomed families, friends and visitors. Across the 6 Christmas services c600 people came!

From late January, February and into March we heard more and more of the virus from China creeping through Italy, France and Spain, then to the UK. Increasingly stringent controls were advised before the Government announced, followed by the Church of England that all Churches and places of Worship should be closed. Churches have not been closed in the past 800 years. The last time was by Pope Innocent 111 in a disagreement with King John over who should be the next Archbishop! Coincidentally that closure took place on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the same date our Government declared a full lockdown. Services went online, led by Matt, from Oxford Road on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mothering Sunday. The content improved considerably through April and May, with people taking part from The Centre and various homes to involve as many as possible, although throughout no singing was allowed! Prayer Central, our monthly prayer service for all the congregations also moved online. Within a few weeks, Reverend Jill began Fulmer Coffee by Zoom, allowing many to gather to chat, exchange stories from the week and discuss Bible readings, favourite Hymns and Psalms, along with prayer. These times have been very valued by all who have taken part.

It has been hard for many to miss so many of our Church festivals and gatherings, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter, our Summer Concert, Fulmer Day, the Community Service, Harvest celebrations and a full Bereavement service. During the year we have lost several of our dear congregation, although not to Covid. Jill was able to say prayers for all at the livestreamed service on November 1<sup>st</sup> the planned day of the Bereavement service. Churches formally opened again from July 5<sup>th</sup> although this date was optional depending on local circumstances. Here in Fulmer we opened for Private Prayer on Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> after much planning, cordoning off some pews to create a through walkway, with all associated cleaning and hand sanitisers. This continued until October 4<sup>th</sup> when Oxford Road began livestreaming a full service. Now we had singing again, at least by both choirs, if no one else was allowed. With very reduced numbers due to the 2 metre distance rule, we were able to gather in Fulmer Church to watch the streamed services. Lockdown 2 has closed Churches again for Services on November 5<sup>th</sup> before Remembrance Sunday. However, as we hold Private Prayer on a Wednesday morning, Jill read and honoured the names of the Fallen, to very few, gathered by the outside Cross and the "There but not there" silhouette soldier, on Armistice Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>. The British Legion had provided a wreath, a welcome addition.

In September Matt and the Staff team still managed to put on a Vision evening via Zoom to start the new term. Called Vision@Home the Matt's talk was all around the theme for this year; "Church as a Family" building on our goal to see "Every Life Transformed. Through Jesus.

For God's glory". It had been hoped that a few could gather in homes to watch it together, but the then new limit of 6 in a house precluded that. So, evening dinner was cooked at home with a visit from the staff team in the afternoon to the doors of homes to those attending, with an encouraging word and delivery of a dessert/pudding! Considering the restrictions this was a well-received and successful event. The pudding box contained a Welcome to St James flyer, outlining our Five Biblical Ministries and a list of all those on the Ministry Team and Operations Teams and photographs to announce the new members of the Teams who had joined throughout the year. Flyer enclosed. Since March there has been a much stronger sense of Community throughout the Village with St James led by Jill and several others and the Parish Council led by David Brackin pulling together to support anyone in need. This continues.

As I write this, we are in Lockdown2 due to finish on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, but Christmas is fast approaching! We are planning a filmed "Carols by Candlelight" which will be screened on the evening of December 20<sup>th</sup>. We are also planning a Family Event "Christmas in the Village" at 3.00pm 24<sup>th</sup> December, more details to follow. Sign up is a must and will be via the Church website [www.saintjames.org.uk](http://www.saintjames.org.uk) Christmas may indeed be different this year but nonetheless, a heartfelt Happy Advent and Christmas to everyone!

Francesca Hall-Drinkwater  
Church Warden

#### FULMER CHURCHYARD

A small team, led by Sue Fagan (01753 662193), do a sterling job in making sure the flowerbeds in the churchyard are colourful and well-tended.  
If anyone would like to join them, to help out, this would be most welcome

#### TRICK OR TREATING FOR HARVEST FESTIVAL



Due to the Autumn Lockdown this year, annual harvest festivals were cancelled across the country which has left many families in area to go hungry. The family at Langley Cottage decided to add a twist to their lockdown Halloween celebrations so they swapped trick or treating for a food collection from neighbours to support the local food bank in Slough. As you can see from the photo, we were overwhelmed by the generosity and support we received from our neighbours. We collected over 500 food and toiletry items for the Slough food bank. We are so proud to live amongst the kindest of people, the true spirit of Fulmer.

By The Dunne Family

## 2020 AT FULMER INFANT SCHOOL

2020 has certainly been a strange and remarkable year for many people across Buckinghamshire and this is certainly the same here at Fulmer Infant School. In the 112 years that the school has been in existence, the last 8 months must certainly have been amongst the most challenging!

We commenced 2020 full of exciting plans for the year ahead completely oblivious to the pandemic that would hit within just a few weeks! By mid-March everyone knew the word 'Covid' and were not surprised when the Government announced the first lockdown resulting in schools closing for the majority of pupils.

Fulmer Infant School remained open for just the children of identified key workers and our numbers instantly dropped from 74 to just 11 eligible children. On some days only 4 or 5 pupils attended, and we missed our lively, vibrant atmosphere so much! In June we were allowed to welcome more pupils back, but we still missed out on fun events such as our Easter Parade, Summer Sports Day, and our Year 2 traditional Leavers Party. It wasn't until this September that we returned to full numbers again. It is so delightful to have our 3 Infant classes full of busy, active learners once more!

Regrettably, following months of lockdown and time out of school, many pupils on their return were identified as being behind in their learning. We are pleased to now see, after a couple of months of an intensive catch-up programme, our pupils are getting back on track and we continue to enjoy academic achievement above both Buckinghamshire and national averages. Fulmer is a thriving and successful school for the Fulmer community.



Cathy Hunt & Tracey Dowsing, Co-Headteachers

## A Time to Celebrate

In a year throughout which there has been little to celebrate, (other than the fact that we're still alive – and if you're reading this, then you must be) it's difficult to find anything to be really grateful for. Take a look outside and we are heartened by the truly magnificent abundance of glorious colour. We are surely all familiar by now with the startling thud on the roofs of our cars as we drive through country lanes such as Stoke Common Road, Hay Lane and Alderbourne Lane, under the canopy of gold. We are being bombarded by a powerful force from above that appears as though we're under attack! And no, it's not the virus, but the falling of nuts and fruit from the trees.

Even our postman, Rajnden, has registered his alarm as he happily progresses on his morning rounds, only to fear that he's being hit by bullets from the sky, landing with a terrifying thump on his little red van.

The lime trees are also shedding their load, and tiny little helicopters swizzle around before landing with a sound like hailstones as they hit the tarmac. Fear not! because this year is a "Mast Year", which tends to happen every 5-10 years. "Mast" is the term used to describe the fruit of trees such as acorns and beechnuts. It's when the trees produce a bumper crop. An oak can drop several hundred acorns in a single square metre! The last "Mast Year" was in 2017 when oaks, beeches, chestnuts and fruit trees, hundreds of miles apart produced cornucopias of nuts, acorns and fruit all at once, as if mysteriously co-ordinated. By all coming together in massive fecundity, they overwhelm the appetites of all our woodland creatures. So whilst they are feasting, the excess means that a number of saplings will survive.

Raise your gaze and you can see the abundance of the "Mast". Crab apple trees swell with fruit, the berries of the rowans look like flaming torches. It's awesome to learn that our remarkable trees are connected by networks of fungi linking their roots. It is via this ancient form of 'social media' that they communicate, exchanging warnings of disease or insect attack and providing water and nutrients. Part of the fascination of experiencing a mast year is that we don't completely understand the complex blend of factors that give rise to them and which allows plants and trees to co-ordinate the production of so much fruit and seed. Yet they are somehow doing so and when you know this, strolling through a wood becomes a magical experience.

The doings of the days and the cares of the human world, such as Covid, Brexit and elections, are insignificant compared to these great presences; living out their slow and mighty lives as if in another dimension.

The coming of the "Mast" is a rich and unexpected gift from nature in a year when we have needed its consolations. The late American poet, Mary Oliver, captures it in a nutshell (pun) in her poem.

Susie Matthews

When I am among the trees  
By Mary Oliver (1935 – 2019)  
Published 2006

When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
Equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile".  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine."

## STOKE COMMON NEWS

### The challenges of 2020

As managers of Burnham Beeches, the City of London's Rangers formulate, and work to, a ten-year management plan which considers the impact that large numbers of visitors can have on what is in fact only one square mile of woodland. The reserve's key feature is of course its ancient beech and oak pollards, trees which are priceless for the (often nationally rare) wildlife that they support and their cultural reference to the way people lived hundreds of years ago. As the ancient trees are around 4-500 years old, it will be 4-500 years before any new pollards are ready to replace them, hence the plan includes a 500 year vision. The historic management techniques employed on the trees, have meant that many have lived for perhaps two or three times the normal expected life span of trees of the same species, and with their age comes increased sensitivity to environmental change around them. Therefore, they must be treated with extreme care: each has an individual management plan, tailored for its specific needs and each presents a challenge to keep it alive whilst the new generation of pollards grows.

The combined experience of the current Burnham Beeches team in managing ancient pollards exceeds 200 years. Ordinarily, it is during the winter months when the team focuses on pollard restoration work, cutting back where possible to reduce the weight of the crowns and minimise the risk of catastrophic failure. Over the coming winter the team will again be working on the trees but in 2020 there are additional dilemmas which will affect the work – these mostly global issues even include factors brought about by the corona virus pandemic.

Before any work is carried out on the ancient trees, each is assessed for its vigour and vitality. For a tree to be able to respond well to cutting, it needs good physiological functions – photosynthesising, storage of sugars, growth and translocation of water and nutrients. Sparse or undersized leaves, premature autumnal colour or leaf fall and weaker than expected seasonal growth can be signs that a tree is under stress.

Lockdown and subsequent restrictions on travel resulted visitor numbers more than doubling at the reserve. During the summer, other than the disheartening rise in litter, the physical evidence of greater visitor pressure was visible in the deterioration and wear on the paths. Ordinarily, paths can widen during wet winter months as people walk to the side to avoid muddy patches, but this year similar (or greater) levels of wear were evident, even during the exceptionally dry summer – the sheer volume of people and the fact they walked to the extremities of the paths to keep a social distance, definitely impacted. Whilst wear on the paths may seem superficial, it is the damage beneath the surface that is cause for concern. The roots of trees, especially old ones, are in the topmost layers of soil, so can easily be damaged – in summer, when they are actively growing, this can be worse. The combined weight of many pairs of feet compacts the soil, restricting root growth, reducing air and water percolation through the soil and, crucially, inhibiting the growth of beneficial mycorrhizal fungi. All these factors can add further stress to already fragile trees.

The weather can significantly influence the progress the team are able to make. The past two summers have been warm and dry, 2020 in particular had an extended dry spell. When it has rained, it has frequently been rapid, heavy downpours which flood but do not allow enough

time for the water to percolate deep into the ground – these may wash away the humus layer and, in some cases can undermine roots, making trees unstable. Flooding of roots has a similar impact to compaction, depriving them of oxygen; again, this is worse when the tree is actively growing. Changes in the availability of water may affect any tree but can tip a finely balanced ancient tree, over the edge and into decline. In periods of weather like that which we have experienced recently, the pre-work surveys are even more crucial, and they will help the team in deciding whether work earmarked for a tree can still go ahead, or if it should be delayed. The team must balance the benefits of taking weight from a tree against the impact that the work could have on it. Inevitably some trees scheduled for cutting this year will now not be cut but hopefully conditions will improve sufficiently next year to get the programme back on track. Trees need space and not just under the canopy; their roots can extend beyond 5m from the tips of their branches - as a visitor you can help the ancient trees by enjoying them from a distance and refraining from ‘loving them to death’.

Chris Morris

Senior Ranger – Stoke Common & Burnham Beeches  
chris.morris@cityoflondon.gov.uk

#### FULMER CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

The flora and fauna in and around Fulmer are a haven, given our location between bustling towns and busy motorways. Even after living here for almost seven years, my family and I delight in being able to walk out the front door and enjoy walks in woodlands, open fields through the village and beyond. We, as residents, are fortunate to have this situation and none more so than during what has been a very strange and surreal year in so many ways. Perversely, and I am sure I speak for many of us, it has allowed us to slow down and pay even more attention to the fantastic wildlife, beautiful flowers and wonderful trees we find in and around the parish; I don't think any of us have witnessed the passing seasons in such detail before! Importantly, for those of us concerned, stressed or simply needing a break from our laptops the countryside around Fulmer provides the perfect tonic. During the early days of Lockdown, back in April, it was heartening to see so many people litter picking in around the village which by the beginning of May was looking pristine; thank you for everyone's efforts. Unfortunately, there was no Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village Competition this year, but that was no excuse not to plant out the troughs and hanging baskets in early May for the start of the Summer. Many thanks once again to Tom and Liz at Pinewood nurseries for their continued support and supply of plants. As Summer moved to Autumn the verges outside the village school were in real need of some new turf. Many thanks to Ian Bocock, Willie Forrest and Collin Griffin for their help with this project and their continued work with the Fulmer Conservation Volunteers (FCV) throughout the year. Who knows what 2021 will bring, but one thing is for sure, we will still be able to delight in the splendid setting we find Fulmer. As ever, we always welcome new volunteers to keep the village looking its best; I know many of you help in your own way. Please contact me at [charleslawsongray@gmail.com](mailto:charleslawsongray@gmail.com) so we can include you in upcoming comms and projects. I have recently registered the FCV with 'Backyard Nature' ([www.backyardnature.org](http://www.backyardnature.org)) an initiative supported by the Duke of Cambridge that is inspiring individuals and families to tackle the nature crisis and make a real difference to the planet by providing tools to help plants and animals thrive on our patch of nature.

CHARLIE GRAY

## BLACK PARK NEWS

I think it is fair to say this is a year that will never be forgotten in Black Park! The initial Covid-19 lockdown saw the park close for several weeks before reopening to a massive increase in visitor numbers, which has continued all the way through the summer and boosted again by the current lockdown. To put it in context, visitor numbers from April to the end of October were the same as the total visitor numbers for the entire 2019/20 financial year and this was one of the highest on record!

2020 was due to be Black Park's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a country park, but sadly all of the celebration events had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, our popular Forest School has also not been able to run since February, but we are hopeful we can restart this early in 2021.

As you may have seen in the national news, litter has been a big problem and Black Park has experienced a significant increase in littering and also waste in general as visitors have used the park for picnics and also favoured pre-packed food as it has been felt to be safer. Extra cleaning of toilets and play areas has also been needed and has been a big cost to the country parks team along with the cost of the disposal of additional waste.

There have been many positives too! We feel that the majority of visitors have come to value the park and nature more, which will hopefully be a lasting legacy of the pandemic. The response we had to a recent volunteer litter pick was fantastic and it has been great to see people exploring the extremities of the park and going out when it rains and having really great family experiences, just by spending time outdoors with each other!

We also received some fantastic news on the conservation front with a large maternity colony of Bechstein's bat being discovered in Black Park. Found almost exclusively in woodland, Bechstein's bat is one of our rarest bats. It feeds on midges, moths and other flying insects that they find in the dark by using echolocation. Bechstein's bats hibernate over the winter. With maternity colonies forming in April and May; between 10 to 30 females gather together, pups are born in June and July.

The country parks team really values the support of the local community and we hope that the parks have been able to help support you through these difficult and strange times, so from all of the country parks team Happy Christmas and a more normal new year!

TIM WILLIAMS – Country Parks Team Leader, Bucks County Council

# Feeding the ducks, geese and swans

Some of you may have noticed that our greylag goslings have different wings to the rest of their family. This condition is called 'angel wing'. It is a disease resulting from incorrect wing development in young birds. Various studies suggest a few reasons for this, two of them being protein or carbohydrate imbalance and excess calories in the diet. Too much bread is thought to be a contributor to this disease. Uneaten bread can also mold, increasing bacteria in the water and leading to the spread of disease to both water fowl and fish.

We know that feeding the ducks, geese and swans is an enjoyable activity and a great way to connect to nature, however they can become dependant on it and not learn to feed themselves when needed. If you would still like to feed them, please stick to our advice:

Winter is the best time, spring and summer less so as there is plenty of vegetation and the young need to learn to forage for plants and insects themselves, in order to get a balanced diet and good physical development.

Feed some of these affordable and healthy options instead:

Corn (canned or fresh), defrosted peas, oats, duck or birdseed, shredded lettuce and other greens.

Thank you for your cooperation,

The Country Parks Team



## BUGS

For those of us that are old enough, do you remember in the 1960's and early 1970's, if you went for a long drive in your car, particularly during Spring and Summer, your windscreen, radiator grill and headlights would be smothered in squashed bugs and if it were a warm, dry day they would be difficult to clean off. Such was the problem that there used to be various attachments on the market you could buy to mount on the top of your car bonnet in an attempt to deflect the bugs from ending up on your screen; windscreen washers were ineffective and wipers soon became clogged.

Nowadays if you were to drive, say, 250 miles you would have no difficulty in counting the number of insects you had encountered head on, on your windscreen, so with the possibility that there could be as many as, say, 50, that would still only be one every 5 miles.

Every day we are being reminded, through the media, of the changes that are happening to the environment, the natural world and the need to protect and conserve it. The above reminiscence is just a demonstrative measure of how large the decline in our insect population has been in the last 50 years and is fast increasing.

As children, prior to the 1970's, it was normal to see clouds of butterflies; most woodlands had stag beetles, we caught grasshoppers and put them in jam jars to look at and, in the evenings, in the dark, we would search for glow worms in the hedgerows - but all are not so easy to find now.

The first time I was given a practical lesson in the need and necessity of insects was at the age of 15. I had started my apprenticeship some 6 months earlier in the Royal Gardens at Windsor. It was late February, bitterly cold, and I was sent, to my great joy, to go and assist in the North Light Range Houses (nice and warm!). There I was met by 3 old boys! Victorian gardeners wearing Trilby Hats, gaiters and smoking briar pipes. The foreman gave me a rabbit's tail tied to the end of a bamboo cane and told me to go along the lines of fan-trained peaches, nectarines and apricots, along the back wall touching the blossom with it. I thought they were winding me up and objected very strongly – (remembering tales from some mates who were engineering apprentices being sent to the Stores for – A Long Weight! - or to borrow a left-handed screwdriver). I could see the lads in the Bothy having a great laugh at me – prancing around the greenhouse waving a cane with a rabbit's tail on the end, however, at the end of my tantrum, they explained (painfully) that at that time of year there were no pollinating insects about and that the fur tail was the substitute.

So why should we be so concerned after all. Wasps, ants, aphids etc., are pests, true, however, insects represent 90 per cent of all animal life on Earth; they are found in most environments, but predominantly on land. They have been on Earth for 400 million years and evolved with the ecology. Virtually all living things on land are directly or indirectly dependent on them. There are estimated to be between 8-10 million species of insects and countless numbers of sub-species, all of which have evolved with, and ensure a balance in, the ecology of life on Earth.

Sadly, vast numbers have been reduced by man's intervention which we only see by things like the reduced numbers of various birds, bats, reptilia, etc., and increasing disease infestations in our woodlands. Most of the blame for the demise of so much of the insect population has been, as we all know, due to the heavy spraying of insecticides by farmers and growers, in past years. We are all very aware that most of the sprays used, kill more than just the pests. Fortunately, nowadays it is more refined, controlled and monitored, however, there is another equally destructive condition which continues to expand on a daily basis and that is Light Pollution. Road-lighting is needed for safety in certain areas, particularly in towns and communities, but should we need, or expect it, on long stretches of country roads? Should large, commercial establishments that have the good fortune to have their premises in country areas, be encouraged to use minimum lighting and not be allowed to use uncontrolled and indiscriminate floodlighting, turning night into day for prolonged periods and, if situated near to forest or parkland, it should be made a legal enforceable planning condition.

And finally, all is not doom and gloom. Earlier this year, for the first time in some 30 years, here in Fulmer, over several days I saw a couple of Bee Flies; they hover and look like tiny Hummingbirds with a long proboscis – delightful.

Enjoy your garden .....

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## MR PEPYS ATTENDS A ROYAL OCCASION



Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> February in the year of Our Lord 2020, and we were up betimes to add huzzahs to those of the citizens of our neighbouring village Stoke Poges as they joined together to give a warm welcome to Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra when she came to present the very well merited Queen's Award for Voluntary Service at the request of the Queen. This being in recognition of the high standard which Stoke Poges has constantly maintained in its enterprise, sense of beauty and orderliness on behalf, not only of its own community, but those villages fortunate enough to live alongside it.

I look forward to meeting the Princess again as she is no stranger to my Fulmer, when in the early years of her public duties she came to open the new Village Hall in Fulmer and the most recent occasion which was when she 'cut the cake' which marked the opening of the very modern new Wing of the Infant School in Alderbourne Lane.

On this occasion in Stoke Poges, the Princess was greeted by the Lord Lieutenant Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher at the Wexham Court school gate for an introduction to the Chairman of South Bucks District Council, David Pepler, followed by the Mayor of Slough, Councillor Avatar Kaur Cheema and Joy Morrissey, our recently elected Member of Parliament for Beaconsfield, and the ubiquitous Ruth Rooley who if a medal was struck for the many civic roles she had performed in Stoke Poges would emulate the bemedalled chest of the late unlamented Field Marshall Herman Goering .

In the Old Barn Ruth Rooley guided the Princess to meet a number of guests who each contribute a great deal to the Civil Authorities both in Stoke Poges and the locality. They included the four Chairmen of the local Parish Councils among whom was Fulmer's David Brackin. Clearly the Princess enjoyed chatting informally to the groups presented to her by Ruth Rooley, including those of all ages who between them contribute so much to Stoke Poges' rich community life. The air was one of informality and I was delighted to observe the number of local school children being introduced in the groups as so much is being done to encourage their interest in the flowers and vegetables, especially where they had been cultivated by themselves. By this time the throng had reached the stage when the top party were invited to take their seats.

The Lord Lieutenant having read the citation for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, HRH presented it to Ruth Rooley, Chairman and my good friend of long-standing, Jonathan Homan, President Emeritus who in turn made a very felicitous speech which was a prelude to the Princess taking leave of those she had met in the course of the afternoon.

Well done Stoke Poges , it had been a memorable and enjoyable day.

And so to bed ....

Edward 'Pepys' Guinness

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Gerrards Cross & Fulmer Scout Group

I am afraid this report will not be very long due to the current COVID situation. Since last November we had normal scouting and as usual finished in early December due to school activities; we started again in January then stopped mid-March for the lockdown although we did try some Zoom meetings, but the interest was low.

We started again in September following the Scouting Association (SA) recommendations at Amber level, restricting our Cubs and Scouts to outdoor activities only and maintaining the COVID restrictions. As Beavers are 6-8 years old, we did not feel they would respect social distancing, so they did not start again! Obviously, we have stopped again and hope to start in January based on SA guidelines. However, on our brief return we have found many children and Leaders have left due to personal circumstances, growing older, etc so our actual numbers are unknown.

This year we celebrate our Group being 100 years old and we had hoped to have some kind of celebration, but this will have to go on 'hold' to a later date.

Once we return to continuous scouting, I am sure confidence will return and I know many children seriously miss scouting as an alternative activity!

Mark Shaw – Group Scout Leader  
07788 891232 [scoutermark@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scoutermark@hotmail.co.uk)

## STOKE POGES, WEXHAM & FULMER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

### **In the absence of the Annual Show**

Stoke Poges, Wexham and Fulmer Horticultural Society's Annual Show did not take place in July 2020. The first time a year has been missed since the foundation of the Society in 1884, with the exception, of the World War I and World War II years. However, on Saturday 25 July, the day on which the Show would have been held, there was a small gathering on Bells Hill Green, Stoke Poges, when some presentations were made. The Best Front Garden in the three villages Trophy was won by Bev and Andrew Nealon, who live in Fulmer. Photographs of their wonderful garden and of some of the other entries can be seen on the Society's website [www.hortsoc.org](http://www.hortsoc.org)

The Michael Mobbs Cup for the person who has made the greatest contribution to the Show or to the Society during the year was presented to Maureen Barton. During lockdown Maureen set up Growing Together, a Facebook page, on which Maureen put videos that she filmed in her garden, giving advice and helpful tips to those who wanted to start gardening. Her advice is helpful for all gardeners and for teachers encouraging pupils to garden. There are now nearly 4,000 members from 33 countries worldwide, although it still has a big local grassroots membership, many of whom are under 45, who are growing for the first time this year, often with their children. She has also created two linked groups, Stoke Poges Safe Plant Swap for swapping or requesting surplus plants and seeds locally. Here is the link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1431012233745894/?ref=share>. Maureen also initiated, and, with some help from others, delivered, the project growing Sunflowers in the Three Villages. We have all enjoyed seeing these bright flowers during the summer.

The British Fuchsia Society's silver spoon for the best handout Fuchsia was won by Lyn and Antony Rodden.

### **Members Autumn Social**

Since face-to-face meetings are not possible the Members Autumn Social was held on Zoom on Wednesday 14 October. Charlotte Howard gave an entertaining and knowledgeable presentation "Green with envy - are Green Walls all they are cracked up to be". A recording of the presentation can be found on the website [www.hortsoc.org](http://www.hortsoc.org) or via the following link <https://youtu.be/Gc1-O639byE>

### **Presentation of QAVS**

The big event in 2020 was the Presentation of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. We were delighted that Edward Guinness, David Brackin, Chairman Fulmer Parish Council, Rev Jill Roth and Cathy Hunt with two pupils from Fulmer Infant School were with us. Edward has written a first-hand account to share the joy of the occasion, if you wish to see the wonderful photographs that were taken they are on our website.

### **Wonderful news!**

We have just heard that Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society is one of the charities chosen for Stoke Poges Co-op for the new Co-op funding year, starting 25 October 2020 and ending 23 October 2021. The money raised will go towards the cost of the 2022 Annual Show.

The Society is deeply grateful to the Co-op Community Fund and its members for supporting the 2021 Show during last funding year. We are heartened by the fact that the Chelsea Flower Show is to go ahead in 2021. If they can, so can we! Our Annual Show is a wonderful community event enjoyed by people of all ages, with the help of the Co-op, hopefully, we can again hold this unique traditional show in 2021 and 2022, year after year.

**At the beginning of each new funding year Co-op members must nominate their chosen charity, choices do not carry on from the year before.**

Please consider becoming a Co-op member, benefits include a 2% discount on Co-op branded products/services and a 2% contribution to your chosen charity. Co-op members can choose a cause to support by signing into their membership account or calling the membership helpline on 0800 023 4708. Please be sure to nominate our Horticultural Society (charity number 283786.) Here is the unique link with our cause number - <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/50593>

### **Our AGM**

Rather than holding the AGM on Zoom we are postponing it to March, at 7:30 pm Wednesday 10 March, at Stoke Poges School on the same evening as our Spring Members' Social. It will be followed at 8 pm by Stefan White's entertaining talk about Tradescant – Skulduggery in the Shrubbery. As usual, we will have a Finger Buffet and Table Show.

### **Future Events**

**Plant Sale** - Saturday 24 April, 10 – 12 noon at the Village Centre

**Lecture Evening** Wednesday 12 May 8 pm at The Stoke Poges School Maureen Barton will talk about the Facebook Page “Growing Together” that she has created.

### **Christmas 2020**

People of all faiths and none look forward to Christmas, which lights up our dark winters. This year will be different, but we can make it special and memorable by sharing love and cheer with friends, family and neighbours in whatever way we can – post, email, telephone, What's App, Zoom or “wrap up” for an outdoor conversation. Especially, remember those who live alone and may be missing companionship.

Stay well, Stay safe. I look forward to seeing you in March, if not before

Best wishes  
Ruth Rooley, Chairman

## FULMER CRICKET CLUB

The 2020 season was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We feel for the families who have lost loved ones and who have suffered with the disease and we are very fortunate that none of our cricket community has had, directly, to deal with the virus. We were delighted when recreational cricket was allowed to get underway. Paul Colloff and Derrick Randall had been looking after the ground during lockdown so we were able to start on 12 July. Our player group were very keen to play cricket which resulted in a very high level of availability for our season.

### Playing performance in 2020

While the rest of summer was nowhere near as hot as May and June, we lost only 3 games to the weather. We played 21 games, winning 11, 1 abandoned and losing 9. Our closest winning margin was 3 runs against Eastcote, while our largest winning margins were against the President's XI, 119 runs and against Wendover, 7 wickets. The fixtures for various leagues were disrupted by the pandemic but our ground was in excellent shape, so we played the majority of games at home. Our square and ground are the envy of league clubs which visit us and, for the statisticians amongst you, there were about 2,700 runs scored at our ground in the 16 games played there. As mentioned earlier, we owe a real debt of gratitude to Paul and Derrick who put in many hours to produce a first-class facility. Derrick is helped enormously by Ku, the Kubota tractor.

The annual President's match, which took place on the rearranged date of 31 August, saw a win for the club. In the 25 years of the President's matches, the President's XI have won 14, Fulmer 10 and 1 was a tie. It took a little while for us to capture the historical data but the wonderful cup is now engraved with all of the results. We had another excellent day and our thanks once again to Peter, Kiki, Will and the rest of the family for their support. With the Covid-19 restrictions on the use of the pavilion for food preparation, Peter and Kiki brought all of the food, already prepared from the farm. It was a magnificent effort and most appreciated by all who took part in the day. Sue and Di from FCC did a great job with the presentation and serving of the food.

### Off field activities

Paul has done a great job with keeping the statistics up to date. They are now displayed on our website in the week following the matches. We should also mention Ben Fisher who attends each home game and manages the bar while the match is in progress. He also does a great job with packing up at the end of the day and making sure the pavilion is properly secure before leaving. Tony King has embraced the Hon Treasurer role over the last few years and has been very successful with making sure all membership subscriptions and match payments are paid. Armando Borges does a lot of work behind the scenes as a Hon Secretary. Our skippers Tony, Danny J, Paul, Derrick and Dan R play a big role in getting out teams and managing our playing performances. The What's App group works very well for efficient communication with our players.

The Covid-19 restrictions meant that players came to the ground dressed ready for cricket, brought their own teas, regularly hand sanitised and socially distanced when off the field of play. These restrictions were well adhered to which was pleasing to see.

### Awards for 2020

With the Covid-19 restrictions in place we have deferred our annual awards event until just before the start of the 2021 season, whenever that may be.

### New Players Welcome

We have excellent playing facilities and are a very friendly Club. New players, of whatever standard, are always welcome. Please refer to our website for contact details [www.fulmercricketclub.com](http://www.fulmercricketclub.com)

### 2021 Season

We are not sure when the 2021 season will commence but we will keep our players informed via our WhatsApp group and our website.

PETER BOX



## A CHRISTMAS CAROUSE - By Charles Watt Le Dickens

It was a festive gathering in an unused building in Fulmer of singular appearance, long and quite low with at one end, a tall square-built erection apparently to support a timepiece. On occasions, such as at Christmas, the building used to light-up and if one listened carefully, from outside, the sound of joyful singing could be heard, but that was all a long, long time ago. As more guests arrived for the function they were greeted by the man who stood at the door. "Prithee," said he, for he was a right character, "Hast ye, ye invitations?" "No need," came the reply, "We are so well known – Dimbleby and Son – er, I mean Dombey of course". With an odd look, for he was of strange appearance, the man at the door bowed them over the threshold. They entered the lofty building to be greeted by their host. He, believe it or not, was a certain Mr Scrooge, partner of Scrooge and Marleytile although the latter had long-ago been floored. Scrooge? Yes it does take a deal of believing because not so long ago old Ebenezer had been a miserly tight-wad, nick-named Squeegee, lacking in warmth both of heart and hearth until his personality was, quite miraculously, entirely transformed by a certain type of festive song. But even endowed with his new-found generosity he found that there were so many characters who ought to be included in these revels that he was overwhelmed and so decided that in the main those most entitled to attend were, if you follow me, titled.

Already gathered inside were Martin Chuzzlewit, David Copperfield, Barnaby Rudge, Nicholas Nickleby, known to his close friends, rather familiarly, as 'knickers' and even Little Dorrit. Also present were a few other guests, not titled but as the host explained "Our Mutual Friend thought they were sufficiently well-known." They included a Mr Pickwick, a newsprint proprietor, it was thought, and that well-known dancer, Oliver Twist, also the young lad Pip for whom, despite a brief association with a criminal, there were Great Expectations. "And is that not Mr Micawber over there in the corner?" asked the guest. "Oh no, there was an unfortunate misunderstanding when compiling the guest list; that is a Mr MacAwber from the Highlands. He has a half-brother called Walter, of whom we are aware but not acquainted."

A pretty young person called Nancy, the only female present, so as to avoid any accusation of sex discrimination, came over to the guest and said. "Let me introduce you to an author, Charles, he's such a Lamb."

"Good gracious!" said the guest "Not our author surely?" "Oh no", said Nancy, "He's having a dickens of a time trying to fit in all those readings to the public, he's here there and everywhere, even to a place called, curiously and I dare to suggest, inaccurately, the United States."

All the while there was a persistent fiddling at the far end of the building under the care of a local but widely admired conductor. "What is that music" asked the guest, "It has an almost Irish lilt. Who is it by?" "Oh", said Nancy, "I think it's Gilbert O'Sullivan." The guest slightly bemused by this reply turned to speak to the chap nearest him who was clasping a very large parcel, and so enquired what it was. "A prize", said the man. "I won it in the Literary Quiz earlier. Having given all the right answers, I got the bird". "Dear me", said the guest I can understand that but whatever is it"? "I'm told it's a special fowl for the festive board on

Christmas Day". "Ah", said the guest, "You're talking Turkey". "No, I'm not", said the man, noticeably affronted, "Talking Turkey? Nonsense. I come from Hitchin".

"Why, that's where Bob Scratchit lives, surely?"

"Don't you mean Cratchit?" said the man

"I'm sure Scratchit is the name" said the guest, "Let me see, yes his wife is May Scratchit, who can be a bit ticklish to deal with at times, then there's the son, Will, and two daughters – can't think of their names and the youngest is little Itch. I think they call him Tiny Tim."

Just then Scrooge called for attention and invited all to partake of the splendid buffet but as everyone moved forward they were halted by the arresting tones of Constable Pleb, freshly arrived from Downing Street. "'Allo, 'allo, 'allo," said he as, wagging his index finger, he summoned Scrooge to come before him. "Wot's all this then?" Only one 'ousehold permitted to foregather, no mixing of 'ouseholds and only one extra person in a bubble. I shall 'ave to book you" said he, making a foot-note (size 14 in his case). "Could lead to a prosecution."

"I think not," said Scrooge knowingly. "For it is not possible to prosecute fictitious people. But I thought I'd seen you before – yes you are part of Christmas Yet to Come. You may be called Pleb by a rude parliamentarian but your first name is Ernest – Ernest the Policeman from the children's story of 'Toytown', yet to be broadcast. That's a matter of fact but you are after all a fiction so come and join in the fun for we all know a Policeman's Lot is Not a Happy One." "That sounds like Gilbert O'Sullivan?" said Ernest. "Well now seeing 'as 'ow you seem to 'ave the solution to the situation I might just allow meself to agree." And so he did and everyone had a merry time and found that All's Well that Ends Well – but that's another story by another scribe.

KEN PETERS (1<sup>st</sup> December 2020)

#### PINEWOOD NEWS

As some of you may know, we have an online directory called 'On the Lot'; a directory of production support businesses based on site at Pinewood and Shepperton Studios. This is available to view on our website [www.pinewoodgroup.com](http://www.pinewoodgroup.com). This year has been difficult for so many but especially to our smaller, local businesses. I have been speaking to a few people recently who have asked if we can help share information on their businesses to our productions and tenants on site. Having spoken to colleagues, we're delighted to advise that we will be introducing a new directory called '**Off the Lot**' which will be a PDF directory listing local services and businesses and sent to productions and tenants on site. This will be an internal document and not for publication outside of the studio. As our on-site tenants cover a wide variety of businesses, we will need to outline a clause on the application form that we cannot list services already provided by a tenant on site. A full list of businesses is available to view online via our website – address listed above. If you would like to be included, please visit [www.pinewoodgroup.com](http://www.pinewoodgroup.com) and search 'off the lot'. The page is called 'Off the Lot Directory Listing' and this is where you'll find the application form. Please send back your completed forms (remembering to tick yes or no regarding our data protection document) to [offthelot@pinewoodgroup.com](mailto:offthelot@pinewoodgroup.com). We will aim to get the first directory out on site by January 2021 with an updated version sent every six months internally. Please share and spread the word and we look forward to hearing from you. In other news, production is back in full swing at the studio will all productions taking stringent COVID-19 measures with all crew members. Pinewood's staff and tenants are also following strict guidelines with the narrative for all full time staff still being to work from home possible.

Kathryn Maidment – Senior Community & Education Outreach Manager, Pinewood Studios

## TEIKYO SCHOOL UK

It has been an unusual year for all here at Teikyo School.

For those of you not familiar with us, we are a Japanese High School for students aged 15 to 18 split into three year groups. We follow the Japanese school timetable in which our academic year begins in April and ends in March.

Our graduates of 2020, along with the other two year groups returned to Japan at the beginning of March for their well-earned end of year break. Little did they know that a pandemic would delay their return and that of new students in coming to England until the following September, when School finally opened. Not just the students, though, as most of our teaching staff were also in Japan. This meant the forced introduction of remote learning and the use of our facilities at Teikyo University in Tokyo to deliver lessons.

The Autumn return of the students was welcomed by all, especially the local support staff, and it was good to see the classrooms, Dining Hall, and sports facilities back in use. Approximately 50 students returned as well as all 55 students of the International School for Creative Arts (ISCA).

During lockdown we have split the student body into four households: girls' boarding, boys' boarding, footballers and day students. These groups socially distance from each other as best they can with specific staff assigned to each household. We are self-sufficient within our little community, but the students are really missing not being able to go offsite.

It is a shame that our off-campus activities have ceased, especially for our freshman students, who, for many it is their first time in the UK. The first few weeks of the term are usually spent giving the students a taste of England with trips to London, Windsor, Cambridge, Oxford, and of course, Fulmer village.

Everyone is hopeful this can be achieved in the spring, along with our footballers back in competition against other schools.

The school has welcomed a new Headmaster in this academic year: Mr Yukihiro Hamada from Fukuoka City in Japan. He has 30 years' experience of teaching English. –

DEAN SIMPSON, Bursar: Teikyo Foundation (UK) Ltd

## SOUTH BUCKS RDA

Hello from Wolfie. I am the handsome chestnut at South Bucks RDA; not be to confused with Forrester, the wise little chestnut pony, that gets all the publicity. I thought I would put hoof to paper and tell you what has been happening in our fields over the past few months as many of you have not been able to come and visit us. At first, way back in March, as the grass began to grow and the sun shone brighter, we thought it was holiday time, we stopped working. Well, we often do, near Easter, and get a one or two-week break. However, we neighed among ourselves and realised that things were getting far too quiet. None of our usual visitors were coming up to give us a pat or three. We only saw the very dedicated staff every day making sure that we were fed, groomed and happy.

We heard the staff say the words 'lockdown' and eventually realised that this meant no riders being able to get our support. Or volunteers to fuss over us. This continued through the summer, eventually a few of the less disabled riders came up to see us and we obliged with giving them lessons. Harley the big piebald horse, came back to the field and told Billy B that the humans had to 'socially distance' from each other, so those very disabled youngsters, that we help so much could not benefit from our company, as they needed the humans to be close, and at times, actually touch them. This was no longer allowed. We do miss those children. However, we have learnt that they have to be kept safe. The humans we see must not be near other humans for now. Maybe this is why when we used to have group lessons we were told to keep a horse's distance away (2m+) from our friend in front of us.

A new smell was introduced to us, 'sanitizer'. We are used to humans often having slightly grubby hands after brushing us off, or poo picking in the fields. Now they have to keep using this funny smelling stuff to keep their hands clean and all the tools clean, as more than one human will share things like barrows or shaving forks.

As the summer progressed into August, some of our volunteer friends joined the riders, which meant even more 'sanitizer' smell as they cleaned their hands, and to make sure that riders were safe our tack had to be sanitized when anyone finished riding us. Billy told me that he is not very keen on this. He is getting better. He no longer pulls faces when his reins and saddle are sprayed after giving someone a ride. We also found out that our manager, Helen, had a little girl and decided that looking after us properly and her little girl would be difficult. She decided that she would concentrate on being a mum. It was hard for us not being able to say cheerio to her properly. Mabel nickered to us all in September that Caro, who had been standing in for Helen was now going to be our centre manager. She has been giving us equines lots of special lessons. Also, Gem would be the assistant yard manager. We know that we have a great team looking after us.

I was enjoying having a few riders back, but then we were told that there was to be another lock-down and so it is 'super school' for us only, as Caro and Gem continue to ensure that we keep fit. I think I would rather hide in the field and keep grazing. Mind you, Lambrusco is looking very trim again, obviously special exercises keep us older horse and ponies in shape. Duke, the little coloured pony with and exceedingly long mane came back to the field the other day with amazing news. One of our riders, Teagan really missed us and was worried that the group might not have enough money to buy food for us throughout the lockdown. She decided to ride a bike instead of us (Duke and Billy B mainly) around the Farnham area to

raise funds for us. The clever girl raised £1380 in sponsor ship. The big news Duke had was that the National RDA has awarded her efforts with the “Young Bright Person’s” award, as someone who has gone above and beyond for RDA during this period. We horses and ponies agree such a lovely girl really deserves this.

Well I see that Caro is coming around with a wheelbarrow of afternoon snacks so I will sign off now, I am not letting Pip, the smallest of us, get my tea... I think pony nuts and hay such a great meal and he does try to pinch everyone’s food. Keep safe everyone. We would lovely to see you once we open up again.

Wolfie  
Front Field  
South Bucks RDA  
01753662796  
[www.southbucksrda.org](http://www.southbucksrda.org)



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