

December 2020

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Peter Storm



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DECEMBER NOTES AND NEWS

This month's cover photograph, an aerial view of the village of Old Basing, was taken by **Peter Storm**. In his words: "The image was taken during the first flight of a new drone. Lifting off from Olivers Battery and facing south west I was able to take in an excellent view of the village, allotments, recreation ground and the surrounding countryside." We live in a beautiful village.

A big thank you to **Patrica Barnes** for her kind donation to the Basinga in thanks for sending her a magazine each month after she moved away from the village after living here for 51 years.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASINGA

We welcome both regular and occasional items for the Basinga. The very last date for copy to the Editor for the **January edition** is **6.00pm on Sunday, 6th December**. The early deadline allows time for our printers to produce the magazine over the Christmas holiday. Please use the forms on the Basinga website **www.basinga.org.uk** to get your dates, articles and letters to us (**see box on page 15 for further instructions**). All advertising enquiries – classified, free adverts or inserts (flyers) can also be made via the website. Don't forget that we only accept articles with about a **300 word maximum** and articles are only published at the Editor's discretion.

PHOTOS AND LOGOS FOR THE BASINGA

If any reader would like to offer a **photograph of the village environment** we would be happy to receive them, either for immediate use or to build up a portfolio of 'village views' that we can use. We now have a web form that you can use to send a photograph for the website archive and possible use in the magazine, you simply go to **www.basinga.org.uk** and the form can be found on the '**Contributors Submission**' drop-down menu. Should you wish to submit multiple or a series of photos they can be emailed but please read the instructions on the photo form for details.

This feature should **NOT** be used for Free Ads or Article photos, which can be attached to their own forms. We continue to make changes to the presentation of the Basinga and we welcome **club** and **society logos**, with the option to use them within articles. Please send graphics to **editor@basinga.org.uk**

SITUATION VACANT – BASINGA ADVERTISING MANAGER

After 30 years involvement in various roles with the Basinga, our current **Advertising Manager** is retiring; we are therefore looking for a replacement. The role covers the administration of advertisers enquires (not selling) through to ordering and liaison with other members of the production team who place the advertisements into the magazine and website.

The candidate should be familiar with the use of Microsoft Word and Excel for record keeping. Full handover training will be given. If you're interested or would like further information contact **advertising@basinga.org.uk**

Basinga Team

OLD BASING WI

On 8th November, our President Sue Stewart, laid a wreath on behalf of us all at the War Memorial at St Mary's Church. It was a scaled down commemoration this year but we were nevertheless delighted to be able to take part.

On Tuesday 1st December we will be holding our first Zoom Member's meeting at 8pm. All Members will be sent a link by email prior to that date, and by clicking on it, will be able to listen in and watch our speaker Sarah Delves, who will be talking to us on the subject of compacts and powder boxes. Sarah had been due to come and deliver this speech in person together with one on the subject of handbags earlier in the year, but we are happy that she is now able to talk to us via Zoom.

Your Committee has been working hard behind the scenes during the past few months. Watch out for something dropping through your letterbox in the next few days! It just remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope to catch up with you all in the New Year.

Details of the WI in Hampshire and other WI activities and articles can be found on our website: www.hampshirewi.org.uk.

If you would like to join our long running and thriving group please contact our President, Sue Stewart, by email at oldbasingpres@hampshirewi.org.uk



Linda Frawley

NATIONAL WOMENS REGISTER

Chineham and Old Basing National Women's Register (NWR) continues to flourish despite Covid restrictions. At the beginning of November we had the first of our regular twice monthly Monday afternoon Zoom meetings when we had a quiz and a general catch up of news. In the middle of the month we had an extra evening meeting as we participated in the annual National NWR telephone quiz. This year was particularly challenging as we met via Zoom to answer cryptic clues, rather than brain-storming together. The other Zoom meeting had us recommending to each other ideas for day visits or holidays in the UK. Meeting together for lunch is on hold at the moment but the members who participate in the evening Book Group continue to keep their brain cells active.

We have a brilliant foursome who always arrange a home-cooked Christmas lunch, usually at Old Basing Cricket Pavilion in early December. This year we are meeting individually at home via Zoom but to get into the festive spirit we will all wear something Christmassy, pull a Christmas cracker so we can wear our silly hats; open a gift we have bought ourselves costing £1 to show to the others; eat and drink festive food (no need to worry about driving this year); tell the others about our best or worst Christmas experience and participate in a Christmas Quiz. Therapeutic laughter is guaranteed.

If you would like to join us for good company, albeit by Zoom, look at www.nwr.org.uk, or contact Karen via karen.dann@gmail.com or call her on **01256 328488** for a chat.

Sandie Tapping

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

By the time this edition of the Basinga reaches you we should (hopefully) be either out of lockdown or looking forward to an imminent release with the prospect of making up for lost shopping time in the run up to Christmas. During lockdown the Parish Council continued to operate as normal as far as it was possible to do so – office staff worked from home and grounds staff continued with general maintenance and upkeep.

Whilst this time around we were able to keep the children's play areas open, perversely adult outdoor gym equipment had to be closed off which is a pity when we are all encouraged to exercise and get some fresh air. The public toilets at the Recreation Ground have remained open and will continue to do so throughout the winter as we recognise the need for these if we are to spend more time exercising outdoors.

Our hand-sanitising stations at the Recreation Ground and Belle Vue play areas continue to be well used. Although checked regularly by our grounds staff, if you do find one empty, please let the office know. You can also find one just inside the door of the public toilets.

NEW COUNCILLORS

At our November meeting held via Zoom we were pleased to welcome two new Lychpit Councillors, Sheena Grassi and Gillian Moore. Both ladies are actively involved in parish organisations, Sheena with Old Basing Village Hall and Gill at Basing House. In addition they continue to represent residents in trying to protect the open space and woodland areas in Broadhurst Grove that were recently sold at auction.

FOOTPATHS

After many months of waiting, the footpath between Crown and Church Lanes has been completed and, although tarmac is not to everyone's liking, this will ensure the footpath remains mud-free during wet weather and offers a safe alternative to negotiating the busy narrow roads. We have been assured that next on the list is reinforcement of the riverbank along the footpath from Bartons Mill.

BOXING DAY WALK

This is a reminder that this event will not take place this year which just leaves us to wish all readers a very enjoyable and safe Christmas and New Year, hopefully spent with friends and family as we would normally.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next two meeting dates are **Tuesday, 1st December** and **5th January 2021**, both at **7.30pm** in the **Pavilion Committee Room**. All are welcome and anyone with impaired mobility should contact the Parish Office so they can be accommodated.

Parish Clerk: **Mrs Sandra Tuck** Deputy Clerk: **Mrs Kate Hope**

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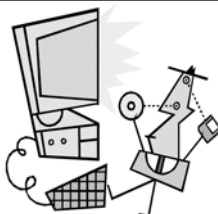
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FIREWORKS!

I have been asked to write this on behalf of an elderly resident of Linden Avenue who was concerned about the fireworks let off in a neighbour's garden. A number of years ago a bungalow in this road was set alight by a stray rocket, and she was worried that the same thing would happen again. Perhaps these fireworks were not suitable for a residential setting as they were quite loud. Could we please be more considerate of our neighbours and at least inform them if you intend to have fireworks in your garden.

Kevin Curtis

PAT SACREE

Pat wishes to make it known to all her friends, Church Fellows and acquaintances that she is beginning a new life at Basingfield Court Residential Carehome, Old Basing.

Love to all, **Constance Sacree (Pat).**

BEDDINGTON CENTRE

With the current Chairman of the Beddington Centre Committee due to step down we would be very interested to hear from anyone who would like to take over.

The Beddington Centre Committee is comprised of members from the principal users of the hall. They meet quarterly for what are usually quite short meetings to review any issues affecting the centre: finances, upkeep of the building and generally make sure the Beddington Centre remains an asset to the local community. Similar experience of this kind of role would be useful. Can you help?

Please contact **Alistair** on **07825082218** or at **aandtsmee@gmail.com**

CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

Test and Trace Scams

The new NHS COVID-19 app is the only official contact tracing app for England and Wales. Criminals may call claiming to be from Test and Trace to obtain personal information or ask for payments to send out tests. Find out more at **covid19.nhs.uk**

Email Scams

Action Fraud have had an increase in reports of various email scams from seemingly trusted organisations, these could be from: **DVLA** – claiming that your vehicle is no longer taxed; **HMRC** – either offering financial support as a result of coronavirus or claiming that you are entitled to a tax refund; **Amazon** – claiming there is an issue with your account

Do not click on any links within a suspicious email. Your bank, or other official organisation, won't ask you to share personal information over email. If you need to check it is genuine, call them directly on a number obtained from their official website (do not follow any links to their website from the email). You can also forward on any suspicious emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) **Report@phishing.gov.uk**

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PAVEMENT PARKING

The last two editions have contained photographs of pavement parking. This month's offering will be no different. Both cars were photographed when Old Basing schools were ending in the afternoon. Both cars were spotted on Hatch Lane, a favourite site. Unfortunately there is only one pavement and the road is usually very busy. Parking on the pavement makes no difference to the movement of traffic but does cause pedestrians, and in both cases, wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs, to have to negotiate the open road.



Hopefully the message will eventually become clear; there is no benefit to anyone by parking on a pavement.

Lyn Caswell

BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Basingstoke is updating its Local Plan, and part of that is consultation with Old Basing and Lychpit and other parishes about the future of the district as our Neighbourhood Plan ties into the Local Plan.

In framing our responses to a long, detailed list of issues, we will be emphasising the following factors.

- we prefer steady sustainable development over rapid growth in the era of Climate Emergency
- we want renewable energy sources incorporated in design
- we want improved design standards and respect for local context
- we want to see affordable homes in the mix
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- we want to create several more Local Green Spaces

Our response is due in early December and we will post more details then on the website.

David Whiter

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We ask for submissions to the magazine and website to be made via www.basinga.org.uk using the web forms:

Selection for Articles/Letters and Diary Dates will be found on the “Submissions” drop down and for Free Ads and Concession/Poster Ads on the “Advertise with us” drop down. Paid advertising enquiries can also be made from the same dropdown menu.

Submissions made via the forms now provide a common input for both the magazine and website and are automatically routed to the member of the team responsible for processing them. All submissions must be received by the 10th of the month (6th in December) previous to the magazine issue month.

If you have trouble finding the forms, you can of course contact us and we will advise.

Our Privacy Policy is available to read on the website which includes the GDPR requirements for publishing photographs.

Contacts for general enquiries and assistance:

Paid Advertising - advertising@basinga.org.uk

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CONCESSION ADVERTS

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THE MILL FIELD CONSERVATION GROUP



Event news: If you want an excuse to get out and get some fresh air why not try out conservation work for a couple of hours at your local nature reserve on **Sunday, 6th December**. We are completely dependent on volunteers to look after the Mill Field, tackle the scrub and open up the paths and views for the many walkers who use the site every day. No special skills are required

but volunteers are asked to bring their own gardening type gloves and own refreshments. Tools, which will be disinfected before and after use, will be provided. **We meet and will be working on the lower path (next to the woods) from 10am for about two hours.**

Any last minute changes due to CV19 will be posted on Facebook and the field notice board, and if you can email that you are coming then I can provide updates.

What to Look out for this month: Considering its December, it will be quite busy on the bird front, so binoculars to the ready: the numbers of Fieldfares and Redwings will build up with groups of Siskin and Goldfinches moving around. The Linnets should be grouping as they start to roost and if you are lucky you may see some lesser Redpoll, Brambling or the giant of finches the Hawfinch, all of which have already been spotted this autumn. Little Egrets will also be grouping in the evening by the pub, or you might see a Green Sandpiper or Snipe in the lower meadow.

For regular visitors to the site a reminder our notice board provides updates on our wildlife; last month's highlights included sightings of a Ring Ouzel and Harvest Mouse.

Anne Francis (07974 944439)

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'TIS THE SEASON TO RECYCLE

Christmas can generate plenty of extra household waste and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is urging residents to recycle more and waste less during the festive season.

There is no limit to how much you can recycle and any extra recycling can be put in cardboard boxes or clear sacks next to your green bin for collection. If you are recycling large cardboard boxes, make sure they are flattened next to your recycling bin and please remove the polystyrene and plastic packaging before leaving cardboard out.

There are lots of items that can be recycled during the festive season and all year round including cardboard packaging, paper, newspapers and magazines, food tins, drinks cans, aerosols and plastic bottles.

Christmas wrapping paper cannot be recycled and needs to go into your grey waste bin. Christmas cards can be recycled but only if they do not contain glitter, ribbons or bows. If you are unsure about what can and can't be recycled visit the website: **www.basingstoke.gov.uk/recycle** or call the council on **01256 844844**.

For a second year, garden waste customers will be able to put their real Christmas trees out for collection with their fortnightly garden waste. Christmas trees over 6ft need to be cut in half and decorations must be removed.

Real Christmas trees can also be **recycled** at one of several drop-off points across the borough between **Saturday, 2nd January and Sunday, 31st January 2021**.

For more information visit **www.basingstoke.gov.uk/christmas-tree**

Christmas can also mean more glass recycling. Your glass box or glass bin should be placed next to your green recycling bin by 7am on your recycling collection day. All bottles and jars should be rinsed out and any corks or tops removed.

Make sure you don't overfill your glass box or bin as it will not be emptied.

Please do not put bottles or jars out for collection in any other container, they will not be collected.

You can order a 140 litre red glass bin for £28.15 as an alternative to a box if you have lots of bottles and jars to recycle. Order at **01256 844844** or visit **www.basingstoke.gov.uk/glassrecycling** for more information.

This year bin collections will be affected over two weeks and, unless adverse weather or lockdown restrictions affect bin rounds, collections should return to normal from Monday 11 January 2021.

Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement Cllr Hayley Eachus said: "Extra rubbish will be inevitable over the festive period but a lot of that can be recycled including glass bottles and jars, plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, aerosols, tins and cans. We can all make changes to contribute to a more sustainable start to 2021 and recycling more is among them."

Check your bin collection day at **www.basingstoke.gov.uk/bincollections** or telephone **01256 844844**.

Christmas and New Year Waste collections on page 21

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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WASTE COLLECTIONS

Normal collection date

Wednesday 23 December

Thursday 24 December

Friday 25 December

Monday 28 December

Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

Friday 1 January

Monday 4 January

Tuesday 5 January

Wednesday 6 January

Thursday 7 January

Friday 8 January

Festive collection date

Wednesday 23 December

Thursday 24 December

Monday 28 December

Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

Saturday 2 January

Monday 4 January

Tuesday 5 January

Wednesday 6 January

Thursday 7 January

Friday 8 January

Saturday 9 January

NEWS FROM BASING HOUSE

The 2020 season proper drew to a close, with an appropriate accompanying rainbow, on the last Sunday in October. That left two remaining events, the Halloween Ghost Walks and the Christmas Fair.

The Halloween Ghost Walks, socially distanced and with six people per group were successfully squeezed in before the second lockdown and visitors were able to learn some of the ghostly stories that surround Basing House.

But, alas, the Christmas Fair is no more, overcome by lockdown. So, if it is in your diary for 28th or 29th November, please delete it. Hopefully, it will be back in 2021.

It joins a wide range of events on the scrapheap of history. We should have staged the biggest Civil War re-enactment of the year, to mark the 375th anniversary of the fall of Basing House. We had many other things planned, among them a Norman day, outdoor theatre and a Tulip festival, but they didn't happen. And of course there were many cancelled weddings.

I'll have to take my hat off to the staff who did much planning for these cancelled events. My attention was drawn to just what had to be done while looking at a planned one-way system for the Christmas Fair. Our ancestors didn't design barns and their accompanying buildings with Christmas Fairs in mind, and their planning certainly didn't take in social distancing and one-way systems. And nobody who has visited could have failed to notice how much better the general site maintenance has been this year. A well done to all who worked there. And I probably should add in the volunteers, but modesty forbids!

Andrew Howard 01256 327014

'THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS'

Dear friends,

One of the things that surprised us about moving to Old Basing is just how dark the streets are in the winter months. Last Christmas we bought each of the children a torch and a hi-vis vest. Almost a year on and they still love their torches. As the sun sets, they like to make the house as dark as possible so that they can get their torches out. If I try to turn on a light to cook, it will be met with calls of: 'No Mummy, turn it off again!' For the thing about torches, along with candles and stars, is that they are most effective when it is dark. We do not notice them as much in the light. Yet when it is dark, they shine brightly.

For many of us, 2020 has not been an easy year. There have been moments of darkness and despair. For many, this Christmas is likely to look a little different from normal. Yet at Christmas, Christians hold onto the hope of Christ's presence with them even in the darkest moments. Every Christmas we proclaim aloud in church the Christmas Gospel which talks of Jesus coming to be the light of the world: 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1:5) We believe that no darkness, not even death, can extinguish the light that Jesus offers us. Indeed, it is often in those darkest moments, that Christ's light shines the brightest, bringing us comfort and hope.

Howard Thurman, a twentieth century American theologian and civil rights activist, wrote the following verse which feels particularly apt this year:

I will light candles this Christmas.
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.
Candles of love to inspire all of my living.
Candles that will burn all the year long.



You are most welcome to join us for our services this Christmas both in church (please pre-book) and online, along with our Christmas Tree Festival and Angel Trail, as we continue to celebrate the light that Jesus brings.

I wish you peace and joy this Christmas and candles of love to inspire your living through the new year.

With love,

Reverend Heather

REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Services in church (apart from funerals) are currently suspended. However, we continue to live-stream worship to our Facebook page and you are most welcome to join us there: **St Mary's Old Basing and Lychpit**. We hope services in church will recommence as lockdown lifts on 2nd December. Our current pattern of services is as follows:

Sunday, 8.00am (in church) and 9.30am (in church and online)

Monday, 9.15am (online)

Tuesday, 9.15am (online)

Wednesday, 10.00am (in church and online)

Thursday, 9.15am (online)

Friday, 9.15am (online)



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, 6th December, 4.00pm, Online Christingle

Pick up a Christingle kit and come and join us for a 'make your own' Christingle Service on our Facebook page, as we celebrate together the story of Jesus, light of the world. **Christingle kits** are available to collect from church over the weekend of **5th/6th December**. If you need one delivered, contact **Debbie** on **07541 698235** by **Thursday 3rd December**.

Saturday, 12th and Sunday, 13th December, Christmas Tree Festival

We hope you can join us for this! It will be entirely outside this year. Please see separate notice on page 28.

Thursday, 17th and Friday 18th, 7.30pm, A Service of 9 Lessons and Music

Join us in church or over on our Facebook page for a traditional candlelit service of readings and organ music. Pre-booking is essential.

Sunday, 20th December, 4.00pm, Blue Christmas

Our annual Christmas service to pause and remember our loved ones, with readings and reflective music. You are welcome to join us in person (please pre-book) or online on Facebook.

Thursday, 24th December, Midnight Mass, 9.30pm and 11.30pm

Due to the popularity of Midnight Mass in previous years, and the limits on numbers this year due to social distancing, we will be offering two midnight services. The 9.30pm service coincides with mid-night in Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus, and the 11.30pm service sees in midnight here in the UK. Please pre-book. The 9.30pm service will be live-streamed to Facebook.

Friday, 25th December, Christmas Day Eucharist, 9.30am and 11.00am (in church and online)

continued on page 24

Again, due to the popularity of our Christmas Day service, we will be celebrating twice. Whether you've worshipped with us on Christmas Day before or not, you'd be most welcome to join us this year. Please pre-book. The 9:30am service will be live-streamed to Facebook.

Sunday, 27th December. There will be no service in church. The Church of England will be providing a national online service that we encourage you to join.

Sunday, 3rd January: Epiphany, Our regular Sunday services at **8.00am** (in church) and **9.00am** (in church and live-streamed) will take place.

Please do check our Facebook page, website and notice boards for updates. All services subject to change depending on government guidance. We have COVID-secure measures in place. As all services have limits on the numbers able to attend, if you would like to join us in church you are strongly encouraged to pre-book by contacting **St Mary's Administrator, Debbie**, either by phone **07541 698235** or email **admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk**.

In line with government regulations, please wear a face covering upon entering the church (unless exempt). Please use the hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the church and do observe social distancing.

PRIVATE PRAYER

The church is now open daily for **private prayer** from **10.00am to 4.00pm (Monday to Saturday inclusive)** and **11.30am to 4.00pm on Sundays**. All are very welcome.

ANGEL TRAIL

We would love to spread comfort and joy around Old Basing and Lychpit this Christmas with an angel trail. Angels feature throughout the Christmas story, right from the beginning when Mary hears that she will bear a son through to angels proclaiming the news of Jesus' birth. Could you make an angel to hang in your window or outside? Let Debbie know where your angel is and we will add it to our angel trail map: **admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk**

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Every Friday send out a bulletin with information about what is happening at the church. If you'd like to be added to our distribution list please email Debbie, our administrator.

BASINGSTOKE FOODBANK - DONATION REQUEST

The Foodbank continues to face a high level of demand and would appreciate any support that you can give in terms of donations. St Mary's continues to be a collection point. Please leave items in the crate on the Vicarage porch (the Vicarage is located on the corner of Church Lane & Milkingpen Lane). There is also a collection box in Tesco at Chineham. For a list of items that are in particular short supply visit **www.basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk**

SUPPORT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

DO CONTACT US IF YOU NEED HELP IF SELF-ISOLATING

St Mary's continues as a local hub working with **Basingstoke Voluntary Action** and **Basingstoke Council** for those needing support at this time, whether that be in terms of practical help such as shopping and the collection of prescriptions or if you are feeling isolated and would welcome a friendly phone call. **Please contact Revd Heather directly on 07745 731729 or email basinghub@gmail.com**

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OLD BASING METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist congregation of Old Basing have not been able to meet formally in the chapel since lock-down began in March. We have worshipped in various ways with worship materials being distributed to people's homes, worshipping with other Methodists in Basingstoke via Zoom, and using various radio services.

A Christmas Carol Service at 4.00pm on Sunday, 20th December and a **Christmas Morning Service at 10.30am** are both being planned via Zoom.

Christmas will be different for us all this year, but we may want to find an opportunity to reflect on the wonder of God's sharing his life with us in Jesus. Often the sheer busyness of Christmas crowds out the space for reflection which this year may give us.

A happy and peaceful Christmas to you all.

Debbie Robertson

LOCKED IN BUT NOT LOCKED OUT - U3A



Our Activities Continue despite being restricted again, and having to rely on Zoom, email and other on-line packages. We have a wide range of groups using Zoom now, and others are considering it, so many activities continue.

Active groups are playing bridge or practising their dance steps at home. Others include discussions on literature, photography, gardening, arts and crafts, art history, science and technology, philosophy, and history (to name but a few). Learning is carrying on too, from French and Spanish to calligraphy, creative writing and family history. There's a holiday in Croatia planned for 2021: **www.basingstokeu3a.org/excursion-and-holiday-details**

The Art History group keeps in touch via emails, a Closed Facebook group and Zoom. Members receive news of the month's activities, a list of art events (online or actual) and a short activity to enjoy at leisure. At a recent Zoom meeting 12 members introduced and showed their chosen painting to a group of 21. More presentations are planned to include 'Totes Meer' a painting by Paul Nash, iconic 'Posters for London Underground' and 'Stations of London Underground'.

A Christmas Quiz is open to members and non-members to help raise a little money for our U3A in these challenging times. This will be a fun quiz with pictures of celebrities dressed as Santa for you to identify, pictorial clues to words and phrases associated with Christmas, stills from Christmas films – but shown as negatives! – and a "spot the differences" Christmas scene.

If you'd like to join the quiz with a small donation, and try for a gift voucher, further details can be found at **www.basingstokeu3a.org/christmas-quiz**

New Members: So, if anyone is looking for something to cheer them up throughout the winter, have a look on our website for further details. Membership is still £5 until the end of December, with unlimited access to our activities, so do give us a try. New members are always made very welcome.

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- Explore the ruins and imagine what the house would have looked like
- Visit the walled garden and learn about Basing House's fascinating history in the museum
- Walk your dog or find a picnic spot

INFORMATION

Pay once, visit all year! With your ticket, you can enjoy unlimited visits to Basing House and return as many times as you like for a whole year! See our website for full details, admission prices and opening times.



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COMFORT AND JOY - ST. MARY'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Saturday, 12th, 11.00am to 4.30pm, and Sunday, 13th December, 11.00am to 4.00pm

This year we are moving our annual event outside, following guidelines to ensure that the event is Covid safe with a trail of trees around the churchyard and stable with figures made by local children. You are welcome to sponsor a tree and decorate with what brings you and your family 'Comfort and Joy'. **Trees cost a minimum of £7.50 to sponsor.**

There are plenty of other ways to be involved:

- Make a crib and send us your photos for St. Mary's Facebook page;
- Make an edible decoration and bring it to hang on the walnut wildlife tree for the birds to enjoy;
- View the trees and vote for your favourite. Voting will end at 4.00pm on Sunday, 13th December with a small prize awarded to the winning tree;
- Take a 'selfie' with your favourite Christmas tree and upload it onto social media with #StMarysTrees2020;
- Make an Angel to decorate the churchyard and stable dedicated to a loved one or donate an angel for visitors to dedicate. Patterns are available;
- Make an angel to display in your front garden. If you let us know it's there we'll add your street to our Angel Trail map;
- Buy a Raffle ticket and win one of the many prizes. Donations welcomed please;
- Spare one hour of your time? We need your help to make this much-loved festival the start of a truly wonderful Christmas.

To book your tree space or find out more visit **St Mary's Facebook page**, our **website** or contact **Jeanette Edwards** at **jdwards38@hotmail.co.uk**

CHURCHYARD CONSERVATION GROUP PLOCC



Last month my foresight once again failed me as the working parties were again cancelled due to the Covid-19 lock-down. We hope that the current lock-down will end at the beginning of December as promised by the government and we will be allowed to hold our **working party on 5th December at 10.00am**, but until Tim Carr, our Chairman, confirms please treat it as cancelled. **There will be no Thursday afternoon working party in December.**

If the St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival takes place 12th and 13th December in the churchyard we will be supporting it. This year's theme is 'Comfort & Joy'. In the wider Conservation Area the holly berries are now at their best. If you look up to the tops of the yew trees, you may see redwings, a thrush that visits us in winter, feeding on the remaining berries. Or, you may simply prefer to sit quietly on the WI seat for a moment of reflection and peace. The Conservation Area is a community space for everyone to enjoy, but please remember to adhere to the latest Coronavirus guideline. It was a joy last month on a sunny afternoon hearing the chatter of children as they played after school in the "woods".

We hope you and your families remain healthy during this festive season.

For further information please ring **Fay Farrant** on **01256 476863**.

Margaret Carr www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk

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RECIPE - CHRISTMAS MARINATED FETA

I find these make good little Christmas gifts, but we tend to eat them with olives as an appetiser. I use the small jars such as 125ml or 250ml that have the orange rubber seals and the metal clips but you can use small jam jars with a screw top lid.

The quantities are not precise because it depends on the size of jar that you use and how much flavouring you prefer. 200g of feta should easily make two small jars. If it comes already in brine then check the weight of cheese! You don't need to use expensive virgin olive oil, normal olive oil will do.

200g Feta Cheese (in block or ready cubed)

Olive oil

½ tsp dried chilli flakes

½ tsp dried mint

½ tsp dried oregano

First sterilise the jars (and metal lids if you are using), in either a pan of simmering water or in a low oven 140 degrees for 20 minutes or so. I "scald" the rubber ring seals with boiling water from the kettle. Leave to cool while you prepare the cheese.

Cut the feta (drained) into neat 1cm cubes and put in a bowl. Add the chilli flakes, mint and oregano and very gently turn over the cheese cubes to get a good coating without breaking them. Fill the sterilised jars to nearly the top with the cheese cubes. Pour over the oil making sure all the feta is covered.

Seal the jars and keep in the fridge. Make up to one week before eating or giving as a gift. Use within one month of opening but remember to keep the jars topped up with oil.

Linda Frawley

PLOUGHMANS LUNCHES

Well here we are now in the run up to Christmas and our aprons are all still gathering dust. I don't think anyone could have predicted back in March that we would still remain largely confined to our own homes. With no sign of us being able to return to Ploughman's lunches anytime soon we would like to take the opportunity of wishing all our 'lunchers' a Merry Christmas. There may not be the usual raffle, mincemeat tart or tinsel but rest assured you are much in our thoughts and we look forward to welcoming you all back when it is a safe and practical. In the meantime keep safe and well one and all.

Denise and the Ploughmans Ladies.

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Our wildlife comes in all shapes and sizes, and all species have a part to play in local ecosystems. There are some species aren't winning any popularity contest and why we should embrace some of our unlovable species.

Slugs are often loathed by green-fingered enthusiasts the world over for chewing unsightly holes in our treasured flowers and shrubs. Their appearance is uninspiring at best and they are largely unwelcome in the immaculate show gardens that many of us know and love.

However, in the nature-centric garden (the kind we prefer here at the Wildlife Trust), slugs and snails are very important and should be tolerated. They are a vital food source for all sorts of birds, mammals and reptiles, and are a part of the natural balance. Leave them be and you may be amazed at the wildlife that follows. They have inspired some of our best-loved novels and without them the world might be overrun with swarms of insects. Despite this spiders carry a formidable reputation.

House spiders are incredibly helpful in the house and the garden as they help to keep flies and other pests in check. It may seem like there are more spiders in your home than usual at this time of year, but in actual fact they are just more active. Though they can appear large and sinister, the UK house spider is harmless.

Out in the garden, you can encourage spiders by providing logs and stone piles for them to live, feed and breed in. Spiders are a food source for many animals - encouraging them in your garden provides a vital link in the food chain. You can help your eight-legged houseguests by hanging a towel over the side of the bathtub as an escape-route.

Moths are often overlooked in favour of their often more glamorous cousins - butterflies. They are often dismissed as brown and dull, but in fact many species are bright and colourful, and with over 2,500 moth species that call Britain home, there's an amazing amount of diversity to be discovered! (*picture - Angle Shades moth*)

If you want to get a closer look at these flighty little visitors, why not set up a simple light trap using a white sheet, washing line and torch? Flitting out of the rising darkness like shadows, these nocturnal mammals are as charismatic as they are misunderstood.

16 of the UK's 18 bat species can be found in Hampshire, including two of Europe's rarest species, barbastelle and Bechstein bats.

All UK bats are insectivores, which means that insects are the main part of their diet. A common pipistrelle bat can eat over 3,000 insects in just one night! They use their famous echolocation skills to identify and catch their prey.

Like many species, bats are under threat of losing their homes and food sources. You can help by taking some of the steps mentioned above to welcome insects into your garden to provide food for bats - you could even install a bat box under your building eaves to give them a place to roost.



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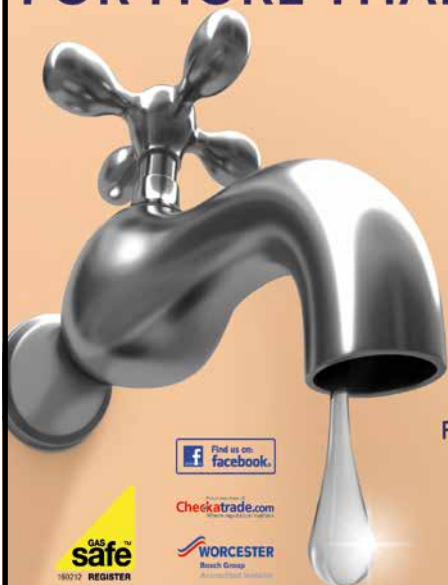


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POPPY APPEAL 'VIRTUAL' BLACK TIE DINNER PROCEEDS

The Black Tie Dinner took place on Saturday, 24th October and 25 people took the opportunity to prepare their own special meals, dress up and send their 'selfies' into us for judging. In addition, other residents generously sent in donations regardless of the evening occasion and this raised a super total of £410.



This amount went some way to filling the financial void left by the restrictions placed upon local businesses and collectors unable to sell merchandise in the normal way this year, so we wanted to thank everybody who helped us. Very special thanks go to Olivers Restaurant, The Andwell Brewery and Marks & Spencer (Chineham) for their very generous prize donations and especially to Tylney Hall Hotel who donated a voucher for a Champagne Afternoon Tea for Two, which was won by Gary and Yvonne Evison of Cavalier Road.

The couple were away that weekend in a motorhome but improvised their dressing up clothes for their photo, including Gary using an (unused!) black plastic doggy bag as a bow tie!!

Well done to all the winners and thank you so much for your great support.

Rick Bourne on behalf of The Old Basing RBL Poppy Appeal

LINGUASTASTIC LANGUAGE SCHOOL

December is usually an extremely busy month for us at Linguatastic, but with fewer of our classes meeting face-to-face and fewer festive events taking place, this month is going to be quieter than in all previous years. That said, being an Early Years Provider means that we are still seeing our pre-schoolers in their French, German and Spanish playschool sessions and they still keep us very busy! Last month, they were learning about fireworks and were raising money for Children in Need and this month, it'll be Christmas, Christmas and more Christmas!

It's been a strange and difficult year for many of us and so whilst we must be strict with our hygiene routines, etc., we feel privileged to be offering our little ones some sort of routine and feeling of normality and are doing as much as possible to ensure that this feeling is carried home and continues throughout the holidays, which will no doubt be very different to previous years.

Please do have a look at our Facebook page every now and again to see our activities in pictures.

Our French playschool continues in Chineham on Tuesdays and Thursdays, German on Wednesdays and Spanish on Fridays. After-school clubs for primary school children, GCSE classes for teenagers and classes for adults continue to meet online. We have a new beginner German class for adults on Thursday evenings. For further information please e-mail us on info@linguatastic.com

Fingers crossed, we'll be able to return to Old Basing Infant School, St Mary's Junior School and Great Binfields Primary School early next year, but in the meantime, we wish all readers all the very best for the end of this crazy year.

DECEMBER IN YOUR GARDEN

The pandemic has created a new generation of gardening enthusiasts who have discovered that growing is good for the soul, but as we enter winter will we retreat indoors and hunker down against the virus? There is no reason to stop now as we enter the colder months. Being outside and engaging with nature is known to lower your heart rate and blood pressure while exposure to natural light boosts the immune system, improves mood and aids sleep. With the days shortening, temperatures dropping and Covid restrictions still in place there has never been a better excuse to get out in your gardens.

With the strong winds we have had this year I would suggest the first job is to check on any greenhouses, polytunnels and other outside structures through the winter to ensure that they are sturdy enough to withstand anything the weather can throw at them. While you are at it, it is also a good time to check the protection on tender perennials so that the cold doesn't creep in and destroy them. Pots should also be raised onto feet or bricks if you haven't already done so lest they become waterlogged. Any tubs or pots that are liable to cracking due to frost should be wrapped in bubblewrap, hessian or fleece to prevent this from happening.

Continue to clear flowerbeds of leaves and cut back plants that have gone over, unless you want to leave these as winter habitats for insects. It is particularly important that alpine plants are not left with decaying plant matter on them as they will die off if left damp for too long. You can mulch around them with gravel to help with drainage and for other plants that will suffer with mud splashes, and then bark-chip mulch can be used to keep them at their best. If your soil tends towards being heavy and claggy, or even filled with big lumps of chalk, then you can work in lots of composted organic matter to help improve it for next year. This will have the added bonus of keeping you warm with lots of digging!

Waterlogging can also be a problem on lawns, if you can't help walking on it when it is wet it will eventually die back and therefore it might be worth considering installing some stepping stones or a path to allow access to the areas you need to reach without causing damage to the grass in the process. If you lay the stones or pavers at a low enough level, they won't interfere with mowing, which might still be necessary if the weather stays above 41°F (5°C) or so as the grass will keep growing at this temperature. Damaged lawn patches can be repaired with turves cut from other areas of the garden and all lawn edges should be re-cut to keep them tidy and to save work next season.

If you have a pond heater, make sure you use it to keep the water from freezing over which can be fatal for fish and other pond life. If you don't have a heater, please don't be tempted to crack the ice as this can damage the fish. Instead, use a saucepan of hot water to melt a hole and allow an air hole. Foraging herons can be deterred using nylon strings at least 6ins (15cm) from the ground and in from the edges of the pond. If you would like to make your pond more wildlife friendly, now is a good time to do it in preparation for next season.

Now is a good time to prune apple and pear trees that are ground in open ground (not against a wall). You are aiming to achieve a balanced, open goblet like structure but better to prune lightly than too hard. There is always next year! Acers, birches and vines can also be pruned now, as they need to be done before Christmas to avoid bleeding. You can take hardwood cuttings of plants now if you need to increase your stock. You can also continue to plant deciduous trees and shrubs.

In this Covid-dominated world it's been a tough year for all of us but at least our gardens have blossomed due to the extra care and attention they have received. Let us hope that

next year will be a “good year for the roses”, as well as humankind!

Happy Christmas and hoping more than ever for a healthy new year.

NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

So, as I write we are just entering another lock-down period and I hope as you are reading this, we are just coming back out of it! The year 2020 is certainly one that will live long in the memory mostly for the wrong reasons but let us hope that 2021 doesn't top it. On the upside all of us have been able to appreciate the natural world about us much more and I've found myself noticing so many more small things than I normally would have done.

As the weather has changed in the past few weeks, conditions became ideal for fungi of all descriptions, so I snapped a couple of these weird products of nature as did Stephen Thair. The huge brown clump were apparently just Common Inkcap which thrive where dead wood is buried and that made sense as an apple tree had been felled in that spot two years previously and the stump ground down as far as was possible. What the alien looking 'thing' that came up on my front lawn was I don't know but it was fascinating to look at. Stephens perambulations led him to several Funnel fungi which appear to be the Trooper variety (there are numerous in the family) and allegedly edible but I'm not bold enough to try anything other than a 100% mushroom!



Like many local bird watchers, I've been wondering when bright green Ring-Necked Parakeets might colonise areas in the locality and whilst one doesn't signify it's happening it does mean their 'scouts' are about. I have David Trevor-Jones who lives in The Street to thank for his email in October that he'd seen and heard one whilst at the Riley Lane allotments. Like many birds its call is a contact note that tries to locate others of its species that might be nearby and that it seeks reassurance of not being alone. You'll be familiar that the Red Kites do this as do small groups of diminutive Long Tailed Tits. Anyway, David said this bird was clearly on its own but it's a bit concerning that they might come in numbers as they can displace other tree dwelling birds such as Woodpeckers and Nuthatches.

Winter visitors have begun to appear locally, and Jim Andrews sent me a couple of smashing shots of a Brambling on the Millfield (right). In addition, several Redwings have been apparent, and a Ring Ouzel has also put in some brief appearances but has so far eluded Jim's lens.

As many of you know, Redwings, Mistle Thrushes and Waxwings arrive from Scandinavia in number during harsh weather there but also UK native species are joined by their continental cousins as well because we are generally a few degrees warmer in these isles from



November til February. Blackbird and Goldcrest numbers here can be swelled by several hundred thousand in some years and I just read that the latter has been seen in copious quantities along the north east coastline. They will spread westward I'm sure but you'll more likely hear rather than see these tiny olive and golden jewels that will generally stay high in cover such as conifer branches. Listen out for high pitch reeling sounds from above and you might just see tiny movement 'up there'.

Nothing stops a building project quicker than finding Great Crested Newts or Bats near or in your property. But a resident of Riverside Gardens had the latter to thank for a few hours of concern when a glazing company, there replacing windows, found two Pipistrelles (we think) hiding in the cavity. Having gained access via a tiny slit in the frame there was no way they could be left or they would have been sealed in so my advice, thanks to contact with local expert David Byett, was to place the creatures in a box indoors with some loose material and a little water, but at dusk (if not raining) take the box outside and lift the lid. The creatures would apparently have more than one roost and could happily relocate so that was good news indeed for all parties.

Finally, I hope you all have a Christmas that is not too far removed from those you normally enjoy. Perhaps spend a little more time outdoors enjoying the air and the wildlife, that's assuming both the weather and the Government allow?

Rick Bourne.

Don't forget to send all your nature related photos to **rickbourne@yahoo.com** or **naturenotes@basinga.org.uk** Or ring **01256 321108** for news. For all your bird food requirements, order it from me at 'Bird Drop-ins' use the former email address or ring me on **07900 648675** to place an order or get a form.

OLD BASING ALLOTMENT AND GARDEN SOCIETY

Hopefully, you should be harvesting lots of veg for your Christmas feasts, including parsnips, leeks and winter cabbages as well as the obligatory Brussels Sprouts. If the soil is likely to be frozen, consider covering it with straw to help with harvesting.

This is the month to prune apples, pears, gooseberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants and whitecurrants to keep them all as productive as possible. If you need new crops, bare-rooted fruits can be planted now as long as the ground isn't frozen. It is also a good time to dig in lots of well-rotted organic material covering the beds afterwards to protect the soil.

www.obags.uk/

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Tracy Braybrook

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*We are not able to include every article that we receive; there are listed below and can be viewed on-line at our website, Basinga Extra, **www.basinga.org.uk***

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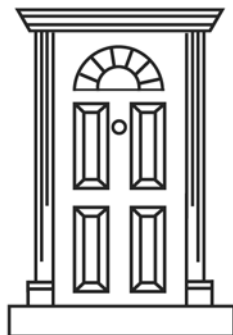
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