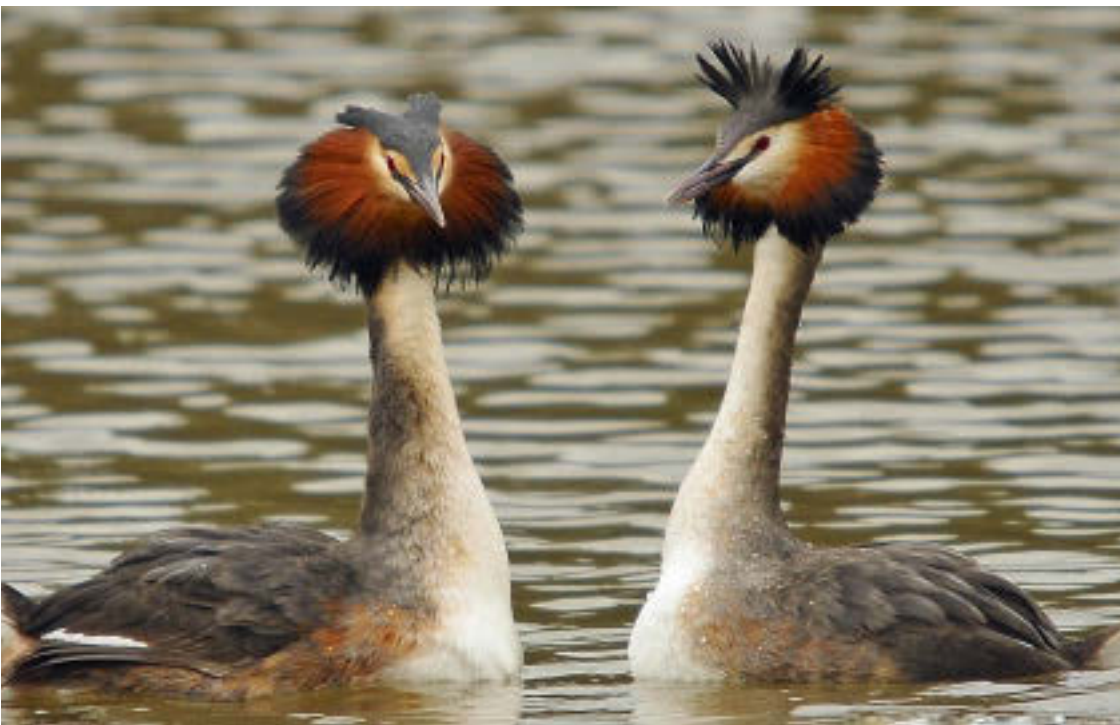


Village Web



February 2021

A nebula in the constellation of Orion, the closest region of massive star formation to Earth - Photo by Colin Hall. See 'Heavens Above' article inside.



*The front cover photograph - Great Crested Grebes
performing a mating dance - Wildlifetrusts.org*



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At the time of going to print, all services in our churches are SUSPENDED on advice from the Diocese of Chelmsford. IF we are able to return to services they will be held in the following *pattern*. Please check parish website for updates.

February Services

Sunday 7

**** 10.00am** Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas, Little Chishill (SG8 8PB)

Sunday 14

10.30am Family service at Holy Trinity Chrishall (SG8 8QU)

Sunday 21

**** 10.00am** Holy Communion Service at Holy Trinity, Heydon (SG8 8PW)

Sunday 28

10.30am Family service at Holy Trinity Chrishall (SG8 8QU)

**** Please note the change of time to 10am for the Holy Communion services**

A short recorded service will also be available each week and can be found on the Parish of the Icknield Way Villages YouTube channel

* This Service is according to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer

T Induction loop at this service

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Wednesday	
<i>Vinaysa Nourishing Flow</i>	09:30-10:30
Friday	
<i>Vinaysa Nourishing Flow</i>	09:30-10:30
Saturday	
<i>Uplifting Flow</i>	09:00-10:00
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Parish News from Anand, our Rector



Dear All

Lifting this third lockdown period, at the moment, appears to be quite distant until the vaccine reaches some of the most vulnerable people. With advice from the Diocese we have had to stop all church services although the government would currently permit them. Fortunately, we are continuing our online virtual services every Sunday. I am very thankful to all team members for their help with singing, music, technical help and to other members of the parish who are kindly making every effort to record the readings and leading prayers. This is a fantastic team effort and if you would like to take part in reading, praying, singing or making music please let us know.

The prayer group is fervently doing regular prayers for individuals in our parish, in our country and across the world. If you have any prayer requests please do not hesitate to tell us. We will keep matters confidential and pray for you.

Some of our parish members currently have Covid and we are praying for their speedy recovery. Others who have had the disease, I am delighted to hear, have now fully recovered. Their recovery is such a joy and our continuing prayers are with them.

For prayer requests, contact Jon Wayper, Mel Chandler, Viv Rogers, Carolyn Hughes, Alison Wilkinson or anyone who is in our prayer group to pass on your requests. As prayer is the most important aspect of our lives in this challenging time, I thought I would share a few thoughts on prayer with you in my monthly reflection, which follows this article.

We hope to be able to open church services as soon as the situation improves and with advice from the Diocese. Meanwhile, please stay safe and take good care.

With warm wishes

Anand Sodadasi

A reflection from Anand

Prayer in this pandemic time

When we wake up in the morning what is the first thing we do? Some people are email checkers, some people are social media scrollers, some people read newspapers and some are “oh...just ten more minutes” sleepers. While some are happy chirpers before their first cup of coffee, others do exercise, some go straight to the kitchen and start cooking and others still go for a dog walk, the list goes on.

Whatever our wake-up routine looks like, how we begin each day can impact our mood and mindset for the rest of the day. I have observed that if I hear songs in the morning before I begin my work, the last song can stay in my mind, possibly even leading up to humming unconsciously, till afternoon if not all through the day!

So, what was Jesus’ habit first thing in the morning? The Bible says, *‘Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.’* (Mark 1:35). Prayer and meditation were Jesus’ habits. It was not only Jesus, many great faith leaders of the Bible practised this. For example, Abraham the father of many nations had the habit of getting up early in the morning to stand before the LORD for prayer and meditation (Genesis 19:27). King David, though a busy man looking after the nation of Israel, meditated and prayed in the morning before he started his day. He says, *“In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation”* (Psalm 5:3). Listening to a ‘Thought for the Day’ can help us to face everyday challenges. *Our Daily Bread* is another good source available free online.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound effect on the lives of millions of people both in our country and around the world. The threat of new COVID-19 variants is increasing casualties in both young and old communities. The current imposed restrictions have thwarted our social lives. We are asking many questions. Why this is happening? Where is God in this? We are all challenged to think and reflect. In times like this, we can seek God for answers and help through our prayers and meditation in the morning, afternoon and in the evening whenever possible.

Despite his busy life, King David also had the habit of praying three times a day morning, afternoon and evening (Psalm 55:17). Jesus too had the habit of praying during the day despite his busy life. Sometimes he sent the crowds away and went up into the mountains alone to pray (Matthew 14:23). Jesus even had ‘all-night prayers’ (Luke 6:12) and often prayed alone (Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16, 9:18 and John 17).

Even Jesus struggled in prayer and was humanly nervous when facing the deadly trial of the cross (Matthew 26:36-44)! We can understand his true humanness when he prayed like this. If Jesus himself prayed when he needed God’s strength, why don’t we pray and make a habit of having communion with God? Instead of seeking someone to answer our questions why don’t we spend time with God and ask questions directly? His Word will give us the answers.

Through prayer we talk to God and through reading the Bible God talks to us. If prayer becomes a part of our life then it brings a huge impact into our daily lives. Such a habit could bring great comfort and assurance in our lives. May the Lord give us grace and help to seek his presence with a sincere heart and mind.

Yours in His vineyard

Anand Sodadasi

The Men’s Group

The group started a few years ago, meeting on the last Wednesday of each month in the Red Cow in Chrishall. Sadly, for obvious reasons, we’ve had to abandon this wonderful venue and we hope and pray that Toby and Alexis, the excellent hosts, will be able to reopen fully as soon as is possible.

The group exists to give an opportunity for men to meet up and discuss all sorts of topics usually of a philosophical nature and often, but not always, things with a spiritual dimension. We did meet a few times virtually over Zoom during 2020 discussing “prayer” and “the common good”, to give examples of areas we considered.

Anand and I would like to get the Zoom meetings back up and running in 2021, so listen and watch out for details. It would be great to “meet up” with old friends and to welcome new ones!

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United Reform Church News

Having had a lovely Christmas Day service we were sad to have to cancel subsequent services until further notice due to Lockdown number 3. There were many who were either on their own or who had to change their plans and experienced great disappointment over the Christmas period and so a warm friendly but socially distanced get together was quite a highlight for many. It was a joy to heartily sing three carols outside to set us on our merry Christmas way.

The Village Advent Calendar proved to be a great success and brought many a much needed smile to so many faces as people wandered from house to house to view a new number opening every day. A huge thank you to all those who took part and produced fantastic creativity. There were many many highlights but one in particular was a family who came to visit ‘The Stable’ at the Chapel at dusk just as the lights came on the Angel Gabriel was illuminated. It brought the scene very much alive.

Together with the Advent and Rainbow wreaths we were able to send over £700 to Alzheimer’s Research and £200 to the wonderful NHS. We would like to thank everyone around the villages who have so generously supported our Alzheimer’s Family Challenge since the first Lockdown and we are proud to say we have raised over £10 ,000.

Wishing everyone a much better 2021 and continue to stay safe, well and hopeful. With much love from us all at the URC.

Tess Gent

The Bats of the Ickniel Way Churches

At least four of the Ickniel Way Parish churches provide a sanctuary for bats, nature’s only flying mammal. This article illuminates aspects of the fascinating biology of these charming and misunderstood creatures, in the hope that understanding more about them will help church communities to live alongside their resident bats.

Britain is home to 18 species of bat, comprising 25% of our mammal species. The French and German common names for bats: chauve-souris (bald mouse) and fledermaus (flying mouse), are misleading – bats are not rodents, but are more closely related to humans than to mice. They are long-lived creatures, reaching ages of up to 30 years. Like humans, their reproduction rate is low, with adult females giving birth to only one, or rarely two, pups per year. Their social lives are complex and fascinating, and the mother/child bond is strong. In spring, adult females gather together to form communal maternity roosts, in warm, dark, sheltered places. Over the summer, they give birth and suckle and rear their pups, who become independent by autumn. This roosting behaviour, with pregnant females gathered together with their pups, makes local populations very vulnerable: if a maternity roost is disturbed or destroyed, both adult females and the next generation are lost.



Why do you share your churches with bats? The answers lie in the nature of churches and of Essex and Cambridgeshire's farmed landscape. Churches are complex and stable buildings which provide very suitable places for maternity and hibernation roosts. Furthermore, the churchyard is often sympathetically managed for wildlife, and so harbours the insects that bats eat. Outside the churchyard, the wider countryside has suffered great loss of biodiversity, and there are insufficient insects, old trees and disused buildings to provide adequate food and shelter for bats. Fortunately, bats are legally protected and it is an offence to kill or disturb a bat. Since the legislation was introduced in 1981, there are some encouraging signs of species recovery for some bat species.



is an offence to kill or disturb a bat. Since the legislation was introduced in 1981, there are some encouraging signs of species recovery for some bat species.

Contrary to what you might read or hear, scare stories about bats and disease are highly sensationalised. The only known disease transmissible to humans associated with bats in Britain is rabies, caused by infection with a European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV). Rabies

caused by infection with an EBLV has only been associated with one human case in the UK. The risk is minuscule, and as EBLVs are transmitted via a bite or scratch there is no risk to unless you handle bats. EBLVs have only been found in a very small number of bats despite more than 15,000 having been submitted for government testing.



At the Bats in Churches project, we are very happy to be working with four churches in the Icknield Way Benefice: Holy Trinity Heydon, St Nicholas Elmdon, Holy Trinity, Chrishall and St Swithin's, Gt Chishill. All the bat species commonly found in churches are present: pipistrelles; brown long-eared bats and Natterer's bats.

Pipistrelles are the most common and widespread British bat. They are the bats that you are most likely to see, appearing fast and jerky as they pursue small insects which they eat in flight. A single pipistrelle can consume up to 3,000 insects in one night. Pipistrelles have declined in the last few decades, although happily populations have started to recover. Their reliance on buildings for roosting makes them very vulnerable to building renovations, exclusion and toxic remedial timber treatment chemicals.

The ears of brown long-eared bats are nearly as big as their bodies. These bats have declined significantly in Britain. They roost in trees, churches and buildings. They catch insects both on the wing and from leaves and bark, sometimes landing on the ground to catch insects. They are even able to take insects from lighted windows. Known as 'whispering bats', their echolocation sounds are very quiet. Their habit of flying close to the ground makes long-eared bats vulnerable to attack by predators.

Natterer's bats are frequently found in churches, which are very important roosts for them. They are medium sized bats which take their prey from foliage. Their maternity colonies are in old stone buildings with large timber beams, such as castles, manor houses and churches, or large old timbered barns, and they are loyal to their roosts. The UK Natterer's bat population is of international importance.

If you are interested to learn more about bats, the Essex and Cambridgeshire bat groups are marvellous groups of committed and knowledgeable people, and the subscriptions are very reasonable. The Bat Conservation Trust is an excellent source of information. The project will also be organising bat walks and talks in happier times, which will be publicised in this magazine, so do look out for those events and come along.

Honor Gay

Bats in Churches Project



Heavens Above!

Astronomy from your garden, a very short introduction.

Without any equipment other than say a deckchair and warm clothing, there is much that can be seen with the naked eye. You will need to let your eyes become adapted to the dark which will take about 30 minutes. The moon is the easy one and if you get the timing right a blood moon is worth seeing. Of the planets both Venus and Mars are often visible although without magnification they appear as bright points of light, just like stars. Meteor showers can put on a spectacular show and last summer the comet Neowise was visible for some weeks.

A good pair of binoculars or a modest telescope will allow greater detail of the moon and comets as well as nearby galaxies and nebulae – these are areas

of star formation. The easiest nebula to see is in the constellation of Orion. It's the 'fuzzy blob' towards the lower end of Orion's sword (see the photo on the inside of the front cover). Mounting your binoculars or telescope on a tripod will help keep the image stable and take the load off your arms!

If you have a digital camera and a tripod then you will be able to explore in greater detail and 'see' fainter objects. The camera's ability to run extended exposure times and at high ISO settings will collect more light. A camera image of the Orion nebula will show bright red from ionised hydrogen gas, green from oxygen and blue-violet from reflected radiation. Much of the nebula is obscured by dust. Unfortunately - or not - the Earth rotates which will limit the exposure time before the stars turn into little sausages. A fairly simple and low cost solution is a motorised mount that sits between the camera and the tripod. This device rotates the camera at the same rate as the earth. The image of the Orion nebula on the inside cover was taken with a Canon DSLR camera and 250mm lens.

If you wish to make a significant improvement on the above arrangement there is a vast array of telescopes, computer controlled mounts and imaging equipment available to the amateur astronomer - the sky's the limit (sorry!). However, much can be done for a modest outlay. You will not achieve the stunning imagery of the Hubble Space Telescope but then this is as much about engaging with the world we inhabit – it's a bit special.

The next time you are out under the stars you may wish to ponder the following; over the last 30 years or so there has been a dramatic increase in the detection of exoplanets. These are planets outside of our solar system which orbit other stars. It would seem that most stars have planetary systems. The Milky Way (our galaxy) has some 400 billion stars. The observable universe has somewhere between one and two trillion galaxies.

There is a host of information out there on the web. Locally there is the Cambridge Astronomical Association www.caa-cya.org that hold public meetings at the Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge.

Colin Hall

P.S. Light pollution is a serious problem for both astronomers and wildlife alike. So, a gentle plea, if you don't have to keep that outside light on it would be very kind indeed to turn it off. Thanks.

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Our thankful experience with the virus



Having spent a lovely quiet Christmas with my immediate family we were devastated to learn

that my son in law, Dan, who was suffering from a head cold, tested positive for Covid 19. This threw us all into isolation during which time I became ill with chest pains and then tested positive with the virus.

During this uncertain time I continued to care for my 92 year old clinically vulnerable mother, albeit with full PPE, and became very concerned for her safety and prayed daily that she would not contract the disease as it would surely kill her.

I was taken aback at how ill I became (as I thought I was fit and healthy) and how quickly I went downhill! I have learnt how vulnerable we all are in our ageing years and how we must never take our health for granted. Both my daughter Victoria and her mother-in-law contracted the virus from Dan on return to Yorkshire and were quite poorly but are now thankfully recovered.

I confess I found it very hard to confine my isolation to the bedroom but I had to consider preventing my husband from contracting the virus. However, as I became even more poorly there was nowhere I would rather have been than tucked up in bed.

The illness itself was rather like a very bad dose of flu with a roller coaster of varying symptoms making you wonder if you'll ever recover or is this the moment it's going to get much worse?! I was determined to manage this alone at home and not impact further on others or the NHS.

I have been blessed with a comfortable home and a very devoted and caring husband, Gary, who attended to all my medical and dietary needs with meals and drugs on trays, improving his fitness in the process no end, going up and down stairs dozens of times a day! Thank goodness for TV, radio and wifi for company. I was also humbled by the love, kindness and generosity of

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spirit shown to us by our neighbours and friends with offers of help from every direction.

I have since asked Gary what it was like from his point of view. He said, “When your partner gets Covid a number of thoughts immediately hit you. Will they recover? How do I support them and is that even possible



without significant contact? In the early days when you were very unwell, how will I recognise if we need to call for medical assistance? If I catch it how will we manage then?

There are so many questions but two things are clear, your partner needs support and if as unwell as you, that is going to involve contact, albeit with wearing a mask and with a bottle of disinfectant at hand! So, in the end you just get on with it, hope that you are doing the right thing and ignore the protestations in the early days of ‘you shouldn’t be in here’ and later on of ‘it’s like being imprisoned’ and above all, have faith that it will be alright in the end.”

Gradually as I recovered for which I am so thankful to God and to whom I have continually prayed for my mother, my daughter Lucy, who cares for a very vulnerable young person with a double dose of isolation, and for Gary who has done such a great job as a carer. I am so grateful that the virus chain has now been broken and my family remain well.

This experience has reminded me just how important it is to protect our neighbours by following the guidelines as I would not wish this illness on anybody.

We must also be thankful that the vaccine is now being rolled out and I am selfishly thrilled that my mother has had her first covid jab!

Liz Stott

Royston & District Community Transport

Royston & District Community Transport are involved in taking people with no other transport options to their Covid-19 vaccinations. With the expected large increase of appointments for the vulnerable and elderly we ask for any drivers to come forward that will help to take people for their Covid vaccinations.

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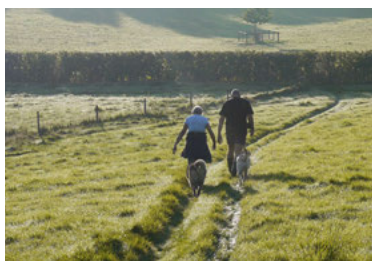
**15 February 2021 -
final date for submission of articles
for the March edition.**

New and old ways to keep us fit and healthy

Whilst for most of us a ‘dry’ January may be the usual route back into health and wellbeing, this year feels like a very different year. While we are restricted by hopefully the last leg of this global pandemic, home schooling, home working, home living and generally being home birds on ‘another level’ placing anymore restrictions on our lives has felt a little, let’s say, insurmountable!

So here are some alternative enjoyable ways to lift our spirits and keep us fit and healthy.

1. Here in the parish we all live in the most beautiful countryside. As David Attenborough (my hero) says, “nature is our biggest ally and our greatest inspiration”, a walk a day really can keep the doctor away. But it can also inspire our brains, imagination, dreams, creativity and overall connection to life itself. You can also combine this activity with a little hedgerow foraging, have you tried Nettle Soup? Nettles grow in abundance around here at this time of year and its a family favourite in my house.
2. Hobbies force you to take a break from your day-to-day stresses and carve out some time to devote to yourself. Not all hobbies are play though – some hobbies like reading, writing, designing or learning a new language can keep you productive and instil you with a sense of purpose while having fun. The more time you spend immersed in your hobby, the more satisfaction and sense of achievement you can get out of it.
3. Keeping our bodies in shape has endless benefits and to do this doesn’t mean you have to sign up for the next Iron Man competition. Physical activities like gardening, dancing, yoga and sports activities all keep us active while we are at home and can easily be integrated into your lifestyle and which in turn can benefit other areas of your life, such as increased confidence and increased energy. Zoom fitness classes have



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come a long way since lockdown 1.0 so why not try one if you haven't already. They are also a great way to stay connected and boost morale in your community and amongst friends.

4. Finally, we all need some space and reflection, like the ocean waves we need to retreat to build strength. Surrender to some down time. Treat yourself to a journal or, if you prefer to doodle, a blank sketch pad and let your creativity flow. Let go of expectation and accept whatever comes from within you.

Whatever you do, enjoy time with your loved ones, animals and the outdoors and remember the impermanence of it all, like the changing seasons nothing stays the same what you experience today is the tomorrow you were so worried about yesterday. Stay fit and healthy. With love.

Becky Duncan

Yoga Teacher, Chanting Stork Yoga

Many thanks to all our contributors. The Village Web is a submissions based magazine created and delivered entirely by volunteers on behalf of the Icknield Way Parish. The magazine's printing costs are supported financially by advertisers.

The editorial team is always seeking a diverse range of articles, poems, photos etc. for publication which would be of general interest.

Those interested in joining the Web's editorial team would be very welcome.

For further information contact an editorial team member or Anand Sodadasi. Contact details can be found on the Parish Contact page - the last page of the magazine.

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Elmdon – John Holford 838286

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The Parish of the
Icknield Way Villages

Published by the Parish of The Icknield Way Villages
on behalf of the eight churches in our community

**The coldest day of the year, so far, on
the Icknield Way Trail**



*Back cover photo - painting of a Great Crested Grebe
with chicks - by Robert E Fuller.*



Distributed free by volunteers to all the homes in the Parish of the Icknield Way Villages - Chrishall, Elmdon with Wenden Lofts, Duddenhoe End, Great Chishill, Little Chishill, Heydon and Strethall