

Charlton St. Peter, Rushall & Upavon
TOGETHER
Church & Village News



February 
2021

Useful Numbers

Doctors.... Avon Valley

Upavon 630221 Durrington 653378
Cross Plains 652221

Salisbury Hospital 01722 336262
NHS Help Line 111 Police 101

Gas 0800 111999 Electricity 0800 0727282
Environmental Agency 0800 807060
Flood Line 0345 9881188

Plainwatch 01980 674700.
PLAINWATCH@landmarc.mod.uk

Upavon Link 07501004349
Durrington Link 01980 594857

Schools

Rushall C of E Primary 01980 630360
Avon Valley College 01980 652467
Pewsey Vale Secondary School
01672 565000

Upavon Village Store & Post Office
01980 630268

WHO TO CONTACT :

Team Rector: Revd. Canon Deborah Larkey (Day off Friday): Tel: 01672 851746
deborahlarkey@btinternet.com The Rectory, Woodborough, Pewsey, SN9 5PH
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jennifer.totney@gmail.com The Rectory, Pewsey SN9 5DL;
Revd. Mark Windsor (Day off Thursday): Tel: 01672 564265
markwindsor923@btinternet.com, The Vicarage, Wilcot, Pewsey, SN9 5NS.

Licensed Lay Minister, Anne Mantle.

Rural Dean: Revd. Canon Gerald Osborne, Tel: 01672 563459.

PEWSEY TEAM OFFICE: Bouverie Hall, Pewsey 01672 562221

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11am to 3pm; Wednesday 12noon to 3pm.

EMAIL: team.office@valeofpewsey.org website: <http://www.valeofpewsey.org>

CHURCHWARDENS

Upavon	Dr Bill Coker	01980 630803
	Dr Virginia Thorne	630830
Rushall	Vacancies	
Charlton St Peter	Mrs Rosie Cunningham	630321
	Mrs Ali Lacey	630385

LAY PASTORAL ASSISTANTS

Mr Bill Bracher	630173
Mrs Anne Prince	630008

UPAVON RUSHALL & CHARLTON LINK

Link Line	07501 004349
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TOGETHER MAGAZINE ADVERTISING AND REVENUE and items of news or notices for the next issue, contact the Together team, Tel: 01980 630023 or email: togetherteam@btinternet.com by the 15th of the month, please.

Please contact a member of the clergy to discuss Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Confirmation, the Blessing of your home, Service of Prayer and Dedication, Renewal of Wedding Vows. To visit in hospital, and the dying at home or in hospital. The clergy are here to help and serve, with our Lay Pastoral Assistants

HOSPITAL VISITS - If you need a visit in hospital, or know someone who has been taken in who would like a visit, please contact a member of the clergy.

HOME COMMUNIONS - If you know someone who is unable to get to church and wishes to receive Communion, please contact Bill Bracher on 01980 630173 and he will make arrangements for this to happen.

THE CLERGY LETTER



I hope you are managing to keep safe and well in these difficult and uncertain times.

Perhaps, like me, you are taking comfort in the increased daylight hours and in the hope of Spring. The appearance of snowdrops and crocus in gardens and churchyards is always a wonder to behold, but even more so this year. Birds are investigating new nesting sites and building up strength for the busy months ahead. If you are a gardener, then you might be sorting out your packs of seeds ready for sowing and planting.

At this time of year, it helps to have something good to look forward to and something good to do. Someone told me today that they were doing more cooking in lockdown, especially making more soup using good local ingredients. Sounds delicious and very practical to freeze portions for another day. Usually many of us would be dreaming of holidays and planning days out with family and friends, but such things are rather 'on hold' until we know that the virus is more under control. Plans are provisional as we wait for the vaccine to take effect and be more widely administered. The churches are beginning to think of what they might do when it is safe to meet again. There will be plenty of coffee mornings and other gatherings to look forward to. That is a real sign of hope.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 17th February. For services (online or in church) please check locally and on the Team website for more details – www.valeofpewsey.org At the time of writing, churches in the Team are open for private prayer and peaceful reflection at the times they were before, but to protect congregations from infection risk, there are no planned Services of public worship. That is why there is less information in this magazine. As soon as it is safe to do so, we will begin services in church again.

During Lent there will be daily emails sent out to people all over the Vale and beyond, with a reflection and a prayer on the theme of **St. John's Gospel**. Do contact us if you would like to receive these helpful daily emails. On the Church of England website, you can also find **#LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story**. Rather than a Lent Course, these are opportunities to 'find ourselves in the greatest story ever told and then to invite others to join in too'. In Lent, like Jesus, we face the desert stillness with hope and prayer, knowing that at the end of those forty days, the bright Resurrection joys of Easter await us.

Meanwhile, we continue to pray for strength and protection for doctors, nurses and health care professionals, for teachers working so hard for children in their care, and for keyworkers serving the community so selflessly. We thank God for them. We pray for neighbours and for those who mourn and for those in need across the world. Amen.

As you look forward in hope, may God bless and protect you and your family.

Deb Larkey (Team Rector)

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals:

May they rest in Peace

Kenneth Windridge. Funeral on 4th January at Salisbury Crematorium

Ann Rosina Jane Handstock. Funeral on 5th January at West Wilts Crematorium

Charles 'Barry' Wookey. Funeral on 11th January at St Matthew, Rushall

Vanda Violet Hersleb. Funeral on 13th January at West Wilts Crematorium

Frederick 'John' Ford. Funeral on 18th January at St Peter, Manningford

Lent 2021

Wednesday 17th February Ash Wednesday

We will mark the beginning of Lent with a service at 10am. For details of how to attend check the sofa sheet and website.

Lent Groups

Discussion groups will begin the week of 22nd February on Zoom.

This will include some groups reflecting on the book 'Saying Yes to Life' by Ruth Valerio as well as other Bible discussion groups. More details will be available on the sofa sheet and website or contact the clergy to find out more.

Poetry Discussion Monday evenings 1st March and 22nd March 7.30pm. Contact Jennifer if you would like to receive some poems to read in advance and/or suggest a poem to discuss.

Come and See

As Pewsey Deanery we will be journeying through John's gospel with a daily short reflection by email – sign up at pewseydeaneryprayers@gmail.com if you are not already on the list.

On Tuesday evenings on Zoom starting on Shrove Tuesday 16th February, Patrick Whitworth will lead a reflection and discussions on 'Conversations with Jesus from St John's Gospel.'

#LiveLent2021

Go to churchofengland.org to find the national resources for #LiveLent2021 God's Story, Our Story including a free app with a daily reflection.

Vale of Pewsey Team online church services

Wednesdays: Morning Prayer at 10am

with coffee and a chat via Zoom

Sundays: Morning Worship at 11am via Zoom and YouTube

Team Website: <http://www.valeofpewsey.org>

St Mary's Church, Upavon

St Mary's is open daily from 0830-1600 hrs for private prayer and reflection when the Church will be unsupervised; visitors are requested to follow the guidance notices on church doors and inside the church. All are also asked to record their contact details in the sheets provided in case of subsequent need by NHS Test and Trace. Please use hand sanitiser on entering and leaving and wear a face covering whilst in the building.

St Matthew's Church, Rushall

St Matthew's is open from 1000-1200 hrs on Sundays and Wednesdays for individual prayer and reflection. Individuals are asked to comply with signage, wear a face covering whilst in the building and use the provided hand sanitiser.



Join the Prospect Hospice spring raffle and you could win £2,000 cash!

Support Prospect Hospice and help raise vital funds to support end of life care in the local community by taking part in their spring raffle. You could win some fantastic cash prizes, all thanks to the generous people at [Imagine Cruising](#).

First prize **£2,000**

Second prize **£500**

Third prize **£250**

Plus five luck winners will receive a prize of **£50** each.

To enter all you need to do is visit www.prospect-hospice.net/springraffle. Tickets costs just £1 each and with every ticket purchased you will be contributing to the care and support that Prospect Hospice provide to local people living with a life limiting illness. Every pound really does make a difference so, whether you're looking to buy a single ticket or many, thank you for supporting Prospect Hospice in this way. Entries close on Monday 22 March 2021. For full terms and conditions, please visit www.prospect-hospice.net/springraffle

London Marathon places available

As a fundraising event, nothing can compete with the marathon, with thousands of people taking to the streets and raising money for causes close to their heart. Since its start in 1981 over £1 billion have been raised for good causes.

If 2021 is going to be your year and you're ready to take on this amazing challenge, apply now for one of Prospect's charity places and run for your local hospice.

www.prospect-hospice.net/london-marathon-2021

Exercise Out to Help Out

If you are glad to see the back of 2020 and looking for ways to make 2021 your year then look no further...

You may have eaten out to help out, now your local hospice is asking you to exercise out to help out. In return, you'll be ticking that New Year's resolution and improving your fitness at the same time as boosting your wellbeing and mental health.

Swim, Cycle, Run, Walk or climb your way into 2021 with this versatile fundraising initiative from Prospect Hospice. The choice is entirely yours!

Don't let that New Year motivation disappear and sign up today. Just contact the hospice's fundraising team at fundraisingandevents@prospect-hospice.net or call 01793 813355.

UPAVON AND RUSHALL VILLAGE BUDDIES HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE COVID-19 THREAT

Do you need help? Are you in one of the designated high-risk groups – over 70, have underlying medical issues or are pregnant? Are you exhibiting possible Covid-19 symptoms – dry cough, shortness of breath, high temperature – and have to self-isolate? If you don't have anyone to turn to then our Village Buddies can assist with delivery of food or medication from the surgery, collecting takeaways from the pubs, walking your dog or just telephoning to make sure you are ok. Contact one of those below with your name and phone number and they will find a Buddy to help. Complete confidentiality will be maintained.

Can you be a Village Buddy? Please contact one of those below with your name and phone number if you're willing to become a Buddy. Think about what you're prepared to do to help e.g. shopping, dog walking, etc. All information will be kept confidential. **Please still make contact even if you are in one of the high-risk groups** (over 70; suffering underlying medical issues; or pregnant). There might still be something you can do to help but it may limit the options!

In Upavon contact: Tim Turnbull 07802 187663 and timequal@gmail.com or

In Rushall contact: Colin Gale 01980 630034 and co_jac@talktalk.net

Buddies' website: www.upavonbuddies.com

UPAVON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council information may be seen on the Parish Council website:
www.upavonpc.co.uk,

WILTSHIRE LIBRARIES

Wiltshire Libraries including the Mobile Library Service: Due to the national lockdown that started on 5 Jan the public Mobile Libraries had to close. Some branch libraries have now re-opened offering an 'Order and collect' service during the lockdown. Wiltshire Libraries will continue to review this situation and the latest news on libraries, including opening hours and contact telephone numbers can be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries .

Any library books that you currently have on loan from Wiltshire Libraries (including the mobiles) will be automatically renewed during the lockdown. Wiltshire libraries continues to offer all members free access to thousands of free eBooks; eMagazines; and eAudio-books (did I mention they were free?!) – details at the website above.

Wiltshire Council



Community First Responders

I have recently been asked how Community First Responders (CFR) are dispatched to emergencies.

Community First Responders are volunteers and book for on call duties when they are available.

Some work full time and are only able to respond during out of work hours.

During the current Covid pandemic some CFRs have been stood down as they are shielding because of age or other limitations.

All Community First Responders in Wiltshire are allocated to emergencies by South Western Ambulance control centre following a 999 call.

Paramedic crews are alerted to the emergency.

If a local CFR is on call they will be contacted by the Control Centre and given details of the emergency and location.

If CFRs based in Upavon or Rushall are not on duty Control will try to contact a CFR from Pewsey or Netheravon or another reasonably near location.

If no local CFRs are available then Paramedics will respond as soon as possible.

Jan Coker, Community First Responder

CHARLTON ST PETER 100 CLUB

(Licensed by Wiltshire Council for the Vale of Pewsey Team of Churches.)

Our November 100 Club Draw took place in at the end of November.

Congratulations to the lucky winners:-

- £100 M. Stacey (Rushall) No. 49
- £50 A. Fowle (Charlton) No. 18
- £50 B. Andersen (Charlton) No.26
- £25 J. Darby (Charlton) No. 77
- £25 D. Broughton (Woodborough) No. 4

Our Christmas 100 Club Draw took place after our Outdoor Carol Service on Christmas Eve. Congratulations to the lucky winners:-

- £250 A. Alderman No. 58
- £50 J. Bottomley (Leics.) No. 84
- £50 W.J. Bottomley (Leics.) No.22
- £25 L. Digby Bell (Charlton) No. 24
- £25 T.M. Callingham (Charlton) No. 3

Our January 100 Club Draw winners will be published in the next magazine.

We still have a few numbers available, so if you are interested in purchasing number for £5 a month, please contact Ali Lacey 630385.

LEAD AND THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

It's a great temptation in life to look for clear and straightforward reasons as to why things happen. The discovery of scientific laws has certainly made us feel that in many areas of life we can explain why things take place and we can even forecast what will happen in the future if we initiate a train of events. If I drop a reasonably heavy object from my bedroom window I can forecast, with the help of Newton's laws of motion and gravitational attraction, how long it will take to reach the ground. Not very useful perhaps, but certainly do-able. Would that this ability to predict events accurately existed in other areas of life!

In the 1980s a chemist published an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* arguing that lead poisoning contributed to the decline of the Roman Empire. This article provoked a furious response from classicists and historians who accused the author of using false evidence, of being ignorant of primary sources and of being uncritical of translated material. The author in his reply to this tirade stated that his critics in turn knew very little about lead poisoning. He was not arguing that lead poisoning was a major factor in the decline of the Roman Empire, just that it may have played a small part.

Lead has been used by man for at least 6,000 years. It was an attractive metal for cultures using simple technology. It was obtained from its natural ore, galena (lead sulphide), which also contained variable amounts of silver. In fact the so called silver mines of the ancient world were actually lead mines. Lead was obtained from the ore relatively easily as it has a low melting point. It is both malleable and ductile and can be joined by moderate heating to form pipes. The Romans made great use of this property. However, the Romans were no slouches when it came to recognizing ill effects. Vitruvius knew that water conducted through earthen pipes was more wholesome than that through lead pipes. He based this on the fact that lead carbonate was obtained from lead by oxidation and weathering and that this substance was 'injurious to the human system'. The Romans also noted that slaves in lead mines were of a pallid complexion due to the 'noxious effects on the vigor of their blood'. No doubt just being a slave didn't help much either!

Many cooking vessels were made from lead and Roman cooking methods used large quantities of unfermented grape juice. This was reduced by heating to about half its original volume to produce *defrutum*. This was then used to enhance the colour and flavour of a whole range of dishes. Often honey was added to *defrutum* and the whole mixture heated in a leaden vessel until it was a third of the original volume. Dried figs or quinces could also be added to thicken the final product. This product

was then served as a sauce available at table. Its use was essentially that of a sweetener.

The Romans were keen on sauces; their favourite being *garum*. This was made from the fresh blood of a fish, 'still writhing,' to which were added the fish's intestines along with salt, various herbs and crushed olives. This mixture was then left to ferment before being served. Apparently when mixed with wine it enhanced the flavour of boiled meats and mussels in particular.

The use of leaden cooking vessels by the Romans must certainly have given regular users of *defrutum* a higher than desirable lead intake. Roman bones found in London have been analysed for lead levels and these were noted to be higher than one would find today. The most interesting fact is that the sort of levels recorded could have reduced fertility in that population. This would have been yet another factor to have had a generally deleterious effect on the population along with the many other factors reducing life expectancy at that time.

There were many factors contributing to the decline of the Roman Empire; internal political factors, shifting geopolitical alliances and climatic changes. In the 6th CE a period of warm, wet and stable weather that had been present for several hundred years was followed by a small but significant drop in temperature across Europe. Along with a fall in agricultural production this encouraged the spread of both smallpox and *Yersinia pestis*, the causative agent of plague. So not just lead!

Bill Coker

ENFORD GARDENING CLUB

The planned meeting for Thursday 11th February 2021 has been cancelled due to the COVID situation. We feel it is unwise to hold this meeting as we would not want to put anyone at risk.

We will review the situation for our planned meeting in March 2021 and let you all know, but feel it is unlikely that we will be able to hold it.

We will continue to send out our monthly newsletter for which we welcome your contributions. If you would like to join the list, please let me know.

In the meantime, Happy New Year, and stay safe.

Further details from Fanny Middleton 01980 671645

email: fannysurtees@btinternet.com

NURTURE NATURE

Prince Charles and David Attenborough – and others – are expressing in the media their concerns for the Planet. Suggestion – Google them and see if you can incorporate their good ideas into your garden planning for 2021. We should be encouraging the children to take a more active part. Involving the next generation is something we have to do. Encourage them to do Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) of where they live, in order to make constructive plans and changes to make them more hospitable to wildlife.

Hints and Tips – Feeding Birds

Feeding small birds throughout the year can be important for their survival, but especially in the colder months.

In winter natural food sources are scarce and supplementary food, both in gardens and throughout the wider countryside, is essential. It is proven that winter feeding can improve breeding success in the spring.

Where to put your feeders and bird bath

Site your feeders and bird bath away from walls and fences, where cats could pounce from, and if cats do come into your garden, then consider using a bird table rather than putting food down on the ground. Place feeders near hedges, trees and other dense, large shrubs. This will allow small birds to get away fast to safety should a predator like a magpie or sparrow hawk be hunting them. Growing more prickly shrubs and trees helps birds to find safety, and will also provide nesting sites.

Obstacles impeding the flight paths of would-be predators will give your garden birds more time to flee and so a better chance of evading such predators and surviving.

Nest Boxes

Different birds need different places for nest sites and will build different nests. Blackbirds and thrushes build 'open cup' nests in hedges and shrubs. Finches build small dense cocoon nests higher up in trees. Tits would prefer a hole in a tree or wall, and due to our tidying away so many rotten trees, they will readily take to a nest box as an alternative. Robins and wrens are very adaptable and will often make their nest close to your home or shed – often inside! Sparrows, swallows, house martins and swifts will all take to nest boxes, and with modern houses and steel barns, there is often no other option for them.

Grey Squirrels

To prevent grey squirrels from stealing your peanuts chop up fresh salad peppers and mix these with your bird food. Time it so the bird food runs out at the same time the peppers start to rot, and they can all be cleaned out at the same time. Squirrels dislike all parts of the capsicum pepper, and even growing the plant can deter them. They are also allergic to peppermint, so dab some peppermint oil on the items squirrels nibble on, remembering to refresh after rain. Squirrels not only steal your bird food, but also destroy habitat, and will eat eggs, nestlings, fledglings and even adult birds when they can. They will often rob birds' nests or break into them to eat what is inside. (Rats also).

Some Collective Nouns for Bird Species

A brace of ducks

A dole of doves,

A dropping of pigeons,

A cast of falcons/hawks,

A clutch of chicks,

A company of widgeons,

A conspiracy of ravens, (ravens do fly over the village – they have a distinctive croak call)

A convocation of eagles,

A covey of coots,

A drumming of grouse,

An exaltation of larks, (on the Red List for scarcity and decline)

A fall of woodcocks, (on The Red List for scarcity and decline)

A deceit of lapwings, (on The Red List)

A wake of buzzards,

A charm of goldfinches,

A murder of crows,

A chime of wrens,

A herd of swans.

This is not an inexhaustible list, please write in with any others you know for future editions.

The Red List will be explained in the March edition of the magazine.

Hints and Tips for Gardening for Wildlife

Most birds rely on a variety of foods, such as insects, slugs, snails, worms, pollen, fruit, buds and seeds. Having a range of these available should attract a variety of birds to your garden.

Planting Ideas

Create diverse habitats and food sources to attract a wide range of insects, birds and small mammals,

Anything that attracts insects will subsequently attract birds,

Pollen rich flowers will always look good and offer plenty of food for insects, especially for bees which can only access the pollen from single flowers, not double,

Different height levels will attract different types of birds – many species prefer to nest at particular heights,

Tall hedges often have many species of birds nesting at the same time and provide habitat for a wide range of other creatures – why not plant a natural hedge including Hornbeam, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Blackthorn, Wild Cherry, Guelder Rose and Dog Rose? Not Leylandii!

Climbers attract insects and provide extra height and levels of habitat, especially valuable in the small garden where space is at a premium, try jasmine, ivy, clematis and honeysuckle, especially to attract Spotted Flycatchers, a Red List summer visitor.

Dense ground cover will protect small animals and birds from predators, try Fuchsia, Berberis, Pyracantha and perennials (spiky plants will deter predators). Also, when trained on a house or around windows such plants act as burglar deterrents!

Bushy shrubs and trees will provide extra nesting sites and escape routes from predator attacks – Amelanchia and Hazel, Viburnum, Holly and Mahonia are good examples.

Many shrubs like Buddleia and Forsythia and fruiting trees such as Cherry, Damson, Plum, Apple, Pear and Medlar, even Mulberry if you can source one, attract bees, butterflies and other insects, and birds, such as bullfinches, like to eat the buds too. More planting ideas next month.

One Last Thing:

From a quiet window enjoy your garden; watch the birds, insects and animals. We haven't touched on other species of wildlife, viz bats, frogs and toads, hedgehogs, lizards, newts, slow worms, wood mice, shrews, moles and other small mammals etc etc!

Quote of the Month for Gardeners

Your first job is to prepare the soil. The best tool for this is your neighbour's motorised garden rotovator. If your neighbour does not own a rotovator, suggest that he buy one. Dave Barry

Connecting With Nature

Faith Douglas, a nurse, has written about how to 'shake the stresses out of your tresses' after long C19 shifts, by experiencing nature. Lockdown has left us craving

real connections with people, and Douglas says that the natural world enhances not just connection with nature but with others, and ourselves. She recommends firstly looking at the sky and clouds. Listening, listen to the sounds of nature, which are constantly changing, and they can induce feelings of serenity and well-being – a good way of decompressing! It may be somewhat chilly for her last tip – which is to go barefoot, a great way of grounding ourselves and dispelling anxiety.

Douglas urges us to celebrate the wind, feel it, listen to it, 'watch' it and walk with it, enjoying the freshness and invigoration the wind gives. Also, on your walks/runs count the colours of the countryside – you'll be surprised how many there are! We are fortunate having homes so close to Nature to be able to experience the openness of the countryside – with grazing livestock, rediscovered familiar landscapes and enjoying new vistas – dreamy water meadows, climbing hills to wander through stately rings of trees, taking in wonderful views and smelling the different odours of the changing habitats.

Otis Tarda (Great Bustard)

So What Have You Been Doing During Lockdown?

This change of lifestyle has been a great shock to many of us. We have been urged to keep fit, but I bet that you, like me, started out with good intentions, but now that it has got cold and foggy, a walk seems less enticing. Dog owners have to of course, but you see some with thick anoraks and gritted teeth, willing their dogs to hurry up so that they can both get home and warm. Cats, however, love lockdown, as there is always someone around to give them that Oh So Necessary Titbit, in a nice warm house.

Days need filling nevertheless. Getting up later and a leisurely breakfast helps, and there are still mundane jobs like making beds and washing laundry that have to be done. Just don't mention ironing. We are exhorted to try out new cooking, but when you are half way through a new recipe and find it needs Ras-el-hanout (look it up in Wikipedia), which is not likely to be stocked by our village shop, I give up and cook whatever is in the freezer. So you turn to long put-off jobs around the house. During the first lockdown the weather was lovely, so I painted the garden fence, which also gave me the welcome chance to talk to passers-by. Then I painted the back fence, all 6 feet of it, dug the flowerbeds, and retired gracefully to my hammock. My husband was shielding, so that gave me the excuse to rearrange all the furniture, and introduced me to the delights of internet shopping. And food is always needed, so after weeks of staying up until midnight to get a food delivery slot, I was very grateful

when Tesco introduced priority slots, so that we can now book up to 3 weeks ahead. And many thanks to the local pubs who started selling take-away meals.

The summer was lovely, when I managed to take all my granddaughters to Centre Parcs, but then came the second, and now third lockdown. I try to fill my days with feeding and watching the birds, playing my piano, and doing jigsaws. I swap jigsaws with my sister in London and a friend in Bristol, which keeps the postman busy, but even jigsaws pale after a while. Then my youngest granddaughter asked me in October to knit her a crocodile, a bright green crocodile. I gaily said yes, but this proved a challenge that kept me busy until Christmas, as a simple looking pattern turned out to be quite fiendish. It was with great relief that I handed it over (socially distancing of course), and was very chuffed when it turned out to be one of her most loved Christmas presents.

Television has helped of course. I have watched all the episodes of Vicar of Dibley for the first time, and I wish all our local committee meetings could be as lively as theirs. And for anyone who has Netflix I can thoroughly recommend, Unorthodox , about a girl who flees a strict Hasidic family for the delights of Berlin.

My son has introduced me to nano-blocks, tiny Lego-like pieces only 4mm by 5mm, with which you can build miniature models ranging from flamingoes to pagodas. If you are really ambitious you can even make a one foot long Titanic, with 1500 bricks, but that will need a lot of experience (and patience). The Pewsey Vale U3A has been a godsend, with Zoom Book Clubs and Zoom singing, and chatty newsletters. I foolishly set the members a Christmas Challenge asking them to list all the countries that they have visited, and have since been inundated with emails mentioning places ranging from Afghanistan to South Georgia. Funny how many people forget trips to Wales though.

Writing this makes it seem that I have been very busy, but the truth is I am bored stiff and just longing for the vaccine and a return to normal life. So I ask you, what have you been doing during lockdown?

Now off to coffee and a comfy chair and read the Sunday Paper. That should keep me occupied until lunchtime.

Virginia