

PARISH CALENDAR 2020

DECEMBER			EVENT	Sidesmen/ women	Altar Flowers	Church Cleaners
6th	Advent II	11.15 am	Holy Communion Revd Andy Froud	Mr B Lewis	NO	Hon Mrs R Assheton Mrs C Naylor
13th	Advent III	11.15 am	Matins Revd Andy Froud	Mr A Herron	FLOWERS	Mr & Mrs B Lewis
18th	Friday	6.00 pm	Carols from Downham	ON LINE	See Page 3	
20th	Advent IV	11.15 am	Holy Communion Revd Andy Froud	Mrs E Parker	IN ADVENT	Mrs P McFall Mrs M Roskell
24th	Christmas Eve	4.00 pm	Doorstep Christingle	See Page 3		
		11.30 pm	Midnight Communion	At St Mary Magdalene Clitheroe		
25th	Christmas Day	11.15 am	Holy Communion Revd Andy Froud	Mrs P McFall		
27th	Christmas I	11.15 am	Matins Revd Andy Froud	Mr K Herron		Mrs J Feibel Mrs A Wallace

JANUARY 2021

3rd	Christmas II	11.15 am	Holy Communion Revd Andy Froud	Mr T McLean		Mrs D Braithwaite Mrs J Shepherd
6th	Wednesday	Epiphany				

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST LEONARD IS MOST GRATEFUL TO THE INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS THAT SPONSOR THE PARISH NEWSLETTER
IN DECEMBER THE NEWSLETTER IS SPONSORED IN LOVING MEMORY OF NINA HEALEY

OUR PRIEST IN CHARGE— The Revd Andy Froud

The Vicarage, Church Street, Clitheroe BB7 2DD
01200 423317—0796 957 6691—andyfroud@gmail.com

OUR CHURCH WARDENS

The Hon Ralph Assheton—441210 Mrs Philippa McFall - 44148 Mr Ian Walton—445063

DOWNHAM VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman Mr Neil Wallace—441196
Hon Secretary Mrs Clare Ashworth—445112
Village Hall Bookings—info@downhamvillagehall.org.uk

PARISH OF ST. LEONARD

DOWNHAM & TWISTON

newsletter

Issue 12 December 2020



From The Revd Andy Froud

Dear Friends

I have a theory that the world is divided into two types of people: people who say yes and people who say no. Covid 19 has provided the people who say no with yet another reason to say no. No, we can't provide that service, no we can't open, no we can't supply that. Martyn James, from complaints website Resolver says: "How can companies say that, six months on, they do not have enough call centre staff to sort out customer issues? Particularly now, when people need jobs." The best example I've seen was Eurostar, who told their customers that free wifi was not available for second class passengers "because of coronavirus".

Of course the coronavirus has caused huge economic dislocation and more importantly millions of premature deaths from the virus itself and other connected reasons. But it should not be an excuse for us failing to do what we ought to do: companies should provide decent customer care and we should all do whatever we can to care for others.

So are you a person who says no or yes? The Bible tells us there were people whose first reaction to the birth of Jesus was a no. Joseph initially resolved not to marry Mary, the people who turned away the family in Bethlehem and, of course Herod.

But sometimes God can turn a no into a yes. Joseph changes his mind after an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream: the innkeeper who makes the stable available for the holy family. And Mary's resounding "Yes" in the words of the magnificat is the response to God's yes for His creation in the gift of Jesus Christ

Yours in Christ,

Downham Social Media Resources

The public Facebook page -
"Downham Village"

The private Facebook page
"Downham & Twiston Residents"

Various Whatsapp groups including
"Downham WI Here to Help"

ONLINE CHURCH RESOURCES

Regular worship is streamed

by Rev Andy Froud on
Youtube via
St. Mary Magdalene
website

www.stmarysclitheroe.co.uk

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin: Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

DOWNHAM ST. LEONARD		FACTS & FIGURES	
	September	October	2020
Communicants	53	20	201
Collections £			
Services	512	414	2,770
Visitors	-	-	123
Donations	272	272	8,649
House Boxes	-	-	30
Special	235	742	7,799
Total	1,019	1,428	17,473

IN OUR PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS

Ian Walton Shaun Roney, Harry and Kath Brown and Jon Whitsey.
and to those with ongoing medical treatments and those shielding.

Nina Healey nee Robinson

Nina Healey passed away on Thursday 1st October 2020 aged 79 years. She was a Downham girl born and bred. She was born at West Lane Farm and later lived at Chapel Brow, Downham. The family later moved away due to her husband's employment as a Police Officer. She was a church member and in the choir and was married at the church in 1961. She had 2 children, Kay and David. Nina worked as a Financial Officer for the local authority. When they both retired they came to live at Rimington where they rekindled old friendships and made several new ones. She was a member of the WI and on the Clitheroe Area Show Committee.

Nina was a kind and gentle person to all and a loving wife and mum and is sadly missed by everyone.
Christine Healey



SPECTATOR

I'M GOING to try to persuade Jon to let me put the Christmas decorations up early this year. It's been such a funny old year that I feel we need more spoiling than usual and there's nothing as cheery as twinkly lighting

It's not easy thinking of ways to treat yourself but we have discovered film afternoons, or even mornings. It feels very decadent watching TV during the day. We get into the Re runs of old box set favourites like the Vicar of Dibley and Dinner Ladies with the glorious Victoria Wood. When the weather is awful, we have disaster movies like The Day After Tomorrow, when New York freezes over and Deep Impact, a Comet is about to hit earth. If you don't want to get too faraway from the disaster that is 2020, I can recommend Contagion which was made in 2011 but I guarantee you will spend the whole of the movie with your mouth open thinking, WHAT! This must have been made in 2021!! Yes that's right I said 2021. I am always plugging for golden oldie classics like Angels With Dirty Faces, Jimmy Cagney, or Love is a Many Splendoured thing, a brilliant weepie

You will have guessed by now that I have a rather large collection of DVDs, and if anyone would like to borrow one or two they would be welcome. You can't beat a good film for taking you away from reality and if ever we needed to be taken away etc etc

Back to Christmas decorations, I just asked Jonathan and the conversation went like this
Me...can we have the Christmas decorations up early this year?
Jon...how early?
Me...well someone I know won't let his wife put them up until after bonfire night
Jon.....WHAT
ME....1st December?
Jon...but no earlier
Me..yes boss..

Linda skips out of room...well..Shuffles slowly anyway...
With a bit of a limp on one side..but singing as she goes, yay

The Last Words on 2020...

"May you live in interesting times" goes the oft quoted Chinese curse.
As we bid farewell to 2020, perhaps this is an opportunity to reflect on how our Parish "stepped up" and organised itself to help out and take care of each other during the difficult days of Lockdown.

In our very special part of Lancashire, we are blessed with the stone and mortar of a cherished and charming built heritage, all set within spectacular countryside; but a truly vibrant, living community is made of caring neighbours, looking out for each other, in a way that adversities, such as Covid-19, may only truly demonstrate.
JA



NEW SOCIAL CARE SERVICE PILOTED

Our Special Correspondent, Twiston

I KNEW that the residents of Downham and Twiston were a resilient lot, but wasn't previously aware of how competitive they can be to get a mention, of any sort, in this venerable organ. That was until I was accosted (there's no other word for it, and if you know the individual concerned you'll agree I'm sure), yes accosted by our own *Spectator* in Church early in November who demanded of me "so what have you done to get to top of sick list?" I *think* she meant it in a loving, neighbourly way. Well, I've had a stroke if you must know and after a couple of days in the loving embrace of the NHS (Blackburn branch), I have been recovering at home, supported by Laura and our son and daughter, who both live away from home. Supported is perhaps too generous a description, although I do understand that family can react differently to the news of sudden ill-health in a parent or loved one.

My son, Tom's, reaction, for example was to come round, demand my PIN numbers and nick my car. Bless him – he is of mixed Scouse heritage. Molly manifests her love by sending me photographs of her lockdown art works, mostly unflattering compositions of her father. After some initial enthusiasm, Laura mainly now just rolls her eyes at me, so exaggerated even with my stroke-induced impaired vision I can't fail to miss them, and hides the television remote. Laura has been afforded some brief respite by a couple of friends taking me for short walks to help build up my stamina. It has become evident that not only has Laura thus benefitted, but also my chaperones' wives who were equally glad of a bit of peace and quiet as we all struggle with being forced to spend much more time at home, and therefore together.

With this in mind, and as I have had to give up my previous business, I am pleased to announce the launch of my "hubby walking" service whereby, for a modest fee, you can drop your hubby off at my house whereupon I will take him for a walk until either you pick him back up again, or he finds his own way home. There will be a short risk assessment to ensure hubby is good with sheep before setting off, and I'm afraid that due to current restrictions, and on the off-chance he may not be housetrained, hubby will not be allowed in the house. Collection can be arranged from the outside privy if necessary, weather permitting (no roof). We are very "woke" in Twiston (yes, really), so this service is open to singletons, those in same-sex and civil marriages and relationships, any non-binaries out there who are identifying as telephone boxes or whatever, as well as those of you who are conforming to the restrictions of a Bourgeois society via the institution of marriage. I look forward to hearing from you (please provide own lead and treats).

Not so much Spectator, more *Spam & tater*.

IW

Covid-19 Cookbook

Inspired from WW2 and Mr Walton

Boxing Day "Planked" Spam, with mashed potato

Score a whole Spam and rub with brown sugar. Surround it on the plank with tomato slices, capped with large mushrooms doused in butter. Bake 25 minutes in hot oven, then ring with mashed potato and slip back the oven for quick browning. Bring to the table, plank and all and be greeted with cheers.

To give it a Ribble Valley twist, add balsamic vinegar and a splash of truffle oil. Add holly leaf for festive decoration.

Next month, Scrambled Scouse Surprise (Spam-free)

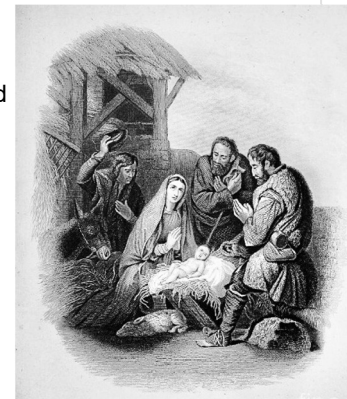


CAROLS FROM DOWNHAM - ONLINE

WITH this year being very different, many events have suffered at the hands of Covid. The annual Carol singing at the pub is no exception. This is why myself and Andy at number 15 have looked at organising a Facebook Live event on 18th December at 6.00 pm called **Carols from Downham**. This will be led by our vicar Andy Froud.

Please watch out online for further information. The location of the Carols will not be disclosed as we cannot risk a large amount of People turning up due to current restrictions. The hope is we can all enjoy this amazing event but in a slightly different way and still keep everyone as safe as we can.

Daniel Naylor-Frizzell



IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

As reported in the national press, in response to questions from a young citizen about Covid safety for Santa Claus, The PM Boris Johnson has drafted an official response:

"... I have put in a call to the North pole and I can tell you Father Christmas is ready and raring to go, as are all of the other reindeer.

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

"Leaving hand sanitiser by the cookies is an excellent idea to help prevent the spread of the virus – and using it yourself, and washing your hands regularly is the kind of thing that will get you and your friends on the nice list"

DOWNHAM PRE SCHOOL

THE run up to Christmas at Preschool is always good fun, we plan lots of fun activities and decorate Preschool with the children's work. This year will be different as we will not be able to hold our Christmas party and nativity performance at the village hall! So we have decided to record the performance for the parents and have a Santa's grotto at preschool so the children can receive a present - so watch out for the man in red! Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year from us all.

SC



St LEONARD's CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

WE HAVE waited until the last possible moment before confirming Christmas plans, due to the ever changing Covid rules.

Regular Sunday worship will restart from 6th December, with services commencing at 11.15 am. Numbers are still restricted, please make sure that you book in with the Hon Secretary.

There will be no Nativity performance in the run up to the festive day, but there will be a virtual Christingle in Downham. Before Christmas Eve you will receive a bag with instructions to make your own Christingle and everything you need (apart from an orange).

At 4 pm on Christmas Eve you can join people across Clitheroe and Chatburn on your own doorstep, light your candle and join in singing a carol. If you have not got your bag by Friday December 18th please text 0796 957 6691 and we'll make sure you get one.

On Christmas morning there will be a normal service of Communion at 11.15 am. On the Sunday after Christmas there will be no service of Nine Lessons and Carols, just one lesson and hopefully a verse or two of carols from the choir!

ROUND AND ABOUT

THE PARISH CHURCH

REMEMBRANCE

AS WITH so much activity this year, Covid rules changed everything at the last moment! Thankfully the wreath had arrived and the perspex "shadow soldiers" had been placed in their seats before the Saturday 31st October, announcement that all Church services would cease until 2nd December (at the earliest). An on the spot decision was taken by the Vicar and Wardens on the morning of Sunday 1st to hold our Remembrance service then and there. With the Church as full as rules would allow, we had a poignant (if early) reminder of the sacrifices made by servicemen and women down the years.

With the Church closed (except for individual private worship) a giant home made poppy was erected on the churchyard wall next to the gate to remind passers by that we had not forgotten, so nor should they. The Union flag flew defiantly on the 11th to mark the day.

ST LEONARD'S DAY TIDYING Saturday 7th November

MANY thanks to the gallant individuals who worked in splendid isolation to help tidy up the churchyard in the days leading up to Remembrance Day. While it was not the jolly gathering of past years, the end result is that the Lime trees have had a "haircut" and the exterior of the Church is reasonably tidy once again.



TREES

WORK has re-started to plant up that part of Hookcliffe Wood that could not be completed in the spring. Gratifyingly those planted in the drought of 6 months ago have survived and thrived, though frustratingly the deer have already found a way into the wood and are snacking on the tender young shoots! RCA



COFFEE CLUB

WELL It's that time of year again and Christmas is just round the corner. Where has this year gone? Although we've seen quite a few of you out and about and at Church, we really miss seeing you and catching up with all your news and are really looking forward to resuming our Coffee Club, hopefully in Spring. I've kept up with my baking to keep out of mischief and have tried out some new recipes to tempt you when we meet again. We'll all miss Carole of course, shouting at us from the stall, trying to part us from our money, but as I said earlier this year, we'll be raising a glass to her memory. Have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year. Lots of love, Barbara & Brian

CHRISTMAS BIN COLLECTION

ACCORDING to the stickers placed on wheelie bins, the refuse collection that would have been on Thursday 24th December will now be a day earlier – Wednesday 23rd December.

PENDLE PARTNERSHIP WORK A SUCCESS FOR EVERYONE!

THE PENDLE HILL Landscape Partnership's People Enjoying Nature project, has been really successful at offering supported outdoor sessions in the local landscape. However, it could not work without the partnership of the East Lancashire Community Prevention and Engagement Team, part of Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT). The partnership has added to their successes and has been celebrated as LSCFT's Partnership of the Year at the LSCFT Awards 2020.

The People Enjoying Nature (PEN) project aims to give local people the opportunity to explore walks and sites across the Pendle Hill countryside, learn new skills and get involved in practical conservation volunteering activities. With the help of Nick Alderson from the CPET team, the PEN project works to engage the benefits that spending time in nature can have on everyone's mental health and well-being supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the PEN project so far has delivered outdoor eco-therapy sessions to 104 different individuals from across Clitheroe, Pendle and Burnley.

Nick Alderson, Rural Development Officer for CPET says "Since the very beginning of the partnership it has been clear that there has been significant benefits for the community that the PEN project serves. Many participants have accessed the project to gain new skills and experience the benefits of being outdoors, however most importantly have also received social inclusion, which is the project's main goal. As always it has been a real pleasure to work with the PHLP and notably Jayne Ashe, whose passion and commitment is one of the main driving forces behind the project and partnerships success."



The PHLP hopes that the People Enjoying Nature project will show how important supported eco-therapy sessions are for everyone in society, and how post Covid 19 this support is going to be needed more than ever.
CH

Festival Bowland 2020

Like many of us, the Forest of Bowland AONB team had to make a lot of changes this year, and our Festival Bowland events programme was no exception.

Unable to get out and about and meet in person, we took the festival online – and alongside our regular visitors we met a whole host of new festival-goers in the process. We're busy working on next year's programme now and, whilst we'll probably be keeping things virtual until Easter, we hope we'll be able to offer some walks and workshops later in the year. For anyone who'd love to find out more about Bowland but can't join us physically for whatever reason, we'll be continuing with our online events right through the Festival.

We've also built up a great collection of recordings and videos featured during 2020 so, if there's an online event you missed, why not take a look and see if it's there? <https://www.forestofbowland.com/online-event-links>
For more information email sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk



SS



The Downham Magazine

A Record of Local Notes and Literary Jottings.

NO 1.

DECEMBER, 1888.

PRICE 3D.

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At the annual Christmas Tea Party the Children of the Village School, will give a Cantata entitled: "The White Garland."

In this musical charade the Queen of the school will bestow garlands upon the Persevering, Punctual, and Generous Scholars.

Much amusement will no doubt be caused by the Quarrelsome, Selfish and Tardy Scholars.

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Talking of Christmas, we hope we were not misinformed when we heard that the Downham Society of Hand Bell Ringers, who of late have indulged in peals of a very muffled nature, intend to favour us again this year with a performance at the Christmas Entertainment.

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A correspondent suggests, that since a portion of the Christmas decorations are already up it would be an excellent opportunity for exerting our decorative powers to the utmost, so as to render our rather barn-like edifice a little more worthy of the name of Church. The extraordinary abundance of holly berries this year seems to further the suggestion. We believe there are several members of the fair sex who are anxious to assist in this good work by making holly beading.

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The last ever edition of the Downham Magazine (No.13 - December 1889) was sadly announced thus:

OBIT.

Dec. 1st. The Downham Magazine, aged 13 mths.

"Take this: a line that does not need a verse:

"Nought is so bad, but that it might be worse."—Hall's Aphorisms

Printed and Published for the Proprietor, by A. Cowgill, at 27, Castle Street, Clitheroe.

November 1889.

(A masterclass in gentle encouragement in order to improve performance that 21st century "Management Gurus" could learn

+++

Downham Cricket in 1889.

Although to persons who have but periodically glanced down the cricketing columns in the Downham Magazine for the last five months it may seem that the cricket season at Downham has been a most unsuccessful and unproductive one, yet, if they had watched with the same interest every movement of each individual cricketer in Barley field, whether at

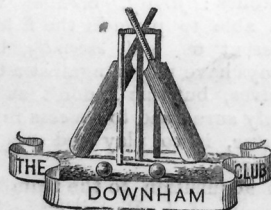
practice or in a match, as I have done when the opportunity allowed, they could not fail to have seen a change for the better.

I think, with but few exceptions, everyone, man for man, has made progress.

A word of praise is due to the non-subsidized groundsman who has quite acted up to his qualifications; they tell me he was seen as early as four o'clock one morning whetting his scythe in Barley field.

With these few jottings we leave cricket for the winter, and I hope next year, when it is roused from its state of hibernation by the annual General Meeting of the Club, there will be a renewal of the enthusiasm displayed this season, which will result in the tables being turned and in our now *pro tempore* victors finding themselves compelled to admit that in the year 1890 they have had to succumb to a superior team on the cricket ground at Downham.

W. O. A., Captain 1889.



BONFIRE NIGHT

THE PLAN to hold a "secret" bonfire on 5th November (as announced in last month's Thunderer) were brought forward by 24 hours in order to avoid any claims that a non essential activity was occurring during lockdown. The last minute change of plan meant that there was not time to tell everyone, so in the event calls were made to a few of the households in the parish with children, who could see the bonfire site in Hookcliffe Wood from their homes.

The fire was not as large as had been hoped, due to the heavy rain of the preceding days, but a glimmer was visible and cheered those who saw it. Despite the absence of advertising it was a surprise to find that some passers by (with torches) tried to make their way to the fire. They were thwarted by the deer fencing around Hookcliffe, so Covid security was maintained!

A few rockets were set off from around the bonfire, but will not be attempted again in the future. Slipping and tripping on a pitch black, debris covered hillside is definitely not to be repeated! Well done to Dan for letting off a few more fireworks in his garden, which was certainly a safer option.

RCA



DOWNHAM WI

The members had a surprise delivery!!

This year is our

Centenary, sadly the first celebration was on

March when we visited The Higher Trapp for a lunch. Covid-19 rules prevented continuation of the remaining programme

Members received a surprise parcel of Centenary mementos which provided a wonderful distraction from the rainy day in October, delivered by committee members.

In true WI style a WhatsApp Downham WI Here to Help page was set up to keep members informed and entertained! A weekly quiz on Thursdays at 4pm is proving to be a great success, with a prize for the winner. Yvonne Carter and Susan Whittaker host, with Susan setting her fabulous questions.

Whilst the quiz is the main object of the afternoon, the hilarious comments and general humour before, in between, and at the end are a delight. Members can also post comments or questions in between the quizzes, especially if they need support. There are zoom courses and virtual presentations available from local or national federations.

New members are most welcome and we have recently introduced 2 new ones. The monthly meetings held on 3rd Thursday will resume as soon as Covid19 rules allow. A programme of speakers is planned with extra events and visits. Interested? Contact Diane Poole email: dianepoole1984@gmail.com

BE ALERT

UNFORTUNATELY, there have been a number of high-value thefts in the Ribble Valley area—including within the Parish. CCTV identifying suspicious activity has been handed to the police. Please keep an eye out for your neighbours and maintain basic precautions against opportunist theft.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Wild Flowers of Winter.

'Edgerow 'Arry

The hedgerows of our Parish are blessed with a multitude of evergreens. Now that the November gales have stripped the deciduous trees of their leaves, the remaining verdant splashes of foliage from holly, ivy and fir trees give us hope on these short, dark days that rebirth and renewal is but a season away. Spring always follows Winter.

Although a welcome addition to our Christian celebrations, the analogy of the evergreen message has endured through

millennia: Ancient Egyptians decorated the Temples of their sun god Ra with green palm tree rushes; British druids embellished their holy sites with evergreen boughs and the Vikings believed evergreens were a gift of Balder their god of light and peace. Romans also celebrated Saturnalia at Winter Solstice by decorating their homes and temples with evergreen boughs.

In central Europe of medieval times, Adam and Eve were celebrated on Christmas Eve with "paradise trees" of fir branches adorning homes. Wooden pyramids with candles often adorned the branches. Martin Luther has been credited with the first placing of a star atop a fir tree in his home to celebrate Christmas. Centuries later, many of these continental customs were introduced to England by Protestant Hanoverian monarchs, culminating in the Royal Christmas tree tradition made popular by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

My better 'alf - 'Edgerow 'Arriot has been busy developing a new twist on this evergreen tradition by making "apothecary wreathes". The careful addition of botanicals can create much more than a door ornament or table setting. The traditional firs and holly can be complemented with beneficial herbs and foliage such as rosemary, eucalyptus, juniper and lemon balm - a decorative source of healthy ingredients for festive roast dinners, teas and bath infusions.

SHEEP DOG TRIAL WIN

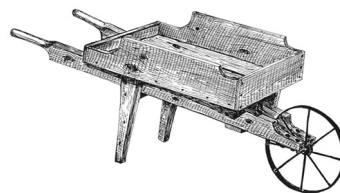
From our Agricultural Correspondent

The Farmers Guardian reported the recent win of Udale Jess at a Nursery Class competition held at Carlisle in October. Jess (no doubt with a little help from her side kick Alan P from Top Row) won with a score of 82.

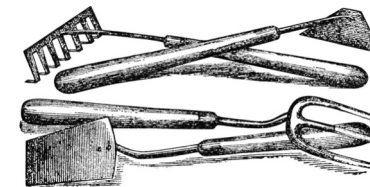
The field was wet on the right hand side, so the fetch obstacle doubled as a pull through cross-drive hurdle. Jess went left-handed for the gather. She gathered without fault before losing an odd point at her lift. She had the best fetch of the day, losing two points for minor wavering.

Moving her Swaledale ewes at a steady pace throughout, she made no mistake at the first drive obstacle and turned them nicely into the second. Minor deviations cost a total of five points. She finished with a clean pen.

Jess has had two further Nursery wins. Her success is particularly welcome as she was kidnapped (stolen) two years ago and spent 13 months in captivity before being reunited with Alan.



GARDENING JOBS FOR DECEMBER



Protect vulnerable plants and bushes from frost. Check bulbs and tubers that are in storage for rot. Thankfully the last of the autumn leaves may be collected for mulch or as an aid to composting. Finally, take this time to enjoy a roaring log fire and your favourite brew whilst reading the seed catalogue. Let more mind drift to warmer, brighter days ahead when we can enjoy our gardens in the good company of our friends and neighbours

"Up Welly Ah !"

In a small corner of Downham, last New Year's Eve saw the resurrection of a old Scandinavian celebration – the burning of a longship to bid farewell and thanks for the old year and to herald the new. Local history books are silent to this tradition as the idea was purloined from our cousins in the Shetland Isles who celebrate "Up Helly Aa". Our re-imagination was inspired by those two infamous Vikings - Tony Curtis and Kirk Douglas. Unfortunately, it appears government Covid restrictions have put Thor's Hammer to this Yuletide's "Up Welly Ah"



WASSAIL !

Another ancient tradition from our diverse local heritage is wasseling. The word may derive from the anglo-saxon greeting "be thou hale !" (as in *hale and hearty*) with the old response being "drink and be healthy!"



Although there are clear links to pagan rituals of rebirth and fecundity, Wassailing is traditionally celebrated on Twelfth Night with a medieval feudal Lord providing food and drink to his peasants in exchange for their blessings and goodwill. The carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" reflects this history.

Ceremonies relating to wassailing were often conducted in orchards, where cider or a perry from the last harrvest was offered to the sleeping buds of the fruit trees in readiness for spring. Some traditions included dressing the trees with pieces of bread to aid fertility. This may seem an odd notion until we look at the emerging science of antibiotics and the microbiome.