

Belfry Bat February 2021

February started well, with Ro receiving an invitation from our GP to go for her first vaccination on Friday. Then I received an email from Rick Marshall to tell me that the magazine is going to go into hibernation for a while. I shall keep the Bat awake and share it with anyone who is interested. Angela suggested it could go onto the church web site as a stand-alone item. In the past each edition has been timed to match the editor's eleventh of the month deadline, but I am now adjusting it so that each edition will cover a calendar month.

We didn't take part in the RSPB survey on the last weekend in January, but with hindsight perhaps we should have, as the bird feeders are attracting a good variety of birdlife. We have always been visited by pheasants who scavenge on the ground, and recently I saw two woodpeckers for the first time for a while, in addition to the many small birds. On Tuesday I went to Sainsbury's at Nantwich to collect our order, which was the furthest I had driven since Christmas.

On Thursday we rang the bells in the garage for a few minutes for the first time since Christmas, partly to test the bells and also to test Ro's wobbly wrist, which performed satisfactorily. Our being out of practice showed, and we will need to practise again.

Friday February 5th was a busy day. In the morning Ro had a useful telephone conversation with the musculo-skeletal clinic, the next step in the assessment of her knees. I very much enjoyed watching cricket live on television for the first time for many years. In the afternoon, VERA, the Vaccinated Elderly Ringers Association, gained another member when Ro received her jab, and in the evening she zoomed with her book group.

Saturday was a sport-on-television day, cricket in the morning and rugby in the afternoon. England did well in the morning but less well in the afternoon. In the early evening the predicted snow arrived, but only for a few minutes, and the same thing happened on Sunday afternoon. The rest of the week passed very quietly, and Saturday February 13th was rather like then previous one, with cricket and two rugby matches. In the morning I collected an order from Sainsbury's at Nantwich and delivered part of it to Lyndsay. While I was out I delivered some paper copies of Bat to Angela to pass on to people who don't have internet access.

On Sunday we tested the damson gin which I won in the Christmas raffle – very good! On Ash Wednesday Ruth Eagle exercised by walking down to our house to pick up a book, and we had a possibly naughty but well distanced cup of coffee in the orchard. For our regular Wednesday zoom chat we were joined by Stuart and Liz Hutchieson from Abbots Bromley. Stuart is a teacher and often rings with us during half term. I have had a letter from a company offering to buy us out of our feed-in tariff payments, but we decided that if it was worth their while to do it, it is worth our while to keep them.

We had good news from our builder on February 18th – he can start work on our extension in mid-March. On Sunday morning we walked up Agger Hill and surprised ourselves by getting as far as the Clitheroe's house, where we were offered a seat in the garden to prepare us for the return walk. This was very pleasing, as I hadn't attempted a walk for some time, and the last time Ro went out she didn't manage to go very far.

Friday brought another ridiculously packaged delivery – a cardboard box 9"x6"x5" containing a watch. On Sunday I watched on zoom another talk by Chris Pickford, this time on Shropshire bells.

Phil Gay