

## ***HUBB Newsletter*** **DECEMBER 2020**

Who or What is HUBB? See back page.

**Hello HUBB Members & Friends,**

We are trying to stay in touch with each other, as we are all having a strange December to end such a strange year.

First, we felt dismay about lockdown ending in "tiers", & strict rules about "bubbles", then hope turned to relief when the reports of Vaccines successes began (see chart, page 3).

Then the Christmas lights came on - some in perfectly-timed snowfall - & on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> at 10.0 am we'll have the Winter Solstice- the shortest day of the year. Afterwards, hurray! -the days get gradually lighter & longer.

For most of us, a rather untraditional Christmas (& no Carol Singers) will be followed by both a hopefully virus-beating New Year, & also (whisper it) by Brexit.....



(Dinah's garden, Havering, December 2015)

**"If December passes without snow, we indignantly demand to know what has become of our good, old-fashioned winters, & talk as if we had been cheated out of something we had bought & paid for.**

**But when it *does* snow, our language is a disgrace to a Christian nation!"**

(Jerome K Jerome)

**The Winter Solstice** has been celebrated in cultures the world over for thousands of years. This start of the solar year was a celebration of Light and the rebirth of the Sun. In old Europe, it was known as Yule, from the Norse, Jul, meaning wheel.



(Photo by trucknet.com)

*(Druids leading the celebrations of the 2015 Winter Solstice at Stonehenge, built over 4,000 years ago to 'capture' the sunset on the shortest day, in the gate-like trilithon of 3 huge stones.)*

It is thought that the Winter Solstice was actually more important to the people who constructed Stonehenge than the Summer Solstice, as it was a time when most cattle were slaughtered (so they would not have to be fed during the winter) and the majority of wine and beer was finally fermented. *If that doesn't sound like a good time for a party, what does?*

A look into the origins of Christmas reveals its Pagan roots. Emperor Aurelian established December 25 as the birthday of the "Invincible Sun" in the third century as part of the Roman Winter Solstice celebrations.

Soon afterwards, in 273, the Christian church selected this day to represent the birthday of Jesus, and by 336, this Roman solar feast day was formally a Christian one." (By Selena Scott, From Circle Sanctuary)

GUESS WHAT?

"A custom loathsome to the eye,  
hateful to the nose, harmful to the  
brain, dangerous to the lungs, & in the  
black, stinking fume thereof nearest  
resembling the horrible Stygian smoke  
of the Pit that is bottomless"

(By King James 1 of England, in his treatise  
'A Counterblast to Tobacco' published 1604, held in  
Worcester Cathedral Library.)



(Dutch Pipe-smokers.com)

Tobacco had been popularized in England by  
**Sir Walter Raleigh** in the late 1570s. Raleigh,  
a some-time favourite of Queen Elizabeth I,  
had a far more acrimonious relationship with  
her successor, James.

James blamed him for introducing the 'foul  
weed' into the royal court, as well as deeply  
disliking him personally.

Not only would he denounce the practice  
through his words, he would attack it in a far  
more effective manner too: with **taxes** – £1  
for every 3lbs of tobacco imported was an  
extortionate amount.

What's worse than fag-ends?

**If you are a dog owner** stay vigilant and  
make sure your pet doesn't attempt to play  
with, or eat, a **discarded face mask**.

Vets and charities are seeing cases of  
dogs mistaking them for food or toys and  
needing emergency surgery to avoid fatal  
consequences.

LBBB news November 2020

*Christmas Cracker:*

Q: What do you call a very old Snowman?

A: Water!



This year we're having a stress-free Christmas.  
I've stuffed the turkey full of Prozac!

(Aunty Acid)

**LONELINESS** is responsible for 18%  
of **depression** among people over 50  
in England, according to a new study  
led by University College, London  
(UCL) researchers. (10 Nov.20)

The researchers reviewed data from  
4,211 participants of the English Longitudinal  
Study of Ageing, aged 52 and over, who had  
answered questions at regular intervals over  
a 12-year period about their experiences of  
loneliness, social engagement and social  
support, as well as depressive symptoms

Senior author Dr Gemma Lewis (UCL  
Psychiatry) said: "*We found that whether  
people considered themselves to be lonely  
was a bigger risk factor for depression than  
how many social contacts and support they  
had. The findings suggest that it's not just  
spending time with other people that  
matters but having meaningful  
relationships and companionship.*"

*Steve Rose, PhD, Addiction Counsellor, wrote*

*I've come across many individuals who live  
in the safest and most secure environments  
but experience a great deal of despair.*

*Because of this, there must be something  
more important than the need for safety and  
security.*

*I believe the most important basic need is **our  
need to be needed.***

"Those who have a 'why' to live can  
bear with almost any 'how.'"

(Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning)



## HOW COVID HAS CHANGED ATTITUDES TO MENTAL HEALTH

- Conversations about mental illness have been 'normalised', with more adults willing to admit they are not coping'.

-We've seen people coming together, supporting each other through digital means & remote calls, We shouldn't lose that motivation to connect & support each other'

-Remote access to treatment for mental illness is easier than ever, & crucial for people finally admitting to not coping, when it is difficult or embarrassing to book an appointment in person.

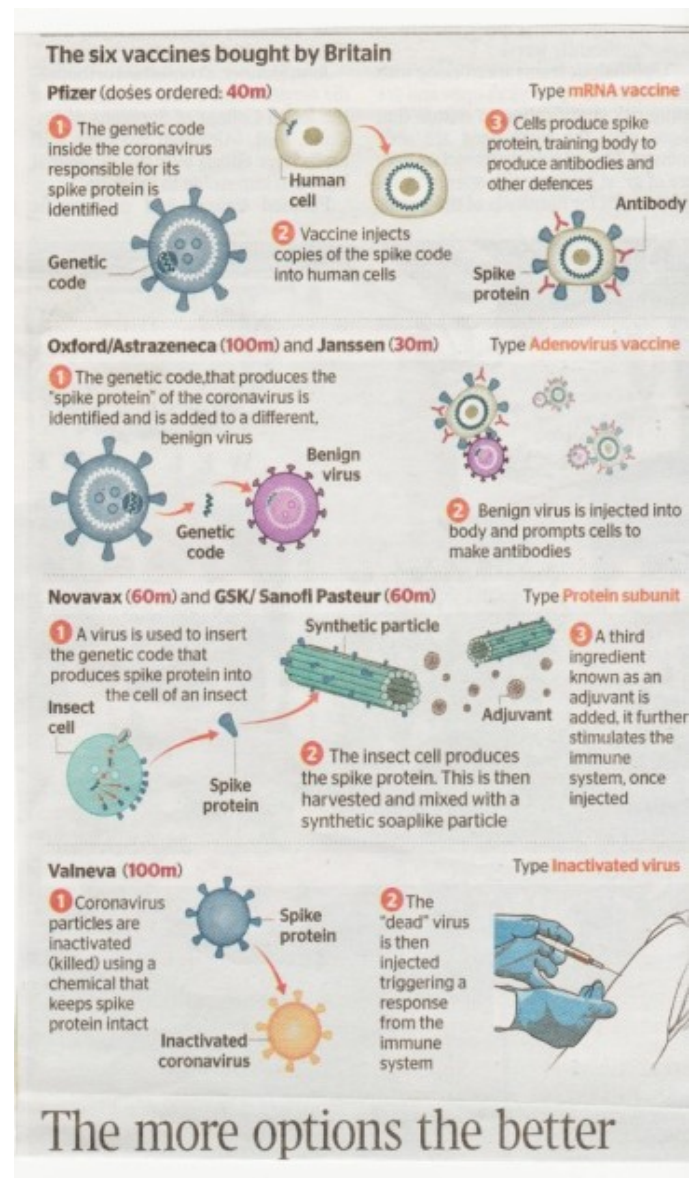
-We're recognising the need to treat the cause, not the problem. As with physical health, early intervention is key, before a problem becomes unmanageable.

-Employers are taking more of an interest. We have seen many companies, whether in the commercial, not-for-profit or civil service sectors acknowledging the need to offer flexibilities to their staff, & we hear a lot of discussions around compassion & being kind to yourself.

-Governments are taking action too. In April, the UK Government launched its *Every Mind Matters* campaign, collaborating with the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge to encourage people to look after their mental & physical wellbeing. And Local government is providing supportive information online & in leaflets mailed out to local people.

From article in Raconteur.net by Chris Stokel-Walker (freelance journalist), quoting Dr Antonis Kousoulis, Director for England & Wales at the Mental Health Foundation

## UK COVID-19 VACCINE SELECTION



(The Times, 17-11-20)

**Save your used stamps this Christmas!**  
*"Recycling used postage stamps is such an easy way to raise money for the Guide Dogs for the Blind charity"*



Please save any British, foreign & Christmas stamps, cut them from their envelopes, leaving approx. 1 cm margin around the stamp, & send them to Myrna Chave PO Box 91, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 9AR or contact [stamps4gdftb@live.co.uk](mailto:stamps4gdftb@live.co.uk)

(From a letter in Romford Recorder on 6 Nov.2020)

### The Invitation

Come down tomorrow night, & mind  
Don't leave thy fiddle-bag behind.  
We'll shake a leg & drink a cup  
Of ale, to keep old Christmas up.

And let thy sister take thy arm,  
The walk won't do her any harm:  
There's no dirt now to spoil her frock-  
The ground's a-froze so hard's a rock.

You won't meet any strangers' face  
But only neighbours of the place,  
And Stowe, & Combe & two or three  
From Uncle's up at Rookery.

And thou wilt find a rosey face  
And pair of eyes as black as sloes,  
The prettiest ones in all the place  
- I'm sure I needn't tell thee whose.

We'll snap the tongs, we'll have a ball,  
We'll shake the house, & lift the roof.  
We'll romp & make the maidens squall  
A-catching them at blind-man's bluff!

And every one shall tell his tale  
And every one shall sing his song  
And every one will drink his ale  
To love & friendship, all night long!

**William Barnes** (1801 – 1886) from Dorset. As well as writing poems in the local West country accent, he was a polymath: teacher, writer, poet, philologist, priest, mathematician, engraving artist and inventor.

### **CHRISTMAS CRACKER JOKES**

*Who hides in a bakery?  
A mince spy!*

*Christmas is a magical time: it makes  
all my money disappear!*

*This is not Grey Hair -  
I'm just growing Tinsel!*  
(posted by Janet Lockhart)

**GROAN!**

### **HUBB MEETINGS 2021**

**If Covid rules allow**, we hope to hold a **Happy New Year meeting** on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January in Romford Baptist Church, from 4.0 to 6.0pm.

**If it is on**, then you will receive an *invitation* by email, phone or post, whichever works for you, **by Jan 4<sup>th</sup>**.

**If it's not possible**, nobody will get an invitation, but we will let you know in the January Newsletter whether & where we can meet in February.

When we do meet we will have our Buffet & Raffle as usual, introduce some new members & may have a Speaker. We will also announce plans for our much-delayed Annual General Meeting.

Social Distancing may still limit the number of members who can come, so we may have a 'lucky dip' for tickets. Masks will probably still have to be worn unless actually eating.

2021 is also the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **HUBB's foundation** (in 1991 at Warley Hospital,) so your ideas for some celebrations next year are invited.



Wishing YOU  
& all HUBB Members & Friends  
Comfort & Joy this Christmas, & a  
Happy & Healthy 2021!

