

STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



25 Court Lane

REW November 2012

***DECEMBER 2012
Number 163***

VILLAGE DIARY

December

- 2 Christingle Service. St. Mary's 3.00pm
- 6 Christmas Lunch (registered walkers only) Harrold Odell Country Park.
- 13 Carpet Bowls Annual Dinner. Royal George
- 13 WI Members Evening. Church Room 7.30pm
- 15 Football Club Party. Royal George. Everyone invited from 9.00pm
- 16 Carol Service. Baptist Church 4.00pm
- 16 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. St. Mary's 3.00pm
- 18 Village Christmas Concert. Social Centre 7.00 for 7.30pm
- 19 Over 50's Christmas Event. Baptist Hall 3.00pm
- 20 Health Walk. Harrold Odell Country Park. 10.30am
- 21 Carol Singing Round The Cross. 7.00pm
- 23 Dressing the Crib. St. Mary's 9.30am
- 24 Midnight Mass. St. Mary's 11.30pm
- 25 Christmas Service. St Mary's 9.30am
- 26 NO Mobile Library
- 30 Together at 10. Joint service with Turvey. St. Mary's 10.00am

January

- 7 Carpet Bowls Restarts
- 9 Mobile Library Restarts
- 10 WI Swiss Garden. Church Room 7.30pm
- 19 Burn's Night Supper. Social Centre

February

- 14 WI The Highland Invasion of Bedfordshire. Church Room 7.30pm
- 17 Magazine Copy Date (Sunday)
- 28 Stevington Historical Trust. Ampthill Castle. Social Centre 7.30 for 8.00pm

March

- 14 WI Bats in Bedfordshire. Church Room 7.30pm

Photographs as credited or by H&K
Cover drawn by Bob Westwood.

Opinions expressed in the Stevington Magazine are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Editor.
Some features may be kept for future issues.

HELLO STEVINGTON!

We can't quite believe that this is our fourth edition of the Stevington Magazine. Each edition through the year provides a different challenge with different centre pages and we are pleased to have survived the first year! We would like to thank Anna Hart and her team for reliably delivering the magazine, Bob Westwood for providing his lovely illustrations for the front cover, Barbara Davies for proof reading the longer articles and Pat Pickup for providing advice and reassurance when we ask for it. You are all a valuable part of the team and we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you to all of the advertisers who have supported us in 2012. Your financial support is vital. We are looking for some additional advertisers for 2013 – so if you are involved in a local business or know someone else who would be interested in advertising then please contact us. Our rates are very reasonable!

We have the usual Seasons Greetings in the centre pages and this year we are supporting Sue Ryder with the donation being made specifically to St. John's Hospice, Moggerhanger. Thank you for supporting our chosen charity – we have raised just over £600 so far. The number of greetings has increased again this year so we've turned it into a pull out Christmas card – we hope you like it!

Finally we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful 2013.

Heather and Keith

**NEXT MAGAZINE**

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 2-3 March. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 17 February 2013. Articles should reach Heather and Keith Parkinson (Old Paddock, Church Road, Tel. 826677, e-mail stevington.magazine@googlemail.com) before 5.00pm on that day, although we will be delighted to receive copy at any time before then!!!



FRANCES BEARD THANK YOU FROM MICHAEL

As many know Frances suffered strokes last August, which resulted in serious brain damage. Physically she is quite well but she has 'aphasia' which affects hearing and speech and she also has sight problems. She has shown some encouraging improvements during the last week.

She is still in hospital (Chaucer Ward), but her discharge could be imminent subject to finding a suitable care home, (which could prepare her for returning home) and a way through the bureaucratic minefield.

Many thanks to all who have sent us cards, given me lifts, offered help, gifts and support and have visited the hospitals.

Michael Beard (10 Nov 2011)

THANK YOU

Since Ian's funeral I have received a letter from St. John's. They say 'We are grateful to have received donations totalling £874.00 for your husband's memorial fund, which is a lovely tribute to him. We will also be able to claim an extra £113.75 in gift aid on top of this sum.'

Thank you all for your enormous generosity.

Pat, Liz, Lynn and families

FRANK VIGNOLA & VINNY RANIOLO

Thank you to everyone who supported the Frank and Vinny Shows in October. Both days were complete sell outs, raising £1,442.70 which was donated to Johnny Dickinson, a seriously ill musician suffering from Guillian Barre Syndrome. The support Stevington people gave the concerts was immense and hugely appreciated. Special thanks to Barbara and Steve without whom the memorable concerts would not have happened.



John Duffield

Photo courtesy of John Duffield

THANK YOU

I would like to thank all friends and neighbours who sent gifts and cards on the occasion of my 70th birthday on 10 November. Thanks also to those who attended the lunchtime drinks party at the Royal George, and to Rob for providing an excellent buffet lunch.

Delia Lee

SAVE THE CHILDREN

The coffee morning on 3 November in aid of Save the Children was more successful than last year. Thanks to Tracy, Gina and other friends who kept the coffee coming. Beryl was sadly missed selling the raffle tickets.

Coffee and raffle	88.00
Sales of cards etc	119.68
Donations	<u>0.78</u>
	<u>208.46</u>

Very many thanks for your support.

Susi Clifton

STEVINGTON POPPY APPEAL

This year's Poppy Appeal in Stevington raised the splendid total of £742.39. Thank you to all those who gave so generously and, of course, to my volunteers who did the legwork and contributed their time.

Most of us have been collecting for some years and one or two would be happy to hand over to younger volunteers (so long as they are over 18 and have good shoe leather). In the spirit which characterised the voluntary effort at the Olympic Games do not email Lord Coe if you would like to help, but contact me now so that we can plan for next year!

Joan Hart (823586)

ERRATUM

The telephone number included in the Village Directory in our September edition for Peter Fisher (Social Centre) was incorrect. The correct number is **825022**. Please amend your copy for future reference.

The Editor

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

What a great Village

All of us in Stevington benefit from the wealth of dedication, commitment, expertise and knowledge of its inhabitants who all help to make it a great place to live. There are many villagers who contribute greatly to our community - thank you for making it a great place to live.

Red Lion

Hopefully by now you will all have heard the good news that the Red Lion Appeal was dismissed. The developers did not get planning permission.

The 4 main reasons for the Inspector's decision were:-

- preventing the loss of a very valued community asset
- the developers did not show that the pub was no longer viable
- they did not adequately market the pub
- the proposed development would not enhance the Conservation Area



Drawing by John Goddard

Many of you are asking WHAT NEXT? Well we are already working on that. We will keep you all informed as to progress. If you would like to contribute something to our discussions please send an email to stevplanning@gmail.com or ring one of the Parish Councillors.

Thank you to all those who have helped the PC to persuade the planners and then the Inspector to come to this decision, especially to all of you who wrote endless letters to the planners and the Inspector, those who have represented the village over the last 2 years in RedLAC, Redrag and the Parish Council, and those who came to hear the Appeal, at the Borough Hall and then in Stevington. Finally thank you to Peter Hart and Vicki Barrett for all their time, dedication and the tenacity with which they approached the planning applications; they provided support, documentation and advice at village meetings and in our correspondence with the planners and Appeal Inspector, they provided invaluable help to the PC, not least in presenting such a united front at the Appeal hearing.

Roger Day Photography 7 Park Road Stevington



WEDDINGS & EVENTS

PORTAITS (my studio or your home)

RESTORATION (old or damaged photos)

CORPORATE PR PHOTOGRAPHY

PRIVATE TUITION (Photoshop/Digital Photography)

01234 823081

www.rogerdayphotography.com

'**STEVINGTON MAGAZINE**'

is Supported by Local Advertisers.

Please Support them.

Please indicate where you saw
their advert.



LOGS

est. 1981

Well Seasoned Hardwood

Quality Split Firewood

Delivered by the Load

Mob: 07929 793361

Sourced from

Tel: 01234 721086

sustainable woodland

The Manse Preschool Nursery Stevington

- ✓ From 6 months to 5 years
- ✓ Cosy, rural nursery
- ✓ Home from Home atmosphere
- ✓ Free funded places available
- ✓ Holiday places for 4-8 year olds



Contact Us:

The Manse Preschool Nursery

4 West End, Stevington, Beds. MK43 7QU

01234 824229

www.themansenursery.co.uk

sue@themansenursery.co.uk



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL NEWS

Red Lion Appeal

What a great result - congratulations to everyone who made such a good case to the inspector at this appeal. It is difficult to pick out just one or two people because so many worked hard to put together such a good case. However, of particular note I feel are Peter Hart, Vicki Barrett and Helen Prentice. Thank you to everyone who attended on the two days. The planners have said that it was good working with Stevington.

Have Your Say on Possible Changes to Bedford Hospital

Healthier Together are at present conducting a review of the hospitals in the South East Midlands region. Bedford Hospital is one of the five hospitals being looked at; the others are Milton Keynes, Luton, Northampton and Kettering. The aim of the review is to improve quality of care whilst cutting costs. The review team is looking at each hospital with the goal of leaving three of the hospitals specialising in certain services.

However this means that two of the hospitals could see their services reduced. There is a possibility that Bedford could lose its A&E and maternity departments and this would mean travelling further for these services.

All councillors have agreed to an online petition which you can sign to show your support for Bedford Hospital. Please go to www.bedford.gov.uk/supportbedfordhospital. There are paper copies of the petition at the libraries and Borough Hall. Please do sign as I am very concerned that A&E and maternity services should be easily accessible for people avoiding a long journey to those departments.

Obviously if people then need specialist attention then a hospital that has expertise in that area of medicine should be available and transport arranged. I welcome that as it is better to centralise expensive treatment that requires specialist expertise but **NOT** A&E and maternity services.

Please do sign the petition either online or on paper.

The Link Road from Branston Way to Sainsbury's Roundabout

Another milestone in place. The side road orders and the compulsory purchase order have now been served. They can be viewed at www.bedford.gov.uk/bedfordbedfordwesternbypass. Should you have a query about the orders please contact the Highways Help Desk on 01234 276213.

Post Office Modernisation

The Post Office has received £1.34 million from the government for an investment and support programme and is aiming to modernise 6,000 branches over the next three years. There will not be any branch closures. There are two models, a Main and a Local one. Both the models will offer longer opening hours, as the service will be available during the same hours as the retail hours offered by the shop/retail business. Oakley Post Office, where Stevington's post comes from, is safe and there could be investment in the shop during the next three years.

(Note that Bromham Post Office counter is now open from 6.30am to 10.00pm. Ed.)

Broadband Update

Improved faster broadband is moving a step closer. It is expected that a contractor will be appointed by mid 2013.

We could all do with faster improved broadband. Please register as the results from registration will provide evidence to providers that there is a need in this area.

Please register on the borough council website, <http://bedford.firmstep.com/popup.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=bPZdoAcksw&HideToolbar=1>. I am sorry that the link is so long but do register.

Borough Councillor Pat Olney



MERRY XMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM EVERYONE AT STEVIINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB



The Football Club will be holding their annual Christmas Dinner at the Royal George on Saturday evening 15 December and would like to invite you to join us for the party afterwards (from about 9pm onwards).



Season's greetings from all those associated with the Club.

ST MARY'S CHRISTMAS CONCERT

TUESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2012

Stevington Social Centre. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Tickets £4 for adults £1 for children are on sale at the Community Shop or can be reserved by emailing Tricia Lennie on msl_acorn@yahoo.co.uk.

Put the date in your diary now and don't miss this annual festive treat. There will be something for everyone so bring your family and friends. The church choir and community orchestra are already rehearsing. There will be audience participation in carol singing, a raffle and warming Christmas refreshments including tea, coffee or mulled wine and mince pies. This promises to be a 'vintage' year for our performers and I guarantee that you will wish you had been there. No matter how busy you are, this will remind you what Christmas is about.



CAROLS AND CANDLES ROUND THE CROSS

FRIDAY 21 DECEMBER AT 7.00PM

A chance for the whole village to get in to the spirit of Christmas. Following last year's success, The Friends of St. Mary's Church are once again organising informal carol singing round the Cross on the last Friday before Christmas. Please bring a candle to put on the cross. This event is free of charge thanks to kind donations of mulled wine and sausage rolls. Voluntary donations can be made to Friends of St. Mary's Church in collection buckets on the night.



John Duffield

HALL AVAILABLE



Come and use our hall at the Baptist Church, West End. You are welcome as guests; all we ask is for a voluntary contribution towards costs.

Feel free to bring your own food and drink; providing such items are not sold on the premises.

If you are interested, simply ring **Carol Wareing** on **01234 825661**, she will be pleased to hear from you.

COURT LANE LANDSCAPES LTD.

All types of garden work undertaken

Maintenance, Renovation, Design, Lawn and Hedge Contracts, Tree Felling, Paths, Patios & Sheds

Call Magnus Lennie

Tel: 01234 825169 Mob: 07713 257409



Save Your Time

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY IRONING SERVICES

• 24h service available

• Free collection and delivery direct to your home or office

All work guaranteed – references available
Fully insured service

A LARGE BAG COSTS £25

Tel: 01234 306485 or 07821 700320
saveyourtimeandmoney@yahoo.co.uk
www.save-your-time.co.uk

Save your time & money

For All Household Needs!

**Professional Affordable
Domestic Cleaning Company**

Regular / One off Cleans

Spring/After Party/House Move Cleans

Friendly Efficient Trustworthy Reliable
& Local!

Fully insured No contracts

References can be supplied

**Call for a free no obligation home
appraisal**

01234 306485 or 07821 700320

**saveyourtimeandmoney@yahoo.co.uk
www.save-your-time.co.uk**



LOCAL POLICE REPORT

At the time of writing on 5 November there has been one crime in Stevington since the beginning of October. It was a burglary in the day time on 11 October at a residential property, whereby a garage door was forced open and garden tools were removed. If you have any information relating to this crime, please contact us.

Please also be extra vigilant to any suspicious vehicles and always write down number plates for us to check.

Catalytic Converter Theft

They may sit unnoticed underneath your car, but when you fall victim to catalytic converter theft you will know about it. Converting harmful emissions from vehicles to less toxic substances, these small metal boxes are being targeted by thieves seeking to convert them to cash.

If your car engine is making an unusually loud noise, check the exhaust pipe extending underneath your car. If it has been cut, it is very likely that your catalytic converter has been stolen. The cost to replace a stolen catalytic converter can escalate into £1,000s, not to mention the increases in insurance premiums. The thief would be lucky to get £200.

Don't fall victim to this type of crime. Bedfordshire Police has a number of tactics in place, including patrols in hotspot areas and on main arterial routes into and out of the county, but we are also appealing to the community to help us reverse this increase.

Report suspicious activity, such as people working under vehicles in an ad-hoc manner, especially at night, and do what you can to secure your property. Where possible, keep your vehicle in a locked garage, otherwise park it in a busy, well-lit area. Install an alarm, such as a Thatcham alarm, which activates if your vehicle is lifted or tilted. Use a marking system to protect and register your catalytic converter.

Contact details

If you have would like to get in contact with your local policing team, you can call PSCO 8423 Chris Warmington or PSCO 8007 Cameron Giles at Riseley Police station on 01234 842865.

The Friends of ST MARY'S STEVINGTON

It's been a busy summer in the Church Room, and, judging by the comments, the interior refurbishments seem to have met with general approval. Great care was taken not only to decide what to do, but to make sure that we achieved value for money. Any day now the new chairs will be arriving, so I'm expecting to hear a range of opinions on that topic too! We do hope that everyone who has joined as a Friend or supported any of our fundraising events feels that their money has been well spent.

This year Friends had a special invitation to St. Mary's Harvest Service. Canon Peter conducted a very welcoming and inclusive service; there were some wonderful choral pieces, and afterwards we all had the chance to linger and admire the floral decorations and mingle with fellow villagers. It would be lovely to do it again next Harvest-time.

On Saturday 10 November a group of incredibly talented Bedford School pupils entertained Friends to a free concert in the Church. We were all completely stunned by the standard of musicianship displayed by the boys, some of whom are about to undertake auditions at musical academies, and we are very grateful to the Director of Music and his staff for devising such a varied and entertaining programme.

Flushed with success (or was it mulled wine) from last year's Carols round the Cross, we will be reconvening on Friday 21 December this year. James has generously offered his garage as 'brewhouse' (no doubt Ged and Rob had that enshrined in the deeds!) so that we can



serve mulled wine to wash down the mince pies and sausage rolls. So come a-carolling and enjoy some community fun around the candle-lit Cross at 7.00pm.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chrissie Galley

STEVINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

We have not played any more friendly matches with other clubs since the summer. Sadly, once again, our attendance numbers are too low due to several different circumstances.



The club membership is now very low and we are in desperate need of new members. It would be such a pity if we had to fold after being in existence since 1990. So many of Stevington's clubs have disappeared – please villagers do not let us be yet another!

Our members' mince pies and wine night will be held on Monday 17 December, and our annual dinner on the previous Thursday, 13 December.

We have entered our two juniors in the Bedfordshire pairs competition to be held at Barton on 13 January 2013. Please wish them well.

Why not come and visit us? You will be pleasantly surprised at the good atmosphere and friendly gentle exercise. We meet each Monday (except bank holidays) at the village hall from 7.00pm in the winter and 7.30pm the rest of the year. The first two visits are free to let visitors acclimatise themselves. Thereafter £1 per week and £3 pa – 50p per week for juniors. This fee includes tea/coffee/juice and biscuits plus games and friendly chat. We also run a weekly raffle which helps to keep subscriptions down.

The club will be closed on Mondays 24 and 31 December and will reopen on Monday 7 January 2013.

Merry Christmas to you all and a happy, healthy and wealthy New Year from all of the Stevington Carpet Bowls Club members.

Barbara Collins

WINTER WEATHER PRECAUTIONS - WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO STAY SAFE?

A government warning said that anyone travelling in icy conditions should take a shovel, blankets or sleeping bag, extra clothing including a scarf hat and gloves, 24 hour supply of food and drink, de-icer, rock salt, torch and spare batteries, safety triangle, tow rope, petrol can, first aid kit and jump leads.

I looked a right idiot on the bus this morning!

THE FOOT CLINIC

For a wide range of chiropody/podiatry care of the highest quality from a specialist with 20 years of experience in both NHS and private practice.

**Graeme A Paterson, BSc, SRCh, FPodA, FCPod(S).
Podiatric Specialist.
Health Professions Council registered.**

For further information, to arrange a consultation or home visit please contact

**The Harrold Medical Practice
Peaches Close,
Harrold,
Beds.
MK43 7DX
Tel: 01234 720225**



W&H PEACOCK

Established 1901

AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS

Auction Every Saturday

Viewing every Friday 8.30am - 8.00pm

3000 Lots Every Week

Monthly Antique & Collectors' Auction

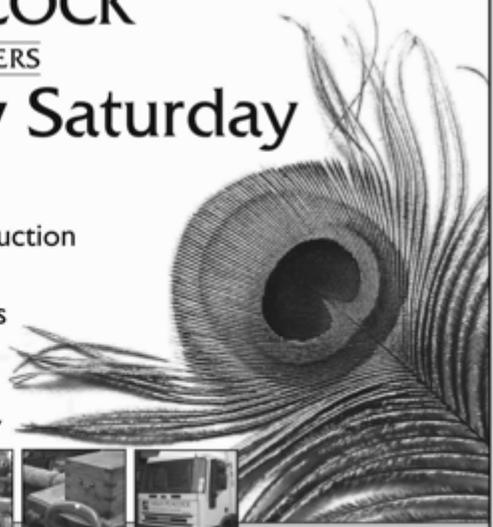
Regular Valuation Days

Specialist & Commercial Auctions

Online Auctions

Collection Service

ENTRIES INVITED MONDAY - WEDNESDAY



Bedford Auction Centre 26 Newnham Street, Bedford MK40 3JR

01234 266 366 www.peacockauction.co.uk

TAKE A WALK

If you don't do much walking, you may be unaware of the wonderful view you can get from the 'hill' just outside Stevington. 'Hill?' you say, I thought Bedfordshire was flat? It is fairly flat, which means that you don't have to go very high to see quite a distance.

If you've never been there, try a walk up past the windmill (turn left before you get to the windmill, on the footpath signposted to the Stevington Country Walk and Bromham), carry on up over the old railway (and thank Mr Beeching for giving us that as a wonderful walk too) and keep going till you're half way to Bromham. It takes only about 15 or 20 minutes from Park Road (small car park in Windmill Lane) to get to the crossroads of footpaths at the top of the hill.

From there, you have a wonderful 360 degree panorama, from Bedford Modern and Manton Heights to the East, round to RAE Thurleigh and the water tower, Radwell/Felmersham and the whole of the river Ouse flood plain spread out before you to the North. Then Pavenham, Stevington, Picts Hill Farm and the Water Tower on the A428, and round to the West the new Wind Turbines towards Cranfield. Strangely, depending on the light, they are sometimes invisible, though well above the horizon. Then moving round to the South there is Bromham nestling in the valley, and over it you can see well past Kempston to the Greensand Ridge near Ampt Hill I think.

Best time, early on a summer morning with the mists just clearing in the sunshine. Worst time, to avoid if you possibly can, early on a winter morning when it's dark and pouring with rain, but the dog has insisted that you take her out for her walk as usual!

Robert Eadie



Photo courtesy of Pat Pickup

STEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

After our summer break we returned to the newly decorated Church Room for our annual Harvest Supper. This social evening gave us chance to chat about events during the summer, eat homemade Cumberland pie and delicious desserts and to come up with new ideas, have a drink and take part in a quiz which everyone enjoyed.



In October we had a talk and slideshow from Craig Fisher entitled 'Stranded in Gambo'. Craig had been a passenger on a plane over America on 9/11. This was his take on his experiences after his plane was diverted and the passengers were bussed to Gambo in Newfoundland where they were taken in by the local people. He spoke about how they coped until they were able to leave. It was a fascinating account - until the talk some of us didn't know where Gambo was!

In October we decided a litter pick was required and villagers were invited to join us - we would very much like to thank everyone who helped out on the day.

We visited the Knitting & Stitching Show at Alexandra Palace which is guaranteed to stimulate one's creative skills and to bring colour and challenge into the long winter evenings. It was good to see so many young people taking part and becoming involved with recycling. We have also visited the WI Craft Fair at Flitwick which is always a good place to start Christmas shopping.

We have attended other events advertised in our local WI Magazine and of course continue with our darts matches, book club, pub suppers and walks when the weather allows.

By the time this comes through your door we will have had a talk about the History of Pantomime which looks as though it will be very entertaining and a lot of fun. In December we have our members evening which involves all sorts of festive activities and good things to eat.

We have some very interesting talks arranged for the New Year – our programme is displayed on the notice board in Church Room and in Sally Macdonald's window at the Cross.

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and healthy New Year. Don't forget to make visiting Stevington WI one of your New Year's resolutions! You will be made most welcome.

For more information contact Marilyn Billett (822103) or Vivienne Newell (826091).

Pat Gibson

STEVEINGTON HISTORICAL TRUST
REGISTERED CHARITY No. 1086669
www.stevingtonhistoricaltrust.org.uk

By the time this issue of the *Magazine* is circulated our first winter lecture will have come and gone. However, on Thursday 28 February 2013 Kevan Fadden, Chairman of the Ampthill and District Archaeological and Local History Society, will be speaking to us about Ampthill Castle, one of the greatest houses of mediaeval/Tudor England.

Also in the New Year (date to be arranged) the Natural History Branch of the Trust is organising an illustrated talk by Dr Tom Hart entitled *The Study and Conservation of Penguin Colonies in Antarctica*.

The *Natural History* is gradually coming together and we are confident that it will be published in 2013. We hope to invite advance subscriptions soon after Easter, if all has gone to plan.

Peter Hart (823586)



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

- Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
- Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
- I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not so sure.
- Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.



NEWS FROM HARROLD ODELL COUNTRY PARK



On 22 October work commenced on the installation of additional play equipment next to the existing clatter bridge, rock and log in the tiny tots play area adjacent to the café. We recently applied for and got a grant of £13,000 from the WREN Group.

This stands for Waste Recycling Environmental Network Ltd who are one of the largest non-profit making distributors of monies accrued from Landfill Tax Credits. As the park began life as a quarry, we qualified to enter a funding bid for a project that would enhance the enjoyment of the park.



Photo courtesy of Simon Carter

Having received a number of comment cards saying that there was insufficient play provision for the very young, (the Odell playground services the 8 to 13 years age group) we decided that this would fill the needs gap beautifully. Teenagers have the skate park. WREN agreed and granted us most of the necessary funding. The Friends of the Park and Bedford

Borough Council each contributed about £1,500 towards the cost from car parking donations and the sale of firewood.

In due course, the area will need to be properly fenced to exclude dogs and more money will have to be found for this. The plan is for enough space to be enclosed for a couple of picnic benches to go inside for parents etc. to sit inside and keep an eye on their children while they play.

In case you hadn't heard, our new bird hide is up and running. Thanks to donations from the public, Bedford Borough Council, the Friends Group etc. we were able to replace the old one that was destroyed by an arsonist in April with a beautiful bespoke oak one within 5 months. We can't begin to describe how blown away we all are by the generosity and support we've been shown.

The members of the Walking 4 Health group that come out to the park every fortnight have clubbed together to donate money for a notice board that will be used to tell the story of the bird hide and how the community came together to resurrect it so quickly. Our thanks to everybody who has helped us make this happen. We couldn't have done it without you!

All that remains to be done now is kit out the inside with information boards. Bear with us as this will take a little time.

The winter tree works commenced in October with major felling taking place in the roadside shelterbelt. Many of the trees were planted to screen off the quarry when it was still working and some are less than healthy. The plan is to move the newly planted saplings from the north shore of the lake to re-populate the cleared areas. They will be our trees of the future.



Photo courtesy of Richard Dowsett

In November, the annual tree survey took place in order to assess the overall tree health in all areas of the park. Ultimately the safety of people using the main footpaths will depend on the results of the survey and any tree giving cause for concern will have to come out. A case in point is the mature poplars that were felled at the bridge by the large lake. They were found to be infested with Hornet Clearwing Moth larvae. They had bored into the trunk which had allowed rot in at their bases. A good gale could have brought them down across the path so they had to go.

Now the clocks have gone back, Tea-Zels Café will be operating between 9am and 4pm daily instead of closing at 5pm at weekends. This is to take into account the dark nights. It takes at least an hour to clean up every day at close of business. Similarly, the overflow car park will close at 4pm instead of 5pm for the same reason.

Health Walks

December 6 (Xmas Lunch – registered walkers only) and 20)
Every other Thursday outside the front entrance of the café at 10.30am.
Call 01234 720016 or e-mail janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk for more info.

Friends Task Days

December 10 (Xmas Lunch – registered Friends only)

Meet at the Ranger's Office on the last Monday of the month (a week earlier if a bank holiday) at 10.00am. Call Richard Dowsett or Janet Munro on 01234 720016 or e-mail Richard.dowsett@bedford.gov.uk for more info.

Janet Munro
Ranger



THANK YOU STEVINGTON FOR MAKING MY 50TH BIRTHDAY PARTY A WONDERFUL NIGHT TO REMEMBER!!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the 'Spike Islanders', family and friends that were able to join in my 50th birthday celebrations back in September and for the wonderful presents I received. It was great to see so many villagers, past and present and you all helped make it a 'night to remember' for me (well most of it anyway).

I am sure that you will all agree that the music provided by Tom and Joe Strutt and their band and Dave Craddock's Disco afterwards was absolutely top class. I hope so because I've thanked them all on our behalf!!

I'd like to give special thanks to Gareth, Jane, Megan, Grace, Daz and Lu and the numerous helpers on the night for the lovely food and for Rob from the Royal George for arranging the bar. Lastly I would like to say thank you to Ali, Hannah, Sam and the rest of my family and friends for somehow making sure I got to reach my 50th.



PS – Was it just me or did you all think time went quickly on the night.... do the clocks in the hall need checking, or is it my age?

Shane King

WORLDWIDE SURVEY BY THE UNITED NATIONS

“Could you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?”

The survey was a massive failure because:

- In Eastern Europe they didn't know what 'honest' meant
- In Western Europe they didn't know what 'shortage' meant
- In Africa they didn't know what 'food' meant
- In China they didn't know what 'opinion' meant
- In the Middle East they didn't know what 'solution' meant
- In South America they didn't know what 'please' meant
- In the USA they didn't know what 'the rest of the world' meant
- In the UK they hung up as soon as they heard the Indian accent.

From the Internet

STEVINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

**Sunday Mornings at 10:45am
Sunday Evenings at 6:00pm**

**BE ASSURED OF A FRIENDLY
WELCOME**

**For further information contact
Barbara Courtney on 01234 824354**

Time to part with those old items?

**Antiques, Coins and
Jewellery purchased for
cash by local collectors -
call**

**Marylyn and Ray Wood
01933 353517**



The Garden Rooms

BED & BREAKFAST. STAGSDEN

Luxury guest accommodation for you or your guests.
Homemade cake on arrival.

All rooms ensuite, bathrobes, homemade biscuits on hospitality tray.
Flat screen TV's, own guest lounge.
Top quality breakfast served with eggs from our own chickens.
Doubles, twins, and a family room available.

Please ring Joanne for room rates
01234 823454
email: gardenrooms10@hotmail.co.uk
www.gardenrooms-bandb.co.uk
10 Bedford Road, Stagsden

Browns of Stagsden...

A proper farm shop on a proper working, family run farm...

YOUR LOCAL FARM SHOP FOR 2012

- ◆ Home reared and local meat & poultry
- ◆ Local vegetables and other produce
- ◆ Deli counter
- ◆ Fresh Fish (Friday 9am - 3pm)

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday - Thursday 9am - 5pm

Friday 9am - 6pm

Saturday 9am - 4pm

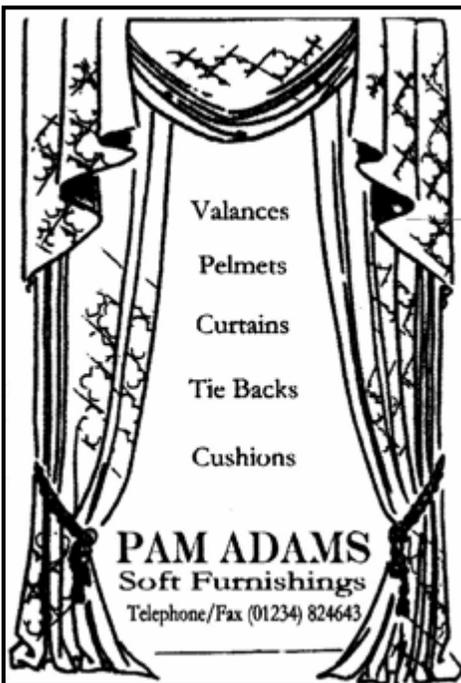
Manor Farm | High Street | Stagsden | MK43 8SQ



Phone: 01234 822330

www.brownsfstagsden.co.uk

Follow us on Facebook or Twitter



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, STEVINGTON

Two recent events are fresh in our minds – a Musical Concert by young musicians of Bedford School on 10 November and, on the following day, our combined Stevington Churches Remembrance Day Service.

The Musical Concert (an event organised by the Friends of St Mary's) was an outstanding success and we are grateful to Robert Eadie for making the arrangements. It is most encouraging that our church is used for such events. The Chairman of the Friends Trustees, Chrissie Galley reports further on this and other Friends activities elsewhere in this issue of the Magazine. We are most fortunate in having such an enthusiastic 'Friends membership'.

Remembrance Day Service was, as always, an emotionally charged occasion. Our Priest in Charge, Canon Peter, led the service while his long-time friend, Canon Toby Marchand (Vicar of Bishops Stortford prior to retirement) presented a moving and thought provoking address. We were grateful for the support of the Bedford Brass Band and our Piper, Richard Galley, who played the 'Piper's Lament'.

Our Christingle service this year will be one week earlier than in previous years on 2 December at 3.00pm. Christingle is always popular with our young people and, as always, we look forward to their involvement. Claire Stapleton and Mary Ronald are currently busy making the necessary preparations.

December services are as follows:

Sunday 2	3.00pm	Christingle
Sunday 9	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 16	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 16	3.00pm	Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
Sunday 23	9.30am	Dressing the Crib and Holy Communion
Monday 24	11.30pm	Midnight Mass
Tuesday 25	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 30	10.00am	'Together at 10' a joint service with the people of Turvey at St Mary's

Other events

Tuesday 18 Dec	Christmas Concert - Social Centre 7.00 for 7.30pm
Friday 21 Dec	Carol Singing around the Cross at 7.00pm

From the Parish Register

October Banns of Marriage for Alex Cowley and Laura Parsons

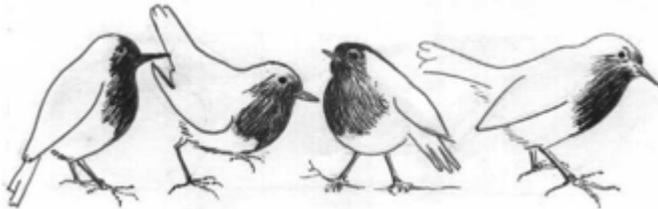
November Marriage of Laura Parsons to Alex Cowley

Baptism of Skye Lacey Duffield

... and finally

Canon Peter, Tricia Lennie and Jane O'Connor join with me in wishing you all a Joyous Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Bob Westwood, Churchwarden



CHARIOTS OUTING

What happens when a man's ambition comes into conflict with his principles made a fitting topic for the recent theatre outing, organised (and subsidised) by the Baptist Church. The production of *Chariots of Fire* at the Gielgud Theatre in London's West End attracted a coachload of theatre-goers, all enjoying some of the best seats in the dress circle.

The plot focuses on the 1920s rivalry between Eric Liddle, the Scottish athlete and rugby player, and Harold Abrahams, the English athlete. Both secured keenly-fought selection in the British Olympic team to go to Paris to compete in the Games, but for Liddle, the crunch came when the timetable required him to race in the 100 yards heats on a Sunday. Despite heavy pressure, he stepped back. He won another race later in the week and the respect of many rivals for his decision.

The production utilises a few musical snippets from Gilbert and Sullivan and of course the dramatic musical score from the film. The revolving stage, and audience front and back pose both challenges and opportunities, as well as making huge demands on the physical fitness of the younger members of the cast.

No complaints about the evening - in fact a gold medal for the organiser.

Peter Evans

STEVINGTON BAPTIST MEETING

Hawkers were welcome in the Baptist Church Hall on a Saturday in September when a short talk was followed by a flying demonstration in a nearby field. Grant Dudley, of the Bedfordshire Hawking Club, recounted how many common day expressions have become part of the language such as being fed up, or an old codger, or the mantelpiece which takes its meaning from the raptors' practice of shielding their prey by spreading their wings over their victim, known in the sport as manteling their prey.



Fielding several questions from his audience Grant told how falconry had developed since the days of Henry VIII. Falconers weighed their birds every

morning - this was the guide to whether a bird was likely to hunt and return to its owner. They might link their owner to food and security, but they were not pets. After the flying demonstration everyone enjoyed a breakfast of sausage and bacon butties.



The following day, members and friends joined to give thanks for the harvest, with the decorated church providing ample evidence of God's generous provision, including the traditional bands of beggarman's beard gathered from the hedgerow.

A few days before, it had been a very different gathering which came to the hall for another afternoon tea, once again enjoying time to chat and more home-made cakes. Another tea was scheduled for 20 November and a special Christmas event will be staged in the hall on Wednesday 19 December at 3pm. Anyone from the village who is 50 or over is welcome.

The carol service will take place in the church on 16 December at 4pm and will include musical items on the spinet played by Robert Shaftoe and compositions for the organ and flute. Traditional carols and readings will provide opportunities for everyone to join in. The celebration will end at about 5pm, in time for tea or coffee and mince pies.

If you have your diaries ready for the New Year, make a note of 19 February 2013 when we will be staging a special lunchtime event on Pancake Day. More details later, but keep the date free.

Peter Evans

Photos courtesy of Baptist Church

SOCIAL CENTRE CHRONICLES

All is well at the Social Centre; we have had some great events over the past three months and a lot of work has been undertaken to improve the Centre.

The Frank Vignola and Vinny Raniolo concerts were a great success thanks to John Duffield and the Centre was full to bursting on both evenings.

A major water leak was discovered that necessitated replacing the water pipe from the building to the mains in Court Lane. Thanks to Steve, Richard and others this was repaired quickly and we now have full water pressure back in the building. Other projects due for completion in the near future include a refurbishment of the ladies' loos and lighting in the car park.

The annual Burn's Night Supper will be on 19 January 2013 and tickets will go on sale after Christmas. This has always been a fun filled evening with a chance to savour that unique Scottish dish – haggis and 'neeps plus try your hand at traditional Scottish Dancing. We hope to see as many of you as possible there on the night.

As always we are looking to run more functions throughout the year so if anyone has any ideas for future events or would like to get involved with the running of the Social Centre please contact one of the Committee.

Thanks from the Committee to everyone who has helped us with running this valuable village asset throughout this year; we wish you all a very merry Christmas and look forward to your continued support in 2013.

Pete Fisher (825022)



BE SEEN, STAY ALIVE!

Bedford Borough Council is urging all road users to take extra care on the roads. When the clocks go back, the nights draw in and the weather usually gets worse which means pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists can be particularly vulnerable. However, there is a range of simple steps which anyone can take to improve their safety on the road, especially when the visibility or road conditions are poor.

Councillor Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Transport, said: 'We all have a responsibility to look after ourselves and each other on the roads throughout the year. However, this is even more important during the winter months when it gets darker earlier and road conditions and visibility can be at their worst. Taking a few simple steps to make sure we can see and be seen is incredibly important and this campaign aims to remind everyone in the borough to make sure they stay safe.'

Please follow our simple tips below this winter:

Pedestrians:

- Try to stick to well lit areas wherever possible
- Do not wear dark clothing. Fluorescent is ideal during the day and if possible use reflective clothing at night, if not, wear lightly coloured clothes
- Be aware of your surroundings and look out for cars and cyclists.

Cyclists:

- Do not wear dark clothing. Fluorescent is ideal during the day and if possible use reflective clothing at night, if not, wear lightly coloured clothes
- Make sure you have lights on your bike
- Have reflectors on your bike (red at the back, white at the front and amber on the pedals). Make sure the reflectors can be seen and aren't covered by bags, coats or overhanging clothes
- Be aware of your surroundings and other vehicles on the road.

Motorcyclists:

- Wearing something fluorescent during the day combined with reflective detailing for riding at night is ideal.
- If visibility is poor, use your headlights, even in daylight
- Use a clear visor or goggles with the BS4110 mark or the EC Regulation 22 type 05 mark
- Make sure your visor/goggles are clean and not fogged up (use an anti-fog treatment).

Drivers:

- If visibility is poor, use your headlights, even in daylight
- Don't drive at all with misty windows. Wait a couple more minutes for your windscreen and windows to clear



Photo courtesy of Pat Pickup

- Take time to clear any ice or snow from all your windows **before** driving off
- Make sure your lights are clean; grime and dirt can reduce their brightness
- Check all your lights at least once a week and replace blown bulbs immediately



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUPPORT BEDFORD HOSPITAL

Bedford Borough Council is inviting people to show their support for Bedford Hospital via a petition which is now available online at www.bedford.gov.uk/supportbedfordhospital. This petition runs until 19 December 2012. It is also available to sign at Borough libraries as well as Borough Hall reception and the Customer Services Centre.

(Pat Olney, our borough councillor, discusses this issue in more detail on page 9. Ed).

PENSIONERS – DO YOU QUALIFY FOR HELP WITH HEATING BILLS THIS WINTER?

This coming winter energy suppliers will pay a rebate of £130 on fuel bills to:

- Pensioners aged under 80 who receive only the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (no Savings Credit)
- Pensioners aged 80 or over who are receiving the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, (even if you get Savings Credit as well)



Your name, or your partner's name, must be on your electricity bill, and you must get your electricity from one of the energy suppliers participating in this scheme: Atlantic, British Gas, EDF Energy, EON, Equipower, Equigas, Manweb, M&S Energy, npower, Sainsbury's Energy, Scottish Gas, Scottish Hydro, ScottishPower, Southern Electric, SSE, Swalec and Utility Warehouse.

If you meet the conditions above you do not need to do anything now to get your discount in 2012/2013.

Energy suppliers may also give a £130 discount to some other customers in vulnerable groups. Each electricity supplier has different eligibility criteria they will use to decide who may get the discount, so you will need to check with your supplier.

Last winter energy companies paid a rebate of £120 to pensioners who received the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit. This should have been paid automatically. If you believe you should have been eligible, but did not receive the rebate you should contact your energy supplier.

Are you eligible for the Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register is a scheme run by energy suppliers which offers extra free services to people who are of pensionable age, are registered disabled, have a hearing or visual impairment, or have long term ill-health. Each energy supplier has its own Priority Services Register. If you get your gas and electricity from different suppliers, you'll need to register with each one. If you switch energy supplier, you will also need to register with your new supplier.

If you need help, and you live in a village in the Borough of Bedford, call the **Just Ask!** Village Agent Scheme free on 0800 039 1234.

Secretarial and Bookkeeping Services and Virtual PA

- All types of Correspondence
- Reports
- General Office Administration
- Setting up Office Systems
- Company Statutory Books
- Sales and Purchase Ledgers
- Typing
- Manual Accounts
- Computerised Accounts
- Excel Spreadsheets
- VAT Returns
- PAYE and Payroll Services
- Invoicing
- Bank Reconciliations

We provide a confidential and efficient service to free you from your paperwork.

SEC Services

Tel: 01234 823940 Mobile: 07976 785710

Email: sheilacowley@live.co.uk

COWLEY Di GIORGIO

SOLICITORS

63 HARPUR STREET
BEDFORD
MK40 2SR

Telephone: (01234) 218171

Fax: (01234) 327632

email: cowley@cowleydigiorgio.co.uk

QUIZ NIGHT FOR MALAWI

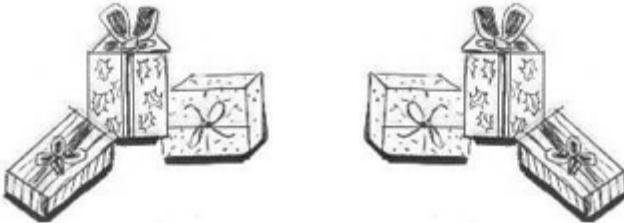
As the Village Magazine goes to press, we are planning a repeat of last year's successful Quiz Night and Fish Supper, which enabled us to send another term's school fees for the older children and some extra for Christmas treats for all the orphans.

In addition, we have had some generous donations from individuals for which we are extremely grateful.

Pastor Machila says:

Many!! Many!! thanks from the children to each and every body and greetings to you and all friends there.

Dita & Tony Hollins



STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE 100 CLUB

Winners of the last three draws are as follows:

Aug	1st	No 66	D Fitch
	2nd	No 62	C Atkin
	3rd	No 91	M Smith
Sept	1st	No 12	M Reeves
	2nd	No 35	B Westbrook
	3rd	No 3	S Blore Rimmer
Oct	1st	No 8	B Davies
	2nd	No 100	S Cox
	3rd	No 56	M Mackness
Nov	1st	No 1	A Pyner
	2nd	No 51	P O'Dell
	3rd	No 53	J Surtees

New members always welcome!

Anna and Bob Hart (823769)

WELL DRESSING AT STEVINGTON FLOWER PETAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH TOLD A BOTH LOCAL AND GLOBAL STORY

Well dressing may have roots in pagan times when water worship was thought to be a common custom. Or it might date back to the period of the Black Death when pure sources of water from springs or wells were thought to save people from the pestilence and so were to be celebrated. Tissington in Derbyshire was known for its well dressing in 1349 and reports were given of the practice still there in 1855. Now six village wells are dressed there each year. The custom has gained a wider momentum in recent years so that in 2012 over 112 villages took part mainly in the Peak District of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, South Yorkshire, around Malvern, as well as Holywell-cum-Needleworth in Cambridgeshire. The figure also included Stevington where the Holy Well has been a major feature at least since the mid 1200s when a hospitium (guesthouse) was built to welcome pilgrims to the holy waters so that eye problems might be relieved.

2012 was our first attempt at a well dressing coinciding with the publication of a new book written by Nick Mayhew Smith which acclaimed our well as one of Britain's Holiest Places. A small group of us including our Churchwarden Bob Westwood, Jane O'Connor, Simon and me ventured up to Waingroves in Derbyshire to learn the skills needed. We could not have been more warmly welcomed by Margaret Bailey and her team. Wooden frames had been constructed with a strong back and a raised edge; they were then soaked for a few days in a local pond or stream. Clay was then puddled with electric mixers to a fine consistency and then thrown on to the damp board. (The previous wetting helped to prevent the clay drying out too fast). The clay surface was then made very smooth. Next it was time to transfer the picture to the clay; religious or otherwise. Bold patterns and bright colours made a good impact. At Waingroves, the picture was made on paper and then drawn free hand on the clay. Usually however it is drawn to scale on paper which is then placed on the clay. This stage may involve many pieces of paper. Using a cocktail stick, the outline is carefully pricked out. The paper is carefully removed and kept for reference and the pattern is revealed.

The picture for our first attempt at Stevington was based on an iconic image closely associated with the village. It was the pivotal scene from John Bunyan's famous book *The Pilgrims Progress* which we think

was rooted in Stevington showing Christian at the Cross, our mediaeval stone cross, with his burden falling into the Sepulchre, our Holy Well, beneath the church. A memorial stained glass window in our Baptist Church depicts this scene. We photographed it, imported it into CAD and enlarged it for our well dressing so that it fitted the A0 sized wooden board prepared and soaked and puddled by Richard Blayney with the help of Ray Cox.



As newcomers to the art, we started with the least perishable material. Alder cones had been gathered in the spring to trace the title and date. We picked small leaves for the bottom half of the scene to depict rocks using ceanothus and dark berberis with various shades of dark

green and bronze while eucalyptus, silver pine, rosemary, euonymus and parsley were used for grass and trees above, providing a range of hues and textures. White stemmed bark was chosen to depict the stonework around the well with small sticks of cornus to create the edges. The face and hands of Christian was tricky but Jane worked miracles with broken eggshells edged in black wool to delineate the fingers and facial features. Long golden stems of miscanthus were placed to depict the cross while the wispy ends were used to shape Christian's hair. After much trial and error, more wispy ends were shaped to form the burden rolling into the well creating a 3D effect. Later, narrow glitzy thread was used to create the ropes. To mark the Diamond Jubilee we added diamante glass beads for buttons.

By mid week we were ready to start with the actual petalling. A visit to the florist wholesalers was most enjoyable and we returned with rich red and orange chrysanthemums for the coat and trousers, plus white ones for the filling around the text at top and bottom, and also for the lace collar. Blue and pink hydrangeas were chosen for the sky, while pretty blue violas were used for the socks. Frothy gypsophila became clouds as well providing the splash as the burden entered the water.

As each part of the picture was finished we watched in amazement scarcely believing that we were able to craft the image. Our petallers returned time and again to do a little more and see the progress. I think there were probably about 20 in total, some staying just half an hour,



several staying for a morning or afternoon. Anyone was welcome to call in and have a go! It was great fun to petal and chatter, then come back a bit later and see the changes. Finally the moment came for it to go on display. The forecast was so dire that we put it in the safety of the porch in St Mary's Church where it remained remarkably fresh for at least ten days. Eventually it was taken down, the flowers taken off, the clay removed and the frame kept to be reused another time. Hopefully we will dampen the clay again and re-use it.

What a wonderful shared experience; what better way to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee.

Photos courtesy of Kathy Brown

Kathy Brown

HARROLD MEDICAL PRACTICE PRESCRIPTION COLLECTIONS

Here are the dates (Wednesdays) to the end of 2013. Please remember to tick the items required on your repeat prescription forms and write a large letter 'S' on the front page of your form.

Barbara (822296)

9 & 16 January 2013
 6 & 13 March
 1 & 8 May
 26 June & 3 July
 21 & 28 August
 16 & 23 October
 11 & 18 December

Pat (823250)

12 & 19 December 2012
 6 & 13 February 2013
 3 & 10 April
 29 May & 5 June
 24 & 31 July
 18 & 25 September
 13 & 20 November

Barbara Collins and Pat Pickup

STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB

After an excellent start to the season, starting with a 7-2 win against the team that beat us in last year's cup Semi Final, followed by a draw, then another win..... we have hit a bit of a sticky patch and are currently without a win in the last six games.



Our current league status is 11th from 14, having played 10, won 2, drawn 4 and lost 3. Our participation in the County Cup is also over, so we will now be concentrating on securing and improving our league position and hoping for a good run in the Watson Shield.

I am sure most readers calendars show Christmas Day as being on 25 December, but for some of our opposition I am sure they will feel Christmas has come early, very early in some cases, especially when we have surrendered comfortable winning positions to both draw and lose matches.

In some cases our team have left the pitch feeling like the proverbial turkey..... well and truly stuffed, recent 8-2 and 6-0 defeats spring to mind!! Also adding to this festive review theme the strength of some of the tackling we've seen from some of the players suggests some of them would be better suited to getting changed into fairies outfits after games ... and sticking their wand where the sun doesn't shine!

Anyway, that's enough of the gloom and doom, we'd like to update you on the positive aspects of the season so far. For the first time in many, many years we are pleased to report that we now have a number of local youngster's playing for us. These include Joe Champion, Jack Conroy and Antony Reed all living in the village and Sam King and Dan Seamarks with very close links to it. There are also a couple of their school mates playing regularly for us and all of them are doing very well, hopefully securing the future of the club for a few more years.

We have also introduced a 'forfeit' for the player deemed to have made the worst mistake in the match. They have to wear 'Onesie' in the form of a penguin outfit. The management committee will be re-assessing this over Christmas as it seems to be popular with the players..... and could be a factor in our recent run of poor results. Some players have worn it on more than one occasion (no names no pack-drill). But if Matt



Coles likes it that much, or has to wear it to get his little one off to sleep or humour Amy, then we suggest he buys his own and gives someone else the chance of wearing it!!

Despite the weather turning colder and results tailing off recently, we are still getting a good level of support and we would like to thank all those hardy souls for coming up to the field for home matches and for tackling Gareth's tea! So much so we are holding a Christmas quiz.... How many tea bags and how much milk does he use to make tea for the two teams, match officials and supporters? All answers to be sent c/o Santa Claus, Lapland by Christmas Eve lunchtime. The lucky winner will receive an unexpected present down the chimney ready for Christmas Day.

Special thanks to Rob for his continued support and sponsorship of the team this season. It is most appreciated and with the festive season fast approaching we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. We hope that you will be able to join us for our Christmas Celebrations at the Royal George on Saturday 15 December.

Shane King

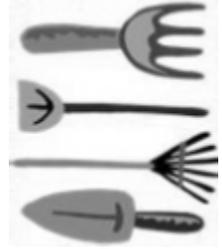
How About a DIFFERENT holiday in Spain? Ideal for nature lovers and walkers.

- * **House for rent in the beautiful Costa Brava, just 15 minutes' walk from the quaint Sa Tuna cove. Many other beaches nearby**
- * **Sleeps 4. Shady patio, sun terrace and large swimming pool**
- * **Many local and longer country and coastal walks, some direct from house, to suit all abilities**
- * **'Must see' is the nearby Aiguamols Nature Reserve offering a whole day out bird watching - for free!**
- * **Barcelona within hour and a half train ride**
- * **Numerous golf courses within easy reach**
- * **Cheap flights from Luton or Stansted to Gerona (1 hr's drive away) or Barcelona or Perpignan (2 hrs' drive)**
- * **Book by the week, fortnight or just a long weekend**
- * **Special discounted rates for Stevington residents**

**Interested? Phone Jan or Graham on 826119
or e-mail gjfollett@yahoo.co.uk for more info.**

WINTER GARDENING

I am sitting at the window of a friend's house whilst I write this article, looking out at the wine red leaves of a purple cherry, the multi-shaded gold leaves of a beech hedge, a Cotoneaster crammed so full of bright red berries that the leaves are almost hidden, and a butter yellow birch with an astonishingly white stem. It has been a wonderful autumn for colour and for late flowers but now winter is upon us and, in theory, we get a bit of a break from gardening.....or do we?



I started to put a 'To Do' list together and find it is rather long but here is an edited version which I hope you will find helpful:

Fruit and vegetable garden

Although cropping levels have not been very exciting this year, we have the unusual benefit of an extended season so I am still picking one or two strawberries. However, it is time for a good tidy up and I am clearing away finished crops, digging beds over and applying a generous layer of mulch. You can continue to do this until late winter, as long as it is not too wet. I find, with my raised beds, that I can dig them all year round, and the task is not at all onerous.

- Harvest leeks, parsnips, sprouts etc.
- Earth up the stems of your sprouts so they are well supported.
- Prune apples and pears.
- Force rhubarb using a clay forcer or a dark bucket. If your plants are too large now is the time to divide and replant them.
- Force mint and chives indoors to keep you going through the winter.
- Put fleece around your bay trees.

Flower garden

It has been strange not to water the garden at all this year, the weather having taken care of that for me, yet still have abundant flowers lasting well into early winter. Roses at the end of November are a real treat, particularly the creamy white ones rambling over an arch which shine out at dusk.

- As the frosts get your late flowering annuals pull them out and compost the waste.
- Coppice trees and shrubs such as hazel and willow. Prune Acers and birches before Christmas to avoid bleeding.

- Plant new shrubs to improve the look of your winter garden. Try Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis*), Winter Flowering Honeysuckle (*Lonicera x purpusii*) and Christmas Box (*Sarcococca*) for flower, form and wonderful scent.
- Prune back longer growth on roses to avoid damage by windrock.



Photo courtesy of Pat Pickup

Lawns

Lawns play a major role in the appearance of your garden in winter, providing colour and brightness during the winter months. It is well worth caring for them.

- Mow them, with cutters set on high, during mild and dryish weather, if they need a haircut.
- Keep the edges neatly trimmed.
- Remove dead leaves to protect the grass.
- If you can possibly do so, avoid walking on them when it is frosty or snowy. This way you will protect the grass and lessen the chances of fungal infections.

Green house/cold frame

Many of your tender perennial plants, and cuttings of perennials which were taken late in the year, will see the winter out in an unheated green house or cold frame. I usually have Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*), ornamental sages, Agapanthus, a range of herbs and smaller cuttings in my 6' x 6' greenhouse, as well as risking scented leaved geraniums if I don't have room indoors. The trick is to avoid overwatering. Once a week, perhaps less than that, is quite enough. Also if you are able to let fresh air in on brighter days it will help to minimise the likelihood of fungal rot, as will leaving some space between each pot to allow air to circulate. Inevitably you will lose one or two things but you should be able to start next year with a good stock for the garden and your pots.

- Check weekly for red spider mite.
- Check weekly for signs of rot.
- If the temperature plummets, protect your plants with fleece or a makeshift frame covered in bubble wrap.

- If you have a greenhouse stuffed full of plants you could consider lining it with bubble wrap. It will increase the temperature by several degrees.

General work

Winter is a good time to do all those little jobs that you didn't quite get round to during the three previous seasons, so tidying sheds, mending fences, repairing paths, making plans, cleaning tools and mowers are all things you can do.....if you can bear to be out in the cold! Here are some other things which may help.

- Insulate your garden tap and pipe work. Bubble wrap works well!
- Clean old pots and seed trays, ready for use from January onwards.
- Seed sowing tends to start in January so make a sowing timetable.
- If you want a good, warming work out, empty your compost bins and bag up the compost which is ready for use. Mix the rest together, breaking up any larger or woody bits and replace the mix in the bins.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have made kind comments about these gardening articles – it makes writing them very worthwhile.

Finally, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and good gardening in 2013.

Anthea Harper

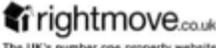


Chartered Valuation Surveyors • Land & Estate Agents
Your North Beds Independent Country Property Agents (established in the 1960s)

- PROPERTY SALES AND ACQUISITIONS | RICS HOMEBUYERS SURVEYS
- VALUATIONS FOR ALL PURPOSES (INCLUDING MARKET APPRAISALS & PROBATE)
- PROPERTY MANAGEMENT & LETTINGS (INCLUDING TENANCY ADVICE)
- PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS (INCLUDING APPLICATIONS & APPEALS)
- AGRICULTURAL & EQUESTRIAN AGENTS | BUSINESS RATES /COUNCIL TAX ADVICE



Local people dealing with local property
 Contact Jeremy Clayson or Matthew Ayres



Park Farm, Stevington, Bedford, MK43 7QF
Tel: 01234 823661 • property@warmingtonssurveyors.co.uk

AJ CHURCHILL

**BRICKLAYER &
GENERAL BUILDER**

Call Ade on
07918 734917
or
01234 824617



26A Court Lane, Stevington, BEDS

Alex Stubbs Flooring

**Carpets, Vinyls, Laminates,
Safety Flooring, Adaptions,
Refits, Repairs.**

Supplied & Fitted.

07976 260572

01234 240954

WHO WAS BERNARD NELSON MATSON?

If you walk round the back of the churchyard, you will come across a gravestone dedicated to Leonard Matson and his wife Catherine. If you look a little closer it also includes the following inscription

'Also in memory of their youngest son Bernard Nelson Matson, Group Captain, Royal Air Force. Born at Stevington Sept. 18th 1908. Died on Active Service at Ranikhet, India, May 4th 1944'.

So who was Bernard Nelson Matson?

Both Leonard and Catherine came from families that had produced a long line of clergy over the generations. In the 1861 census Leonard's father is listed as the Curate of Thorverton in Devon, interestingly Leonard's younger brother Edward aged 2, is listed as being born overseas in the British Virgin Islands. In 1871 Leonard's father is now the Curate of Falmouth. Whilst Catherine's father in the 1861 census was the Curate of Hungerford & Chaplain of Union, and in 1881 he is Curate of Sutton Cheney. Catherine's older brother went on to enter the clergy and eventually became a Canon and Rector in an area of the UK that is closely linked to Catherine's family through the generations and gave birth to one of this country's most famous historical figures, more about that later.

The Matsons moved to the village from Withybrook near Coventry in 1903, when Leonard took up his duties as the parish vicar. Clearly Rev. Matson MA was an educated man and shortly after moving in in May 1903, he applied to the Supreme Court Pay Office for funds payable to him as new incumbent under an order re "The Bedford & Northampton Railway and the Vicar of Stevington" made in the High Court of Justice on 1 July 1870. He was applying for dividends due on £281 1s. 8d.

Prior to his ministry in Withybrook Leonard had served as a vicar in Kempston where his two eldest sons were born, Charles in 1893 and Arthur in 1895. Edith a daughter was born in 1897 in Withybrook. Bernard who was born in the vicarage in 1908 is in all probability the last person to date to have been born there.

I have in researching the Matsons been very fortunate to speak to Charles's daughter, Betty now aged 90. She advised me her father and Arthur would help a certain Mr Grimmer in his aviation experiments. As the plane was so flimsy the boys were tasked with having to run alongside at take-off supporting the wings. Further research reveals Grimmer an Ampthill man owned a cycle business known as 'The Flit

Cycle Company' and he was interested in aviation even before the Wright brother's first flight in December 1903. In fact he wrote to a number of scientific and engineering journals supporting the brother's claim to flight in the period before 1907 when the Wrights came to Europe and finally 'proved' to the experts in France and Great Britain that they had actually flown.

Grimmer ended up acquiring two planes a Bleriot type XI and a Deperdussin both now owned by the Shuttleworth Collection. The Bleriot is the oldest flyable aircraft in the World and the Deperdussin is now a unique survivor of its type.

The elder brothers involvement with Grimmer had an impact on both their lives and ultimately on their younger brother, Bernard.

Leonard Matson died suddenly in 1912 and this resulted in a major upheaval for Bernard (then aged 3) and his mother, who would have been required to vacate the vicarage and so they were assisted by the splendidly named Rev. Arthur Carsten Holthouse (who had been Leonard's best man) and moved to Benfleet where in 1916 Catherine and the Rev. Holthouse were married. Sadly he died in 1921. In just 13 years Bernard had lost both his father and stepfather.

During this period the First World War started and both Charles and Arthur saw active service, Charles with the Lancashire Fusiliers, and Arthur with the Bedfordshire Regiment. Betty informed me the brothers met up whilst in France and Arthur told his older brother Charles he had volunteered for the RFC (Royal Flying Corps) and so Charles also applied. Both were accepted and Charles's transfer papers came through just in time to miss the carnage at Passchendaele, although the odds of survival as a pilot were very slim. Arthur was eventually shot down and held as a POW for the remainder of the war. Charles was more fortunate and flew as a reconnaissance pilot, Betty said she still holds some of the photographs her father took whilst flying over enemy lines.

Back to Bernard, upon reaching school boarding age he was sent to St Edmund's School in Canterbury (previously known as the Clergy Orphan School). It is unclear what year Bernard left school but by 1929 (just a few days before his 21st birthday) it is documented in the London Gazette he had been granted a short service commission as a Pilot Officer (on probation) with the RAF, effective from 13 September 1929.



Fairey Swordfish

Between 1929 and 1930 he undertook flying training at No 5 FTS Sealand in Flintshire, North Wales. Bernard's flying log reveals he flew two types of aircraft during this period, Avro Lynx and Armstrong Whitworth Siskin and passed out 'Above Average'. The London Gazette records that Bernard along with several other Pilot Officers on probation were confirmed in rank effective from 13 September 1930.

Between 1930 and 1933 Bernard served with 19 (F) Sqn at Duxford and was promoted to Flying Officer on 13 March 1931. His flying log reveals he again flew the Siskin along with the Bristol Bulldog and De Havilland Moth. It is worth noting the Bristol Bulldog had poor spinning recovery properties and Douglas Bader (who Bernard knew) lost both his legs when his Bristol Bulldog crashed while he was performing unauthorised flying Aerobatics. During this period Bernard met and married his wife Muriel Eldridge in 1931. Betty recalls him as a very tall dark, dashing, handsome man and she told me she could see why his wife fell for him. She went on to say he was very adventurous and used to ride a motorbike but when he met his wife he gave the motorbike up but still had several scrapes and near misses whilst driving cars.

Bernard's next transfer came in 1933 when he was posted to Henlow on an Officer's Engineering course and this ultimately led to his specialty within the RAF. It is worth noting Frank Whittle (the father of the jet engine) was also at Henlow on an Engineering course during this same period. Bernard was promoted to Flight Lieutenant in March 1935 and appointed to a permanent commission in September 1935.

During 1935 he was stationed at HMS Vernon on a Torpedo course and qualified as a Torpedo specialist. This led him to be stationed from late 1935 until 1939 at RAF Gosport Torpedo Section, where Bernard had a major involvement in the invention of the B-Bomb, which was designed to be dropped in the path of a ship, sink, then rise to the surface, strike the bottom of the ship and detonate when the ship passed over it. His flying log reveals the planes he flew during this period - Avro Tutor, Blackburn Baffin (the aircraft is said to have inspired the

coining of the word "Boffin"), Blackburn Shark, Fairey Seal, Fairey Battle, Fairey Swordfish, Hawker Nimrod, Hawker Osprey, Miles Magister, and Vickers Vildebeest. In 1936 his first son, Robin was born.



Vickers Vilderbeest

Bernard's flying log records he passed an Instrument Flying course as 'Above Average' in February 1938. In the summer he took the B-Bomb to RAF Mildenhall to show to King George VI. He was promoted to Squadron Leader on 01.08.38 and also in August was posted OC 106 Sqn - however the posting was ultimately cancelled. From 1939 to 1942 Bernard was based at HQ 41 Group, Andover. The family was also living in Andover and increased with the arrival of his second son Richard, born in 1940 and Mary in 1942.

Bernard transferred into the RAF Technical Branch upon its formation in 1940. The Branch was necessary due to the growing complexity of modern aircraft and equipment which demanded a greater degree of specialisation. In December 1940, Bernard was promoted to Wing Commander. The global threat of the German Navy and its U-Boats was at its height during this period, as the Germans attempted to starve the UK of fuel, supplies and armaments. Whilst the work he undertook is not documented (probably due to the sensitivity) one assumes Bernard was involved in developing and trialling armaments to counter this threat. This is borne out by the long list of planes his flying log documents he flew during this period - Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle, Avro Anson, Blackburn Skua, Bristol Beaufighter, Bristol Beaufort, Bristol Blenheim, DH Dominie, DH Rapide, General Aircraft Cygnet, Gloster Gladiator, Hawker Fury, Hawker Hind, Hawker Hurricane, Miles Falcon, Miles Mentor, North American Harvard, Parnall Hendy Heck, Stinson Reliant, Supermarine Spitfire, Vickers Wellington and Westland Lysander.



Vickers Wellington

Bernard's next posting was to India in 1942 and having spoken to his son Richard, he feels that due to his training and technical expertise he was sent as an Anti-Shipping specialist. His flying log reveals there was clearly a shortage of modern aircraft in India, as he was flying some types he had last flown 13 years earlier - Hawker Audax, Hawker Hart, DH Leopard Moth, DH Tiger Moth and Percival Vega Gull. During his time in India the RAF Third Tactical Air Force (Third TAF) was formed in South Asia in December 1943 and was one of three tactical air forces formed by the RAF during the war. It is unclear whether Bernard had any involvement in the planning and formation of Third TAF but in April 1944 he was promoted to Acting Group Captain. His niece Betty believes he was at the time the youngest Group Captain in the RAF. Tragically a month later on 4 May 1944 and at the age of just 35 he died of polio. He is buried in Delhi War Cemetery.

Bernard's early death is ironic, as within the space of one generation history had repeated itself in that his 3 children had lost their father at a very young age. In speaking to his son Richard who was only 2 when his father left for India and 4 when he died, he said he simply could not recall anything about his father.

Another irony can be traced through Bernard's mother's family. Her full maiden name was Catherine Suckling Baron. The middle name of Suckling was in fact her mother's maiden surname and if you trace this surname back you will find a Catherine Suckling of Barsham who married another vicar a certain Edmund Nelson in 1749. Amongst the many children she bore was a boy by the name of Horatio. Her brother Captain Maurice Suckling gave young Horatio his introduction to the Royal Navy and his first lessons in seamanship. The irony is both Bernard and his distinguished distant relative Horatio Nelson, were trained to attack and blow up ships.

I am extremely grateful to Robin Matson (ex RAF) for supplying me with a copy of his father's flying log. Also to Richard Matson (ex RAF) for putting me in contact with his cousin Betty and her marvellous recollections and conversation.

Finally, apart from the inscription on his parent's grave there is no lasting memorial to Bernard, therefore this begs the question - Is it not appropriate that a son of this parish should have his name added to the Stevington War Memorial?

Mark Jackson

Pictures provided by Mark Jackson

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS WITH PAPWORTH TRUST IN BEDFORD

Papworth Trust is a leading disability charity. Our mission is to support disabled people to have equality, choice and independence in their lives.

In Bedford we are looking for youth workers at either the Farady Centre or at the Kempston Youth Centre to support young people with disabilities taking part in a variety of activities. Previous experience of working or volunteering with disabled people is desirable but not essential. If you have a particular skill or interest you would like to share, we would like to hear from you.

We also want parents to give feedback on the how useful these sessions are, what benefits the young disabled people have encountered and what could be improved. Someone who would be able to discuss this with parents of the youth club members would also be welcome.

We give training and expenses to all of our volunteers.

Could YOU do it?

Youth work: We are looking for volunteers to help develop youth skills for various activities, if you have a passion in an activity we would like to hear from you. The idea is to bring your specific interests or skills to youth sessions to provide young disabled people with new stimulating activities. Do you have an interest in music, cookery, health and beauty, fashion, film, sports, gardening or arts and crafts? Saturday mornings.

Research: We want to set up meetings with the parents of young people using the youth club to find out how useful these sessions are, what benefits the young disabled people have encountered, who has discovered a talent that had never previously explored and what could be improved.

If you'd like to get involved please contact Christian Cornforth at Papworth Trust on 01480 357200 or email volunteering@papworth.org.uk



MOBILE LIBRARY VISITS

The Mobile Library visits The Cross from 2.10 - 2.40pm on alternate Wednesdays and the dates for the next three months are:



December 12 (No visit Christmas Week)
January 9, 23
February 6, 20

Please continue to support this service.

THE FOREST OF MARSTON VALE - WHAT'S ON

Sunday Strolls (6 January, 3 February)

A gentle Sunday walk. Meet at reception at 10.30am. Walk lasts approx. 2 hours. Cost £1 no need to book. Call 01234 767037 for details.

Conservation Tasks (19 December, 19 January, 17 February)

A variety of practical projects. Meet at the Forest Centre at 10.15am. Wear old clothes and bring lunch if you are going to stay all day. For details and to confirm attendance contact anna.charles@marstonvale.org or call 01234 762614.

Learning Lunchtime:

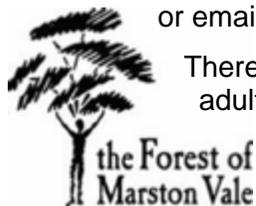
Free talks on Thursdays at the Forest Centre at 11am:

17 January Wildlife gardening
7 February Age UK – what you might be entitled to
21 February Writing your will

Creation Station: (8, 15, 22 & 29 January, 5, 12, 19 & 26 February)

Events each Tuesday from 10.45 to 11.30am for pre-school children (from 15 months), giving them the chance to experiment with a range of materials, tools and ideas. Great fun for the kids and no clearing up for the adults! £5 per child (reduction for siblings).

Details at www.thecreationstation.co.uk. To book, call 0844 854 9178 or email louiseplatt@thecreationstation.co.uk



There are lots of other exciting events planned for both adults and children. For information on other events visit www.marstonvale.org/events.html

THE VILLAGER MINIBUS

Why not use the Villager Minibus for some Christmas shopping? Northampton on Wednesday 19 December or Olney every Thursday. Unfortunately there is no run to Milton Keynes in December as it falls on Christmas Day.

SERVICES FROM STEVINGTON

MILTON KEYNES (Shopping Centre & Market)			4th Tuesday
Stevington West End	Dep: 09:18	Milton Keynes	Dep: 12:30
Stevington Cross	Dep: 09:20	Stevington Cross	Dep: 13:10
Milton Keynes	Arr: 10:00	Stevington West End	Arr: 13:12

NORTHAMPTON (Town Centre & Market)			3rd Wednesday
Stevington West End	Dep: 09:18	Northampton	Dep: 12:30
Stevington Cross	Dep: 09:20	Stevington Cross	Dep: 13:08
Northampton	Arr: 10:00	Stevington West End	Arr: 13:10

PETERBOROUGH (Queensgate Bus Station)			2nd Friday
Stevington Cross	Dep: 09:12	Peterborough	Dep: 14:00
Peterborough	Arr: 10:45	Stevington Cross	Arr: 15:33

OLNEY MARKET			Every Thursday
Stevington West End	Dep: 10:08	Olney	Dep: 12:10
Stevington Cross	Dep: 10:10	Stevington Almshouses	Dep: 12:34
Stevington Almshouses	Dep: 10:12	Stevington Cross	Dep: 12:36
Olney	Arr: 10:36	Stevington West End	Arr: 12:38

The new website can be found at

www.villager-sharnbrook.org.uk

Stan Jones
Coordinator

The Villager Minibus (Sharnbrook) Ltd
Tel: 01234 266070



The UK's No.1 Lawn Care Company



- Scarification
- Aeration
- Lawn Fertilising
- Weed Control
- Moss Control
- Water Conserver
- Pest and Disease Management



GreenThumb has a variety of treatment programmes to suit your pocket that include our traditional 'pay-as-you-go' service and our new, pay monthly, Direct Debit programmes, where you can save up to 25% annually.

Our treatments start from £5 per month, that's cheaper than D-I-Y and without the hassle!

Call your local branch today for a FREE lawn analysis and no obligation quote.

0800 0111 222

GreenThumb
LAWN TREATMENT SERVICE



Find us online at: www.greenthumb.co.uk



WHAT

WHERE

HOW

WHO

Just Ask!

*If you live in a village in Bedford Borough,
BRCC's Village Agents can help you access
the services and support you need*

Call FREE on:

0800 039 1234

(If no answer, leave a message, we will call you back)



NHS
Bedfordshire

www.bedsrcc.org.uk

Village Agents can provide high quality information, promote access to services, and help you to make informed choices. The service is free of charge.

You can invite your Village Agent to visit you in your own home, or you can talk to us by phone. All Village Agents are CRB checked and operate in the strictest confidence.

Your Village Agent can help you to find out about:

- ... feeling safer at home
- ... becoming healthier
- ... pensions and benefits
- ... support for carers
- ... transport options
- ... joining a local group
- ... finding a job
- ... local volunteering opportunities
- ... housing issues
- ... or anything else

Village Agents are employed by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC).

Just Ask!

Delivered by: Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
Supported by: Bedford Borough Council, LFRS & NHS Bedfordshire

Image: BRCC Services Ltd. All images Copyright © 2011 BRCC Services Ltd.