

STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



***MARCH 2015
Number 172***

VILLAGE DIARY

March

- 9 Christian Aid Lent Lunch. Church Room 12.30pm
- 10 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Hall
- 12 WI You Can Do It. Church Room 7.30pm
- 15 Mothering Sunday Communion. St. Mary's. 9.30am
- 16 Christian Aid Lent Lunch. Church Room 12.30pm
- 23 Christian Aid Lent Lunch. Church Room 12.30pm
- 26 Bedford Sailing Club AGM. The Royal George 8.00pm
- 30 Christian Aid Lent Lunch. Church Room 12.30pm

April

- 5 Easter Day Communion and Easter Egg Hunt. St. Mary's. 10.00am
- 6 Family Cycle Ride. The Cross 11.00am (see page 48)
- 9 Stevington Social Centre AGM. Social Centre 7.30pm
- 9 Deadline for nominations to stand for the Parish Council
- 9 WI WW2 Prisoner of War Escapes. Church Room 7.30pm
- 10 FOSM Children's Cookie Baking Event
- 14 St. Mary's Annual Parish Meeting. Church room. 7.00pm
- 16 Parish Council Meeting. Baptist Hall 7.30pm
- 19 Help for Heroes Big Breakfast. Social Centre 10.00am (see page 37)
- 25 Hostess Supper. Social Centre
- 27 Bowls Club AGM. Social centre

May

- 7 Election Day
- 10 Stevington 12K Run. (see page 26)
- 12 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Hall
- 14 WI Annual Meeting. Church Room 7.30pm
- 16 WI Produce & Plant Stall. The Cross 10.00am
- 17 Manor House Open Garden. (see page 27)
- 24 Magazine Copy Date (Sunday)
- 30 Centenary Organ Recital. St. Mary's. 7.30pm
- 31 Patronal Day Choral Evensong. St. Mary's. 5.00pm

June

- 7 Bulky Waste Collection. (see page 38)
- 7 Manor House Open Garden.
- 13 FOSM Concert. St Mary's

Photographs as credited
Cover drawn by John Goddard

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!

You will remember that our Christmas Greetings Charity in December was CLIMB (Children Living with Inherited Metabolic Diseases) and that our donation was made specifically in memory of Esmé Blore-Rimmer. Thanks to the generosity of the village we had 42 greetings and raised £745 plus Gift Aid. We have received a thank you letter from CLIMB which you can read on page 5.

We are very grateful to all of our regular advertisers who have signed up to continue to support the Magazine during 2015. We are also delighted to welcome several new advertisers. The annual costs of the Magazine are a little over £1,000 and without our advertisers we wouldn't be able to cover costs so please have a look through the Magazine and use all of these local businesses when you have a need – it's great to support them as they support us! Remember to tell them where you found their details.

Congratulations to Stevington Football Club who have had a brilliant start to the season – see page 20 for the full report. We wish you luck in the forthcoming 'big' matches.

The Stevington Neighbourhood Plan will become a legal document within planning legislation and will influence how the village develops in the future. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party is actively steering the process and will be seeking everyone's views – see page 12.

Finally we hope to see you all at the Help for Heroes Big Breakfast on Sunday 19 April. The event offers plenty of good food and company while raising money for this important charity. See page 37 for full details and how to get your tickets.

Heather and Keith

NEXT MAGAZINE

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 6-7 June 2015. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 24 May 2015. Articles should reach Heather and Keith Parkinson (Old Paddock, Church Road, Tel. 826677, e-mail stevington.magazine@googlemail.com) on that day, although we will be delighted to receive copy at any time before then.



SAVE THE CHILDREN

With help from friends the coffee morning on 25 October raised £134.82 including the raffle. Special thanks to Tracy, Gina and Lesley.

As the cost of Christmas has increased so much people are sending emails and texts – perhaps we should consider a different means of raising funds? Any ideas?

Susi Clifton

BECHAR (Bedford Concern for the Homeless and Rootless) and BEDFORD FOODBANK

A massive 'THANK YOU' to everyone who has given so generously over the Christmas period to these appeals. The response from Stevington has been just amazing! The collection boxes in St Mary's Church and the Church Room were filled (and overfilled!) several times over and numerous trips have been made to deliver the goods. Everything has been very gratefully received and many of the disadvantaged in our wider community have directly benefited from your generosity.

Items are still being donated so it is our intention that the Collection Boxes will remain for as long as giving continues. Items most required are listed on the boxes. For those not liking to miss a trick, why not buy food items from the Community Shop and support two places at once?

To make a donation of money the details of how to do this can be found online at:

Bedford Foodbank: www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

BECHAR: www.Prebendcentre.org.uk/contribute/

Once again very many thanks to you all.

Chrissie Fitch, St Mary's PCC

FOR SALE - WATERCOLOUR OF THE RED LION

I own an original water colour painting of The Red Lion by Ron Henderson - size 13" x 9" mounted and framed. It is in lovely condition.

Would anyone be interested? I can email pictures to you. Please contact me on Mobile 07969 286360 or Home 01327 354911.

Richard Wilson



Climb

National Information Centre
for Metabolic Diseases

Climb
Climb Building
176 Nantwich Rd
Crewe,
Cheshire
CW2 6BG
6th January 15"

Dear Heather & Keith Parkinson,
Thank you for your kind donation of £745.00
given to Climb in memory of Esmé Blore-
Rimmer.

It was such a lovely gesture to receive
this donation from generous villagers who
used your magazine to send Christmas
Greetings to neighbours and friends in
lieu of cards.

Your donation will be used to support
families affected by the many terrible
metabolic conditions that we come across,
as well as continuing to search for treatment
and cures.

Many thanks once again for your support.

Warmest wishes and all the very best to
you all in 2015.

Take care

Rachel

Family Adviser for Climb.



Climb

RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

Month	Orange	Green
March	9, 23	2, 16, 30
April	6, 20	13, 27
May	4, 18	11, 25
June	1, 15, 29	8, 22

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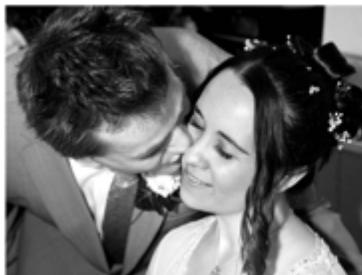
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PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Since the December magazine was issued the Parish Council has met twice, (13 January and 24 February). At our January meeting we were shown examples of the proposed new Natural History of Stevington book which is being produced as a community project by an enthusiastic and committed group of villagers. It looks wonderful and we wish them the best of luck.

Planning matters continue to take up much of our time and we work hard to best represent the interests of Stevington.

We have started work on our Neighbourhood Plan and the first meeting of the steering group took place on 10 February. A Neighbourhood Plan is, once adopted, a statutory document which can help to shape the future of our village. There are restrictions as it must be in line with the Borough Council's Local Plan, but without one we could be less secure from inappropriate development. The steering group is a sub-committee of the Parish Council and has a lot of work ahead of it before the plan can take shape. They will be consulting with the village on a wide range of issues. A dedicated website is being created, the address for which will be published soon on the parish notice board and the Parish Council's website. If you would like to volunteer your help please contact our Clerk at stevingtonpc@hotmail.co.uk. You can find further information about Neighbourhood Plans by visiting the Borough Council's website at www.bedford.gov.uk

We are delighted to advise that the Parish Council has secured a defibrillator for village use. It will be installed in the old BT phone box near the Cross and in due course there will be an opportunity to attend some awareness training – details of which will be published once we know them. We are in the process of adopting the phone box from BT following which we will refurbish it before installing the defibrillator. There is no firm date for installation as yet as this is dependent on BT handing responsibility for the phone box to us. It is particularly pleasing that the defibrillator itself was obtained at no cost and we only have to pay a small amount for training and maintenance.

We hope you have noticed that we have a smart new notice board. This was paid for almost entirely by a grant from Bedford Borough Council's Rural Affairs Committee. We would like to thank Ade Churchill for kindly installing the board at no cost.

If you have any items which you wish to post on the notice board, please either email them to our Clerk at the address below or email/hand them to any Parish Councillor. Contact details for your Parish Councillors are posted on the notice board and on our website <http://Stevington.bedsparishes.gov.uk>.

The Parish Council hopes to obtain further grant funding to buy a notice board for general village use and we will let you know if we are successful.

It can't have escaped many people's notice that this is an election year and this applies not only to the national government and our Borough Council, but also to the Parish Council. We would encourage anyone who would like to get involved and make a positive contribution to our community to put their names forward to serve as Parish Councillors. The Borough Council will be publishing the Notice of Election on 30 March and then nominations must be in by 4pm on 9 April. If you would like any further information please contact our Clerk.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on 16 April at 7.30pm in the Baptist Church Hall, West End. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there are 15 minutes at the start of each meeting for public questions.

Roz Buchanan
Parish Clerk

Website: <http://stevington.bedsparishes.gov.uk>
E-mail (Clerk): stevingtonpc@live.co.uk
E-mail (Planning): stevplanning@gmail.com



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We will be at the Cross from
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BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL NEWS

Early Warning – Road Closures

Bedford Western Bypass where it will joins Bromham Road

There are two roundabouts being constructed on the Bromham Road for the final link for the bypass. Bromham Road will be closed for three weekends at the end of April and either early or mid-May. There will be a diversion route. The bypass construction firm will be sending a newsletter out nearer the time and also the information on the closures will be on the Borough Council's website.

Council Tax

The Council will not be raising your council tax for 2015/16 whilst protecting key services. The weekly bin collections will be maintained, replacement of temporary classrooms in all schools including Oakley Lower, increased disabled grants for adaptations to enable people to live in their own homes and children's centres protected.

Mr Martins, the Bedfordshire Police Commissioner, has put together a budget, part of which means more neighbourhood policing. This will mean an increase in the police budget of 15.58%, an extra £24.88 a year on a Band D property. This will increase your council tax by that amount. However before this can happen the Bedfordshire Police must hold a referendum which will take place on 7 May 2015.

Elections 7 May 2015

You will be electing your Member of Parliament, your Borough Councillor and your Parish Councillors. It will also be your opportunity to vote in the Police Commissioners Referendum on the rise of 15.58%.

These are important elections please go and vote. If you have not registered please go to www.bedford.gov.uk/register tovot e.

Health and Hospitals

The Bedford Hospital and Care in the Community Review that is being undertaken by the Bedfordshire GP Commissioning Group is nearing completion. Once the three options are finalised there will be a further consultation which will take place in summer 2015. The possible options are for the hospital to be a Major Emergency Centre, Integrated Care Centre or a Modern District Hospital. All options will mean changes to how care in the community is structured.

Bedford Hospital continues to give good service. They are the second best hospital in the East of England in getting A& E waiting times to under 4 hours continuously since Christmas.

The new 'Reading Well Books on Prescription' books on Dementia is a scheme that provides reading material and support on wellbeing to improve people's awareness of dementia. There is also guidance and support for those who have been diagnosed with the condition. The collection for dementia is available at Bedford Central Library and Kempston Library, in addition single titles are available at other libraries including Bromham Library. Please visit www.reading-well.org.uk for further information and a full list of titles. All the listed books have been recommended by experts and tried and tested by those living with condition and found to be useful.

Neighbourhood Plan

Congratulations to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party which has been working hard to set this up. I am looking forward to the launch and finding out how you see Stevington and its evolution to 2032. Please make sure you get involved and shape your village.

Borough Councillor Pat Olney



MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

PCSO Daniel James left the PCSO role on 27 February. He has been replaced by PCSO 8221 Daniel Corbin, who has transferred from Biggleswade and has been in the role for over 5 years, and new starter PCSO 6750 Daniel Henman who joined the team on 14 January.

Bedfordshire Police would like to make the residents of Stevington aware that there has been a recent increase in car crime in the area so make sure your car is locked, alarmed and secure.

Officers have increased patrols in the area and we also urge residents if they see anything suspicious to contact Bedfordshire Police on either the 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies.



Daniel Corbin
PCSO 8221
Riseley Police Station
North Rural
01234 842865

lpt.carlton@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

WHAT DO YOU WANT STEVINGTON TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

What makes Stevington special to you and your family? Is it the pleasant rural environment, with country walks and scenic views, such as the Stevington Railway Walk and John Bunyan Trail; or the historical landmarks such as the Cross, Stevington Windmill, St Mary's Church and the Holy Well or the Baptist Chapel with its John Bunyan window; or perhaps it is access to highly regarded schools; or the very many community activities and clubs; or is it just meeting with friends to put the world to rights in the Community Shop or the George? Whatever makes Stevington an attractive place for you to live, it is time to think about the future. Picture Stevington in 2032 – what do **you** want it to look like? The Neighbourhood Plan is your opportunity to help influence how your village will develop in the future.

The Parish Council is in the early stages of preparing the Stevington Neighbourhood Plan which, when adopted, becomes a legal document within Planning legislation. The Neighbourhood Plan is a real and positive opportunity for the community to shape the future development of Stevington, particularly the use and development of land and buildings. Without a Neighbourhood Plan, we will have little influence over future development: already there are planning applications submitted under the Government's 'call for sites' which, if approved, could increase the number of houses in Stevington by at least 60%.

In the December issue of the magazine, the Parish Council sought volunteers to form a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. Six volunteers, assisted by Pat Olney, our Borough Councillor, and Roz Buchanan, Clerk to Stevington Parish Council, are now working actively to steer development of our Neighbourhood Plan. Regeneration Positive has been engaged as consultants and a successful grant application has provided initial funding.

The most important thing you can give us is your opinions and suggestions to help the Working Party to develop a good and effective Neighbourhood Plan which will win support from the whole Stevington community in the referendum held before it is adopted. The Working Party's first task is to set out how we are going to make this as straightforward and fair as possible, ensuring everyone has the chance to understand what it's all about and have their say. Whether you are a resident, work in a business based in Stevington, are involved with local sports or social groups, or have some other involvement, we need your views.

A website is being developed but rest assured that this won't be the only mode of communication. To read more about Neighbourhood Plans, or for email and other contact details and to see what's happening next, see the beginnings of our website at www.stevington.com and keep an eye on the village noticeboards and Stevington Magazine. If you'd like to get in touch straight away then email us or drop a note to any of the Working Party.

We would also appreciate any help you can offer. If you have particular expertise in planning, retail, education, environmental issues, recreation, transport or infrastructure and would be willing to assist with, or advise on, these aspects, we would love to hear from you. We would equally welcome volunteers who can be 'a pair of hands' when needed. Whatever time you can offer over the two years it will take to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, please let us know. If we all work together, we can have a major influence on how Stevington develops in the future.

Contact details at present either via the Parish Clerk, Roz Buchanan, at stevingtonpc@live.co.uk or via www.stevington.com.

Linda Penney
Stevington Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

HARROLD MEDICAL PRACTICE PRESCRIPTION COLLECTIONS

Here are the dates (Wednesdays) to the end of 2015. 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 and Pat visit the Harrold Surgery two weeks in every four. If you would like to have your repeat prescription delivered to and/or collected from the surgery, please give one or other of them a call. The collected prescriptions are delivered to your door immediately on collection.

Barbara (822296)

11 March
29 April & 6 May
24 June & 1 July
19 & 26 August
14 & 21 October
9 & 16 December 2015

Pat (823250)

1 & 8 April
27 May & 3 June
22 & 29 July
16 & 23 September
11 & 18 November
6 & 13 January 2016

Barbara Collins and Pat Pickup

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HELP FOR HEROES FUNDRAISING UPDATE

As you know we are taking part in the Help for Heroes 4x4 European Rally in June to raise funds for Help for Heroes. Our fundraising is progressing well and we wanted to update you on how our recent fundraising events in the village have gone.

The Bakeless Bake Sale on 31(!) November was a great success. You'll remember that the idea was that instead of making and donating a cake and / or buying a cake at a cake sale we asked you to donate the cost of the cake or what you would have spent on buying one. We were overwhelmed with Stevington's generosity and the 'event' raised **£370**. Thank you to everyone who 'took part'.

We held a Book Sale on Friday 30 / Saturday 31 January which raised £426. Since the sale we have sold some more books and received kind donations from people who were unable to make it to the sale – this totalled £117. So the total from the Book Sale so far is **£543**. We have books left and will be doing our best to sell some more before donating what remains to local charities.

Thank you to everyone who donated books and came to the sale. Also thanks to St Mary's for the use of the Church Room without charge and to Anna Hart, Barbara Cattermole, Chrissie Fitch and Dita Hollins for helping with the refreshments.

Our next event in the village will be a Help for Heroes Big Breakfast at the Social Centre on Sunday 19 April. Full details and how to get your ticket are on page 37.

If you would like to sponsor us on-line or see how our fundraising is going please go to **www.bmycharity.com/H4HTeam33**.

If you are on Facebook you can see what we have been up to on our page '**Help for Heroes Rally 2015 - Team33**'

Thanks to everyone in Stevington for your support

Heather & Keith Parkinson
(Team33)

STEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

TODAY'S WOMEN WORKING FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD

2015 is a very significant year for the Women's Institute as we celebrate our Centenary and Bedfordshire County Federation has a variety of events planned throughout the year.



For our part in this celebration we are planning an Open Gardens event in the village on the afternoon of Sunday 5 July and we would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to participate - you will be contacted nearer the time with confirmation and further details. Posters will be displayed around the village prior to the event.

Our own Stevington WI was founded in 1943, is still going strong and we hope it will for a while longer yet! This proves we must be doing something right by maintaining membership and understanding that WI has to move forward with the rest of the world.

Our own activities continue with walks, litter picks, darts, book club, pub suppers and other social events.

Barbara has compiled and edited a Federation Favourite Recipes book which is proving very popular and members are enjoying experimenting with the different dishes.

Once again this Christmas we borrowed a Reminiscence box from the Higgins museum and together with mince pies and mulled wine the evening proved to be most enjoyable.

In January, Rachel and Hayley took us on a Hebridean Island cruise which was very interesting and was illustrated by a beautifully presented brochure.

Dates for your diary

- 12 March You Can Do It - Ian Rowe (Open Meeting)
- 24 March Group Meeting at Keysoe
- 9 April WW2 Prisoner of War Escapes with Ken Lewis
- 14 May Annual Meeting
- 16 May WI Plant & Produce Stall at the Cross from 10am

Our programme is displayed on the notice board in the Church Room - visitors are most welcome at all our meetings, there is a charge of £4. Copies of the W-Eye, which is a Bedfordshire County Federation publication detailing forthcoming events, can also be found in the Church Room.

Pat Gibson

STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE

Stevington Social Centre held the annual Burns Night Supper at the end of January. This first event of the New Year was well attended as usual with quite a few attending from Carlton. An excellent celebration supper of haggis, neeps and tatties was prepared by Lawrence Kay, Jean and Richard Blayney. Iain Morrison led the address to the haggis with verve, which was piped in by our very own piper Richard Galley.

The dancing this year was led by Iain Morrison who stepped up to the mark as our resident caller Linda Penney was unable to make this year - we wish her well. The dancing was as energetic and hectic as ever and a great time was had by all. Many thanks to Barbara Collins and everyone else who helped with this event. Watch for next years date on the hall website.

The next Social Centre event will be the launch of the Stevington Cinema Club on Thursday 5 March, which will be a free event to let people see what is being offered.

January and February have seen some intense work in installing all the equipment required for projection, installing a new sound system and upgrading the lighting systems. We are now handing the project over to the cinema club team to manage. Keep an eye on the cross for posters and find out more at the club website. www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk.

Many thanks to Roger Penney for running the project, which also included him spending many hours crawling about the hall loft space running cabling - well beyond the call of duty. I'd also like to thank Jon Sidwick for his advice and help in completing this project. The hall now benefits from an excellent versatile system that can be used for many events as well as the cinema club.

During the upgrade we took the opportunity to install broadband and wifi in the hall, which is available to all hall users. We hope to be able to offer some events at the hall to help those of us who may struggle with technology or need some help understanding the internet. Keep an eye out for any announcements at the shop, hall notice board or the cross.

The Social Centre will run the annual Hostess Supper on Saturday 25 April - always a fun event and a chance to display your culinary skills and have a great sociable evening.

Sunday 10 May will be the Stevington 12K run. The event is always attended by many from keen amateur club runners to health wise joggers - get out those running shoes and have a trip 'round the loop'.

Stevington Social Centre will be holding its AGM at 7.30pm on Thursday 9 April - all are welcome to attend.

Lastly, with mixed feelings, I can report that the Social Centre has received a very generous donation from the estate of Terry Studley. Many of you will have known Terry, and his crossword. This donation will enable us to move forward on several projects, which would have taken some time and a lot of effort to raise the money for. We intend to dedicate one of these projects to Terry. Terry attended and enjoyed many events at the hall and this was obviously appreciated. This funding has effectively been left to the Social Centre to help provide Stevington with better facilities and activities. We will do our very best to ensure we make the most of it. Thanks Terry!

Steve Cole

www.stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk

STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE 100 CLUB

Winners of the last three draws are as follows:

Dec	1st	No 48	L A Taylor
	2nd	No 78	J Garrett
	3rd	No 27	E Goldby
	4th	No 57	M Murzyn
Jan	1st	No 13	B Collins
	2nd	No 10	V Aspley
	3rd	No 17	G Puckett
	4th	No 87	G & M Billett
Feb	1st	No 88	J & F Cumming
	2nd	No 10	V Aspley
	3rd	No 78	J Garrett
	4th	No 21	H Odell



Anna and Bob Hart (823769)

STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Unlike the last few seasons we've been fortunate and not seen too many games postponed yet due to waterlogged or frozen pitches. This is welcome news as we still have at least 14 matches to play in what is shaping up to possibly be one of our best seasons for many years.



At the end of February the statistics read as follows:

- League Division 2 – Currently second having played 16, won 14, lost 1, drawn 1, scored 94 goals, conceded 18 goals, goal difference + 76, 43 points.
- Bedfordshire FA Junior Challenge (County) Cup – Finalists
- Quarter Final of the Jubilee (League) Cup – through to Quarter Finals

As mentioned in the last article we've been lucky to see an influx of new players join us this season. This was essential for the long term viability of the club and we are pleased to be able to report that they have all settled in well. The team has been well supported at all home and away matches and has responded by playing some fast attractive attacking football right through the team. We've witnessed some great individual and team performances and seen some great goals and we are hoping it continues until the end of the season.

The final three months of the season is going to be rather hectic and will see a number of 'top of the table' clashes. Whilst we have played five games less than the current league leaders, all the top teams have to play one another at least once, so it's likely that there are going to be some really high tempo and difficult matches. With one cup final appearance already assured it is essential that we keep the momentum going right through to the final match of the season.

With all these big matches on the horizon you should all make sure you have a reliable vehicle as you won't want to miss any games or the celebrations afterwards.....

With this in mind I'd like to suggest you consider visiting our two club sponsors, Hilton Suzuki Bedford (at Clapham) for your motoring needs and Rob at the Royal George for your refreshment needs..... both at the top end of their game like Stevington FC!!!

As always we would like to thank our followers for their on-going support, especially during the recent wet and cold weather.

Shane King

BAPTIST NEWS



Doesn't Christmas seem a long time ago and here we are, looking forward to the clocks going on, the dawn chorus building morning after morning and, we're now into Lent. It is fitting for the Christian believer to glance back at Christmas and look forward to Easter because that was God's plan – the route of forgiveness for those who believe that they are not perfect. The reasons and the need for faith were highlighted by the Rev Colin Pye at a service in February. He drew attention to the contrasting peaks and troughs experienced by Jesus himself. Colin has recently been appointed to the central regional ministry team of the Baptist Union and encouraged the church to acknowledge the sweeping cultural changes in today's society which required the church to change its own ways of communicating.

Shrove Tuesday saw more than thirty people gather at the Baptist Church for soup and a roll followed by the obligatory pancake. This used to be the day when fats were used up before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent.

Mother's Day on 15 March will see the church try a slightly less formal gathering, using the hall. The Rev Peter Eyre will lead this service and the one on Palm Sunday. On the Wednesday before Easter, on 1 April, he will lead Communion while drawing out the meaning to the Jews of the Passover meal. Peter has played a significant role among UK Baptists in twinning with churches in Israel and visited the country again last month. Although retired and living in Rushden, he is playing an important part in leading the Stevington church forward.

Good Friday morning will see a short commemorative service at 10am before gathering for tea or coffee and hot cross buns and that leads on to the Easter celebration on the Sunday morning at the usual time of 10.45am.

Looking ahead, this is another year for the scarecrows. The competition has been moved to coincide with harvest and will be staged on 26 September, followed by the harvest thanksgiving service the day afterwards. The theme for scarecrow designers this year will be "Holidays". Once again, younger people – up to their 12th birthday - will have their own competition and entry forms will be available in the summer.

Peter Evans

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The Friends of ST MARY'S STEVINGTON

Our beautiful and ancient Church, St. Mary the Virgin, continues to play a vital part in the life of the village, not just for regular worship, but for weddings, baptisms and funerals too. It's sobering to think of it falling into disrepair or, worse, closing down. This is what spurs on and sustains the commitment of Friends Trustees to continue with their programme of fundraising in a time when we recognise that there are so many calls on everyone's financial resources and when there is plenty of competition for us to donate any spare cash we may have to worthy causes. Your generosity and enthusiasm for our fundraising helps secure St. Mary's and the Church Room, so vital to many aspects of the village community, for our lifetime and for future generations too.

Since FOSM (let's call it that here for ease of reference) was established in its current form in August 2010, the village has helped the Trustees raise many thousands of pounds through Friends membership fees, kind donations and your support of a wide variety of fundraising events. Trustees have also successfully pursued grant funding for projects associated with refurbishing the Church Room. If you would like to take out a membership (£10 annually for single, £17.50 family) and become a Friend of St. Mary's, please contact Tony Pyner (4 Farley Way) or any of the other Trustees.

At the moment, St. Mary's have a project in hand to create a contemplative memorial garden for cremated remains in the churchyard. FOSM Trustees have always wanted the funds you help us raise to be associated with particular projects, so that you can easily identify where your money's spent. The memorial garden seemed to fit this bill perfectly and so we have agreed to donate funds to help establish this very special space.

We have recently had a most generous donation from Nigel and Margaret in memory of their mother Peggy Chadburn and plan to use this gift to commission a new oak signboard to put at the Church gates.

Fundraising events are all in hand for the year and we will already have held a fun Pancake Race for the children by the time you read this. We are planning more activities which the younger members of the village community can take part in with their families, following the fun we had at the Christmas Crafternoon. A family 'bat prow' in the churchyard – followed by a feast of hot dogs and hot chocolate – is one plan. Once the bats come out of hibernation, of course!

And finally, some dates for your diary: We are very excited to say that John has arranged a visit from a world-renowned, BAFTA award-winning guitarist, lutenist and composer – Robert Foster. (www.robertfoster.org.uk). Robert's previous gigs have included performances with Elton John, Simon Rattle and Michael Crawford, but on Saturday 13 June Robert will be performing for Stevington in our Church. We will be making it a very special summery occasion, with some fizz and canapés, so watch out for the posters and make sure you get your tickets.

Our annual Tea Party will be held on Saturday 1 August, a little later than usual this year, with the usual mouth-watering cucumber sandwiches and delicious home-made cakes. I can't wait!

Chrissie Galley, Chairman of Trustees

EAST ANGLIAN AIR AMBULANCE

Are you looking for a new challenge this year? Why not volunteer to help local charity East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) and play a part in continuing our lifesaving work.

EAAA is a 365 day-a-year lifesaving helicopter emergency medical service working across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Since the charity began 15 years ago, we have attended over 16,000 missions. We completely depend on our volunteers to support us in delivering our lifesaving services.

There are plenty of opportunities, from organising your own events, to helping us for a few hours at one of our events across East Anglia. You could spend your time volunteering behind the scenes at one of our seven offices, with anything from operations to communications.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer in 2015, visit: www.eaaa.org.uk/support-us/volunteer/becoming-a-volunteer/ or contact your local area Fundraising Manager who is Kay Marter, her details are: kay.marter@eaaa.org.uk or phone: 01525 718 517.

BEDFORD SAILING CLUB



The Sailing Club AGM will be held on Thursday 26 March in The Royal George at 8pm.

If you are already a member or just interested in joining, we would be pleased to see you. Any queries please call me on 822119.

Liz Stammers

STEVINGTON 12K ROAD RACE

This year's race will be held on Sunday 10 May at 11am, with registration open from 9:30am. Full details of how to enter have been added to the Road Race website. www.stevingtonroadrace.co.uk. Last year we received great support and are hopeful that this year will be even more successful.



Olly Morrison

THE FOREST OF MARSTON VALE - WHAT'S ON

Sunday Strolls (1 March, 5 April, 3 May)

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.

Volunteer Tasks (14 March, 19 April)

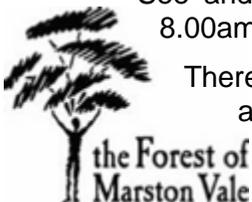
A variety of practical projects. Meet at the Forest Centre at 10.00am. Wear old clothes and bring lunch if you are going to stay all day. For details and to confirm attendance contact volunteers@marstonvale.org or call 01234 762614.

Health Walks (Wednesdays 10.30am)

Free, no need to book. Most walks start at Reception but some elsewhere - see noticeboard or ring 01234 767037 to confirm.

Early Spring Wildlife Walk (4 April)

See and hear the wildlife of the Millennium Country Park. 8.00am to 11.00am. Book in advance on 01234 767037.



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

CHINESE LION DANCE AT THE MANOR HOUSE GARDEN SUNDAY 17 MAY



We had a remarkable open day for the Winter Garden on 15 February with lots of people from far and wide braving the weather. Our very sincere thanks to Jane O'Connor and her wonderful helpers for supplying a tasty stream of bacon butties, soups etc. to warm everyone up. Richard and Helen Dunster were brilliant as our entrance gate 'welcomers' and John O'Connor was essential as helper with all the cars - a very big thank you to all involved. The honey sold extremely well and all in all we were able to send off very nearly £1,500 to National Garden Scheme Charities with funds mainly going to Marie Curie Cancer Care, Macmillan Cancer Support, Hospices UK and Carers Trust.

Our next Sunday opening will be on **Sunday 17 May** when the Laburnum and Wisteria arches will be looking lovely along with all the purple Alliums. The spring clematis will be in full flower along with the early Chinese roses - white and soft yellow. We are celebrating all the Chinese plants, including our new Tree Peony border, with a **special Chinese Lion Dance at 2.30pm** on the main lawn. It will involve a

unique display of Chinese storytelling and promises to be huge fun. Margaret Pyner has kindly agreed to organise teas on this occasion and I know that she would really appreciate lots of support.

Other Summer Sundays are 7 June for the roses and 19 July for the late Clematis.

So far this year the four beehives are in good shape which is great news. Chris Lewis who looks after the bees sells the honey on our Open Sundays and also in the Community shop.

Simon and Kathy Brown



The Natural History of Stevington

The Stevington Historical Trust is to publish in November its latest book: *Stevington – The Natural History of a Bedfordshire Parish*. There have been comparatively few natural histories of a single English parish in the last 200 years.

The book is lavishly illustrated with photographs by Roger Day and drawings and paintings by Jackie Gooding. All the illustrations are of flora and fauna photographed in the Village or drawn from specimens found in the Parish.

We expect the book to run to about 350 pages, 300mm x 240mm in size and printed on 130gsm silk paper with a hard cover. The initial print run is to be 350 copies and all books will be numbered. Numbered books will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Until 30 June 2015 the price will be £25.00 for orders received on or before that date. Thereafter the price will be £27.50. Anyone who purchases a copy before that date will be recorded in the book as a subscriber and will receive an invitation to the launch of the book in St Mary's Church on Saturday 14 November 2015.



ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?



General and Local Elections will take place on Thursday May 7th 2015

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ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, STEVINGTON

Where are we now?

St Mary's is now in a Vacancy (no vicar) and we hope shortly to be advertising and interviewing prospective priests for Stevington and at Turvey. We shall be looking for a salaried person who has the time and energy to take the two parishes forward to achieve the strengthening of our mission in these difficult times.

In the meantime, we continue our regular pattern of services (Holy Communion on 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays at 9.30am and Evensong on the 4th Sunday at 5.00pm and 6.00pm after the clocks change). We are hugely grateful to the visiting priests, including Father Mac and Revd Lionel Albon (who used to live in the village), for taking all these services.

Additional Services with Turvey

The two Church Councils are working together to provide the following additional services and events.

- 'The Passion', Thurs 26, Fri 27, Sat 28 March - Turvey Church will present the second of the cycle of three Passion plays (the Crucifixion). 1.30pm (TBC). Ticket details will be advertised later.
- Maundy Thursday, 2 April - This service at 6.00pm at St Mary's, will be the traditional Stations of the Cross with readings and hymns.
- Good Friday, 3 April - 2.00 - 3.00pm Solemn Liturgy at Turvey with readings, hymns and prayers. 7.30pm Evening Service at Turvey with contemplative readings and appropriate choral pieces.
- Easter Sunday, 5 April - Traditional Easter Day service 10.00am at St Mary's. Easter Egg hunt for the children after service.

Patronal Weekend and Centenary Organ Recital

Advance notice of the Patronal Weekend on 30 & 31 May. Our church organ is 100 years old this year. To mark this event, and in memory of Robert Shaftoe who completely rebuilt the instrument, a recital will be given at 7.30pm on Saturday 30 May by the highly reputed organist Paul Edwards. The organ, well regarded locally, has been described by the Diocesan Organ Advisor as 'well and solidly built, could hardly be bettered for parish use'. This year's Well Dressings will be on display, and the evening will be rounded off with celebratory refreshments.

On Sunday 31 May there will be a Festal Choral Evensong at 5.00pm at which Canon Peter will preside.

Christian Aid Lent Lunches

Every Monday lunch time throughout March you can enjoy a frugal lent lunch of soup, bread and cheese for a donation to Christian Aid. Do come and bring your neighbours, enjoy the company and benefit a good cause. In the Church Room 12.30 - 1.30pm.

Easter Lilies

The church is traditionally without floral decoration until Easter Morning, when Easter Lilies are displayed in memory of our loved ones. They can be obtained at the price of £2 each from Marina Markham (822301), who will assemble them in suitable displays around the church. A list is in the church if you prefer.

Robert Hart, Churchwarden

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Available on a Saturday to Saturday basis or for short term rates (minimum 3 nights). For further information and bookings, contact James Petre on jamespetre@btinternet.com or 01234 822511 or 07757 123120. More information can found at:

www.islandcabins.co.uk

GIRLS DAY OUT A DAY TO REMEMBER

A brilliant idea from Jackie. 'Do you fancy a coach trip to Rochester - they are having a Christmas Market?' Rochester - it didn't sound very German. I just thought all Christmas markets were in Germany. No replied Jackie, Rochester is in Kent. Well yes that sounds good not sure about the coach. (I think I was psychic.) Six of us signed up for this epic trip - Jackie W, Sue C, Sally, Jane T, Jean B, me and Tracy who became our on board entertainment.

The great day arrived; we had recruited a few husbands to transport us to Milton Keynes as we had to be there by 8am. We were there on time but no coach and it was freezing. Eventually after about twenty minutes our transport arrived and our jobsssworth driver alighted with clip board in hand ready to deal with troublemakers. We formed an orderly queue ready to board so that we could all sit together on this half empty coach. No luck from Mr 'more than my jobs worth driver' (you will all sit in your allocated seats.) Apparently it was all about health and safety. We then seemed to turn from grown up women into school children and all sat meekly in our allocated seats. A further twenty minutes while he ticked off the other school kids and made sure they sat in their allocated seats and we eventually departed MK.

We arrived in Rochester mid-morning - it was a beautiful sunny day but bitterly cold. The search was on for a cosy cafe and a hot drink before we explored this beautiful little town. There were lots of cosy cafes but full up with people who were not about to vacate their seats for these marauders from Stevington. We had to sit outside on very pretty but very cold seats. (I now have great sympathy for poor smokers who have to endure this deprivation all the time.)



The big event of the day was about to begin, 'THE PARADE', and what a parade it was! It must have gone on for an hour. The mainly Dickensian costumed Rochester people were magnificent. We were all photographing each other with these glorious people from another age. There was even a wonderful Miss Havisham white faced in tattered wedding gown and covered in spiders and cobwebs.

There was snow (I know it was artificial) but we were caught up in the magic of it all and it seemed so real.



The parade was over. Now for the market along with about a million people. We then had this claustrophobic walk or should I say crawl. What if I have one of my falls? I will be crushed to death - well perhaps not -

I think I would be noticed underfoot in the animal print coat I was wearing and nobody was panicking. Only me! We eventually reach this not very good market. By this time we were all quite hungry and we had to settle for an enormous German sausage with chips. By now we had had enough of a somewhat disappointing market and after each of us purchasing a fur hat the time had come to go back to our roots and find a pub.

I can be very observant and I had noticed a Wetherspoons pub on our epic journey to the market so we all arranged to meet there. Sadly these million other people had the same idea and were there waiting for us. We had a cunning plan and we positioned ourselves in various positions round the bar area next to people sitting with empty glasses and just stared. They soon cracked and we managed to get seats for all our party when they finally arrived from last minute shopping. We then put the second part of our plan into action (not to have an empty glass!) That worked a treat and we spent the rest of the afternoon sampling the very nice wine.

When we left we were ready for Mr Jobsworth driver and we got seats altogether at the back and behaved moderately badly. We all sang moderately badly (isn't that what you are supposed to do on a coach?) We modelled our hats to the rest of the passengers and invited them to join us in the singing which they declined. We still had our ace up our sleeve and got a rather reluctant Tracy to sing that well known carol 'Santa Baby' - and after that you couldn't stop her!

All in all a great day out with great friends.

Anne Westbrook

Photos courtesy of Jackie Ward

Last year Stevington Village Hall submitted an application to Bedford Borough Council for funding under the Mayor's Climate Change grant scheme. Under the scheme, community projects that would reduce carbon emissions within Bedford Borough were awarded a grant which would award projects up to 50% match-funding of between £5k and £20k for improvements.

Funding was granted to Stevington Hall to reduce the hall's emissions and running costs by replacing the boilers and removing the electric showers, water heaters and electrical heating appliances. The single-glazed windows and doors were also replaced with double-glazed UPVC equivalents; reducing heat loss and meaning fewer draughts and cold spots. Both changing rooms at the village hall now also have radiator central heating and improved showers.

Mayor Dave said 'it is wonderful to see how the Climate Change funding has been used to reduce the costs of heating the village hall. The new boiler and double glazing will lower the energy costs associated with running the building; allowing the money saved to be used to run even more activities for the local community.'

Steve Cole, who applied for the grant on behalf of Stevington Parish Council, said 'I can now report that all the work has been completed, improving the hall's domestic water system immensely and providing much better control of our central heating system. It has given the village hall a new lease of life! We are looking forward to having reduced energy bills which means we can put more money into running community events.'



Since the fund was launched in early 2010, the Climate Change Fund has allocated funding to 38 projects, across a wide range of community buildings and local facilities within the Borough, saving energy and cutting carbon emissions. So far nearly £350,000 has been allocated since 2010 to Climate Change Fund projects.



HELP FOR HEROES BIG BREAKFAST

Sunday 19 April 10.00am - 12.00 noon
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NEWS FROM HARROLD ODELL COUNTRY PARK



Here we are – it's almost 3 months since Christmas and the park is springing to life once again.

Daffodils are already peeping up through the leaf litter and winter migrant birds are visible everywhere. The Scandinavian thrushes are looking to migrate back to colder climes to breed.

We are enjoying the company of a particularly bold robin. He comes into the workshop while we're in there doing tool maintenance and hops around looking for spiders. We've taken to treating him to mealworms and any grubs we come across when we're felling trees.

After being thwarted by flooding during the last two winters we have at last managed to get into the heart of the Nature Reserve to thin out some more of the spindly willows. They are too close together to be able to grow into the splendid specimens found elsewhere in the park. It will be interesting to see what flowers emerge now that there is more light available.

This wet woodland habitat is rare in Bedfordshire and we have had some truly special orchids appear in areas we have already worked on. It is also an essential area for the park's amphibians that rely on the seasonal ponds to breed. We are on the lookout for frog spawn. The tree stumps left behind after felling will re-grow thus enabling us to have trees of differing ages that will appeal to a bigger diversity of wildlife.



Kingfisher

Photo courtesy of HOCP

Any good quality timber arising is being seasoned and processed into firewood. Any that is of poor quality will be stacked into habitat piles and left to rot down. This provides opportunities for insects and fungi to thrive which in turn will feed birds. Voles and other small rodents can breed and hide out in them and our resident grass snakes use them for hibernation dens and in the spring places to lay their eggs. Rotting timber generates the necessary heat to incubate the eggs.

The coppicing regime is now coming to an end with the arrival of spring. The willow branches cut down have been used for hedge laying and hurdle making. Ideally hazel is the best material but we have very little in the park. We therefore resort to using willow, which sometimes sprouts from the stakes that are put in to hold the hedge in place. Creating new trees without really trying!

Members of our Friends group have built new firewood storage bins in the compound in the overflow car park. They have been a fantastic asset as we are now able to keep our wood much drier. Previously we have stored our split logs under tarpaulins but this is not ideal as damp can seep in when it rains. Now the air can freely circulate and it's made a big difference. Our thanks go to everyone involved particularly to Trevor Sudds and Roy Mayne, the principle builders and Simon Carter and Jette Randall the principle log splitters.



Bluebell with Ladybird

Photo courtesy of Ella Cooke

However, thanks must also go to all the visitors who put donations into the car park boxes. It is this money that is funding these extra projects around the park and paying for equipment and volunteer training. Every penny is ploughed back into the park. Next on the list is a new boat and a new trailer. The first to enable us to manage the habitat on the island and the second to ferry all our stuff around to where it's needed.

It might not be widely known but we also have management responsibilities for other sites in the area. We look after places like Daisy Bank Picnic Site near Felmersham, Pavenham Bury, Lower Farm Road Nature Reserve, Stevington Country Walk, Bromham Water Mill and Yelnow New Wood the other side of Odell. Together with colleagues working at our sister park, Priory Country Park, Bedford we could be asked to go anywhere within the Borough Council Estate should problems arise.

We are looking forward to the possibility of putting on a few events during the coming year. Keep your eye out for posters in the notice board, office window and on the website over the next few months. Log on to www.hocp.co.uk to have a look.

In June we hope to repeat the very successful Mini Woodworks event showing off the different arts and crafts using timber. Peter Hall his bringing his mobile sawmill to demonstrate how he processes raw tree trunks into useable products.

On Good Friday we are hoping to run our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Booking is essential with 25 places available for a 10am–12pm session and 25 for an afternoon one from 1pm–3pm. Call Janet Munro on 01234 720016 nearer the time to book.

Dates for your diaries:

Health Walks

12 March, 26 March, 9 April, 23 April

We meet every other Thursday at the café entrance at 10.30am for registration. Walks last about an hour with the aim of improving your health and wellbeing and an opportunity of making friends. There's always an option to have coffee, cake and a natter in the café afterwards. Leader Janet Munro tel. 01234 720016 or e-mail janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk for more information.

Friends Conservation Tasks

30 March, 27 April

Volunteers meet on the last Monday of every month (a week earlier if a bank holiday) at the Rangers office at 10am for registration and tea. Please wear sturdy footwear and appropriate old clothing. Refreshments, gloves and tools provided. Please contact Richard Dowsett or Nicola Monsey on 01234 720016 or e-mail Richard.dowsett@bedford.gov.uk for more information.

Janet Munro
Greenspace Officer

NEW LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUP

Would you like to join a growing online community with news and events focused on Stevington and surrounding villages? Log into Facebook and search for **Clapham, Oakley, Pavenham and Stevington Community Group**. Once you are a member, you will then be able to find out what else is going on. For more information contact the founder of the site; Ade Clewlow at aclewlow@yahoo.com.



FLOODS IN MALAWI

We received this letter from Pastor Machila about three weeks ago. You may have seen reports in the news at the time. It is ironic that they had been praying for rain. How stable our lives are, compared to their fragile conditions.

We are planning to organise a Safari Supper sponsored by the Stevington Book Club. Friends have told us this is an excellent and enjoyable way of raising money and we hope many of you will support us in this venture! We are looking at a Saturday in May – not one of the bank holidays – and hope to give you more details soon.

Dita and Tony Hollins

Dear Hollins,

I hope this e-mail gets you well, for the last two months in Malawi we have been praying for rain, since the normal rain season passed. Our State President called for the Clergy and the people all over the Malawi to pray for rain, after the prayers God answered our prayers and it started raining. Unfortunately it was raining so heavily beyond normal day and night continuously. The rain which we considered a blessing from God turned into something we started to worry. Few days later so many houses, people, people's belongings as well as crops were washed.

*About 300 people were reported dead, 60 dead bodies were discovered in different places and still more people are reported to be missing with no hope of whether they are alive or not. People have sought accommodation in classrooms, churches, open grounds and others to sympathizer. We as an organization have not been spared for we have been affected the same also. As we were running for our lives yet no chance of taking anything not even food, we are sorry to say that most of our belongings were also washed away. As I am communicating to you the President has declared Malawi as a **National of Disaster**.*

You can get more and also learn more about this on internet. It's our desire and wishes to help the affected people and we are begging all the well-wishers to support the flood victims. Any kind of support will be greatly honoured and appreciated as we have tried but we have failed and our hope is in you.

I would like to buy foodstuffs, cloths and construct the buildings which has been washed away.

Depending on you and I greatly appreciate if this request will be considered soon. Don't forget to include us in your prayers as this rain is still coming and structures are still falling down. My best regards to you all.

Yours truly,

Pastor Erick & Ireen Machila.

STEVINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Our heartfelt thanks to Jean, Richard and Steve for preparing and serving a lovely three course meal for our annual dinner on 1 December 2014. This time we celebrated on a club night. There were 17 members and guests plus our three very terrific cooks. Many, many thanks to you three – we had a wonderful time.



The traditional mince pie and wine night took place on Monday 15 December – our final 2014 club night. Once again enjoyed by all.

Club attendances have now become fairly consistent and as a consequence, we are able to once again commence our knockout competitions. By the time you read this we should have completed the singles and be well on our way with the pairs. It's a pleasure to once again hold these contests after a number of years.

Jake was not, unfortunately, on a winning side in the East of England League game although his particular foursome was the only successful one.

Toby and Jake contested the Beds Pairs in January and, although they played well, were unable to progress beyond the preliminaries. Eric and Jake are helping to make up a team in the Beds Triples in February.

Another member signed up to join our club prior to Christmas – welcome Trevor! We are sorry however to report that Toby has now left us.

Our AGM will be on Monday 27 April 2015. Due to bank holidays there will be no club nights on 6 April, 4 May and 27 May.

We have good social evenings on Mondays at the Social Centre from 7.00 to 9.00pm. You are all very welcome to join us. Your first two visits are free. Hope to see more of you soon.

Barbara Collins

Easter

at the Forest Centre



Easter Trail (5/6th April) 11am- 4pm

Join us this Easter and take a trip around the Millennium Country Park, for our Easter Trail. Just £2 per child, and includes a chocolate prize! Get some fresh air and see the sights of the Park. No need to book!

Rabbits and Hares (7th April)

Kids' Indoor Crafts. Can you tell the difference between rabbit and hare? Come and find out and make a rabbit or hare mask to wear when you hop home. Sessions cost £3 per child and run for approx. 45 minutes at 10am, 11am, 1pm and 2pm. Booking essential!

Activities suitable for ages 4-10
Parental Supervision required

The Forest Centre
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MK43 0PS tel. 01234 767037
www.marstonvale.org/events



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Beat the Easter rush: Come to Church this Sunday

**Afternoon
teas 2015**

March 10

May 12

July 14

Sept 8

Nov 10

Church Hall: MK43 7QU

An ideal venue for meetings or family parties – available from £25.



For details, call Carol Wareing on 825661

SWOOP'S XMAS FAMILY CYCLE RIDE - AND CUNNING PLAN FOR EASTER MONDAY!

Considering the weather was seriously grim at 8am on 27 December, it was encouraging that twelve stalwarts were brave enough to face up to relatively inclement weather for the first Stevington Family Cycle Ride! It was good to see that we had a wide range of ages, abilities and machines - exactly as I had hoped. Alphabetically ordered entrants are listed below:

- Bonnie was e-powered
- Brian was suitably attired including a skull-cap!
- Dave gave his chopper an airing
- Dick smiled the whole way round
- Lady Anne hurtled round at near-light-speed (albeit in her slippers??)
- Shane looking every part the cyclist with his super-cool-shades
- Sue & Ade – with Sue test driving her brand new shiny Xmas steed and Ade making sure nobody scratched it!
- Tom who had the luxury of a choice of machines from his extensive stable!
- Tony who had probably cast a special lightweight frame for the occasion
- and, finally, even my scratch-built flexi-tandem survived the journey, suitable aided and abetted by Richard in the rear engine room and yours truly as pilot!





Lady Anne crossing the finishing line with Tony in hot pursuit!



*Lady Anne in slippers!
Cool or what!!*

Aside from having a giggle, and trying to lose a bit of that 'Xmas Lard', the real reason for organising the Family Cycle Ride outing was to have a fun event that could be entered at no cost, for a wide range of ages and that families can get involved in. So, for the next Family Cycle Ride which I'm planning for 11am on Easter Monday, 6 April, the weather will be better, more people can get involved and the event will hopefully, begin to feature itself in Stevington's annual events calendar!

So, come on, no excuses, get it in your calendar, dust off your trusty (rusty!) steed and BE THERE on Easter Monday, 6 April at 11am!

Ray Cox

Stevington Neighbourhood Plan

Do you want Stevington to double in size?

www.stevington.com

Watch out for updates on our website &
see the article in this magazine.

Changes will affect Stevington & you can have your say.

PERFECT PANCAKE PARTY

It was sunny and bright for Pancake Day – ideal for a race or two. It turned into quite a party at the Church Room. All the children who attended were ace pancake makers, skilled at racing and tossing pancakes as they chased round Kathy and Simon's field. Running certainly gave everyone an appetite for eating - adults and children alike. Summer McGlynn has written a splendid review of the event:

We had a great day today making pancakes in the Church Room. Jane showed us how to make the batter then we all had a go. There was flour on the floor and all over the table but we didn't mind because we were having so much fun!



While the pancakes were being cooked by Chrissie and Gina, John took us outside to Kathy's garden for pancake races. The sun came out to watch us race. It was difficult to catch the pancake in the pan, but we were having lots of fun and just kept laughing.

The day was finished off with eating up all the pancakes; we covered them with sugar, lemon and syrup. YUMMY! The adults had some too and they said they were delicious. We even had seconds!

Thank you to everyone for organising it all for us.

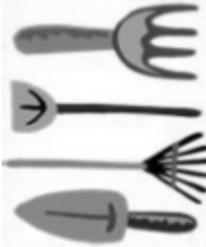
The Friends are looking forward to our next children's event which will take place on Friday 10 April. We need cooks to come and help make delicious cookies – some to eat, of course, but mainly to bake and sell for a charity stall on Saturday 11 in the Church Room. Look out for the posters.

If children would like to be involved in the Friends' events over the year, we would like to hear from you. We also want to set up a Children's Newsletter – written by the children themselves. If you are interested and would either like to help organise the newsletter or just receive it, please send an e-mail (children must have parental/carer's permission) to jojo2.oconnor@gmail.com or drop a note at 20 Church Road.

Look forward to seeing you soon!

Jane O'Connor

Photo courtesy of Jane O'Connor



GARDENING TIPS AND INSPIRATION FROM PARK END THATCH

If you are still in 'catch up' mode from a chilly winter, check now to see if you still need to deal with moss in your lawn and get the job done before the middle of the month. Begin regular mowing on dry days once the grass starts growing. Use turf to patch worn

areas of lawn.

MARCH

Some of us leave all the cutting back until March to help insects overwinter under the cover of spent foliage. This waste material is ideal for adding to your garden compost bin or heap. New shoots of herbaceous perennials will begin to emerge if there is a warm spell this month so take care when cutting low down and protect those leaf buds. Lift and divide plants such as *Geum*, geraniums, *Persicaria* and *Phlox*.

It is your last chance to spray your apple and pear branches with winter wash to keep the troublesome woolly aphid at bay. This pest hides in the cracks of old wood and pruning scars and can kill an elderly tree.

Weeds will begin to emerge this month. If you get into the habit of hoeing them when they are just at seedling stage throughout the summer, the job of controlling them will be much easier.

Coppice *Cornus* and *Salix* to stimulate colourful young stems for next winter.

Plant evergreen trees, hedging and shrubs. Put in stakes to support the taller plants in borders.

Early potatoes are delicious if you have some spare ground, chit them by standing in an egg box and when the shoots are 1cm long plant them 30cms deep. Plant onion sets and shallots. Late in the month sow seeds of leeks, carrots, broad beans and peas directly into the ground as soil begins to warm.

Repot houseplants which have become pot-bound or need dividing into clean pots with fresh compost. Feed and begin watering them with fresh rainwater.

Creatures will be emerging from hibernation: toads from their shallow excavations, hedgehogs from their dry nests and mice and shrews will be more active.

APRIL

This is the ideal month for sowing a wide range of vegetables directly into the soil. Prepare an area of fine soil, make a drill with the end of a piece of cane for each type of vegetable and sow carrots, turnips, peas, broad beans and spinach. Protect all new shoots from frost.

If you have a greenhouse, sow French beans, squash and courgette into individual pots and grow on to transplant in the third week of May when frost has passed. Also leeks and brassicas, unless you have a seedbed ready for them. Ventilate greenhouses and cold-frames on warm days.

Finish tidying borders, pull up weeds, divide and transplant herbaceous perennials, water new plantings, feed with Growmore, put in stakes and then mulch with your home made compost. *Penstemon*, *Caryopteris* and *Artemesia* can all be cut back towards the end of the month.

Summer flowering bulbs and corms such as alliums, eucomis, lilies, cannas, dahlias and gladioli should be planted in pots or borders now. Water all new plantings in dry weather.

Feed roses, soft fruit and container plants with general purpose fertilizer, diluted liquor made from fresh comfrey leaves left to decay in a lidded bucket or mulch with well-rotted manure.

On poor soil feed borders with Growmore, irrigate and then mulch with home-made compost.

New rose leaves may display black spot, a cosmetic problem which also causes leaves to fall prematurely. Remove the worst of the leaves; pick up all fallen rose leaves and burn. Sprinkle a sulphur dust around the plant to help fight the problem.

Keep all newly planted trees, hedges and shrubs watered until established.

MAY

Deadhead fading daffodils, sprinkle around the foliage with bone-meal and leave the leaves to die naturally. Next year you should get more flowers.

Start liquid feeding houseplants and all those containers outside.

This month weeds will grow as fast as the precious seeds and new plants you have put into the ground. Hand weeding and careful hoeing on a weekly basis is recommended.

Now that you are regularly cutting your lawn, this is the time to apply the high nitrogen feed and selective lawn weed granules. If you have just a few weeds try the Verdone lawn weed-killer hand spray treatment.

Check your seed packets to see which should be sown where and when. Keep young plants watered in dry weather. Earth up potatoes. Continue successional sowing. Sow lettuces in module trays and plant out straight into empty sunny spaces in your garden. Towards the end of May plant out those vegetable modules and protect from any late frost with fleece as with all new shoots from tender plants which you have in your garden.

Those lilies you planted will be attracting the scarlet lily beetles to their fresh growth, pick off the beetles and squeeze them! Find slugs and snails on the lawn by torchlight and relocate them away from your garden.

Many garden birds feed their young with aphids and caterpillars. Parent birds need us to provide them with fresh water to drink and bathe in. Put out feeders full of sunflower kernels for the adults to keep their energy levels up while they search for appropriate food for their nestlings.

Please let me know if there is a subject you would like me to write about, by email to susankyoung@btconnect.com or contact the editors.

Susan Young, Park End Thatch

MOBILE LIBRARY VISITS

The Mobile Library visits The Cross from 2.15 - 2.45pm on alternate Wednesdays and the dates for the next three months are:



March	4, 18
April	1, 15, 29
May	13, 27
June	10, 24

Please continue to support this service.



THE VILLAGER MINIBUS SERVICES FROM STEVINGTON

You are advised to book for Milton Keynes, Northampton and Peterborough by telephoning the bus information line on 01234 718005 by 16:00 the day before.

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: 09:22	Northampton	Dep: 12:30
Stevington Cross	Dep: 09:24	Stevington Cross	Dep: 13:16
Northampton	Arr: 10:10	Stevington West End	Arr: 13:18

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

National concessionary permits issued by Bedford Borough accepted throughout. Other national concessionary Permits accepted after 09:30.

Details of all of our services and excursions can be found on our web site www.villager-sharnbrook.org.uk. Timetables available - call 01234 781920.

Volunteer drivers always welcome.

For more information please contact Andrew Gell on 01234 708191.

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