

STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



Your Village Needs You!

Please read the update inside this magazine and don't forget to return your questionnaire as soon as possible

See www.stevington.com for full details

DECEMBER 2015

Number 175



VILLAGE DIARY

December

- 6 Christingle Service. St. Mary's 3.00pm
- 10 WI Our Christmas Party. Church Room 7.30pm
- 13 Christmas Market. The Royal George. (see page 25)
- 16 Cinema Club. Live Ballet Broadcast. Nutcracker. Social Centre
- 18 Carols by Candlelight. The Cross. 7.00pm. (see page 23)
- 18 Soul & Motown Disco. The Royal George.
- 19 Festive Fancy Dress and Christmas Jumpers. The Royal George.
- 20 Carols and Readings. Baptist Chapel. 3.00pm
- 20 Nine Lessons and Carols. St. Mary's. 5.00pm
- 21 Christmas Concert. Social Centre. 7.00 for 7.30pm (see page 36)
- 25 Christmas Communion. St. Mary's 10.00am (to be confirmed)
- 25 Christmas Morning Service. Baptist Chapel. 10.15am
- 27 Cinema Club. Encore Ballet Broadcast. Nutcracker. Social Centre (Matinee)
- 29 Pub Quiz. The Royal George
- 31 New Year's Eve Party. The Royal George.

January

- 6 Parish Council Meeting with Police Commissioner. Social Centre. 7.30pm
- 7 Cinema Club. Film. Chicago. Social Centre
- 11 Carpet Bowls restarts. (see page 21)
- 12 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Hall. 3.00pm
- 14 WI Songs and Stories. Church Room 7.30pm
- 23 Burns Night. Social Centre.
- 28 Cinema Club. Live Theatre Broadcast. Les Liaisons Dangeruses. Social Centre
- 31 Together at Ten with Turvey. St. Mary's. 10.00am

February

- 4 Cinema Club. Film. Cinema Paradiso. Social Centre
- 11 Cinema Club. Live Opera Broadcast. La Traviata. Social Centre
- 11 WI Gunn's Bakery. Church Room 7.30pm
- 21 Magazine Copy Date (Sunday)
- 24 Parish Council Meeting. Baptist Chapel. 7.30pm
- 25 Cinema Club. Live Theatre Broadcast. As You Like It. Social Centre

March

- 3 Cinema Club. Film. Casablanca. Social Centre
- 8 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Hall. 3.00pm
- 10 WI Shackleton's Forgotten Men. Church Room 7.30pm
- 13 Cinema Club. Live Ballet Broadcast. Giselle. Social Centre

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!

In this edition we have the usual Season's Greetings in the centre pages and this year we are supporting Amyloidosis Research in memory of Dennis King. Thank you for supporting our chosen charity – we have raised the record amount of £880 this year, before the addition of Gift Aid. Don't forget that it is a pull out Christmas card that can be displayed with all the other cards you receive.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped the magazine effort this year - Anna Hart and her team for reliably delivering the magazine, Barbara Pheasant for proof reading the longer articles and all of those who have contributed articles. 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 2015. Your financial support is vital.

This is the end of our fourth year producing the Magazine – difficult to believe as time goes by so quickly. This makes us remember what an incredible job Pat and Ian Pickup did for the village by producing the Magazine for 27 years. We all owe them a very big 'thank you'.

Stevington has been punching above our weight again! In recent weeks we have had the launch of 'Stevington: The Natural History of a Bedfordshire Village' which is a really beautiful and amazing book. We have also enjoyed 'The Winter's Tale' which was the first live broadcast event put on for us by the Stevington Cinema Club.

Finally we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful 2016.

Heather and Keith

Photographs as credited

Cover produced by SNPWG and sponsored by the Parish Council

NEXT MAGAZINE

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 5-6 March 2016. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 21 February 2016. 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.



POPPY APPEAL

This year the Poppy Appeal in the village raised the wonderful sum of £851.38p.

Thank you to all who gave so generously and of course to my collectors who gave their time: Margaret Jackson, Alma Mayes, Mary Ronald, Mandy Stupple, Carol Woods and Doreen Pendlington (who also moderated the count). Thanks also to Elaine Lawson for having a box in the Royal George.

Joan Hart

JOAN HARRIS

Bill Harris and his family would like to thank everyone for their cards and condolences following the loss of Joan. It is heart-warming to know she was so well liked and loved and will be sadly missed.

Thank you for the donations. Arnolds sent £540 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Thank you once again.

Bill Harris

THANK YOU

Mrs Josie Cox would like to thank family, friends and neighbours for the cards and flowers received following the death of Barry.

Thank you

BAPTIST CHURCH HALL

Having hired this hall in the summer, I would like to highly recommend it. From the booking, with Carole Wareing, to having car parking facilities by kind permission of Alec right opposite, it couldn't have been more convenient. This venue is a good size, clean, and very well equipped with easy access for those with a disability and the hiring fees are very reasonable - it has everything going for it! It received numerous compliments from people around the County who were not aware of its existence!

Thank you

Pat Gibson

BOOK LAUNCH

Thank you to everyone who came to The Book Launch in the Church on 14 November. What a warm party atmosphere you generated. We are all immensely grateful for your appreciation of our work and I hope the book will continue to fan the flames of your love of wildlife.

Jackie Gooding

COFFEE MORNING THANK YOU

A big thank you to everyone who gave donations and supported my coffee morning for Louis. I am pleased to say that we managed to raise £250.20. His family are very grateful to you all.

Janet Knight, 14 Burridges Close

70TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

I would like to thank those who attended my party on Saturday 10 October.

A special thanks to Rob for the venue and the excellent spread and to his staff who were very busy.

Thanks for the cards and presents and for the collection from friends for the Corner 5 vouchers. I will not be doing any wake boarding or surfing but will enjoy some nice meals! A special thanks to Mark Whitlock for the excellent entertainment and show.

I hope everybody enjoyed themselves – I did.

With best wishes
Little Dave



GOOD LUCK TO THE ROYAL GEORGE

Best wishes and good luck to Gareth, Jane, Denzil and Elaine on your new joint venture of keeping a traditional village pub in this lovely traditional village.

From everyone in the village and frequenters of this establishment.

FUNDS FOR MALAWI

Kathy Brown gave us the opportunity of hosting the Teas at her final Sunday Open Gardens of the year on the 20 September. We were incredibly lucky with the weather. The trickle of visitors who came early, looking for lunch, soon swelled to a good steady flow of visitors throughout the afternoon. Kathy had been selling produce during the summer and the Collins family harvested apples from her trees to provide delicious freshly squeezed apple juice, all of which brought in extra revenue. To our great relief, we now have a tidy balance, having banked £677.80, with which we will be able to pay the next few terms of school fees for the older children.

Sally and Ray Cox raised £93.14 through the sale of fresh vegetables from their garden, which they generously donated to the Orphanage again. We will send this off as an extra present from them to provide something special for Christmas.

We are extremely grateful to everyone: Kathy & Simon, the Collins Family, Sally & Ray, our generous helpers and cake bakers for the Teas, those who donate money, both regularly and occasionally – and we thank you on behalf of the children of the Chirimba Orphanage, Malawi.

Dita and Tony Hollins

DOG POO

We apologise if the title offends but dog poo offends if it is not picked up.

While the majority of Stevington's dog owners are very responsible about picking up after their pets there are still some who are not doing so.

You are spoilt for choice when it comes to disposal of your dog's waste. Not only are there several poo bins around the village but you can now bag and bin it in any public litter bin or, indeed, in your own black bin at home.

The fine for not picking up is £75 rising to £1000 if you fail to pay promptly.

The Community shop has poo bags for sale, open 10-12 and 3-5pm Monday to Friday and 10-12 on Saturdays.

BAG IT, TIE IT, BIN IT.

THE ROYAL GEORGE

I would like to wish Rob, who has run the pub for the last ten years, the very best for the future. With pubs all over the country, and particularly country establishments, closing every day he has done a splendid job and for the last five years single handedly which is no mean feat.

He worked hard to make the pub welcoming and cosy with wood burning fires and even a comfortable area for the smokers (so they told me) and a lovely patio area made beautiful with stunning hanging baskets and potted shrubs.

He also kept the most important part of what is essential for a country pub going - the games: darts, skittles, pool and of course the ongoing support of the local football team which I believe has always been the backbone of The Royal George.

However we have been so fortunate that the pub has been taken over as a family affair and I am sure we want to welcome with open arms Elaine, Denzil, Jane and Gareth who have already made a very good impression.

So welcome the new team and a fond farewell to Rob who I am glad to say is still very much around and enjoying no longer being behind bars.

Anne Westbrook

Concord Singers

with

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at

St Owen's Church, Bromham, MK43 8LL

Saturday 6 February 2016 at 7.30pm

Adults £10; u16 £3 - includes light refreshments
Tickets 01234 825454 (mornings) 01234 826551 (evenings)

Proceeds to Friends of St Owen's (Regd Charity 1022947)
In support of St Owen's Building fund



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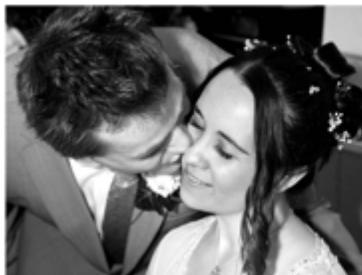
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STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Latest news

- The Parish Council was successfully audited earlier this year, but changes in the law mean that in future all smaller authorities – those with a turnover of less than £25k – will be exempt from external audit. Instead we are subject to a Transparency Code and must publish information in order to enable local electors to access the relevant information about our accounts and governance. A page giving full details of the change and where to find the information is available in the navigation menu on our website <http://stevington.bedsparishes.gov.uk>.
- The maintenance of our footpaths and roads is important and we have, with help from members of our community, been striving to ensure they are kept in good order. Please help by clearing up after your pet.
- There is presently a petition to government requesting a ‘Third Party Right of Appeal in Planning’ for Parish Councils. Under current rules, if a council refuses a planning application, the applicant is allowed to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. If a council approves an application, no one has the right to appeal. The petition is an attempt to persuade government it should introduce a limited third party right of appeal by giving parish councils a right to appeal planning decisions to the Planning Inspectorate. Anyone who supports this can sign the petition at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110489>.

Broadband

The majority of the village now has access to superfast broadband. Those who do not (mainly the Tithe Farm and cottages area) are expected to be included in the Phase 2 rollout which is due to be delivered in the third quarter of 2017. You can use BT’s availability checker www.superfast-openreach.co.uk/ to confirm whether your address can access superfast broadband and then contact your internet provider to ensure they can supply fibre broadband to you. If they can’t you could consider changing your supplier.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Stevington Neighbourhood Plan Working Group continues its sterling work in creating a Plan which will reflect the views of those who live in Stevington.

No doubt many of you will have attended the very successful events held in November and we ask that you please return your completed questionnaires to ensure your views are taken into account. Questionnaires are also available in the shop. There is a separate report elsewhere in this magazine from the Working Group and there is a dedicated website at www.stevington.com.

Bedford Borough Council Local Plan to 2032

A couple of years ago Bedford Borough Council adopted its 'Local Plan to 2021' which decided how much growth was required (housing/jobs/infrastructure) in the Borough. It is now consulting on its 'Local Plan to 2032'. The consultation can be viewed on their website www.bedford.gov.uk – search for 'Local Plan 2032'.

If you wish your views to be taken into account we encourage you to respond to the consultation, which closes at 5pm on 14 December. There is an online response form or you can print off a Word version to complete and submit. Please note this is separate from the Stevington Neighbourhood Plan mentioned above.

Windmill Heritage Open Day

The second annual Heritage Day took place at the windmill between 2pm and 4pm on Saturday 13 September. The event was very successful with over 100 people attending, including many children. On a sadder note the death of Vincent Pargeter, who designed the current sails, was marked on 31 October by the sails being turned and then paused in a traditional mourning position. Some remedial work is required on the windmill to keep it in good working order and we will keep you informed.

Defibrillator

In September we organised a seminar through the Community Heartbeat Trust which gave those who attended an understanding of cardiac arrest and the chance to practice CPR skills and the use of the defibrillator that we now have in the village. We had 30 attendees from all age groups and judging from the feedback everyone thought it was a good, interactive evening; we hope to be able to repeat the event in 2016 so that as many of us as possible can learn these simple, lifesaving skills.



The defibrillator, located in the phone box in Church Road, is maintained and checked every week, but if anyone notices any damage please contact Stephanie Wingrove on 07725 216568 or 01234 825022.

Free orange recycling sacks

In order to help with the extra recycling which Christmas creates the Borough Council is making available extra rolls of orange sacks free of charge. A small supply will be available in the village shop from around 8 December with a further few available around 21 December. Between 14 December and 5 January you can also collect free rolls of orange sacks from Bedford Central Library, Putnoe Library, Wootton Library, Bromham Library, Kempston Town Library, Customer Service Centre (Horne Lane, Bedford), and the Household Waste Recycling Centre (Barkers Lane, Bedford).

Parish Council Meetings

All our meetings start at 7.30pm and are open to the public, so please do come along (even if it is only for part of the meeting). There are 15 minutes set aside at the start of each meeting for public questions. The minutes of Parish Council meetings are published on our website <http://stevington.bedsparishes.gov.uk>.

Ten days before each meeting a notice will be posted on the Parish Council notice board outside the Red Lion and on the Parish website confirming the date of the meeting and giving details of whom to contact if there is an issue that you wish to bring to our attention. The agenda will be published on the notice board and the website three days before the date of the meeting.

Our next two meetings will take place on 6 January 2016 in the Village Hall (see STOP PRESS below) and 24 February in the Baptist Chapel. Dates for the remainder of 2016 and early 2017 will be agreed at the meeting in February and then published on the notice board and on our website.

STOP PRESS - PCC to attend Stevington Parish Council Meeting

Our Police and Crime Commissioner, Ollie Martins, plans to attend our meeting on 6 January 2016 to talk about the new model of policing called 'Meeting the challenges of Policing for Bedfordshire'. He will make a presentation and there will be a short Q & A session. As mentioned above all our meetings are open to the public and we hope you will join us.

All that remains is for every member of the parish council to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful new year.

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

Contact details for the Parish Councillors are as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| <u>Paul O'Flynn - Chair</u> 823306 | 46 Park Road, MK43 7QG |
| <u>Sarah Bush</u> 824007 | Twin Cottage, Church Road, MK43 7QB |
| <u>Pete Fisher</u> 825022 | 3 The Bakery, Silver Street, MK43 7QH |
| <u>Andrew Lockwood</u> 825586 | 42 Silver Street, MK43 7QP |
| <u>Graham Read</u> | graham_read@hotmail.co.uk |
| <u>Sam Stapleton</u> | samstapleton@hotmail.co.uk |
| <u>Jane Thomas</u> | je_thomas@btinternet.com |
| <u>Roz Buchanan - Clerk</u> | stevingtonpc@live.co.uk |
| <u>Mary Murzyn – Planning Assistant</u> 824267 | West End Farm, West End, MK43 7QU |



**STEVINGTON: THE NATURAL HISTORY
OF A BEDFORDSHIRE VILLAGE**

Copies of the 348 page hardback book
are available for £27.50 from:
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SUPERFAST BROADBAND FOR STEVINGTON

Most of Stevington now has access to superfast broadband (speeds greater than 24 Mbps). The exception is the Tithe Farm area towards the southern edge of the village. This should go superfast in Phase 2 (2017) of the Borough Council's second broadband project.

Why you should get it?

Having a faster broadband connection allows several people to use internet services in the home at one time. You can view and download from the internet quicker and will have improved access to online shopping, banking and public services and be able to stay in touch with family and friends in new ways. Children may be more able to do their homework or you could do an online training course.

From a business perspective, faster broadband can provide good access to a range of online services e.g. for accounting, transactions, file transfer, data storage/back-up, marketing and support. If you have a job elsewhere you may also find that you could work from home just as effectively. You could also be in a better position to consider setting up your own business and running it from home.

A wider benefit of high take-up of superfast broadband

Higher take-up (the number of people using superfast broadband) means more money back to the Council for further superfast broadband investment which will help reach the more difficult last few premises.

How to get it?

Contact your internet service provider (or other ISPs).

How much will it cost?

Information on the broadband packages that different ISPs are offering and the cost of those packages are available via their websites. Prices are generally affordable and may not be much more than you are currently paying for standard broadband.

Where can you find out more?

There's loads more information on the Borough Council's website **www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband**, including answers to lots of questions.

Paul Vann, Bedford Borough Council
paul.vann@bedford.gov.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STAGE 2 UPDATE

Thanks to all those brave villagers who turned out on a dark and windy night on Thursday 12 November for the first of our two question and answer sessions about our neighbourhood plan. Thanks also to those who had enough energy to make it on the afternoon of Saturday 14 November, after the very successful launch of the long awaited 'Stevington - The Natural History of a Bedfordshire Parish', a fabulous book – copies still available from Janet Day!

The meetings were admirably chaired by Paul O'Flynn, chairman of the Parish Council, and the intelligent and insightful questions were comprehensively answered by Graham Read and Andrew Lockwood, from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

The size and nature of development in Stevington over the next 17 years will be down to us as a village, provided we can complete all the legal requirements to get our plan adopted. Bedford Borough Council (BBC) has to make a local plan for Bedfordshire before the end of next year (2016) and our plan will be a small part of that. You can follow the link from www.stevington.com and find out more.



At the moment as part of the BBC local plan Stevington, along with many other small villages, has been allocated a housing increase of 15 to 20 houses to the year 2032. The Borough has estimated that 17,367 houses will be required in Bedfordshire over this period, an estimate based on its Objectively Assessed Needs. The Borough has chosen to allocate each village with a set amount of housing, however if you think a completely new settlement for the Borough on a brownfield site, covering all the recommended increases in one area, would be a more acceptable plan, please visit their website www.bedford.gov.uk and let this be known.

After the Q&A session everyone attending the meetings was given a strip of five stickers to add to the objective statements on the display boards to indicate their personal priorities. These statements were similar to those found in neighbourhood plans that have already been adopted. The statements that got the most green stickers will be used by the working group to put together a questionnaire that hopefully asks the questions about development, infrastructure and environment that you want asked.



Once the questionnaire is ready one copy will be distributed to every household. If you would like extra copies, as each person in the house is entitled to have their opinions heard, then please ask a member of the working group or fill in a copy on the website. **PLEASE FILL IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE** so we can accurately record the wishes of every villager. **YOUR OPINION COUNTS!**

Don't forget to enter the photo competition (details on our web site www.stevington.com) and get your picture included in the final document.

Entries can be left in the community shop, uploaded to the website or handed to a member of the committee - Graham Read, Andrew Lockwood, Linda Penney, Mary Morris or Heather Eadie.

Heather Eadie
(SNPWG)

RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

| Month | Orange | Green |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| December 2015 | 14, 21 | 7 |
| January 2016 | 4, 11, 25 | 18 |
| February | 8, 22 | 1, 15, 29 |
| March | 7, 21 | 14, 28 |

NOTE: Black bin collection on 28 Dec changed to 30 Dec

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL NEWS

Stevington Neighbourhood Plan Launch

I was pleased to be at the launch and see how everyone was involved. I am looking forward to the questionnaire and to seeing what Stevington residents say about how they would like the village to develop.

Stevington Natural History Book

It was a great pleasure to be at the launch of this book. It was good to see so many people and realise how the village has worked together in its production. I have since enjoyed dipping into my copy, marvelling at the photographs and the artwork. It is such a beautiful book and I will be looking at it and reading it for a long time to come. Thank you so much for my copy.

Speed Cameras

Please be aware of the speed cameras in Oakley. I do not want any Stevington people to be caught speeding!

Thank you to all the people who have slowed to below 30mph in Pavenham Road and Station Road. Since the cameras have been working 32 drivers have been issued with notices of intended prosecution in Station Road with the highest speed being 43mph.

The Borough is changing the speed limit to 40mph between the end of Pavenham Road, Oakley to Pavenham. The contractors will be installing this speed limit during the week beginning the 14 December. So please do not put your foot down too hard after leaving the 30mph limited cameras in Pavenham Road, Oakley.

Amey should be installing and calibrating the two cameras in Church Lane in January 2016 and the Lovell Road ones late February 2016. The Lovell Road cameras will be installed the Oakley side of the Railway Bridge along Lovell Road. Clapham and Oakley Parish Councils both asked for this to enable the children from Clapham safe access to Lincroft School.

Consultations

There seem to be so many consultations at the moment that I feel that people will get consultation fatigue. However it is important that you do respond.

1. Bedford Borough Budget consultation

The councillors on the borough council have tried to make sure over the last five years that no frontline services were cut due to the

government reducing their contribution to the local authority. However this year there will be cuts and the borough is asking you for your opinions on certain cuts. Please go to the website – www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/budget2016/ - and give your views.

2. Bedford Borough Local Plan consultation

The borough is consulting on the future need for housing in the borough and what the borough should look like by 2032. I would urge as many people as possible to look at the website and make your views known. This consultation ends on 14 December 2015. Please go to www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/planning_policy__its_purpose/local_plan_2032.aspx for more information and to give your views.

3. Local schools

Both the Lower School and Sharnbrook Trust are consulting.

The Lower School on your views on going Primary - please go to the Lower School website.

Sharnbrook Trust on Lincroft going 11 to 16 years, Sharnbrook Upper School 11 to 18 years and that both Harold Middle School and Margaret Beaufort go Primary. Please go to the Lincroft School website for details.

Higgins Museum – Turner Paintings

No, the Higgins is not consulting - you will be relieved to know - but they would like you to relax and visit their Turner Exhibition.

Some exceptional Turner paintings are on view. They also have paintings from his contemporaries on exhibition. You can also book for tours. The exhibition is already creating great interest and we are so lucky to own these wonderful works. So I urge you to go to Higgins Bedford and find out about the exhibition and treat yourselves not only to the visual treat but also lovely refreshments at the Pantry.

Finally have a lovely Christmas and enjoy the New Year Celebrations.

Borough Councillor Pat Olney

Telephone 01234 824384

Email pat.olney@bopenworld.com

Website www.patolney.wordpress.com

ALL CHANGE AT THE ROYAL GEORGE



What's on in December

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Sunday 13 | Christmas market |
| Friday 18 | Soul and Motown disco with Bobby Day |
| Saturday 19 | Festive fancy dress or Christmas jumper night. Live music with Mexican Wine |
| Friday 25 | Christmas day - open 12pm - 3pm |
| Tuesday 29 | Pub quiz with cash prize |
| Thursday 31 | New Year's Eve - party celebrations |

Weekly meat raffle now up and running, tickets available from a member of staff.

Please pop in or check Facebook ([theroyalgeorgestevington](https://www.facebook.com/theroyalgeorgestevington)) for upcoming events.

About us

The Royal George has been purchased by Denzil (Wes), Elaine, Gareth & Jane with a view to running it as a traditional country pub which we aim to be a focal point for the village. Children, pets and well behaved adults are welcome. Following upgrading of the premises, to meet the required standard, food will be available daily.

Elaine Lawson

STEVINGTON COMMUNITY SHOP

It's that time of the year again folks; time to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Many, many thanks for your custom over the year and special thanks to our wonderful volunteers.

Your shop will have many Christmas lines of food, paper and cards to name just a few. We have our Christmas raffle with lots of prizes. All proceeds go towards the upkeep of the shop, so do come to buy some tickets. We look forward to seeing you.

Our opening times over the holiday period will, as usual, be posted on the door.

Season's Greetings from Jackie, Sarah, Doreen and June.

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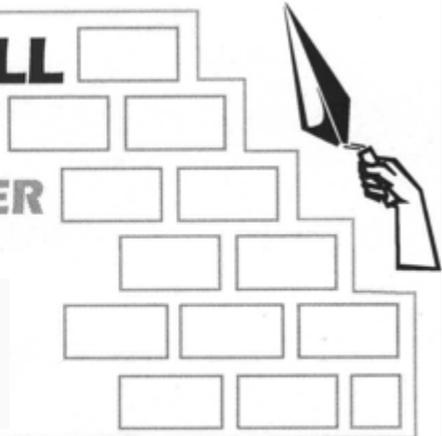
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Stevington: The Natural History of a Bedfordshire Village

Now that the book has been published the Trustees wish to express their gratitude to the Study Group and to all who participated in the Field Survey and the Garden Watch. We are also indebted to all those villagers who subscribed in advance of publication, to the Parish Council for its financial support and to a number of other benefactors whose generosity made publication possible.

We were pleasantly surprised at the number of additional copies which were sold at the Launch of the book. There are still a few left and they are obtainable from Janet Day at 7 Park Road, 01234 82301, janetday51@yahoo.co.uk.

It was kind of the Church Wardens and the Parochial Church Council to host the Launch.

Peter Hart
Hon Secretary

STEVINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Hello again everybody. We're pleased to announce that we have two more members – welcome to Eileen and Arnold. It's nice to see you back again.

Jake has had another 'go' at the county singles but unfortunately was unable to progress beyond the preliminaries. We are getting on with the club championship, albeit rather slowly. At the moment Peter Evans sits at the top after 9 games – lots more to go yet.

Our annual dinner will be held on Monday 7 December and will, we hope, be provided by our three wonderful chefs from 2014. The mince pies and wine night will be held on Monday 14 December and will be our last club night until Monday 11 January 2016.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous 2016 – maybe we'll see more Spike Islanders at the club come 2016.

Best wishes from Stevington Carpet Bowls Club members.

Barbara Collins





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Carols by Candlelight Stevington Cross

Friday 18th December 7.00pm



**Communal carol singing accompanied by a saxophone ensemble and various trumpeters!
Everyone welcome, bring the whole family.
Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and Sausage Rolls
Please bring a candle in a jar to put on the cross.**

Church Room in the event of bad weather.

This event is free of charge, voluntary donations can be made to Friends of St. Mary's Church Stevington on the night.

STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE

Autumn has been busy. We have finished the patio and will be dedicating this to Terry Studley. We hope next year is warm and sunny so we can all enjoy it.

Firework night was somewhat blighted by the weather in the afternoon and early evening, but someone smiled on us and it all cleared up for the event. The display was bigger and better than last year, but with the numbers down as many wimped out and decided to stay dry, we just about broke even. Undeterred, we are planning a bigger bang next year. Thanks to Pete and Richard (singed beard) for letting off the fireworks, including the 'finale', and to the legion of helpers who turned out to serve drinks, teas and coffees, cakes, etc, and all those that otherwise helped us put the event on. You are too many to name, but thanks to you all.

At last the equipment needed for real live streaming is in and running – mainly the satellite dish at the end of the hall and satellite receivers. The first event, 'The Winter's Tale', will have been shown live by satellite broadcast from the Garrick Theatre by the time you read this. The next event is 'The Nutcracker' live from The Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House on Wednesday 16 December at 7.15pm. Our next film night is 'Chicago' (12A) on 7 January 2016. If you are interested, tickets are available in the village shop or online at www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk.

Fynnius Fogg has been booked for 5 December, and tickets are available from committee members. This is a great evening to listen and dance to a great band, and generally have a good time.

Burns Night will be on 23 January, and again, tickets are available from committee members. This is popular, with bagpipes, Scottish country dancing and a plate of haggis, chapped tatties and bashed neaps, the obligatory toast to Rabbie and a snifter all in the price.

Roger Penney



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STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB



After winning an unprecedented Bedfordshire Football League treble last season of League Division 2, the Bedfordshire FA Junior Challenge County Cup and the Jubilee League Cup, we are extremely pleased to report that the club has made a very good start to the season.

We are now fielding two teams in the league. The first team managed by Aaron Coker and A.J. O'Reilly is currently second in Division 1; played 9, won 7, drawn 1, lost 1, 32 goals scored, 13 goals against with 22 points. This is a fantastic start to the season considering that new players have joined and are getting used to one another's style of play. Kieran Souter is also the second highest scorer in the league with 7 goals so far. However, there also needs to be a special mention for Gavin White. Gavin has temporarily relinquished his place on pitch and has done an excellent job standing in for our normal keeper who's been in the USA on 'Camp America', giving goalkeeper coaching to youngsters. We also wish our captain Jordan Wright a speedy recovery from the two cracked ribs and punctured lung he suffered in a match at the end of October.

The newly formed Reserves side, a 'subtle blend of youth and experience', managed by Lee Coker and Darren King are currently third in Division 4; played 10, won 5, drawn 0, lost 5, 33 goals scored, 28 goals against with 15 points. Cameron Cain is second highest goal scorer in the league with 14 goals and Sam Nightingale is fourth with 11 goals. Clinton Tatham is claiming he has the most 'assists' in the league, but this isn't a statistic recorded by the league - so we are all worried that his mind is going before his legs. Some cynics, once his greatest admirers, have decided his legs went ages ago so they have both gone now!

Everyone involved with the club is pleased that we are getting great support at both home and away matches for both sides. We hope that you are enjoying the performances as much as we are! But please be warned we might have to start charging an entrance fee soon as news is getting out about just how good it is over here on a Saturday afternoon.

The other week my daughter came home from the packed London commuter train laughing so much that she could hardly speak. After she calmed down she said she'd heard two young lads talking about football

and that they 'should go and play at Stevington as they had a good side, played great football but unlike a lot of sides have a great social scene after the game with everyone joining in together. They even go on end of season tours, not just the players - but most of the people involved'!! What a fantastic accolade for everyone at the club.

On behalf of everyone associated with the club we would like to take this opportunity to say a special and sincere thank you to Rob Oliman for his support, sponsorship and hospitality shown to us during his 10 year tenure (Nov 05-Oct 15) as landlord of the Royal George.

Those of you that know anything about the club, and apparently random commuters, will know that whilst each and every game is taken seriously on the pitch, so are the celebrations or commiserations after the match in our adopted clubhouse aka the Royal George!! It would therefore be amiss of us not to welcome the new landlords Gareth, Jane, Denzil and Elaine. We are looking forward to you carrying on the tradition of hospitality and support going forward.

We will also be having the club Christmas meal with you, so would be grateful if you could learn from Rob - please put the Brussel sprouts on as soon as you read this as some of the older players struggled with the frozen al dente ones a few seasons ago!

We would also like to thank our kit sponsors Autotech Recruit Ltd, Hilton Suzuki (Clapham) and the Royal George for their generosity and support this year.



With the festive season fast approaching we would like to spare a thought for all those victims of the recent Paris tragedy and their families (hence the three French hens in our title as our dual festive tribute to them and our treble last season). We would also like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Weather permitting there will be a charity football match at the playing field on Boxing Day between the 'Lived in Stevington XI' versus 'Stevington Invitation XI'. It's in aid of the Amyloidosis Research Fund and should be good fun for all those playing and watching.

You can also get accurate match reviews and results by following the team on  Twitter @Stevington FC 'we play footy have a laugh and love a beer' or the league website at www.bedfordshirefootballleague.co.uk.

Shane King

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STEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
TODAY'S WOMEN WORKING FOR TOMORROW



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Joan Harris on 8 September. Joan was not only one of our longest serving members but a very dear friend to many. She had in the past played darts and continued supporting our present players. She attended many of our WI events and meetings and supplied delicious cakes for our Pantry Stall. She will be greatly missed and our sympathies go to Bill and all her family.

Our Harvest Supper proved popular once again and to celebrate the centenary of the WI we invited four past presidents, we were fortunate that Judith Cummings and Marion Watkins (formerly Tysoe) were able to attend. Some of you will remember that Miss Tysoe was the headmistress of the village school. The reunion of past and present members gave rise to a very noisy but enjoyable evening. Once again Phoenix Cards were on sale during the evening.

We have taken part in local walks and a very pleasant pub supper at Newton Blossomville was enjoyed by twelve members. A literary lunch at Keysoe was attended by four members where the guest speaker was Tony Jordan, the television and screen scriptwriter.

In October we were given an interesting talk accompanied by a slide show by Beverley Bond on the history of the Swiss Gardens at Old Warden.

Our November speaker, Dr Clive Travis, was somewhat different – his talk was entitled ‘Looking for Prince Charles’ Dog’ and he talked movingly about his experiences of living with paranoid schizophrenia. He is at present working with patients suffering with this condition and raising money for charity.

We are holding a workshop at the end of November for Christmas wreath making, so hopefully there should be some very special wreaths displayed on front doors in the village!

Members will be attending a local craft fair in search of Christmas gifts and also the annual Salvation Army Carol Service in early December.

Dates for Your Diary

- 10 December Christmas Meeting - “A Childhood Memory Box”. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served.

- 14 January "Songs and Stories" - with Clive Rudd
- 11 February "Gunn's Bakery" - Talk by David Gunn

Our posters are displayed on our notice board in the Church Room - all are welcome - £4 for visitors.

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and healthy New Year and to thank everyone for your support during the past year.

Pat Gibson



HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS FOR 2016?

Where do you like to travel when you are in Decisive?

I would like to take a trip, and go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I am not into physical activity anymore.

I have however, been in Sane. This is not very far away actually. They don't have an airport: you have to be driven there. I have made several trips, thanks to my friends, family and work. In my travels, I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit too often.

I have been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm. Sometimes I am in that place where I am in Capable, and I go there more often as I get older.

One of my favourite places to travel to is in Suspense! It really gets my adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! It is a wonderful faraway place, and I need all the stimuli I can get!

I may also have been in Continent, but I don't remember which country I was in. It is an age thing!

Do you like to travel to faraway places too? From one unstable person to another. I hope everyone is happy in your head ... as I am now in transit to those faraway places!!!

Shared by Anna Hart

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Here are the dates (Wednesdays) to the end of 2016. 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. The surgery needs at least three working days to prepare your medications, so please send your forms in early enough.

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 us a call. The collected prescriptions are delivered to your door immediately on collection.

Barbara (822296)

9 & 16 December 2015
3 & 10 February 2016
30 March & 6 April
25 May & 1 June
20 & 27 July
14 & 21 September
9 & 16 November
4 & 11 January 2017

Pat (823250)

6 & 13 January 2016
2 & 9 March 2016
27 April & 4 May
22 & 29 June
17 & 24 August
12 & 19 October
7 & 14 December

Barbara Collins and Pat Pickup



THE FOREST OF MARSTON VALE - WHAT'S ON

Sunday Strolls (6 December, 3 January, 7 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.

Volunteer Tasks (13 December, 16 January, 28 January, 21 February)

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.

THE WINTER'S TALE

Well Stevington did it again! Another great evening at the Social Centre. Congratulations to Steve Cole and everyone involved in the Stevington Cinema Club.

On Thursday 26 November we were treated to Stevington's first live satellite broadcast event – 'The Winter's Tale' by William Shakespeare presented by the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company live from the Garrick Theatre in London. The production starred Judi Dench and Kenneth Branagh. I would describe it as a romantic comedy with the usual confusion between identities and fools to entertain us. It contains one of the most famous Shakespearean stage directions: '*exit pursued by a bear!*' In this production we suddenly saw the jaws and teeth of a real roaring bear filling the screen which was a bit of a surprise to us all!

The Cinema Club provided a licensed bar, hot drinks, ice-cream and snacks to purchase before the show and in the intermission.

The technology all seemed to work without a hitch. Keith and I had a good night out at the fraction of the cost of going to the theatre in London and with the benefit that all we had to do was walk up the road! A schedule of live broadcast events is planned and we would definitely recommend you give one a try. Forthcoming events are listed in the Village Diary.

Heather Parkinson



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.

Christmas Tree Festival & Farmers Market (5 & 6 December)

Santa's Grotto and childrens rides. Local suppliers bring a host of quality goods to the Forest Centre. 11.00am to 3.00pm.



There are lots of other exciting events planned for both adults and for children.

For information on other events visit
www.marstonvale.org/events.html



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, STEVINGTON

THE WHEELS OF GOD....'grind very slowly' is the answer! Since writing in the September Magazine very little real progress has been made to appoint the team rector and the team vicar for the seven parishes without a priest between them. The 'Sharnbrook Group' of Sharnbrook, Felmersham and Souldrop, already a Joint Benefice, has been able to advertise for a rector. The good news for the rest of us is that the one abstaining parish has now agreed to be included in the remaining seven (Wymington, Podington, Odell, Harrold, Carlton, Turvey and Stevington). A legal technicality which threatened to exclude Harrold United Reform Church has also been overcome, so the team will now be eight strong!

The team is now preparing individual parish profiles which, together with a team personality profile, will take until the end of January. These documents will be distributed to interested priests, so that they can understand the task ahead before responding to the advertisements. We must still be looking at the late summer before appointments will be made.

Harvest celebrations

As we move into wintery and blustery days, it is good to remember the success of harvest and our celebrations. Children's bread and biscuit making, with lots of flour and fun, was a great success and children and adults alike welcomed Margaret Tufnell at the joyful Harvest Service. Our festivities culminated in the successful Supper which raised £559.91. Thanks to all who helped to make this such a happy festival.

Garden of Remembrance update

The Garden of Remembrance was blessed by the Revd David Mason following the morning service on 11 October and the first interment took place on 30 October. All that remains to complete the project is some landscaping. This includes removal of the existing snowberry hedge and replacing and extending it with yew cloud shrubs. This will enhance the garden and give privacy to the area. We are also planning to develop appropriate spring and early summer planting.

Advent for children

We start Christmas preparations in Advent. The Christingle service is an opportunity to benefit those children less fortunate than ourselves via the Children's Society. Come and join the fun on Saturday

5 December at 1.30pm in the Church Room. We will be making the Christingles for the service on Sunday and making amazing Christmas snowmen for you to take home. Look out for the posters or contact Jane at jojo2.oconnor@gmail.com or 825578 or John Duffield at duffieldjc@aol.com.

We are delighted that Margaret Tufnell will be taking our service and blessing of the crib. So children please come to collect your Christingle, contribute to the Children's Society and enjoy a joyful family celebration. The service begins at 3pm at St Mary's on Sunday 6 December.

Travelling Crib

The Travelling Crib starts its journey around homes in the parish before returning to church on Christmas Eve. This reminds us of the meaning of Christmas and is a way of meeting and greeting friends. Families are invited to host the nativity figures for one or two nights before passing them to the next family. To sign up, find the list in the Church Room or contact Mary on 824779.

Stevington continues to give generously

The Giving Tree

Last year Christmas gifts around the giving tree were gratefully received by the Bedford Women's Refuge. From the beginning of December a box will be placed in the Church Room for you to give your gifts to women and children. The Women's Refuge would welcome wrapped gifts for children to be used at Christmas and throughout the year. At present there are several girls (10-14 years) and boys (11-12 years) resident. Older ability Lego would also be much appreciated.

BECHAR

Following your generous response last winter, we have again put the box in the Church Room to collect items for BECHAR (Bedford Concern for the Homeless and Rootless). Below is a list of items needed:

- **Food:** tins (especially meat, fruit, soup), tin openers, Pot Noodles, chocolate bars, biscuits.
- **Clothing:** boxer shorts (M/L), jeans (mostly 32-36), jogging bottoms (32-36), t-shirts, socks, gloves, hats, waterproof jackets, hoodies, towels.
- **Toiletries:** double-bladed disposable razors, aftershave foam, antiperspirant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo.
- Sleeping bags, quilts, blankets, tarpaulins, tents, back-packs, first aid kits.

- A continuous supply of instant coffee, teabags, soft drinks and biscuits so they can provide free refreshments. In addition, detergent, washing powder tablets, toilet rolls etc.

If you would like a collection from your home then please call Chrissie Fitch on 822945. For more information about the Centre and ways to give and help please visit the website: www.prebendcentre.org.uk.

Nine Lessons and Carols

The choir has just started preparations and practices for the busy Christmas season – Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 20th and the Village Concert on Monday 21st, and I hope swelling the choral volume at the ‘Carols Round the Cross’ on Friday 18th! We have been pleased to welcome one or two new members, but are always on the lookout for anyone who enjoys singing – no audition required!

We are particularly looking for a small group of youngsters who might sing the first verse of ‘Once in Royal David’s City’ which traditionally starts the service. If they would like to join the choir in one or two of the other carols that would be lovely, and we will fit them in. No audition required!

Please contact Robert Eadie on 826198, or youngsters talk to Jane O’Connor or John Duffield.

Christmas concert

This is one of Stevington’s highlights of the Christmas Season. Be sure to be there on Monday 21 December - 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets are available from the Community Shop now.

Christmas flowers

If you would like to help with flowers, it will help to make the church look very special at Christmas. We plan to decorate the church on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 December. Contact Jane on 825578 or jojo2.oconnor@gmail.com.

From the Registers

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Weddings | Lucy Watts and Anthony Deacon | 22 August |
| | Mary-Carol Dack and Florin Gales | 25 August |
| | Danielle Cannon and Thomas Cox | 5 September |
| Funeral | Lorna Gaunt | 23 October |
| Interment of | Joan Harris | 24 October |
| Ashes | Barry Cox | 30 October |

Robert Hart, Churchwarden

The Friends of ST MARY'S STEVINGTON

Firstly, let me wish everyone the compliments of the season on behalf of all the Friends Trustees.

Secondly, here's a date for your diary – Friday 18 December. We will be singing **Candlelit Carols** at The Cross, starting at 7pm. James has kindly offered the use of his garage as Brewhouse and Musicians' Shelter again this year, so we look forward to welcoming you with mulled wine and mince pies while you join in the festive singing. Don't forget your tinsel!

2015 saw us celebrating Pancake Day with the youngsters in the village; sharing a scrumptious summer tea party with friends and neighbours; lots of cakes were baked and sold by the children who presented a cheque for £131 to Keech Hospice; a whole host of scarecrow holiday-makers appeared at the Church Room; a spooky bat prowled, complete with hot dogs (thank you Dave), discovered at least three species of bats flying around the churchyard; and even more baking was done by the children for St. Mary's Harvest Service. We were fortunate recipients of generous donations from the string concert arranged by John Duffield and also from the Avis Clayton Memorial RWC Sweepstake.

Next year we have grand plans underway to hold a fundraising **Auction of Promises** on Saturday 17 September 2016. We will be starting to rustle up Promises very soon, so if you have any that you would like to offer, or any helpful suggestions, please email Tricia Lennie (msl_acorn@yahoo.co.uk). Anything from baking a cake to a holiday in your Caribbean villa will be most welcome!

The Pancake Race this year was such a great success and so much fun, we will be having another one during Spring half-term 2016 and in June we plan to bring you a special musical event during the Patronal Festival weekend.

We very much look forward to seeing you in 2016 and wish you a very Happy New Year!

Chrissie Galley
Chairman of Trustees

BAPTIST NEWS



What a day! A crisp start, then sunshine and soon all sorts of characters were appearing on verges and in gardens: fishermen dangling their hopeful bait, seagulls a-plenty, buckets and spades: Stevington-on-Sea has never seen a day like it! All because it was another scarecrow festival, culminating in an awards supper when the winners were announced.

Presenting the awards, the judges said they were impressed from the outset and were soon faced with a dilemma as to how they could sort the entries. They therefore decided to separate entries based on pastimes and concentrate on holidays: buckets and spades, ice-creams and all, at the same time favouring traditional scarecrow poses – standing, with arms raised. The winner was Mary Ronald in Silver Street, with Mary Murzyn at West End the runner-up; while in the children's competition, Summer Spencer came first, with Zofia Hamilton second.



Mary Ronald's winning entry, complete with ice-creams



Summer Spencer stands with her red-haired winner



Mary Murzyn takes her runner-up certificate from the judge

Some of the happy guests at the awards supper



Commendations and certificates were also awarded to the Friends of St Mary's for a wedding scene; the thatchers, whose 'crows' caught the eye of passing drivers in Park Road; and the Wareings' angler who certainly caught the judges' eye.

The congregation from St Mary's Church joined in the harvest festival in the Baptist Church the next day and perishable gifts were passed on to the village shop for free disposal. A few weeks later some of the Baptists joined in a service at the parish church.

The final afternoon tea of the year taxed the brains and local knowledge with everyone taking part in a quiz on local (Bedford) knowledge, while consuming savouries, sandwiches and cakes, washed down with numerous cups of tea or coffee.

The traditional service of carols and readings will take place in the chapel at 3pm on 20 December and the chapel will also be open for a brief celebration on Christmas Day at 10.15 when children from nought to ninety-plus will be welcome to show off any portable (or wearable) gifts. There will be no service on Sunday, 27 December.

Into the New Year, and the first planned event is an afternoon tea, any time from 3pm on 12 January.

Peter Evans



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ANOTHER GIRLS DAY OUT

My lovely friends, they are so good to me. I really feel I should be staying at home now with a rug over my knees, perhaps learning new skills like crochet.

Absolutely not - they assured me what you need is a spa day, it will do you good. I had been treated to a spa day by my daughter on quite a few occasions and I have always enjoyed them. Needless to say I didn't have to be asked twice so the day was booked for the four of us - Sally, Jean, Sue and me.

'Twenty past eight at the cross' said Jean who was driving. This sounds reasonable but in reality for me it is a real task as I have to walk Winnie, prepare lunch for Brian and what is even more difficult persuade him that no, eight am is not the middle of the night and he has to get up because he is responsible for two dogs (Winnie has an elderly friend staying three days a week).

The day arrived which as I write was actually yesterday and I arrived breathless at the cross carrying my half-finished cup of tea. They were all there and Sally sat in the front seat applying her make up - mascara, eye liner, the lot - no mean feat in a moving vehicle.

We arrived at Wyboston about nineish with Sally's make up immaculate. We checked in at this lovely establishment, then enjoyed a latte while we checked out the treatments available. We then decided we were all perfect and any treatment would be superfluous!

We collected our fluffy robes and towels and changed into our cozzies and made our way to the amazing giant outside jacuzzi. This was absolutely delicious - you were breathing in wonderful lakeside air while being pummelled by a bath of hot water. Sally immediately went to the almost violent water pumps which she assured us was fantastic for your back. Then looking round at the other guests we were glad to note there was nobody too skinny or too young so it was going to be a good day. We did point out to Sally when she emerged from her back treatment that her mascara wasn't waterproof. She had emerged looking not quite so immaculate!

Then it was off to the salt room (yes really) this is a very hot steam room where every now and again you are showered with salt - an amazing exfoliant I was told. I must say my skin did feel very smooth after this. Unfortunately not visible to the human eye.

After leaving this room and donning our robes our day was nearly ruined by the sight of an extremely beautiful young woman, very slim wearing what I can only describe as a mankini. She approached us in a very friendly manner to ask if her mascara had run. I assured her that it hadn't and Sally described her run in with what should have been waterproof mascara clearly still visible on her cheeks. Jean said you should have said it was awful and perhaps she should go home. Now come on girls we are not so bad - Sally with her lovely long slim legs, Sue very pretty and petite and Jean with her athletic build and still bronzed from her summer cycling - a match for anyone.

Let's have a rest before lunch. Now resting at this spa is like nothing I have seen before. You have water bed chairs like cocoons that just swallow you up all with subdued lighting and living flame fires. A fat farm it is not.

Lunch time at last - we were starving after all this water pummelling, steaming and resting. Lunch was delicious, very healthy and non-fattening although with the portions we had plus a large glass of wine each I am not sure about the non-fattening bit. Then back for another rest - this time I chose a water bed in a darkened room where I attempted to read my book - I fell asleep and woke an hour later. Where am I and where are my friends? No they are not on the treadmill or joining the yoga class they are next door chilling out and chatting. Sally had taken a photo of me asleep - thankfully my mouth was closed. Is it going to appear on Facebook I wonder? Who cares! Our lovely day had come to an end and Jean took us all home where I relaxed on the sofa with Brian and Winnie and a glass of wine - and in five minutes I was asleep.

Anne Westbrook

MOBILE LIBRARY VISITS

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



| | |
|----------|-------|
| December | 9, 23 |
| January | 6, 20 |
| February | 3, 17 |

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WILDLIFE CUTTINGS OTTERS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

It was nine in the morning on 25 December 2014. While looking for kingfishers from the river bank of Lake Meadow Roger and Janet Day saw what they thought was a log rolling in the water.

A whiskery head appeared emitting short, high pitched whistles and Roger got his first photo of an otter in Stevington. A second head appeared and the pair, long and sleek, swam together for a full half minute before they noticed the intruders and moved away down river.

HARROLD TWINNING ASSOCIATION



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FRANCE AND THE FRENCH WAY OF LIFE?

For over 20 years Harrold Twinning Association has been twinned with Ste Pazanne, a small town in North West France close to Nantes.

In June 2016 (as we do every two years) we shall be visiting Ste Pazanne for a few days, staying with our hosts, visiting local attractions and enjoying the French way of life. In alternate years we return the hospitality, hosting our French friends in Bedfordshire.

Over the years we have made many long-term friendships. We would now like to expand our group and welcome more families, couples or singles from Harrold and the surrounding area to join us. Options are either supporting our events, coming on our trips to France or hosting a visitor.

We have no fee for joining. However, to enable us to return the hospitality given to us, we hold a number of enjoyable fund-raising social events throughout the year.

For more information please visit our website - www.harroldtwinningassociation.com or contact Pam, one of our committee members, on 01234 720210.

A warm welcome is assured!

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Winners of the last three draws are as follows:

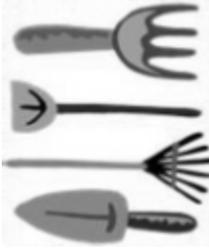
Sep 1st No 43 S & H Robinson
2nd No 13 B Collins
3rd No 26 L & A Kay
4th No 10 V Aspley

Oct 1st No 58 C Boniface
2nd No 79 M Stalley
3rd No 60 D Taylor
4th No 53 J Surtees

Nov 1st No 14 B Westwood
2nd No 87 G & M Billett
3rd No 88 J & P Cumming
4th No 2 R Penney



As in previous years there will be an extra prize for the December Draw, hopefully a Hamper, which will take place before Christmas on **19 December**. There are still some numbers available so come and join - you might be lucky and have something extra with which to enjoy the festivities. Application forms from the Church Room or Bob and Anna Hart (823769)



GARDENING TIPS AND INSPIRATION FROM PARK END THATCH

By early December all the leaves will have been blown off the trees, around the garden and have collected in corners. Leaf mould cannot be purchased and is easily made by stuffing into black sacks and stashing away behind the shed for a couple of years. Use the black crumbly material to improve the ground for spring planting under trees, where you have bulbs or as general mulch.

In mild weather the grass will continue to grow but rather slowly. Avoid walking on the lawn when there is frost or ice as it would damage the grass.

DECEMBER

By now we should have emptied containers of summer bedding and have to hand fleece and bubble wrap ready to protect your plants when freezing temperatures are forecast. I use clothes pegs to fix fleece in place, don't wrap too tightly and remove as soon as temperatures rise otherwise rot can set in.

Those pots that are too large to bring inside need to be raised a couple of centimetres off the ground to allow excess water to drain away. If you don't have pot feet, use pieces of broken pots instead or position the containers on gravel.

I have new rose bushes on order for clients, with their delivery due in early December and will be using mycorrhizal fungi granules on their bare roots to assist with their establishment in newly dug soil.

This is the month for pruning wisteria. Look carefully at the twigs and you will see fat buds near the base of last season's growth. These are the flower buds, cut back to one or two of these. All the thin buds will be leaves and new branch growth, so you will need to decide which to retain before cutting back.

This and next month are best for pruning apple and pear trees. Call a tree surgeon if you are unsure what to do.

At Christmas we enjoy using holly as decorations. As soon as the birds have cleared the branches of berries, I go out and prune my holly trees on a mild day.

JANUARY

Winter aconites will be the first flowers to emerge in January with snowdrops in February. Their shoots are delicate and can be seen a few weeks before, so make sure you have cleared away weeds or long grass from those areas in December in time to enjoy the display.

Tackle the perennial weeds such as dandelions, dock and nettles by getting out their roots and cut off tattered evergreen foliage as you go round tidying up. Cut down hops and remove ivy which has got out of hand. Many birds rely on mature ivy for food this should be left un-pruned until all the berries have been taken.

FEBRUARY

February is the right time to prune late summer and autumn flowering clematis. Find the new leaf buds low down on the plant and prune back to a couple of these. If it's a mild spring further buds will break even lower down, but be careful how low you prune as a sharp frost can kill their tender leaves.

This month cut down the canes of autumn fruiting raspberries, be careful to burn the old canes or dispose them to landfill. Also the best time to revitalize rhubarb; dig up the old root and cut pieces with a sharp spade keeping one bud to each section. Replant each piece in a new position at the same depth using farmyard manure and as mulch. Allow the new leaves to strengthen the plant by harvesting in summer the following year.

Late February is the time to divide snowdrops after they have flowered. Just fork up a clump, divide it gently with your fingers and replant the bulbs complete with foliage in their new positions at the same depth. Remember to water in straight away.

I like to clean out water-butts, wash empty flower pots, clear and clean the shed and garage at this time of year so we are shipshape and ready for the new growing season.

WILDLIFE

There will be many insects hibernating amongst the dead stems of your herbaceous perennials in January and February. Some of us like to give wildlife a chance by delaying cutting back of the stems until March. Whichever way you decide, new shoots will be emerging from early March and need light and air to develop to their full potential.

If you like the idea of a garden wildlife pond or bog garden, a cold winter's morning could be a good time to get digging. Ideally position it in a naturally low position in the geography of your garden and away from overhanging trees. Have a deep area for dragonflies and frogs, with shallows for birds and small mammals to take a drink. Plant up in spring.

Check the bonfire heap for hibernating hedgehogs before lighting it. A tell tale sign are dried leaves and soft material such as grasses, which the hedgehog rolls in to weave a sort of cocoon around itself.

We feed garden birds throughout the year, as the arable fields around us have little to offer in the way of bird food. Net-less fat balls, sunflower kernels and niger seeds will attract a range of birds. Soak raisins in water for thrushes at ground level and put mealworms on the bird table for robins. Keep bird tables and ground feeding stations clean to prevent the spread of disease, also scrub out bird baths weekly and change their drinking and bathing water regularly.

By keeping busy in the garden those gloomy winter days will soon pass and spring will be upon us.

If any readers would like information about a specific aspect of horticulture or to encourage wildlife, please let me know, by email to info@susanyoungdesign.co.uk or contact the editors. I would be pleased to write about it for all our benefit.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and don't forget to order those new seeds in good time!

Susan Young
Park End Thatch

BLUNHAM BOOK SALE

Saturday 20 February 2016 10.00am to 3.00pm
in Blunham Parish Church (MK44 3NQ).

Huge selection of nearly new books, teas/coffees and homemade cakes, homemade soup with bread and a raffle.

All proceeds to Blunham Church Fabric Fund.



ARE YOU READY FOR WINTER?

Now the clocks have gone back motorists in Bedfordshire are being urged to make sure their vehicle is ready for winter. Police are encouraging people to perform simple vehicle maintenance checks, such as making sure the tread depth on tyres is above the 1.6mm limit, to help avoid being involved in a collision.

Other things to check include lights, brakes, windscreen wipers, screen wash and the vehicle's battery.

This year TyreSafe conducted the UK's largest survey of tread depths at the point of replacement. The results showed that 27 per cent of people replaced their tyres when they were already illegal. In addition to safety concerns, this could result in a fine and up to three penalty points for each illegal tyre. Officers from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Road Policing Unit will be conducting an increased number of vehicle checks throughout the winter. They will also be targeting drivers of overloaded vehicles.

The darker evenings mean it is essential that vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians wear high visibility clothing and bicycles must be fitted with lights. It is an offence to use a bicycle in dark conditions without lights.

Inspector Mark Rogers said: 'With the clocks going back it is vital that people make sure their vehicle is ready for winter. A few simple checks could save your life and the lives of others. If you're unsure about the condition of your vehicle and whether it is ready for the colder weather then book it in for a winter service. With less light in the evenings we are also reminding cyclists to make sure they are visible to other road users. This includes using lights on their bicycle and wearing high visibility clothing.



Daniel James PCSO 8754
Crime Reduction and Partnerships
Riseley Police Station
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Riseley
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FEEDING GARDEN BIRDS IN WINTER

Many of you love the birds with which we share our village and its surroundings. Birds do not feel the cold or the wet as we do, however they do need energy to survive the winter weather and to fly around in search of food and clean water. In winter they come closer to our homes in search of food, water and shelter from the elements.

Different birds feed on different foods groups whilst some feed across a range of food types.

We see berries in the hedgerows and ivy climbing some of the older trees, there are nuts on the ground, insects hidden in amongst leaves and clumps of grass and a few remaining seeds on plants. Sometime the occasional rodent will venture out often to be eagerly grabbed by talons from above. However most of the available food suitable for birds becomes much harder to find as we approach January and often the coldest month February, very few birds can be seen flying around. It seems logical that with little food about and therefore less to go around, birds have low energy reserves and take cover, managing to get through until temperatures pick up in spring.

There are several things we can easily do to help and feed our garden birds in winter.

In Stevington we have the house sparrow, which is one of the most threatened species mainly due to few suitable nest sites in houses or buildings. House sparrows rely on us to put out food for them all year round: seed blends, sunflower hearts and mealworms. I have seen a group of around 20 house sparrows fly around the village together enjoying the hawthorn hedges and shrubs along the roadside.

We are lucky to share our gardens with song and mistle thrushes which need us to put out mealworms and fruit such as windfall apples, raisins soaked in cold water and other fruit based foods such as stale cake. They will find the earthworms they prefer to snails, where someone has been digging the soil. Mealworms are a good alternative, these can be scattered on open ground for thrushes and robins to find.

Many birds use our gardens throughout the year as they struggle to find sufficient natural foods from the fields for their needs. Ensure food is available from early morning to give the energy boost needed after a cold night and to put out more at midday so they can feed before nightfall.

As a general point, try to site feeders at 6 feet and within 8 feet of a bush or tree, so birds can take cover when a predator appears. Suet fat balls should always be offered from a feeder. Always remove the plastic nets from fat balls as they can trap or tear a bird's delicate tongue. Consider repositioning feeders and bird tables to avoid un-hygienic areas such as mouldy seeds which are highly toxic.

A regular supply of clean fresh water for drinking and bathing all year round is essential. Position bird baths up off the ground, so that birds can see clearly all around them and can look out for predators.

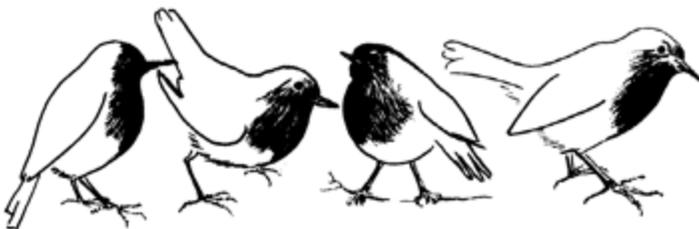
Remember to keep the feeders clean to help avoid the spread of bird diseases. Scrub feeders, bird tables and bird baths every few days or when there is old food or bird droppings are seen. Wear rubber gloves, scrape off the old food with a paint scraper. Use a mild disinfectant in the washing water and a scrubbing brush kept for the purpose. Rinse thoroughly with cold water and allow to dry in the open air, before putting out more food.

After Christmas there may be suitable leftovers to put out for the birds: stale cake, old cheese, tiny pieces of cooked bacon or meat - not too much and not on the ground as this might attract rats. Stale bread or pastry, preferably wetted a little otherwise it can choke.

When the kitchen has no more to offer, a wide range of bird foods to choose from can be found at the local garden centre and some farm shops. Sunflower hearts or kernels are a good idea as they are not as messy as sunflower seeds. Wild bird mix is a good all-rounder, I have seen our local reed buntings, greenfinches and chaffinches taking this food. Niger seed will please the goldfinches. Peanuts bring in great tits, blue tits and the great spotted woodpecker. Fat balls attract many birds including starlings and the robin and blackbird will pick up any fallen morsels. Fruit blocks will please the thrush and you may even be lucky enough to see a hedgehog after scraps fallen from any of your bird feeders.

Happy winter bird watching!

Susan Young
Park End Thatch



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grants@harpurtrust.org.uk
or visit our website www.harpurtrust.org.uk/450

(Deadlines for application submissions can be found on our website)



NEWS FROM HARROLD ODELL COUNTRY PARK



There will be a lot happening this winter. From October – March all the major tree works are undertaken during their dormant period. Work has already begun on the next areas to be coppiced as we need a lot of stakes and binders for the next section of hedge-laying. Traditionally hazel is the preferred material for this but we don't have enough of it in the park. We therefore use the willow that we have in abundance.

While water levels are still low, we are coppicing the area next to the path out to the river meadow at the edge of the silt pond. This area has a lot of the materials we are looking for. We also have to replace a strip of hurdle fencing past the Grebe Lake Bridge that is currently preventing visitors from falling down a gully next to the path. The old fence has had it.

In late October, Peter Hall, the contractor who built the new bird hide in 2012 started constructing a board walk to take people out to look at the Dragonfly Pond in the Nature Reserve. This project has been financed to the tune of £10,500 by The Friends of Harrold Odell from the proceeds of our firewood sales and car park donations. The £1,500 balance has come from grants from The Bedford Borough Council Disability Access Fund and Ward Funding via our local Councillor. The aim is to allow wheelchair and pushchair access along it with a passing place incorporated, a non-slip surface and steps down at the end. The entrance will be straight off the bridleway.



*Peter Hall & Michael
working on the
Board Walk*

Another recent addition is the extra ramps in the skate park thanks to funding from Harrold Parish Council. The feedback we've had from the local users has been very favourable. The new equipment certainly presents them with more of a challenge.



Using the new skate ramps

Our volunteers have recently completed the mammoth task of cutting back at least 10 years worth of vegetation overhanging the main fence line through the River Meadow. It was horrible stuff to handle – a mixture of fallen trees, wild rose, bramble and assorted thorn bushes. All the cuttings then had to be loaded on to the Land Rover and trailer and hauled off to a fire site for disposal. We can now see the extent of the damage to the fence which will need a lot of new posts and wires re-strained ready for next year's cattle. The animals we had this year took the opportunity to scoff all the leaves off the cuttings and fought over the tasty sloe berries on the Blackthorn.

Dr. Sharpe from Pavenham is the grazier responsible for the cattle. He plans to start taking them off-site for the winter from 8 November. Once they are all off-site we will remove the grazing signs from the entrances. A new herd will go on next year at the end of April/beginning of May when signs will be re-erected.

We will need to get on to the island in the middle of Grebe Lake this winter to undertake urgent tree works over there. The storms last winter brought quite a few down in the central part and some of those on the edge overlooking the lake are teetering on the brink and will need extensive coppicing. If you see us on the island you'll know what we are doing. More open ground will give the geese a bigger nesting area and more wild flowers growing in there will feed the island bee hives.

Please feel free to ask questions about any aspect of the park and its management. There is always a reason for the work we do. Also, have a look at the website that is run by the Friends Group. Log on to www.hocp.co.uk or e-mail hocp@bedford.gov.uk There are I Spy sheets to download and a gallery of photos to look at in addition to all the general information.

Dates for your diaries:

Health Walks

December 17 & 31, January 14 & 28

This is a free national scheme aimed at people who are new to walking or have a health issue that would be helped by gentle exercise. The Harrold walks occur on a Thursday morning once a fortnight. We meet for registration at 10.30am outside the café entrance and walk for about an hour to improve your health and wellbeing. There's always the opportunity to have a coffee and a natter in the café afterwards. Leader: Janet Munro. For more information please call 07585 908821 or e-mail janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk.

Friends Task Days

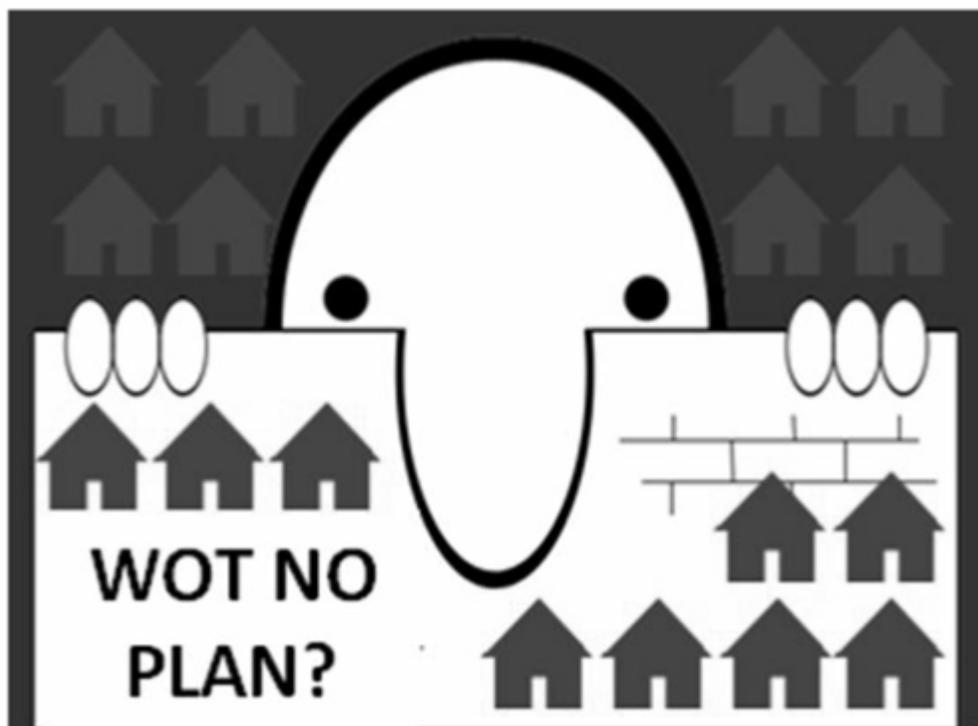
28 December, 25 January

These are held on the last Monday each month (a week earlier if it's a Bank Holiday). Volunteers come out with a packed lunch, sturdy old clothes & footwear to undertake conservation tasks around the park. We provide tools, gloves and refreshments. Meet at the Ranger's office in the café at 10am. For more information either e-mail Richard Dowsett on Richard.dowsett@bedford.gov.uk or call 07792 721866.

Photos courtesy of Trevor Sudds

Janet Munro
Greenspace Officer

| | |
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