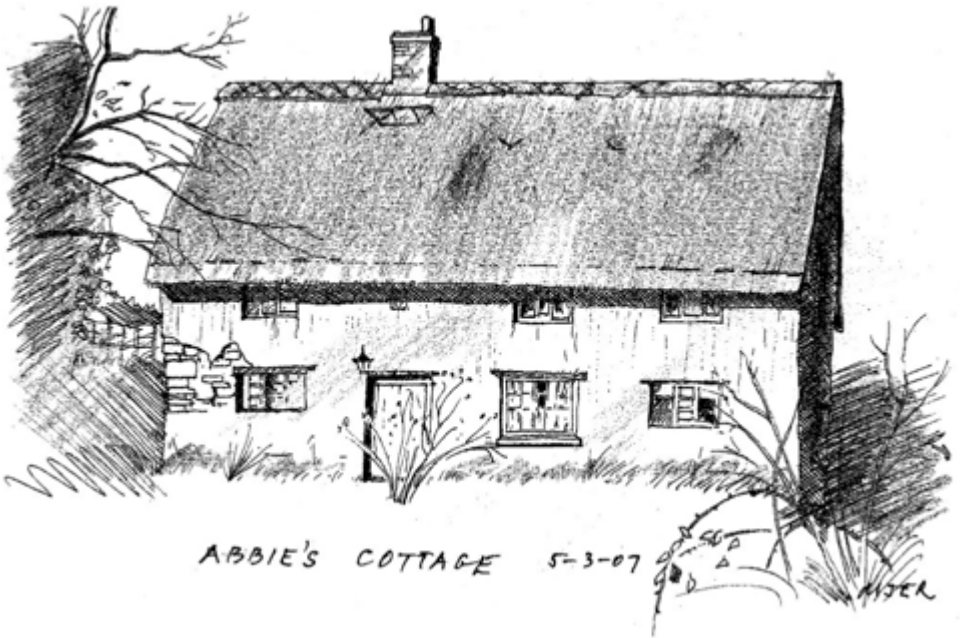


STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



ABBIE'S COTTAGE 5-3-07

DECEMBER 2020
Number 195

VILLAGE DIARY

Because of the uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic there are only a few Village Diary entries in this edition. We hope that in 2021 it will be jam packed with events taking place in the village.

In the meantime, please keep an eye out for posters round the village and check the Stevington Support Facebook group and the websites and Facebook pages of the pubs, village organisations and the churches to keep up to date with what is happening.

November

29 Advent Carol Service. St Mary's Zoom 5.00pm

December

3 Cinema Club. Theatre Broadcast. Uncle Vanya. Village Hall
10 WI Cheese & Wine Party. Zoom
10 Cinema Club. Theatre Broadcast. Warhorse. Village Hall
17 Cinema Club. Ballet Broadcast. Nutcracker. Village Hall
20 Lessons and Carols. St Mary's Zoom 5.00pm
25 Christmas Morning Eucharist. St. Mary's. 10.00am
28 Cinema Club. Opera Broadcast. La Traviata. Village Hall

January

7 Cinema Club. Opera Broadcast. Manon Lescaut. Village Hall

February

21 Magazine Copy Date (Sunday)



Photographs as credited. Cover drawing by Mike Robinson

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 Smart! Prebend Centre in Bedford. Thanks to your generosity and a record number of entries this year we have raised over £850, before the addition of Gift Aid. The final total will be published in the next magazine as we are waiting for a couple of donations. Don't forget that it is a pull-out Christmas card that can be displayed with all the other cards you receive.

This is the end of our ninth year producing the Magazine- difficult to believe as time goes by so quickly. We would like to thank everyone who has helped the magazine effort this year - Anna Hart and her regular team for reliably delivering the magazine, special thanks to those who have stood in to deliver this year when some of the regulars were not able to do so, 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 2020. Your financial support is vital.

I think that everyone will agree that 2020 has been a very strange year. We've seen so many of the activities and events that we take for granted in the village cancelled this year because of lockdown and the various restrictions. But we have all carried on making the best of it, including meeting in different ways and using Zoom etc where we can, and many people have helped their neighbours in too many ways to mention. In case anyone was in any doubt we think that this year has shown that Stevington is a wonderful place to live.

Finally, we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas, however we are able to spend it, and a happy, healthy, peaceful and, most importantly, normal 2021.

Heather and Keith

NEXT MAGAZINE

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 6-7 March 2021. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 21 February 2021. Articles should reach Heather and Keith Parkinson (Old Paddock, Church Road, Tel. 826677, email stevington.magazine@googlemail.com) on or before that day.



POPPY COLLECTION

As we all know it has been a difficult year and I was uncertain whether we would be able to go ahead with any collection as I only received the seals and poppies a few days before we were due to collect at the Cross.

Thank you to the wonderful people of Stevington who turned out to support us and thank you to all my helpers - some of whom had to brave the elements.

We collected a magnificent £670.

Joan Hart

THANK YOU PAUL O'FLYNN

I should like to put on record my(our) gratitude for the hours and hours Paul spent on villagers' behalf. In my opinion, he did a stalwart job. As a regular in the pubs, he often received more than his fair share of aggravation on his own time. His legacy will be appreciated in time when the village realises we are in a better place than we were before his tenure. The 'apostrophe', as I call him (he calls me 'hyphen'), was one of the least self-serving Parish Council officials within recent times, whilst others sought office to advance their on causes, Paul always acted with integrity. I for one thank him for that. I hope others will come to be thankful too.

Seb Blore-Rimmer

THANK YOU STEVINGTON

Many, many heartfelt thanks to you wonderful Spike Islanders, for the care and attention you've given me since March. My backdoor is usually unlocked.

Special thanks to Jean and Richard Blaney – you've been my lifeline for hospital trips and shopping. Also for your daily visits. I don't know how I would have managed without you. (Hope I haven't embarrassed you with these words!).

My other very special thanks go to Julia and Jim Sinfield who've kept a close eye on me and, of course, Lottie Jackson who brings my Friday fish 'n chips from The Royal George come rain or shine.

I'm getting on well after my hip operation and now often get about indoors without either stick or trolley. Next step, hopefully, will be venturing outside to practice longer walks. Unfortunately I'm unable to drive at the moment. Fingers crossed for the return of feeling in my foot.

Once again many, many thanks to my visitors and friends. Here's hoping that 2021 will be better for us all.

Much love and best wishes to you all.

Barbara Collins

DO YOU HAVE A WOOD-BURNING STOVE?

We have dismantled our shed and have a quantity of wood cut into manageable-size pieces to dispose of. It seems a pity to dump it if anyone can make use of it. It is not creosoted.

If interested, please contact:

Peter & Hilary O'Dell. 01234 824612

ENID WOODING

Enid Wooding was a Yorkshire lass, who settled in Stevington after marrying Frank Wooding, and became part of the village. Her biggest joy was having her son Neil.

She was a woman of strong opinion and a very capable person with a heart of gold.

Auntie Enid was known for her love of craft work e.g. lacemaking, knitting, crocheting, you name it she did it! She loved experimenting and adding her own twist to patterns - and it had to be perfect!

Her daily routine was housework, gardening, cooking and finally sitting down to enjoy her favourite television programme with her hands creating something special - as she didn't believe in idle hands! She loved teaching young people in particular about craft.

Her great nieces are now following in her footsteps and using the craft items she was unable to finish – 'waste nothing' is our happy memory of her.

Every time I drive past the cottage in West End, I can't believe she is no longer there, but I smile with the happy memories of her and Uncle Frank tending their beautiful garden together. Reunited.

Pat Gibson

MICHAEL ROBINSON

I would like to thank you all for your cards and kind words about Michael. He loved being part of this village, joining in whenever he could. He would have been so moved to see everyone who turned out to say goodbye on his way to the church. I would like to share with you the following words he asked to be read at his funeral. Sadly COVID-19 rendered this impossible, but Peter Turnbull made his graveside service very special.

He was so brave and uncomplaining as MND gradually took away everything that made his life worth living. In spite of this he was always ready to receive visitors with a smile and a glass.

As his life approached its close he did indeed meet it with such dignity. With his love of river fishing 'The River Speaks' seems to mirror his own journey.

We will always be thankful for the support Doctor Limond gave us during his last days.

My deepest thanks once again.

Judith

An extract from The River Speaks by E H Knatchbull Hugessen

It always seems as if the Spirit of the river was speaking to me, and telling me how, in its rapid, continuous course, it is setting an example to Man how he can most wisely and happily regulate his life.

The water is so wise; when it comes to little banks and uneven places in its bed, it gently flows over them without making any bother about it, and this, says the river, is just the way that men should treat little unpleasantnesses and smaller misfortunes of life instead of allowing such things to distract and worry them, and perhaps even to alter their whole course of existence. Then, when huge boulders of rock stand out into the stream, the river glides quietly round them, accepting them as necessary evils which must be endured, since they cannot be cured, which is the way in which men should treat their greater difficulties and hardships of their lives, instead of fuming and fretting, or sitting down in despair.

These are the things that rivers never do, says the Spirit, and moreover, as they move constantly forward, they explore with their water

every hole and corner within their reach, neglecting nothing, giving a kindly wash to everything that comes in their way, and holding a pleasant conversation with all objects, living or inanimate, with which they come in contact.

So a wise man, and one who desires to make his life useful and pleasant to himself and others, will always seek for information as he goes along through the world, will ever have a cheery word for his fellow-travellers, and be ready to do a kind and friendly action to any that require it. And, if he does so, just as the river grows broader and wider as it nears the ocean in which it finally loses itself, and merges its waters in the infinite space of the sea, so the man's life will become grander and more noble as it approaches its close, and he will have gained the affection and respect of all whose respect and affection are worth gaining, before the stream of his life, too, floats out upon the ocean of eternity.

Note from the Editor: Unfortunately this was received too late to be included within the September issue.



MIKE ROBINSON

We met Mike when he and Judith moved up to Hart Farm about 25 years ago. His love of life and desire to share it with everyone he came in contact with shone out. They made us so welcome in their home and, over the years, we spent far too many evenings round the table sharing some "bloody good wine" (Mike's words). Our lives have been greatly enriched by the love and friendship he showed us and his generosity of spirit. We will always remember the days spent fishing with him and his sincere concern that his guests should be the ones to land a fish, followed by his eagerness to crack open the champagne in celebration! He was a gentleman, a joy to be with and never failed to make us laugh. Mike Robinson was our very, very dear friend, a unique man sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers and continued friendship go to Judith and the family.

Anne & Lawrence Kay



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STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Parish Councillors:

Pete Fisher (Chair)
Andrew Lockwood (Vice Chair)
Janet Day
Aaron Keep
James Lockwood
Lucy Norton
Jane Thomas

Tricia Lennie (Clerk)

The Parish Council would like to welcome Aaron Keep onto the Parish Council and look forward to working with him in support of the residents of Stevington.

A Short Message from Pete Fisher, Parish Council Chair

At the last Parish Council meeting I had the honour of being elected as Chair. This year continues to be a challenging time for all of us; as well as restrictions on our personal lives, cancellation of planned village events, closure and then changes to opening times for our pubs, curtailment of club meetings and restrictions on church services have affected everyone.

Parish Council meetings have been able to continue via Zoom and until circumstances allow face-to-face meetings, will continue in this manner. These virtual meetings remain open to anyone who wishes to log in, please contact the Clerk for details. Parish Councillors are in contact with each other and we are still working on all Parish related matters behind the scenes, for example: the Neighbourhood Plan is working its way through the various regulatory stages, our contractors have been able to carry out grass cutting and tree pruning as planned and we have been reviewing planning applications as they arise.

We have all been concerned with the increased traffic and speeding through the village, in part due to the closure of the A428. With the assistance of our Borough Councillor, we have been able to get the mobile speed camera van in the village on a number of occasions. A traffic management plan for the village is being worked on by the Parish Council and we are liaising with the Borough Council Highways Department. Unfortunately, there is no magic fix to this problem, reduced speed limits, a priority system at the Cross and speed cameras

are just some of the ideas being considered. I regard this as a priority for the village and one the Parish Council will pursue with vigour. However, we have to be cognisant of the restriction and delays incurred by the current pandemic, so we cannot put any timescale on this matter at the moment.

With the aid of volunteers, the Parish Council has made arrangements to support those of you who may need assistance collecting prescriptions etc. during lockdown. I can assure you that we will continue working to the best of our abilities and on your behalf maintain and improve the character of this delightful and vibrant village.

The recent news of progress towards an effective Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine gives us a glimmer of light at the end of a very long tunnel. Stay safe!

Community Support during COVID-19

Volunteers are still available to support any residents who may need help with shopping or collecting prescriptions, including any families who have to self-isolate. Harrold Medical Practice have advised that most people can still collect their own prescriptions. The Community Shop will remain open from 10 to 12 every morning with all the precautions in place to protect the volunteer shop keepers and people using the shop. The Parish Council would like to thank the Community Shop Committee, all the volunteers in the shop and the community and everyone who is helping friends, neighbours and family during the ongoing pandemic.

If you know of anyone who may need extra help or support please contact the Parish Council by email clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk or contact Janet Day on 07843 642867.

Neighbourhood Plan

We are very pleased to confirm that Stevington's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has passed independent inspection with only minor amendments. The Plan is currently with Bedford Borough Council in order for them to formally publish their decision statement. Once the decision statement stage is completed the Plan will be retitled as the 'referendum' version and the Parish will be given the opportunity to vote on the Plan next year. This will not be before May 2021 owing to COVID-19 restrictions. We would like to thank the working group and all of the people of village who have given up so much time and effort in producing such a complex planning document.

The Windmill

Unfortunately, with the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions it has not been possible to arrange a suitable date for the turning of sails demonstration that we had hoped to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the mill this year, instead we are hoping that this event will now occur in Spring 2021. Please keep an eye out nearer the time for confirmation of the date, we hope to coincide this with other village activities if possible.

Public access to the mill remains under review by Bedford Borough Council, we hope to be able to provide an update to this soon.

The 'Friends of' group is now in regular contact with the Borough to discuss ways in which they can help support the mill going forward, if you would like more information please email FoSW@stevington.com or speak to your Parish Councillor.

The Village Hall

The Parish Council would like to acknowledge all the work the Committee have undertaken to ensure the hall is COVID-19 compliant for reopening. At the time of writing we are in the middle of a second lockdown which while not as stringent as the first has put on hold plans to reopen the hall. The aerial firework display on 4 November was a colourful if brief morale booster enjoyed by many villagers.

Church Room

The Parish Council heard on Monday 15 November that the planning application for improved facilities at the Church Room had been successful. An exhibition of the plans for the new disabled access will be mounted there shortly. Grant applications to support funds already raised by The Friends of St. Mary's can now be explored.

The Playground

The playground has reopened and weekly safety checks are undertaken. Parents and carers who use the playground with their children are advised no cleaning of the equipment is undertaken. If you use the playground please ensure you follow the guidance by ensuring your children keep their distance wherever possible and use wipes to sanitise their hands.

Postbox at West End

The Borough Council has been informed by the contractors for Royal Mail that the box will be reinstated at West End. No date has been given but the Parish Council will keep the situation under review. Thanks to our Borough Councillor for following this up.

Keep safe and well

Jane Thomas

Email: clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.stevington-pc.gov.uk

Sign up for the weekly bulletin by going to the website.

Windmill photo courtesy of John O'Reilly

BEDFORD BOROUGH NEWS

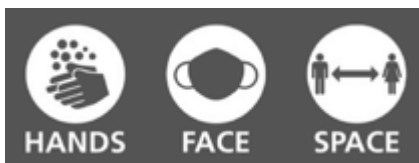
In my last piece I spoke too soon about a return to some sort of normal. As I write this latest Borough Council Report, we are in the middle of a four-week lockdown; I hope by the time you read this we will either be about to emerge from or have left it in its current form. You will have also seen that figures are still rising and if we return to exactly how we were prior to 2 November, then unfortunately by Christmas we may be returned to some form of lockdown. In the Borough we are asking all residents to follow the guidelines issued after the lockdown is over. A big thank you to all for doing what is asked, this has meant that numbers in Bedford Borough are increasing more slowly than surrounding local authorities.

As part of the measures to help control the spread a new COVID-19 a walk-in testing centre has opened at the University of Bedfordshire Campus in Pollhill Avenue. This is operating on a walk-in basis for anybody in the Borough who needs a test. It will be open every day providing testing for students at the University and local residents. It expands on the local testing availability currently provided at Borough Hall and Prebend Street car parks in the town.

You can book a test online at nhs.uk/coronavirus, or by calling 119.

Test results will be available within 24-72 hours of completing the test. People testing positive should self-isolate for 10 days, with other people in their household needing to isolate for 14 days.

Please remember **Hands, Face, Space**.



Wellbeing

As we enter the ninth month of living with COVID-19 the Council is encouraging residents to look after their wellbeing.

In April, the council created a webpage, www.bedford.gov.uk/wellbeing, offering advice to Bedford Borough residents on how to look after themselves whilst at home during the coronavirus outbreak and beyond. With regular updates, the site offers advice and signposting to help residents stay healthy in what continues to be an extremely difficult and uncertain year.

Finances

The Borough Council is now facing a funding gap of £26 million. Due to the impact of coronavirus, the Council has to manage the vast majority of this gap - £21.8 million - in next year's Budget, which will be set in the coming months.

The impact of COVID-19 has affected services across the Council, with new ways of working and new demands, placing the Council under unprecedented pressure in working to deliver care for the vulnerable and elderly while keeping vital day-to-day operations running in extremely challenging circumstances.

The Council is looking to maximise savings through more use of technology and streamlining Council processes. This will build on the Transformation Programme which started in 2017 and has seen around 70 projects completed and £18 million saved by working in a more efficient way.

However, given the size of the challenge the Council faces in 2021/2022 there is a need to look at savings in how they deliver some services and new fees for services such as planning advice.

Transport

Manton Lane/Clapham Road

The major works which affect residents of Stevington currently are the on-going works on Clapham Road, the utility works are expected to be finished by Christmas, with further work on Manton Lane starting in the new year, once the footbridge is installed.

The final phase of this work will be the installation of part-time traffic lights on the Fairhill roundabout. This work will be completed by March 2022. (See map at <https://tinyurl.com/Clapham-Rd-Changes>).



Bedford High Street

Temporary measures have been put in place to create more space for pedestrians and install permanent average speed cameras to enforce the 20 mph speed limit.

Results of a survey on traffic flows in October, showed that both the volume of traffic and average speed had increased compared to October 2019.

The permanent work on the High Street will include:

- Footways will be widened on both sides to create a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers
- New loading and short stay parking bays will be introduced
- 20 mph speed limit - enforced by average speed cameras (already introduced)
- High quality York paving and granite kerbstones will be used

More details at www.bedford.gov.uk/transportingbedford2020.

Councillor Jon Abbott

Telephone 07784 549180

Email jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com

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Bike 'n Hike



A VERY DIFFERENT BIKE 'N HIKE
12 SEPTEMBER 2020

The restrictions placed upon this type of event during COVID-19 made the Trustees of the Historic Churches make many changes to this year's Bike In Hike - no churches open, no welcoming stewards, no refreshments for weary travellers, no register to sign, no toilets.

So this was a difficult decision. The annual income from the event is the principal source of funds for the Trustees to distribute to hard-up parishes struggling to keep their mediaeval buildings wind and weather tight. It was something of a gamble to adopt, could have been a damp squib.

We are one of those parishes who has expensive maintenance repairs ahead, and our Church Treasurer has already sought and obtained a grant from the Trust.

It was very much in our interest that the event should go ahead, as half of all sponsorship raised comes back to the participating churches. Although only four people from the village walked this year, they had worked hard and brought in generous sponsorship from friends, neighbours and church members.

I wish I could tell you the financial outcome, but some of the income from all member churches across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire has yet to come in. The Event Treasurer has told me that the Trustees were really pleased to have gone ahead despite the dreaded COVID-19, and the overall income will be 'very pleasing'!

I will be able to tell you more in the next magazine.

Robert Hart, Stevington Representative

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The Friends of ST MARY'S CHURCH

As with most social activities Friends of St. Mary's Church fund raising hit a wall with the arrival of COVID-19. Our last gathering was a sell out quiz in March, but almost the next week we were coming to terms with unfamiliar language like shielding, social distancing and furlough. As we adjusted to a new way of living, we had to cancel our Open Gardens event and all of our subsequent plans were thwarted.

We had hoped to hold a carols round the cross type event at Christmas but as things stand that is not possible. We look forward to resuming our activities in the village as soon as circumstances allow us to.

But not all fund raising stopped. We are extremely grateful to Paul O'Flynn for the generous donation he made from the Avis Clayton Memorial Fund rugby sweepstake. Thank you to everyone who took part and made the donation possible and of course to the winner Dave Fitch.

Alison Champion has made some lovely face masks which are available for sale in the Community Shop. Alison has kindly donated the proceeds from the sales to FOSM.

If any of you have any ideas about how we can raise funds for FOSM or you have an idea for a fund raiser that you could run to support us during these challenging times we would be delighted to hear from you. We can be contacted at fosmteam@gmail.com.

FOSM has donated £3,500 towards creating disabled access to the Church room to make it accessible to everyone in our community.

John Duffield

PARISH COUNCIL EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Do you ever feel there is too much information but still wish you knew what was going on? Why not sign up on the Parish Council website www.stevington-pc.gov.uk to receive a free weekly email newsletter. Agendas, minutes and the latest local notices will be sent straight to your inbox each Wednesday.

BEDFORD SAILING CLUB WE REMAIN OPEN THIS WINTER!

Following a very busy summer and autumn with a record number of attendances, use of club facilities is slowing down over the winter, but in spite of the precautionary lockdown restrictions we remain active for those wishing to enjoy the outdoors.



Thanks to careful hygiene management members are able to book an allocated time slot to allow for social distancing and can use a selection of club equipment for canoeing and kayaking to explore the river Great Ouse or just relax in our idyllic riverside spot.



We hope to return to normal free access as soon as the government restrictions are lifted.

Free coaching sessions for rowing, sculling and canoeing will resume in the spring.

A family membership is an absolute bargain at only £45 for the year!

Villagers wanting to join the membership of this fantastic local facility or to book a time slot can contact Dave at daveabrear@aol.com or Hugo at hugovankempen0@gmail.com.

Hugo van Kempen

STEVINGTON COMMUNITY SHOP

We would like to offer our condolences to the family and friends of Enid Wooding who has sadly passed away. Enid was a very strong supporter of the shop and had been a volunteer with us for many, many years.

Our volunteers are extremely important as we could not open without them, especially at this awful time. A big thank you to you all. If there is anyone out there who may have any spare time and would like to help, please contact us.

The shop will continue to open in the mornings, within the restrictions and guidelines set by the Government.

Eggs from June Homer are still available from her bungalow in Church Road and by the time you read this our usual Christmas goodies should be on sale.

We are running our Christmas raffle, so please donate prizes and buy tickets from the shop. All proceeds go towards our expenses.

Our opening hours over the Christmas period are as follows:



Thurs 24 Dec.	Open
Fri 25 to Sun 27 Dec.	Closed
Mon 28 to Wed 30 Dec.	Open
Thurs 31 Dec and Fri 1 Jan.	Closed
Sat 2 Jan.	Open

We hope you all stay safe and have a lovely Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes from
Jackie, Sarah, Doreen and June

WASTE COLLECTIONS

Month	Rubbish	Recycling	Green
December	1, 15, ??	8, 22	None
January 2021	12, 26	5?, 19	None
February	9, 23	2, 16	None
March	9, 23	2, 16, 30	2, 16, 30

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STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB



As we all know 2020 is unlike any other year that any of us can remember and the same applies to local football. There were delays in getting any form of pre-season training going and league fixtures didn't begin until the last weekend in September. We only managed to play 4 games up until the end of October when the second COVID-19 Lockdown came into force also having had a game postponed due to a waterlogged pitch and another when the tractor and mowers got stuck on the Pavenham pitch because - you've guessed, it was waterlogged!!

I think that from the outset there has been a feeling from everyone involved in local football that it seemed highly unlikely that the league and cup competitions would be completed again this year. Not surprisingly this has impacted on everyone's enthusiasm and commitment for a Saturday afternoons football, especially for those with real COVID-19 issues at home and work to worry about. None of this is helped by the fact that we have been unable to use changing rooms or have showers after the game and enjoy a post-match review of the game over a drink as we used to, due to the COVID-19 social distancing control measures.

So, all in all it's been a bit of a slow start to the season and the statistics in mid-November are:

Premier Division:- Position 14 of 16, played 4, won 0, drawn 2, lost 2, scored 4 goals, conceded 6 goals, goal difference -2 and 2 points. So, lots to play for when the season recommences sometime after 2 December, we just need to start converting our chances to goals.

Everyone at the club was shocked and sorry to hear that one of its past players, Melvin (Mel) Cox sadly passed away on the 24 October. Mel played for both Stevington FC and Stevington Lions FC on Sundays for many years as well as for the successful youth team beforehand. He played a number of seasons alongside his brothers Graham, Philip and Tim and his cousin Stephen, watched by their dad Bernard (Shay) and Uncle Alan. Without the Cox family support and commitment to the club over the years it wouldn't still be going today as the longest serving club in the local league. Mel was a good all round sportsman and went on to play rugby after finishing football, was a very good batsman and bowler for the village cricket club and also known to be as accomplished at a number of traditional indoor social sports! Our thoughts and condo-



British Heart
Foundation

lences go out to his wife Val and their family and all the extended Cox family. A great sportsman and character in the sporting clubs of the village who will always be fondly remembered.

Traditionally the club raises money for charities over Christmas and this year any funds raised will be donated to the Heart Foundation in memory of Melvin Cox.

Shane King



WaveLength

Stevington

During the last two years Stevington Wavelength has offered support to anyone in the village who doesn't use the internet or has difficulty using their PC, tablet or phone. Initially we held regular meetings in the church room topped up with one to one help or online video meetings.

Despite the present social distancing requirements, we have a successful WhatsApp group where members seek help and share solutions. We continue to offer one to one help over the phone and by video calls.

We have some tablets which are available for anyone in the village to use if they don't have their own equipment, but these will only work if the user has an internet connection.

We would like to provide one tablet that can connect to the internet independently. As services become increasingly based online this would be useful for people who don't have any internet access and can't get out and about. If you could make a donation of suitable equipment, or help us update our own, we would welcome a call.



To Join our WhatsApp group, ask for IT help or talk about helping us in any way contact John Duffield on 07540540698 or email duffieldjc@aol.com or have a word with Bob Collins, Robert Eadie, Roger Day.

Stevington Wavelength Team

STEVINGTON WRITERS



Stevington Writers have been meeting for over three years and are proud to announce the publication of their first anthology, 'Let's Imagine' containing prose and poetry produced over the past year from eight local writers: David Fitch, Heather Eadie, Fran Stone, Jane O'Connor, Bob Collins, Ruth Ivey and Tricia Lennie.



Print copies can be purchased from any contributing author or via the website, where details of the launch event will also be posted. www.stevington.org.uk/writers/.

Profits from sales of the book (RRP £5) will be donated to Bedford Foodbank.

Tricia Lennie





ST MARY'S THROUGH 'LOCKDOWN' AND COVID-19

This magazine in December 2019 was reporting the success of our Harvest Festival and Harvest Supper, and was looking forward to an Advent Carol Service, Service of Lessons and Carols, and of course a Christmas Service. 2020 is somewhat different.

We were pleased to be able to open St Mary's for Private Prayer and then services restarted from September - - - - until early November when the Government once again prohibited services, though did allow us to continue to open for Private Prayer.

Remembrance Sunday saw a limited service with, I'm pleased to say, our traditional bugler (Hannah Bushby from Bedford Brass) and piper (Richard Galley). Despite being restricted numbers, several commented that it lost none of its usual poignancy and emotion. A fitting tribute to those lost in the two World Wars, and other conflicts before and since. Many villagers also stood at their front doors or driveway at 11am on 11 November, and I was pleased to see a passing cyclist and car also stopped for 2 minutes to remember.

Changes to the PCC

We thank Jane O'Connor who has stepped down as Churchwarden after 6 years in the 'official' post, and several years before then as an unofficial joint Churchwarden, and we are pleased to welcome Alison Campion onto the PCC (again!). If you want any information about St Mary's, the PCC members are Alison Campion, Robert Eadie, Frances and John Hirst, Tricia Lennie, Bob Westwood, and our Vicars, Jacqueline Curtis and Peter Turnbull (ex officio).

Church Room Developments

As 'custodians' of the Church Room the PCC has commissioned an architect, Ron Sheffield, to prepare plans for a disabled access up the front steps, together with a 'link building' between the rear porch and toilet block. The planning application has just been approved.

Advent and Christmas

Things are of necessity not yet clear, but we have a Christmas Eucharist planned for 10am Christmas morning, though numbers may have to be limited to allow safe distancing. There is a Chellington Team

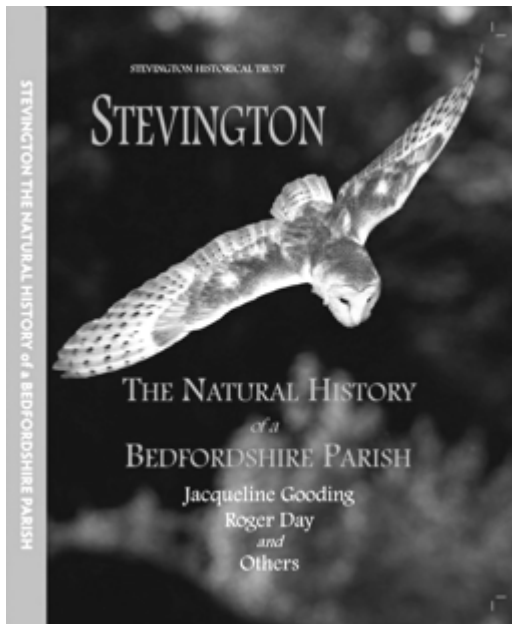
Advent ZOOM Carol Service at 5pm on 29 November, and a ZOOM service of Lessons and Carols at 5pm on 20th December. One advantage of these is that you can sing along at home, while singing is still prohibited in churches.

From the Register:

Interment of Ashes:

Josephine Hunter
Yvonne Dorothy Haggerwood
Olive Harris

Robert Eadie, Churchwarden



**STEVINGTON:
THE NATURAL HISTORY**

Our interest in wildlife sparked by Stevington: The Natural History of a Bedfordshire Parish is alive and well. Over the last few weeks, villagers have told me about bird behaviour, badger visits and fungi, which are having a good autumn. Stevington has a surprising variety of habitats and species, with several less common plants. To find out more and learn the backstory on Stevington's wildlife, get a copy of the book from

www.stevingtonhistoricaltrust.org.uk/Publications.htm or from Jacky Gooding or Roger Day. £25 with no delivery charge in the village if ordered direct from Jacky or Roger.

Jacky Gooding
jackyogooding@gmail.com



STEVINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Although Stevington Baptist Church remains closed for services we have been meeting for bible study and prayer up until the second lockdown. Thanks to modern technology this will continue until we can meet again in December. If you would like us

pray for you or a particular situation please email, in confidence, office@stevingtonbaptistchurch.org.

Let me tell you a story. School was out and 10-year old Charlie was thrilled to be out of London to celebrate Christmas in the country. Driving along the winding roads with his mum he was captivated by the snowy winter landscape, but suddenly the snow became heavy, the visibility turned poor and the car slid out of control and into a ditch.

Charlie tried to push while his mother pressed the accelerator, but it was no use, so they left the car and walked down the road where they knocked on the door of a little house and asked for help. Flustered, the lady of the house invited them in to use the phone and warm up while she made tea and biscuits.

'What's so special about that?' you may ask. Just another everyday event you may think. But no, at least not to the woman who opened the door that day. She has already told this story many times - and can you blame her? It's not every day the Queen and Prince Charles turn up on your doorstep in those circumstances!

On a winter's night more than 2,000 years ago the Prince of Peace knocked on our door - and it was no accident. The Bible says it happened to fulfil God's prediction and purpose. He was Immanuel 'God with us', and He still is.

Let Jesus touch you this Christmas and you will never be alone, whatever life throws at you during these unprecedented times. So let us take just a few moments to remember what Christmas really celebrates.

We at the Baptist Church wish all Stevington villagers a peaceful, enjoyable and God-blessed Christmas.

Barbara Courtney

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

What a year! This time last year I was looking forward to taking Brian to the Grimsdyke Hotel in Old Redding for Brian's birthday, dinner followed by a performance of The Pirates of Penzance. Very bold of me as I knew he liked Fats Waller but would he like Gilbert and Sullivan? I needn't have worried, he loved it and even sang along. I am not sure that was allowed but nobody seemed to mind. We even went there for Christmas with the family joining us for Christmas Lunch.

Prior to that Brian wowed everyone at the village concert when he sang along with Dave to a Fats Waller number.

These are all things stowed in my memory box.

Since then we have not had such good memories. This pandemic has had an awful effect on everybody's life. However, I do think that living in Stevington makes us all very lucky. From day one lovely people, too numerous to name, stepped up to volunteer. Shopping, collecting prescriptions and even dog walking. I declined the shopping and the dog walking but the prescriptions just turned up. Thank you all you lovely people for that.

Also a big thank you to Nigel, Alex and Andrew and their teams from The George and The Red Lion for providing us with delicious takeaways delivered piping hot to our doors.

I would also like to pay a tribute to my little dog Winnie for keeping me fit and happy and for watching over Brian when I go out shopping. He loves her company.

We must also not forget the Thursday night clapping and banging saucepans together for the NHS. We even managed to celebrate VE day with a socially distanced street party.

We sadly said farewell to a number of our dear friends: Delia Lee, Alan Proud, Betty Cox, Mike Robinson Chris Boniface (Bonny) and Yvonne Haggerwood, all sadly missed and without the traditional send off. However, I know that we lined Church Road for quite a few to say farewell.

Having reflected on all this I think we have probably all laid down some precious memories of these past months. I want to thank all my friends for their love, friendship and support they have given to Brian. I have even managed to lay down a very special memory for him. Wimbledon FC were back playing at Plough Lane last week - the first

time in thirty years. I spotted this coming up on Football Focus. I know, Football Focus. What has lockdown done to me?! The ABC (Alternative Book Club) know the significance of Wimbledon when they collect him for men's night at The George. They have learned not to mention Wimbledon.

All is not lost, there is now a very promising vaccine being rolled out. I must stop lying about my age so I will be first in line for the jab.

Who knows what sort of Christmas we will have? Sadly no concert. Socially distanced carols round the cross perhaps or even on our doorsteps - hopefully all singing from the same hymn sheet.

Let's hear it for the shepherds!

A very Happy Christmas to everyone

Anne Westbrook



Anne Stileman Bursary Fund

Are you a resident of Stevington, studying art, photography, graphic design or visual arts?

Would a grant help you with equipment, travel or research costs?

**Applications for support are open all year round.
For information about how to apply email the Clerk at
clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk**

STEVINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

What can I say? Here we are again in another lockdown – let's hope the population follow the rules this time.

Hope to see you all in early 2021. It will be lovely to see all your 'happy smiling faces'!

Very best wishes to you all, take great care.

With my love



Barbara Collins

**STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE 100 CLUB
YOUR VILLAGE HALL CONTINUES TO NEEDS YOU!**

The 100 Club still has a few numbers available, so try your luck and help save your village hall!

For only £5 per month you can help raise valuable funds to keep your fantastic village hall in good order whilst helping yourself to the chance of winning £100!

Unable to operate and raise revenue due to the current lockdown the village hall is in desperate need of funds. A dedicated team of volunteers help keep the building in good order throughout the year and with your help we can secure the future of the building until we re-open with our usual programme of films, theatre, ballet, opera, carpet bowls, table tennis, yoga, Pilates and private functions.

EVERY MONTH 4 lucky winners receive a cash prize of £100, £50, £25 or £15.

To join contact Hugo at hugovan Kempen0@gmail.com or on 01234 824894.

These are the most recent lucky winners:

Sep	1st	No 81	Sara Hetherington
	2nd	No 36	Christine Sear
	3rd	No 25	Emma Freeman
	4th	No 20	Gary Thomas
Oct	1st	No 8	Barbara Pheasant
	2nd	No 79	Mick Stalley
	3rd	No 67	Marion Hext
	4th	No 48	Lesley Taylor
Nov	1st	No 55	Frances Hirst
	2nd	No 34	Mary Hughes
	3rd	No 5	Mary Morris
	4th	No 97	Anne Westbrook



Hugo van Kempen



STEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
TODAY'S WOMEN WORKING FOR TOMORROWS WORLD



As a group our activities are still curtailed by the coronavirus. However we have been able to meet up for two walks, albeit socially distanced. In September we walked a circular route around Harrold Country Park and in October a small group walked footpaths around Stevington.

On 10 October we were able to go ahead with our Plant and Produce stall which was very successful and we would like to thank everyone, WI and non-WI members, for their donations and purchases.

Unfortunately our Harvest Supper arranged for October had to be cancelled but we have since planned two evening WI events online through Zoom. Firstly, a short quiz was held on 12 November with 10 members answering questions set by Barbara. It was an enjoyable evening particularly meeting up with members not seen for a while. Secondly, a virtual Cheese and Wine party is to be arranged for 10 December. It is our intention to deliver a selection of cheese, biscuits etc.(regrettably wine cannot be included) to all our members. Those who do not join us online will not miss out - we will deliver to all.



Our contact with our Bedfordshire Federation for this period was made by Pat who was our delegate at the Annual Council Meeting in October. Again this was carried out on Zoom and Pat reported that it went very well and that many WIs are managing to have meetings online. A new Bedfordshire WI website will inform us of future events in which we can partake.

We are keeping members up to date with our County WEye Newsletter and Jackie has issued her own newsletter relevant to our WI.

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year - hopefully a more normal year for 2021. Thank you to everyone for their support throughout the past difficult year. Stay safe.

Marilyn Billett



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STEVINGTON VILLAGE HALL

We hope you enjoyed the short aerial fireworks display on 4 November; the clear sky was a bonus making the display easy to see. Many thanks to Pete Fisher and Richard Blayney who set the rockets off, keeping their hands in for next year when we hope to return to our normal fireworks spectacular.

What a difference two months makes! In the September issue of the magazine, we optimistically advertised the re-opening of the Hall and were really looking forward to resuming a full range of events in the COVID-secure Hall. For a few short weeks, we did have some activities taking place and had more planned. It was good to see Pilates, some temporary dance classes and football training on the field as well as a football team from outside Stevington playing some matches. A new programme of events for the Cinema was about to be launched.

Unfortunately, due to Lockdown 2, the broadcast productions scheduled for November have had to be cancelled. We hope, depending on the announcement about local restrictions on 2 December that we can offer some entertainment in December. You might like to provisionally put Thursday, 10 December (NT production of Warhorse), Thursday, 17 December (The Nutcracker from the Royal Ballet) and Monday, 28 December (La Traviata from the Gran Theatre del Liceu, Barcelona) in your diary.

In the meantime, the playing field and play area remain open. The car park should be open but damage to the gate and gatepost, due to an unknown large vehicle reversing into it, means the gate cannot currently be secured open safely so the gate remains closed until repaired.



Linda Penney
Stevington Village Hall

STEVINGTON CINEMA EVENTS PROGRAMME

We are pleased to announce the reopening of Stevington Cinema.

During our closure Stevington Village Hall has put everything in place to meet the government COVID-19 Secure safety requirements for public buildings. We are confident that we have everything ready to provide a safe environment for those attending performances and the cinema team.

Your experience will be a little different to accommodate the safety procedures we have had to adopt to enable us to reopen. We hope this will not affect your experience too much but is the only way we will be able to operate in the current circumstances. Seating will be laid out in tables of two. However, depending on the regulations to be announced on 2 December, we may be able to cater for groups of up to six. There will be a maximum capacity audience of 30. Masks must be worn and social distancing and no socialising should be maintained on entry/exit and during any intervals.

Refreshments will be provided via a table service and toilet facilities are now limited to individual access.

All tickets will be available only via the website and payments at the cinema will have to be by contactless card transactions.

Unfortunately the material is limited to mainly recordings of past performances due to the prevailing COVID-19 regulations. Some new productions are in process and we hope to bring these to you as soon as they become available. We have quite a full programme for December due to the November lockdown and a limited window for screening these performances. We have selected a programme of events that are currently available from the service suppliers that will cover all tastes.

We will not be screening any films initially until we can estimate the demand.

Tickets for the following events will be released from November 21 subject to the prevailing regulations.

Door opening time for live broadcasts is 6.45pm unless otherwise stated.

Film Programme 2020/21

Uncle Vanya	Theatre	Thursday 3 December 2020
Warhorse	Theatre	Thursday 10 December 2020
The Nutcracker	Ballet	Thursday 17 December 2020
La Traviata	Opera	Monday 28 December 2020
Manon Lescaut	Opera	Thursday 7 January 2021 (early start)



Stevington
Cinema Team



JOSEPH AND THE SHEPHERDS
BY GODFREY RUST

Midnight in Bethlehem, Zero AD.
One or two people in difficulty.
Out on the street with a donkey and wife Joseph had reached a bad
point in his life
with the kind of a problem that won't go away:
a woman in labour, and nowhere to stay.
Now the root of it all, when you boiled the thing down,
was too many people in too small a town.
When they dreamed up the plan of administration
for a poll tax on all of the Jewish nation
only a bureaucrat somewhere like Rome
would send everyone back to their ancestors' home,
for little old Bethlehem wasn't designed
to cater for David's prolific line.
Still the problem was there and he couldn't disown it:
they'd left it too late, and Joseph had blown it.
If they'd finished the packing the evening before
and not gone back to check that they'd locked the front door
if they'd not missed the turning at that roundabout
if they'd filled up the donkey before they set out
if they hadn't agreed to call in and see
all of Mary's relations at Bethany
or if only he'd booked by Israeli Express
that would have done nicely-but this was a mess.
No room at the inn. No room anywhere.
They gave him the only place they could spare
and the promised Messiah was born that night
on the floor of a stable without any light
where they cut the cord and cleaned up the mess
and wrapped him in somebody's workaday dress
and while Mary slept there, exhausted and cold,
Joseph sat by feeling helpless and old.
This wasn't the way he had thought it would be
when the angel had told him that destiny

chose them to look after the Holy One.
No, this was a farce. What God had done
was to trust the care of the Saviour instead
to a man who could not even find him a bed.
If only he'd planned it more carefully then.
If he only could go back and do it again.
He turned round in his mind the ways he had blundered
then he looked at the infant and suddenly wondered
if it all was a lie, if he was a fool
and the object of everyone's ridicule,
if the dreams of the angels were tricks and not
what they promised to be, and his anger grew hot
when the shepherds burst in all breathless and wild
and stopped in their tracks when they saw the child.
They shifted their gaze from the baby's bed
and their eyes met his, and he nodded his head,
standing awkwardly, not knowing quite what to do
now they all knew for certain the story was true.
They stayed there for minutes. It might have been years.
Not one of them spoke. Their hopes and their fears
were gathered around this helpless God
as their minds tried to grasp what it meant. Where he stood
Joseph was silent as finally
he saw this was how it was planned to be,
that the smell and the dark and the dirt and the pain
were not Joseph's mistake but God's choice once again:
past midnight in Bethlehem, Joseph knew
that men would be saved despite all they might do.
He could not control it. He did not understand.
He felt like a baby himself in God's hand.
He thought of his anger and flushed now with shame.
He remembered the angel had said that his name
would be Jesus, God saves. He glanced up and saw
that the shepherds had gone. Day had dawned.
From the floor Mary gazed at him,
quizzical, on her straw bed.
The tiny God-child cried out to be fed.
Joseph moved to the business of the new day,
gave the child to its mother, the donkey some hay.

FARMING NEWS

There is no question that Climate Change is now the biggest influence on agriculture and food production and not just in parts of the World that have always had to cope with extremes. UK farmers have only had to cope with *changeable* weather in the past and were moderately satisfied with whatever came their way. But now they know it is here and affecting the way they grow their crops even in the relatively temperate British Isles. For the second autumn running we have experienced a long summer drought only to be followed by a continuously wet autumn. This has not allowed for an easy establishment of the winter cereals that is the mainstay of farming in the village (no one grows oilseed rape anymore except for Joe Tandy, who grew about 11 acres last year in Whitelands field, on the road to Pavenham). So far, all the winter wheat is in at Duck End Farm but into atrociously wet conditions and the vital pre-emergence blackgrass herbicides have still not been applied. If the blackgrass is emerged by the time we can travel, we may as well not bother to continue with the crop and the worst-case scenario is to spray off the crop and start again - after having already spend £'000s. At Mill Farm, they have drilled most of their customers' wheat and barley but still have the beans to go in. Fortunately, they were able to get a good early flush of blackgrass that allowed them to spray it off before drilling (sowing). The bad news is that, like Duck End Farm, the pre-ems have still not gone on. (Although they have as of today – 11 November).

The malting barley at Duck End Farm originally destined for Budweiser never made it in the end - because of the drought, the grain ended up with too high a nitrogen content and so the crop ended up going for animal feed.



I'm not sure what the Christmas Tree situation is but I imagine it will be business as usual but with stricter parking and queuing(?). As villagers we are in pole position to grab what we need, so don't delay ordering. We are lucky to have two tree vendors in the village and I should think they will both have to cope with similar difficulties.

With smaller gatherings likely at Christmas, this has affected the turkey business for Peter and Hilary at Tythe Farm – the demand will be for small/medium sized birds this year and the larger ones now may only be destined for the freezer. If you

know the size you want, I'd get an order in quick before they all go – phone Browns Farm Shop on 01234 822330.

Meanwhile, on the ecology front, farmers are looking forward to establishing early pollinating plants and last time I promised how you can help too. To recap, March is the time many pollinators emerge and begin their new lives. It's also a time of year when flowers are in short supply (the so-called 'hungry gap'), so plants which flower in early spring (March/April) are very welcome. So, what can you do? Focus on some easy-to-establish plants first, namely Goat and Grey Willows. You can go to a garden centre and buy bare root cuttings so all the work has been done for you - but where's the fun and ownership in that? Almost guaranteed success comes from the following method:

1. October to February, select some stems that have a thickness of between a pencil and your thumb and cut them into 12" lengths. Ask any of the farmers in the village where you can take some cuttings or buy a guide and select them yourself on a walk.
2. Fill a few big flowerpots with potting compost and a bit of sharp sand at the bottom and push several cuttings so that half the cutting is buried.
3. Keep these well-watered and after a year they can be planted out. Losses can be reduced if you buy a few more pots, thin by half and pot on for one more year.
4. Planting out is best done in March as the soils warm up and the cuttings will take leaf. In a couple of years, these plants will produce the flowers you need. Best planting out areas are sheltered and sunny corners especially on a south side.
5. Tree guards are essential and can be obtained at Duck End Farm for free.
6. Keep the metre radius of the new tree free from weed competition for the first 3 years.
7. Finally, there is another way - take a larger cutting and drop it into its final permanent site and manage as from stage 4. It's easier but not as reliable.

On the livestock, the free-range pigs at Duck End Farm have gone for another year. The fresh cuts and sausages are all in the customers' freezers and the bacon, salamis and gammons are due to come back from the curers and smokers this week (11 November).

Will Saunders from Oakley, meanwhile is busy getting ready for the forthcoming tugging (breeding) season – as the nights draw in, the ewes (aka yohs or yows) will have a pre-mating check consisting of a teeth, udder and foot inspection. Teeth are particularly important as bad teeth leads to difficulty grazing which in turn leads to poor condition. Feet will be trimmed to prevent foot-rot and both sides of the udders must be healthy for her to be able to feed her lambs. Any ewes that don't make the grade will be culled. The lucky ones will come into season with the shortening day length and the rams will be introduced 147 days before Will wants to start lambing - early lambing generally gets you a higher price for the end product but the losses are higher and ewes are less prolific (number of lambs per ewe). The rams (or tups) get an inspection too - feet and testicles are the important parts. If you look closely every ram will carry a leather 'raddle' that holds a coloured wax pastel on his chest and when he mounts a ewe he will leave a mark on the ewe's backside. This will show the shepherd that the ewe has been inseminated. Any ewes without a mark can be re-introduced to the ram (with a pastel colour change) at the next heat cycle for another 'go'. If, by the New Year, any ewes have not been mounted, this can indicate a fertility problem which is bad news for the ewe. Sometimes a ewe will show that she has been inseminated more than once (a multicoloured backside) but still not conceived – this is again 'bad news all round'. Will usually runs 1 ram in with 50 ewes.

Will Helliwell from Wootton owns the cattle you can see at the end of Church Road where they graze on the river meadows at Manor Farm. They are mainly Simmental cross cows which are bulled to a Limousin bull. The cows are housed in winter so by the time you read this they will probably be housed indoors. They calve at home where they can be closely monitored and are then turned back out to grass around April, subject to weather and ground conditions. They then spend the summer grazing the pastures until the Autumn. Will also grazes sheep with the cattle, they will stay outside a little longer and are brought back to the farm in Wootton ready for spring lambing. They help to keep the grass

tight over winter allowing the grass to have the best start in the spring.



The Farmers



THAT WAS THE NEWS THAT WAS

The Bedfordshire Times and Bedfordshire Standard - 13/11/1942

Case Dismissed - Court Story of Stevington Night Ploughing - As a result of borrowing fifteen gallons of paraffin for fuelling a tractor doing night ploughing, without first obtaining the consent of the proper authorities, on the night of 3rd - 4th October, Arthur Goldsmith, licensee of the "Royal George", Silver Street, Stevington, and Alec George Goldsmith, a tractor driver, also of Silver Street, Stevington, were charged with theft at Bedford Division Petty Sessions on 5th November. Both defendants pleaded not guilty.

Special Constable W. D. Smith said that while on duty near Duck End, Stevington he heard voices in a field. He twice called, "Are you on night shift?" but received no reply. He entered the field and saw three men move quickly away from a trailer on which were two tanks of paraffin. The men were the two defendants and Leslie Goldsmith, the son of Arthur Goldsmith. Alec Goldsmith told witness that they were going to refuel the tractor, which was working a short distance away, as it was very important to keep it ploughing. Defendant added, "I don't think it will matter, and I will see Mr. Rowland in the morning and put it right with him." Witness asked Arthur Goldsmith if the War Agricultural Committee were doing the ploughing, and Goldsmith said they were. Witness told Alec Goldsmith he would report the matter. Goldsmith then accompanied him to the home of Mr. Stanbridge who was looking after the fifteen gallons concerned on behalf of the War Agricultural Committee.

NO INTENTION OF STEALING

P.C. Eric William Lake said that he saw the defendants on Sunday evening. Alec Goldsmith said that there had been no intention of stealing the paraffin.

Mr. Joseph William Rowland, of Biddenham, a machinery officer in charge of a large number of tractors for the War Agricultural Committee, said that Alec Goldsmith was one of the tractor drivers under his supervision and he had always found him straightforward. Witness had never given any employees the authority to lend or sell War Agricultural paraffin.

Evidence was also given by Clifford Ernest Corby, of Church Road, Stevington, a tractor driver employed by Mr. H. W. Sanders. He said that Arthur Goldsmith, who was a friend of his, told him that he had been ordered to drill seven acres of ground, and that it was not ploughed. With the permission of Mr. Sanders, witness used his tractor for this purpose

and he ploughed Goldsmith's field throughout the night of 3rd - 4th October.

Appearing for the defence, Mr. E. Noel Binns said that he did not consider the defendants could be accused of a criminal offence, because the paraffin had been used in the national interest and had since been replaced in full. Moreover, when questioned by the police, the defendant had not attempted to hide their actions in any way.

The case was dismissed.

Bedfordshire Times & Standard - 12/03/1943

Bedfordian's Diary - Do any Pavenham people remember old Thomas Flanders, who lived to be over a hundred, and as gamekeeper for the Greens and the Tuckers was a holy terror to the poachers? He was born at Keysoe in 1808, and his father was a sergeant in His Majesty's Foot Guards and used to wear a pigtail and may have fought at Waterloo. But it is in connection with another fight of not such world-shaking importance, it is true, but still of fame in Pavenham annals, that I revive the memory of Old Flanders.

He had a tough life, and many hairsbreadth escapes by flood and field, and is said to have survived an attack of Asiatic cholera in the 'sixties, and, in a later winter, a visitation of influenza, bronchitis, jaundice, and eczema all together, which miraculous to relate, seemed to set him up for the rest of his life! His night work took him into all sorts of strange adventure, and one incident of his nocturnal vigils was during a period when body-snatchers were abroad, and he had to keep watch and ward over the churchyard.

Flanders was always regarded as too formidable to molest lightly, and he was a dead shot with a gun. Quick of eye, and sure of aim, he could let fly and unerringly, hit a penny flung into the air. He shared with the companions of his youth a love of the boisterous sports of the Englishry, and being himself a man of pluck, ready for any emergency, he admired the pugilistic art.

The old people of Pavenham and Stevington used to talk of the famous fight between "Dumadumb" Hulatt and Lacey of Stevington for the championship of the two villages. It took place down against the osier-bed at Dancing Mead (a name surely more attuned to pixy pranks than a punching match). Alas there is no written chronicle of the battle, but legend hath it that Flanders fired his gun as a signal for the fight to

begin, and that "Dumadumb" gained a glorious and honourable victory for Pavenham.

Twere well if the strife of nations could be settled in this simple and straightforward way.

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Mark Jackson



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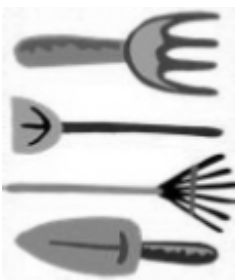
In light of the Government guidance around non-essential contact, we regret to announce that public worship at Stevington Baptist Church is suspended until further notice. Please check our Facebook page for further updates. We will put posters up in the village when our services and events are able to resume.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy, in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

www.stevingtonbaptistchurch.org

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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 leaf mould 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 centimeters 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 improved with well-rotted farmyard manure.

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 for new framework and flowering spurs, 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.

Unless you want to retain plants for insects, 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 berries for food this should be left un-pruned until all the berries have been taken. Leaving ivy and other evergreens unpruned until after nesting in the summer, would provide much needed cover for birds and insects to use as shelter from the cold and wet.

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 flowerpots, 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, frogs and waterlilies, with shallows for birds, small mammals to take a drink and marginal plantings. Line with a thick butyl liner, weigh down the edges with heavy rocks, make a beach with shingle and 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, in which the hedgehog rolls to create 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 safe and Happy Christmas and don't forget to order those new seeds in good time!

Susan Young

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By bus, car, train? However you normally travel outside of lockdown, you can really help us by donating one day's commute. The brakes are on our income again, with the Forest Centre closed and our events cancelled, so we'd be wheely grateful if you can help us keep the pedal to the metal with caring for our woodlands and planting more trees.

Every £ makes a difference and £20 helps plant another tree in the Forest!

PLEASE DONATE AND GET US BACK ON TRACK

www.marstonvale.org/news/donate-your-commute-during-lockdown



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To access these in an emergency situation, **please dial 999 immediately**. The call handler will provide you with the code for the cabinet lock.

The defibrillators are located in:

- Red telephone box near the cross in Church Road
- Yellow cabinet on front of Village Hall
- Yellow cabinet on front of Baptist Chapel Hall, West End.





MOBILE LIBRARY

Hello Stevington Readers!

Firstly, we hope you are all safe and keeping well during these difficult times.

As with many other services, at the time of writing, we're unsure as to when we will be able to resume the Mobile Library visiting you. Those of you who are signed up to our text local service will receive a message when we are due to start visiting again, and we'll also be announcing this through our social media streams (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).

When we restart, the times for stops at Stevington is as follows:

The Cross - 1.35 to 1.55pm

In the meantime, until we return (or after if you still wish!) we have a fantastic range of digital resources available via the Virtual Library. Using either your Mobile Library or static branch card, you can register for thousands of free audio books, ebooks, digital magazines and daily newspapers, from our suppliers at RB Digital, Borrowbox and Press Reader. For further information on these, visit www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries and browse the eResources section of the virtual library.

The very best wishes to you all for a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year. Stay safe, and we look forward to you borrowing from us soon!

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HARROLD ODELL COUNTRY PARK NEWS



We have now started the gradual countdown to Christmas. With COVID-19 rearing its ugly head again it's going to be a Christmas like no other! As I write this at the beginning of November there seems to be more and more bad news and new restrictions being announced every day.

All this hasn't put people off visiting however. The park has been a lifeline for people and we have been extremely busy ever since the original lockdown was relaxed back in June. Due to the virus, the Dragonfly Café had to bring in drastic changes to its operations in order to remain open and safely shield its customers. From the time it reopened in July, it has had to operate as a takeaway only.

It started offering a very limited sit-in service in the middle of October with the proviso that customers wishing to sit in either scanned the check and trace QR code on their phones or gave in their contact details. This very quickly had to be reversed when the second lockdown was announced.

Since our volunteers were allowed to return in July, they've helped us catch up with the backlog of work that built up during lockdown. It is not widely known but we have a total of eight countryside sites to manage as well as Harrold. All of them require monitoring and any problems sorted out. There have been a few early storms this year which have caused tree issues all over the place. Undoubtedly, there will be more to come this winter. This has been one of the worst years for tree damage and weeks of our time have been taken up with felling



anything dangerous and clearing up. Our precious budget has been eaten up by unexpected tree surgery costs when dealing with trees we are not qualified to fell ourselves.

At least the timber generated by all this damage will go into next year's firewood pile. We season for a year any decent wood gleaned from the winter management works then sell the logs to the local community for wood burner fuel. Most of the timber generated for this is not hardwood though. Therefore it is not recommended for open fires. It tends to be a mixture of willow, alder, poplar and conifer. Any hardwood we do get is sold by the sack at £5 each and is a mixture of mostly ash, silver birch, hawthorn and blackthorn. A 110 wheelbase Land Rover Defender with a tipper is used to deliver within 10 miles of the park. A full tipper load is £100 including delivery and a half load is £60. We regret that we cannot deliver at weekends. Call 01234 720016 to make enquiries.

In addition, there have been miles of hedge trimming to do, viewpoint clearances, bramble control, mowing, strimming and repairs etc. to deal with. As we enter the winter period, regular readers will know that this is the time for planting trees, hedge laying coppicing, thinning and repairing hurdle fencing.

In early autumn, the volunteers finished restoring the duck feeding area. It had become eroded and unsafe due to the popularity of this pastime. They have shored up the bank, made a new fence and steps and levelled off the top of the bank with extra topsoil gleaned from elsewhere in the park. The pollarded willow next to the steps needs re-cutting as it was splitting out. Some of the branches were cut up and used to make the decorative uprights along the fence and down the steps.

The tangled vegetation on that corner was cleared out at the same time to extend the view and allow more light into the area. We are planning to create a new hurdle fence around there.

The next project involves replacing worn out picnic benches with new ones made of recycled plastic bottles. These will need much less maintenance than the wooden ones. We have two picnic areas, one outside the café and one next to the overflow car park. Both areas will have this new furniture which has been purchased by The Friends Group out of your generous car park donations. Future projects include modifying the boat launch area near the overflow car park as we use the boat to undertake management on the island. Normally boats are banned on the lakes as they form a major part of the nature reserve.

The monthly volunteer group have now completely replaced the old numbered trail posts dotted around Grebe Lake. They mark out the points of interest shown on a free leaflet titled The Welcome Trail. Copies are available from the leaflet spinner just inside the café. There are also blue Harrold Odell leaflets there showing a map and general information about the park. Alternatively, log on to the park website www.hocp.co.uk

Going forward, we are replacing all the main sign posts in various locations round the park that help visitors find their way around. The arms on the current ones have been so badly vandalised over the years, we can no longer repair them. This will take time as the old ones have to be dug out and the new ones bedded in securely.

Future plans involve revamping and updating some of the information signs around the park. Again, this will be funded from your car park donations and a very generous grant from the NextEnergy Solar Fund via a local solar farm.

The virus situation has ruined most of our planned events, school and community group bookings this year. The only things that are on-going after the 3 month break are the monthly volunteer task days. During lockdown the fortnightly Health Walks have once again had to cease until after 2 December. See below for the forthcoming dates for your diary. It has also meant that we have been unable to run the socials for the volunteers. Normally, there would be a social around mid-summer in the park and one at Christmas at a pub. We are praying that next year will be more normal but sadly, there are no guarantees.

One piece of good news - we have been awarded another Green Flag. This is run by the Keep Britain Tidy Group and is a mark of high quality green spaces. They run a Blue Flag Award for clean beaches. Sites are visited by their judges and scores are given against their criteria list. We are proud to say that we have won it for 13 consecutive years and it is thanks to a joint effort between ourselves and our wonderful volunteers. I want to thank them for everything they've done for us again this year under very difficult circumstances.



All that remains now is for us to welcome the winter migrant birds like Fieldfares into the park to replace the summer ones like Swallows that have departed for warmer climates.



Finally, it is planned that the cattle in the river meadow will be going back to the farm in Pavenham by the end of November, depending on how easy it is to capture them all. Last year the last two took 3 weeks to round up. We will keep the grazing signs displayed on each of the entrance gates until they have all gone then we will remove them. If the signs are up please assume that some animals are still on site and keep all dogs under control. The

usual routine is that they will return to the park at the end of April/beginning of May.

Dates for your Diary

Friends Group Task Days (30 Nov, 21 Dec, 25 Jan, 22 Feb, 29 Mar)

These are run on the last Monday of the month or a week earlier if this falls on a Bank Holiday. Volunteers come for registration at 9.45am and work until 3pm approx. but some come just for a morning or afternoon. Attendees come in sturdy old clothes suitable for the weather conditions, boots (not wellies unless otherwise instructed) and a packed lunch. We supply gloves, tools and refreshments. For more info please call 01234 720016 and leave your name & contact details or email Richard.dowsett@bedford.gov.uk.

Health Walks (3, 17 & 31 Dec, 7 & 21 Jan, 4 & 18 Feb, 4 & 18 Mar)

These are run every other Thursday at 10.30am. This is a national scheme aimed at improving your health & wellbeing and providing opportunities to meet new people. New walkers complete a health questionnaire for insurance purposes then just sign a register each time they attend. The walks last an hour. Meet outside the woodland café entrance. Leaders: Janet Munro & Lindsey Alton. For more info please call 01234 720016 or email janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk

Janet Munro - Park Warden

Photos courtesy of HOCP

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