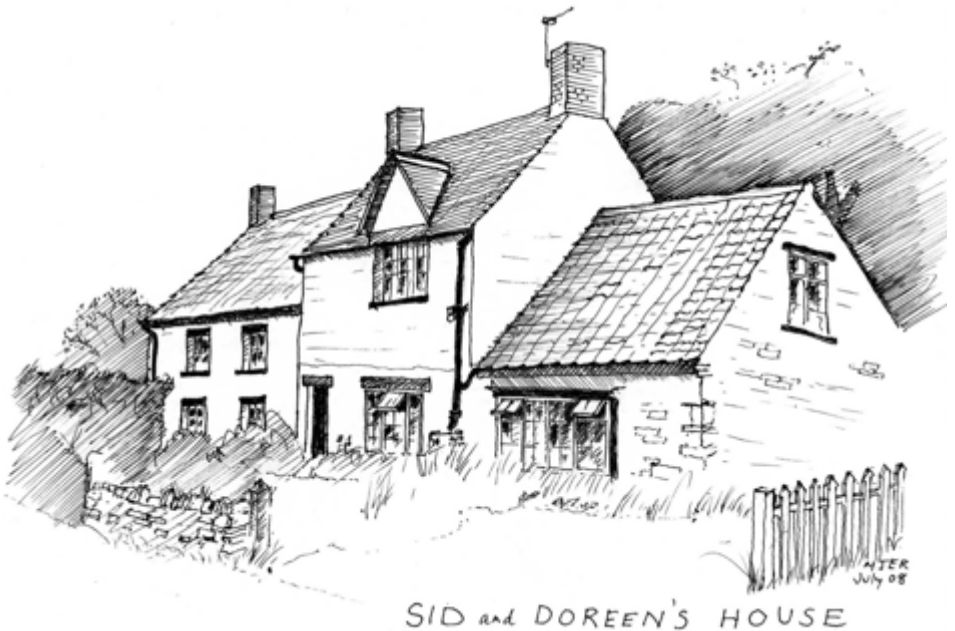


# STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



SID and DOREEN'S HOUSE

**DECEMBER 2021**  
**Number 199**

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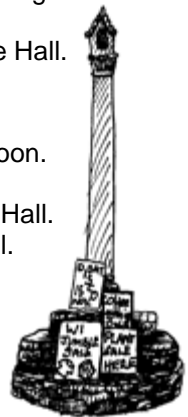
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Photographs as credited. Cover drawing by Mike Robinson

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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 The Primrose Fund at Bedford Hospital, in memory of Bob Coleman. Thanks to your generosity we have raised over £850 this year, 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 tenth 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 team for reliably delivering the magazine, Barbara Pheasant for proofreading 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 2021. Your financial support is vital.

It's wonderful that we are starting to have events in the village again after all of the Covid-19 restrictions. In November the Village Hall committee gave us a great Bonfire Night firework display and Stevington Guitar Concerts arranged a wonderful evening of live music. The craft fair was a great success and gave us the chance to do some Christmas shopping while 'buying local'. In addition, the Stevington Cinema Club has planned a full and varied programme of films and live broadcasts – theatre, ballet and opera.

Finally, we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, peaceful and, most importantly, normal 2022.

Heather and Keith

**NEXT MAGAZINE**

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 5-6 March 2022. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 20 February 2022. Articles should reach Heather and Keith Parkinson (Old Paddock, Church Road, Tel. 826677, email [stevington.magazine@googlemail.com](mailto:stevington.magazine@googlemail.com)) on or before that day.



## POPPY APPEAL 2021

The Poppy Appeal this year raised £936.77.

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously

and to my helpers.

A special thank you to Paul and

Trish who not only provided protection from wind and rain with a tent but put it up and took it down on the three Saturdays involved.

Joan Hart



## WELL, WE HAVE MOVED!

.....after a wonderful 36 years in beautiful Stevington, who would have thought it!

We moved to this lovely village in 1985 with our three daughters; Jennie, Natalie and Laura who was just 15 months old. They are all now married with children who have also enjoyed the festivities in the village. I think it's fair to say Stevington has been a special place where our three daughters have lovely memories of their growing up years, making friends for life for them and ourselves.

So many village events, clubs, productions, holidays and parties. Sharing such incredibly fun times with very special people.

Our daughters have so appreciated growing up where there has been such a wonderful infrastructure giving help and support when we have needed it. We have been so lucky having the brilliant neighbours and friends we have had.

We really do feel we have a wonderful bond with the people of Stevington and although we have moved a bit of a distance to Norfolk, we intend to come back regularly for more village events - and we will always welcome our Stevington friends with open arms, to share a bit of the new chapter of our lives.

Our love and best wishes to you all for a wonderful Christmas and the year ahead.

Sue and Andy Smith xx

## **INVITATION – 8 JANUARY**

On Saturday 8 January there will be a talk in our barn at Yew Tree House at 4pm by Nikki Bulteel. Nikki has worked at the University College of Estate Management for over 22 years and served as a member of its Innovation Group before joining the Board of DiverseCity Surveyors. Nikki built her own Passivhaus from scratch and then converted an older house to Passivhaus standards and will be talking about her experience with the two houses and what doing this actually means in practice.

If people would like to attend, please can they email Sally Macdonald on [shh@stevingtonpartners.co.uk](mailto:shh@stevingtonpartners.co.uk) with the words Nikki's talk in the subject.

Sally Macdonald

## **DOG WALKERS – VILLAGE HALL GATE**

We have been advised that there is currently a risk in North Bedfordshire of people parking caravans on any untended open spaces. We are trying to close off the hall playing field gate at night.

If you walk your dog near the hall playing field late evening or early morning, would you be willing to open/close the gate? This is not expected to be a regular commitment, but if you are there and the gate needs to be opened/close, and you can help, we would be very grateful.

If you are able to help out contact Roger Penney (30 Court Lane), or any member of the hall committee, and we can pass on the code for the combination lock.

Thank you in anticipation,

Roger Penney

### **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](http://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.*



## **JEAN EDWARDS 1933-2021**

Jean Edwards, who died on 1 November after a very short illness at the good age of 88, had been a Stevington resident for more than 40 years. She absolutely loved living in the village where she had lived longer than anywhere else in her life and was a well-known character around the place.

Jean Macgregor was born in Cockfosters, Barnet in March 1933 and spent her early years, including the war, there. She was briefly evacuated to Teignmouth in Devon but returned to North London and told stories about hearing the V2 doodlebug bombs in the final stages of the war. The family moved to Northwood in Middlesex just after the war and Jean went to school there gaining her Schools Certificate before going to work in London. She worked at a stockbrokers in the City and then at an advertising agency in the West End and got to know London very well. She was very sporty and adventurous, playing tennis and golf and going on regular ski trips to Austria. In 1958 she married Dr. Vernon Edwards, a GP starting out in practice in Watford, and became a devoted doctor's wife at the time when this was a real role! Between 1960 and 1965 Jean had four children, David, Alison, Duncan and Fiona, and the next twenty years were mainly devoted to home making.

In the late seventies, Jean and Vernon bought the Old Vicarage in Stevington. During the war, Vernon had been sent to Olney as a schoolboy on 'Harvest Camp' to help the local farmers and had made many friends and got to know and love the area. They spent some time looking for the right house and were thrilled to find the Vicarage and took it on as a project. After a few years of weekending, Jean was able to move permanently to the Vicarage in the early 'eighties when Fiona left school.

Jean breathed life into the Vicarage as a homemaker and host - there were legendary parties for their friends from Watford, from the Village and for all the children and their friends. Alison and Fiona were both married at St. Mary's and David and Alison's wedding receptions were held in a marquee in the garden which was stunningly restored by Vernon. Jean had an amazing ability to produce vast quantities of food at almost no notice and no one ever left the Vicarage hungry or thirsty!

Sadly, Jean was widowed in 1991, and after a few years she sold the Vicarage and moved up Church Road to Barnside where she lived until she died. Jean did not let widowhood get on top of her and remained active, interested, curious and happy right to the end. In Watford she had worked as a volunteer at the Citizens Advice Bureau, and she did the same in Bedford for many years; in the village she was involved with the WI and she was a very active member and past president of the Inner Wheel in Bedford. She supported many causes including, in particular, Save The Children and The National Trust.

In her sixties, Jean took up bell ringing at St. Mary's and the other local churches which she loved doing and kept up into her eighties. She loved animals and kept a (progressively smaller) series of dogs right to the end. Many people have mentioned remembering Jean out and about for her daily walk with Bella, Tassell, or Rugs when she would no doubt stop for a chat.

We know that Jean was well liked and cared for in the village where she had so many friends and we would especially like to thank those close friends and neighbours who helped and supported her as she got older. It is impossible to imagine anywhere or anyone doing it better.

Jean was always very proud of her Scottish ancestry, always cheering for Scotland in the rugby, and when the children were growing up would often holiday at her parents' house in The Boat of Garten on Speyside. Her sister-in-law and niece still live in the area and Jean tried to visit as often as she could; amazingly this last summer she made her last trip with her daughter, Alison, and stayed in her old family house, Broomfield, which is now a wonderful Airbnb.

Finally, and most importantly, Jean loved her family; she had four children, ten grandchildren, four great grandchildren, nieces and nephews, cousins and in-laws and she kept in touch with them all. She never forgot a birthday and always knew exactly how everyone was doing. Her advice was always wise but never pushed, which is a rare combination.

Happily, the Edwards connection with Stevington is not over with Jean's passing. A year or so ago, the water meadow below the church which was owned by the family when at the Vicarage was bought by Will Edwards, Jean's grandson and David's son. Will remembers playing in the field as a small boy with his grandpa and grandma and, now with a

family of his own in Olney, is bringing it back to its intended state. In the last couple of years, nothing made Jean happier than this.

There will be a funeral service at St. Mary's on 13 December at 10.30am to which all are welcome. The family requests no flowers but anyone who would like to can make a donation to 'Greenfingers' a charity that creates gardens at children's hospices.

[www.greenfingerscharity.org.uk/](http://www.greenfingerscharity.org.uk/).

The family welcomes anyone who knew Jean to drop in at 8b Church Road at 12.30 on 13 December to say hello.

The Family of Jean Edwards



### **COMMUNITY SHOP**

Firstly, on behalf of the committee and myself we must send our condolences to Jean Edwards family. Jean had worked as a volunteer from the very first month of opening in February 1994. She was very much a strong supporter of the shop and we will miss her greatly. On a personal level, when Jean lived in the vicarage, my children really enjoyed her fancy-dress competitions at the fetes held there. They were great times.

We are still looking for more volunteers to enable us to open in the afternoons. Please get in touch if you can spare two hours or more a month.

As you probably know we used to sell eggs supplied by June Homer from the shop, but since we have reduced our hours you can now obtain these from June's house in Church Road. Please support us as profits from the eggs help us with the running costs of the shop.

As Christmas approaches, we will have lots of festive treats for you to buy and not forgetting our annual raffle. All donations are greatly appreciated as once again the proceeds from this helps us with the running costs.

Thank you to all our volunteers, as we cannot run the shop without you and we hope you and all our customers have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jackie, Sarah, Doreen and June.



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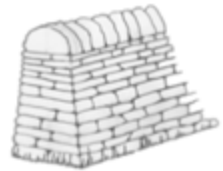
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## **STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

If you would like more information about the work of the Parish Council please sign up to receive the weekly newsletter which is sent out on Wednesday mornings. Go to <https://stevington-pc.gov.uk/>.



### **Casual Vacancy**

The Parish Council is pleased to report there has been an interest in the casual vacancy for the Council. Once a new councillor is confirmed we will publicise details on the website.

### **Planning Applications in the Village**

All planning applications are considered on their merit and a response provided on behalf of the village by the Parish Council, usually three working days prior to the end of the local consultation period. If you would like to comment on any local application then please do so by contacting the Parish Clerk at [clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk).

Thank you to those of you who took time to submit comments for the Dane Hill Farm appeal. As far as the Parish Council is aware the application will be heard by the Inspector by way of a hearing in the new year. Once details are known these will be shared with the village.

There are currently six other planning applications that are pending decisions by Bedford Borough Council within the Parish. Although the Parish Council is only an advisory participant in the process if you have comments you would like considered for inclusion in any response then please do let us know by contacting the Parish Clerk at [clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk).

### **Stevington Windmill**

The outstanding windmill repairs are currently scheduled to start in February 2022, weather permitting. Once completed the millwright will be contracted to service and maintain the mill on an annual basis and the mill will be part of the Borough's managed estate going forward. Stevington Parish Council would like to thank Bedford Borough Council and particularly Tom Perrett for managing the recent renovation process and for formalising the inclusion of the mill within the estate maintenance register. Once the mill realignment is completed then it should be possible for the postponed sail setting event to be rescheduled; we will confirm new dates as soon as we are able to.

## **Highways and Footpaths**

The village has certainly been put through a testing time lately, especially our residents on Silver Street. The recent road closure leading from the Oakley Bridge turn to Bromham caused a significant increase in traffic through our village and up Silver Street. The Parish Council received a number of complaints and contacted the Borough Council several times requesting additional signage and constraints. Our Chair wrote to both the Mayor and our local Member of Parliament, Richard Fuller, expressing our grave concerns. Richard Fuller MP visited to grasp a better understanding of our concerns and the matter was raised by residents when the Mayor visited on 10 October.

Thank you to all those who reported concerns and provided evidence of the need for a long-term solution.

Since the reopening of the road, traffic flows have reduced and we have received a proposed plan to impose a weight restriction on the section of Silver Street from Duck End Farm to the Cross. The Parish Council will be reviewing this plan and discussing the matter further with the Borough Council. We have also requested a 20 mph speed restriction through the village centre and are awaiting a response.

## **Public Rights of Ways**

Now that autumn is here and the weather is turning, we are seeing more wet days! This will of course mean wellington boots are in order and we ask people to be mindful of the use of these public paths. Stevington Country Walk is not to be used by horses or bikes, please help by sticking to the appropriate paths for your activities to protect these routes for all to enjoy.

## **Public Footpaths**

Please be careful as Autumn is upon us, there are a lot of leaves on public paths. If you see any issues where a path has been damaged and requires remedial work please let us know via the Clerk.

## **Dog Walkers**

Please be mindful and clear up after your canine companions, including on the public footpaths around the village. It is unpleasant and a danger to health for anyone coming across dog waste. Please use the appropriate bins and if at all possible avoid using the general waste bins especially by the children's play area up at the playing field and at the bus stop by the Red Lion.

## **Village Hall, Playground and Churchyard**

The contract for maintaining parts of the playing field, the enclosed play area and the Churchyard has come to an end as the company who provided the service has ceased trading. The Parish Council will be making arrangements for a new contract to be set up through a new tendering process. Details will be posted on the website once the specification of a new contract are agreed.

Thanks to the Village Hall Committee for ensuring the hall is open and now holding events again. It is looking clean and refreshed as well as having good procedures in place for managing any risks from Covid-19.

It is good to see the playground being so well used, especially by the families with young children who have moved into the village over the last 18 months.

## **Stevington Environmental Group**

The work of the group is covered in a separate report. The Parish Council is delighted to learn we now have the YES group, the Young Environmentalists of Stevington saying YES to the future of the planet and our village.

## **Ditch Maintenance**

The work of the environmental group and its younger members has a significance for us in the village especially as winter and flooding season approaches once again. Given the increasing likelihood of extreme weather events, residents in Stevington have queried the ownership and responsibility for ditch maintenance in Stevington. Maps from the Environment Agency show that many areas of the village are at risk.

The Parish Council has been in contact with Bedford Borough Council Flooding and Resilience team. As far as the Parish Council can establish so far, each landowner adjacent to a flowing ditch, even if this ditch only flows during parts of the year, is what is called a 'riparian owner' and as such has responsibilities. The full document is available from the Clerk on request.

The Parish Council is acutely aware that there are residents living next to watercourses who are living alone, are elderly or for various reasons would struggle to fulfil these responsibilities. It is therefore proposed that a Stevington Flooding Resilience group is started. This would comprise volunteers, some of whom may be part of the newly

formed Stevington Environmental Group, to help their neighbours meet these obligations. Bedford Borough Council is willing to help set up and support such a group. Please contact the Clerk if you would be interested in joining this group.

### Looking Forward

As life slowly returns to pre-pandemic normality and social events at all the venues in the village are slowly resuming we hope all residents will feel able to participate in village events. It will be good to see people gathering together including all the new residents including those with young children, who have moved here during the pandemic.

Some initial planning has already begun for **Queen's Platinum Jubilee from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June 2022**. A programme for the village will be included in the next magazine. If you have an idea about an event or would like to get involved please contact the Clerk.

### Seasonal Greetings and Thanks

The Parish Council would like to wish all residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank all those people and organisations who do so much to make Stevington a positive and vibrant place to live.

Janet Day  
Stevington Parish Council

Email: [clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.stevington-pc.gov.uk](http://www.stevington-pc.gov.uk)

*Windmill photo courtesy of John O'Reilly*

## VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATORS

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.



## **BEDFORD BOROUGH NEWS**

### **Boundary Changes**

The Boundary Commission has announced the reshaping of the boundaries of the Bedford Borough Council, from May 2023 the current Oakley Ward comprising of Oakley, Pavenham & Stevington will be split into three. Stevington will be joining a new Bromham Ward, along with Bromham, Turvey & Stagsden. This is part of an increase in Councillors from the current 40 to 46.

I am keen to assure you that I will continue to represent and support Stevington until the May 2023 election. Further details on the changes across the Borough can be found at [www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/Bedfordshire/Bedford](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/Bedfordshire/Bedford).

### **Northern Gateway (A6 Roundabout)**

Good progress is being made on the Northern Gateway project with the widening of Clapham Road between the Paula Radcliffe Way roundabout and Manton Lane, including installation of the new kerblines, footway and drainage system, along with a dedicated left hand turn lane from Clapham Road into Manton Lane.

Extensive road widening on the north eastern corner of the Manton Lane roundabout adjacent to the Bedford Modern School playing fields is complete and extensive traffic signal ducts have been installed at the Great Ouse Way roundabout. This is in preparation for the installation of permanent lights to control traffic flow.

Works have started on the central reservation of the dual carriageway, introducing a permanent right hand turn into Sainsbury's so people won't need to use the Clapham Road/Manton Lane roundabout to U-turn.

Works to the central reservation are expected to continue for several weeks, and work will also continue at the Great Ouse Way roundabout and other areas.

The works are programmed to be completed at the end of March 2022 and the contractor is currently on track to meet this deadline.

### **Libraries**

Mobile Library: The mobile library has been available for Select and Collect for a while, but it is now welcoming customers aboard once again.

Visit the mobile library to browse the shelves, choose some books, and borrow them using the self-service machine. Remember to take your mobile library card and check the timetable for stop dates.

There's a limit on the number of customers inside the vehicle at once, and measures remain in place to help ensure the safety of everyone on board. Please continue to respect others' space, wear a face covering if you can, and remember not to visit the mobile library if you have symptoms of Covid-19.

Central Library: LibraryPlus has returned to Bedford Central Library. LibraryPlus lets you use the library when you want, offering extended opening times. With LibraryPlus you can choose when you access the library, using a mixture of both staffed and self-service hours. It's easy and convenient - just use your library card and PIN to enter the library during self-service hours.

Not sure whether you are a LibraryPlus user? You need to be aged 16 or over and a full member to register. Pop into any of the branches during staffed hours to find out more.

Bedford Central Library opening hours:

Mon to Fri:	LibraryPlus 9am-11am, 4pm-6pm	Staffed 11am-4pm
Sat:	LibraryPlus 9am-10am, 5pm-6pm	Staffed 10am-5pm
Sun:	LibraryPlus 10am- 11am, 2pm-4pm	Staffed 11am-2pm

Councillor Jon Abbott

Telephone 07784 549180

Email [jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com](mailto:jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com)



## **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](mailto:clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk)**



# Stevington Guitar Concerts

Our first concert since Covid-19 restrictions were introduced took place on 13 November when Catfish Keith, and his wife Penny, came to Stevington. Tickets for the gig went on sale on 1 July at 8.00am, they sold out by midday making it our fastest ever full house.

Ohio based Catfish is one of the finest exponents of early acoustic blues. His style of including harmonics, slip harmonics, tapped and palm harmonics, coupled with vibrato, is complex to say the least. His music is mostly only known about by guitar nerds, but our Stevington audience happily joined him on a journey of discovery.

The day after the gig Catfish did a workshop in the Church Room. One of the pupils drove from Cardiff to take part, others came from Birmingham and Kent. Their comment after the workshop was that it was worth every mile.



The profits from the gig were donated to the village hall.

Big thanks to the village hall committee who have created a venue that can host international artists. Thanks also to Barbara Collins for organising legendary raffles, Steve Cole for his expertise and hours of work, Bob Collins for lighting, Jean and her staff for running a great bar and, perhaps most importantly, our wonderful audiences whose support makes the whole thing possible. It's a real team event.

Sign up to our newsletter and follow our Facebook page to keep up to date with our next gig.

John Duffield  
[www.stevingtonguitarconcerts.co.uk](http://www.stevingtonguitarconcerts.co.uk)

## GREEN TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS

### Eco-friendly decorations and wrapping

The decorations we hang on the tree, cards we send and paper we wrap round presents can end up harming wildlife, adding to pollution, and filling landfill.

- Most glitter is made from plastic and so doesn't decompose, it just breaks down into microplastics. These microplastics pollute earth, rivers and sea, killing birds, fish and other wildlife. There are biodegradable glitter alternatives – but these are debated.
- Paper and cards with gold, silver or sparkly designs can't be recycled – these designs are made with forms of plastic so can't be returned to the fibres that would be used to make recycled paper.
- **What to use instead?** Choose decorations, cards and paper without glitter or sparkly designs. Recycled paper with great patterns and colours and without the harmful plastics is widely available. Brown parcel paper and torn out pages from magazines are also great options or use leftover fabric to wrap presents – fabric feels nice, looks special, and can be used over and over again. For ribbons, use more leftover fabric. See <https://tinyurl.com/wpwtog> for wrapping without Sellotape and other tips.

### Wrap fewer presents - take it easy and shop for less

We all like giving gifts, but all this new 'stuff' takes energy and resources to produce and transport – and much ends up in landfill. Support local producers and think about re-use - see what can be found in craft fairs and charity shops, make something homemade, or get into 're-gifting'. See <https://tinyurl.com/fptbcp>.



### Shopping for the turkey?

Make a plan for the leftovers too, even if it is just bung it in the freezer and make soup and sandwiches later; practically everything freezes. Be the household with no food waste this Christmas.

For more ideas, see <https://tinyurl.com/rar12wthamsc>.

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for SEG

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## **STEVEINGTON VILLAGE HALL**

*stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk*

The Hall is Covid-19 secure and is back to normal activity, with lots of exciting forthcoming events. We have now appointed a booking secretary and are delighted to welcome Ivana McSweeney to our team. All enquiries and bookings should now be made by email to [bookings@stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:bookings@stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk) or via the Hall Hire Enquiry pro forma, available at [www.stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](http://www.stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk).

So many new residents have moved into the village in the last two years, especially young families. Welcome! We hope to see many of you enjoying events and getting involved in the Hall, which is a great community centre. It is lovely to see children enjoying the play area again and to meet many of you out trick & treating on Halloween; some of the costumes were amazing. We are very open to suggestions for additional family activities, so let us have ideas.

**The Stevington 12K Race** was well supported on 19 September. 150 runners registered, many taking part for the first time, which was encouraging considering there were other races taking place on the same date. Thanks to Will Stanbridge, Steve Cummings and the rest of the organising committee for their hard work. Thanks also the kitchen team of Carol Jackson, Julia Sinfield and Megan King and Jean Blayney and the bar staff who kept runners and supporters well fuelled and to all the other villagers who assist with marshalling, car parking and all the many tasks that need doing.

The 2022 Race will take place on Sunday, 8 May. We hope to see you there - plenty of time to start training.

**Fireworks Night** was the busiest ever and it was so good to see so many people enjoying themselves! We hope you enjoyed the wonderful fireworks display accompanied by stirring music. Many thanks to Pete Fisher, Richard Blayney and Dave Taylor for managing the display. The kitchen, bar and refreshment table were busy all night; we even ran out of sausages, so will order more next year. Thanks to Jane

Thomas and Sue Churchill for support in the kitchen; Stephanie Wingrove and Gina Duffield for refreshments and Jean Blayney and Sally Cox for the bar. So many other volunteers worked hard on marshalling traffic (particularly demanding this year), manning the gate and helping set up and clear up.

**Regular activities** which have already resumed are:

- **Carpet Bowls** on Monday evening, 7.00-9.00pm. All over 12 years old welcome; just turn up on the night.
- **Pilates** on Friday morning, 11.00-11.45am. Contact Jane Butcher on 07891879571 or jnbutcher72@gmail.com
- **Stevington Cinema** has reopened with a full programme of films and live streamings planned. To receive updates and performance details, subscribe to the mailing list via [www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk](http://www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk) or keep an eye on the village hall website and posters on the Cross. The next performance after you receive the Magazine will be the popular classic Christmas ballet, 'The Nutcracker' on Thursday, 9 December. This is a new production from the Royal Ballet.

### **Forthcoming events**

**Sunday 12 December:** a children's party with entertainment and a special visit from Father Christmas. This is open to Stevington parents and grandparents; children **must** be accompanied by an adult. Entertainment is by Krisgar, one of Bedfordshire's leading children's entertainers, who will provide a magic show, children's games and competitions. After the show, Santa will arrive with presents for the children. Children's snacks and drink (mulled wine and mince pies for the adults) are included in the ticket price. Paid teas & coffees are available and the bar will be open. Tickets are £3.00 per head or £10.00 per family and must be bought in advance from [www.stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](http://www.stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk).

**Sunday, 5 June 2022:** Queen's Platinum Jubilee. As part of the Jubilee weekend celebrations, a Big Lunch (bring your own picnic) at the Hall is planned. Put the date in your diary and more details will be provided closer to the time.

The Village Hall is run by volunteers who give freely and generously of their time. If you have enjoyed any of our recent events, you will appreciate how hard our



volunteers work to make these a success. We would love to increase our volunteer team so that we have a 'bank' of people we can contact when help is needed - if you can offer help at an event such as setting up the Hall, assisting in the kitchen, making cakes, marshalling, manning the entrance etc. or if you have particular skill that could contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the Hall, please send contact details and how you would like to assist to [secretary@stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:secretary@stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk). Thank you to those who have recently approached the Committee - we will be in touch.

Linda Penney  
Stevington Village Hall



## STEVINGTON CINEMA SCREENING DIARY

<b>Date</b>	<b>Screening</b>	<b>Production</b>	<b>Type</b>
2 Dec	ELF		Film
9 Dec	The Nutcracker	The Royal Ballet	Live
15 Dec	Tosca	The Royal Opera	Live
6 Jan	TBA		Film
27 Jan	Leopoldstadt	National Theatre	Live
3 Feb	TBA		Film
14 Feb	Romeo & Juliet	The Royal Ballet	Live
17 Feb	The Book of Dust - La Belle Savage	National Theatre	Live
3 Mar	TBA		Film
10 Mar	Rigoletto	The Royal Opera	Live
17 Mar	Hex	National Theatre	Live
7 Apr	TBA		Film
13 Apr	La Traviata	The Royal Opera	Live
5 May	TBA		Film
19 May	Swan Lake	The Royal Ballet	Live

Please check [www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk](http://www.stevingtoncinemaclub.uk) for details of dates, screening times, tickets etc. as they may be subject to change.

## STEVINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

SEG is your local community group supporting efforts to protect and enhance the Stevington parish landscape and river and identifying activities which reduce carbon emissions, loss of biodiversity and environmental damage. These are currently managed by a core group of enthusiasts who freely give their time but

we would really welcome more volunteers. We also welcome small donations to support incidental expenses.



### Big Green Week launch of SEG and Beds GOVET

SEG and Bedfordshire Great Ouse Valley Environmental Trust (Beds GOVET) were launched in Stevington during the recent Great Big Green Week. Our local events included an interactive, multi-media display about river health, a talk about the re-introduction of beavers to support natural flood management and a visit to New Barns Farm in Carlton for a fantastic insight into environmental farming practices. Families enjoyed a tractor-trailer ride, a talk about strategies to increase biodiversity and soil health, followed by fun and pizzas at the glamping site. A big thanks to Will Tongue and his family.

### Interest Groups

*Young Environmentalists in Stevington:* An enthusiastic group of 8 to 12 year olds met for the first time on Sunday 31 October and decided on the brilliant group name YES (Young Environmentalists of Stevington). We welcome older participants as 'helpers' and under 8s are welcome if accompanied by parents, which is an opportunity for parents to meet each other over tea/coffee and a chat. YES discussed what they care

about in terms of the climate and how they want to get involved in projects that can help. They are keen to learn and have set up a borrowing library of reading material in the Church Room.



*Isabel and James*

Isabel Sim gave an introductory talk about local species of bats while making bat-mobiles, thank you Isabel. Monthly





meetings will be supported by Jane O'Connor, Poppy Marsh, Jacky Gooding, Tricia Lennie and Sarah Sim and we are grateful to the Parish Council for their initial financial support to cover rent and insurances until March 2022. We would also like to thank the Sims for providing delicious bat-cupcakes for the first meeting. If you want to join, contact [clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk).

*Biodiversity Group:* We are working on a number of areas to provide community advice and support to increase local wildlife and biodiversity, including:

1. Wild-life friendly gardens
2. Wildflower garden plots and wildflower meadows
3. Hedge cutting and mowing of lawns and verges
4. Walking and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways

*Renewables and Energy:* At our first meeting in October, we discussed energy issues. Topics included better home insulation, solar panels, passive solar heating, heat pumps and how these technologies could help support us in reducing the carbon footprint of our homes and the village as a whole. On Saturday 8 January we have a talk on 'passive' houses and low energy living in older properties which is open to everyone. Other talks are planned for the future. We are also looking into thermographic surveys of houses to enable us to get a better understanding of heat loss hotspots in houses where further insulation will add value and the feasibility of heat pumps for older properties.

### **Proposed Flood Resilience Group**

We are looking to establish a new flood resilience group in response to concerns related to residents' responsibility for ditch maintenance to reduce the risk of flooding. This is becoming more important as climate change increases the duration and intensity of rainfall. We intend to provide advice to residents on flood risks and to support elderly or infirm residents in any physical work required to clear ditches on their property.

## **Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will take place between Thursday 2 and Sunday 5 June 2022 and we are working with the Parish Council to stage a fun packed weekend of celebrations for all ages. SEG biodiversity group will focus on tree planting and are currently identifying trees and planting locations on community accessible sites. More news to follow in 2022. Residents interested in planting trees in their gardens either for the Jubilee or to increase their garden biodiversity, should contact SEG. If there is sufficient demand, we will investigate options for bulk purchase of trees and possible grants to reduce costs for residents.



## **Declaration of a climate emergency**

COP 26 has opened our eyes to the enormity of the climate emergency but at the same time it is difficult to see what we as individuals can do. We have set up SEG as a first step but to strengthen our commitment the next step is for the Parish Council to declare a climate emergency, as other parishes and councils have done. This would reinforce our community actions and could act as a lever to access government and business support for the initiatives we need to take to address climate change in our own parish. We need you to tell us if you would support this action.

## **How to get in touch with SEG**

If you want to give us your views on declaring a climate emergency, need more information or are interested attending our meetings/events please contact [johnstrutt34@gmail.com](mailto:johnstrutt34@gmail.com).

## **Beds GOVET News**

### **Protect our rivers from storm sewage and pollution**

There are gaps in our knowledge of the frequency, volume and polluting effects on our wetlands from untreated sewage outflow into our rivers. There are many river users, including children, who swim in the River Great Ouse and there may be many others who would like to, but dare not, because our water authorities are legally permitted to routinely discharge raw sewage into our rivers. Beds GOVET are planning a project to oppose the dumping of sewage into the Great Ouse so that we can work to achieve bathing water status, as has been achieved in Ilkley on the River Wharfe. If you are interested to support this project, please go to the *Bedfordshire Great Ouse Valley Environmental Trust* Facebook page or contact [bedsgovet@btinternet.com](mailto:bedsgovet@btinternet.com).

John Strutt



# Sponsored Bike 'n Hike

BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

## 2021 BIKE RIDE GETTING BACK ON TRACK – BOOK FOR 2022 NOW!

After the outstanding result of 2020 (£112,809 across the two counties and £1,000 plus Gift Aid in Stevington alone), our result this year was a little more usual at £464 plus Gift Aid.

As the Stevington Magazine drops through your letterbox on or about the beginning of September, let me give you plenty of notice of next year's event:

**The 2022 BIKE In HIKE will be held on SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER  
from 9am to 5pm.**

Please get this date into your diaries, and I will let you have a lot more information in the next issue. All you will need is either a pair of walking shoes/boots, a bike, or a car (yes, that is now legitimate!), and families/friends for company, PLUS kind folk to sponsor you for every church you visit.

Mediaeval churches, including our own St. Mary's, cost a huge amount of money to maintain, so please be generous with your time and support!

Robert Hart  
Stevington Representative Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust  
Tel 01234823769  
Email: [roberthart234@btinternet.com](mailto:roberthart234@btinternet.com)

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## **BEDFORD SAILING CLUB STAY ACTIVE THIS WINTER !**

Activities at the sailing club have slowed a little following a very busy summer and autumn with a record number of attendances, but we remain open during the winter months for those wishing to enjoy the outdoors by paddle boarding, canoeing, rowing, kayaking or swimming.

By observing good Covid-19 prevention protocols the club has managed to remain open to members throughout the year.

Cleaning of all equipment and social distancing continues to be essential, and members have unlimited free access to our fabulous facilities to use a selection of club equipment for canoeing and kayaking for exploring the river Great Ouse or just relax in our idyllic riverside spot.



Free coaching sessions for rowing, sculling and canoeing will continue all winter, so please contact us if you wish to learn or improve your water skills.

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 free introductory visit and a paddle can contact:

Dave on [daveabrear@aol.com](mailto:daveabrear@aol.com) or

Hugo on [hugovankempen0@gmail.com](mailto:hugovankempen0@gmail.com).

Hugo van Kempen

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## STEVEINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Ho Ho Ho! What's going on? May we take the opportunity to remind you of our fun challenge in the previous magazine - Santa Sightings? The idea is for anyone in the village to build that well-known red-suited figure and put him on display in their gardens, on the roof, down the

chimney - in fact anywhere noticeable. It's purely for fun; no judges, no prizes, no real deadlines, but Santa needs to make an appearance before the day itself. He probably needs to be weatherproof as well! He could be sitting on a wall, climbing through a window, riding a sledge, or up a ladder, or even a tree. If he can be seen after dark so much the better. Let's make Stevington the Santa centre.



With two afternoon teas already having taken place, we are confident that the new formula of meeting on the fourth Wednesday of every month has been a success. Numbers have bounced back higher than pre-Covid-19 days. Owing to Christmas diaries, there will be no tea in December so the next one will be on Wednesday, 26 January at 3pm. Do come along and enjoy the tea, sandwiches and cakes and, of course, the ever-popular quiz. The only thing we do ask is that you stay at home if you have any Covid-19 symptoms. Please keep Stevington safe!



This year's carol service will be held at 4pm on Sunday 12 December to ensure we don't clash with St Marys. The service of popular carols and readings will last about an hour and will be followed by festive refreshments.

A reminder that we meet every Sunday at 10am for morning worship and all are welcome.

Peter Evans

# *The Friends of* ST MARY'S CHURCH

We held our first ever Bric-a-Brac sale on 9 October, our first live event since Covid-19 restrictions became part of everyday life. A big thank you to everyone who donated items for us to sell. On the day the weather was kind which meant that our tables could be outside. It was lovely to see so many people enjoying the refreshments, catching up with friends and, of course, hunting for bargains.

The event made £400, every penny will be well spent making improvements to the Church Room.

## **Our next events:**

**4 December** – Wreath Making Workshop. Here you can make a terrific Christmas wreath for your door. Places can be booked on our web page.

**17 December** – Carols round the Cross at 6.30pm. We are very grateful to the Red Lion who have kindly allowed us to hold the event in their garden. Everyone is welcome to come along, have some fun and enjoy mince pies and mulled wine. A perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit.

Looking forward to next year we are planning a quiz and supper in March.

If you have any ideas that would be valuable additions to the village social calendar and could raise some funds for FOSM, please do let us know.

Having secured planning permission we are now getting quotes to carry out the works to improve the facilities and access to the Church Room.

We are extremely grateful for the tremendous support FOSM receives but more is always welcome. Our aim is to raise money to help preserve and improve the fabric of the Church Room. FOSM is an opportunity for everyone to help ensure that the Church Room remains a viable, important community resource.

You can join FOSM, or contact us, by visiting our web page on St. Mary's Church website ([www.fosmstevington.uk](http://www.fosmstevington.uk)).

John Duffield



## FUN FUND FOR FOSM

Each year since 2010 I have been running a charity Village Sweep, based on the Six Nations Rugby competition, in aid of The Friends of St. Mary's. The monies raised are used to help fund repairs and improvements to the Church Room and other FOSM projects. Half of the money raised goes to the charity and the other half to the winner of the sweep. The winner usually receives around £400. Not bad for a £6 stake. You do not need to know anything about rugby to take part and win. Many of the previous winners couldn't tell if the ball was pumped or stuffed and anyway expert guidance is available to those who need it.

### Previous winners include:

<b>2010</b> Darren Wallinger	<b>2015</b> Gareth King (World Cup)
<b>2011</b> Richard Blayney	<b>2016</b> Magnus Lennie
<b>2011</b> Barbara Cattermole (World Cup)	<b>2017</b> Graham Dawe
<b>2012</b> Bob Poulter	<b>2018</b> Gina Thompson
<b>2013</b> Richard Blayney	<b>2019</b> Robert Eadie
<b>2014</b> Jane Poulter	<b>2020</b> Dave Fitch
<b>2015</b> The Friends of St. Mary's	<b>2021</b> The Friends of St. Mary's.

### The Avis Clayton Memorial Six Nations Rugby Forecast 2022

Forecast the total number of points scored in the 2022 Six Nations  
Rugby Competition  
£6 per entry

### Rules

You may not pick a total score that has already been selected. Any number accidentally duplicated will be increased to the next available number. The closing date for entries is 14.00 on 5 February 2022. You may enter as often as you wish. If your chosen score is exceeded you are eliminated. The winning entry must match the total points scored or be the closest to exceed that number, but, by no more than 50 points. 50% of the total amount collected will be donated to The Friends of St. Mary's Church. 50% will go to the winner. If there is no winner the entire amount collected will go to The Friends of St. Mary's Church. The winner will be announced after the France v England game on Saturday 19 March 2022. **There are 15 games in the competition.**

### If you wish to take part contact Paul O'Flynn on:

Tel: 823306, 46 Park Road or email your selection(s) to paul.oflynn2@btinternet.com.

*The Friends of St. Mary's Church. Registered Charity Number 1139161*



## STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB

It has been good to get back to having regular football on a Saturday afternoon after the disruption caused over the last couple of seasons by the necessary control measures for the Covid-19 Pandemic.



We have started the season well and our current statistics in mid-November are as follows:

**Premier Division:** Position 5 of 16, played 9, won 5, drawn 2, lost 2, scored 14 goals, conceded 11 goals, goal difference +3 and 17 points. We are 3 points adrift of the current leaders with a game in hand, so lots to play for over the remainder of the season.

We are fortunate to have retained the majority of our players from last season and our new management team of Ian Collins and Tommy McGirl has also attracted new players to the club. However, it's been a challenge fielding a regular side in the early part of the season as some of our players have been unavailable due to taking long awaited postponed holidays, golf trips, illness and injuries. Hopefully as we head into winter things to start to settle down and we will have a regular squad available each week.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish the Queens Crescent player that dislocated his knee when playing against us a speedy and full recovery. It was an innocuous challenge that caused the injury, but the bigger challenge was to come, he had to be lifted into a car as when we called for an ambulance we were told there was at least a 5 hour wait! In the second half of the same match our player Tommy McGirl suffered a fractured tibia, had to be carried off the pitch and taken to hospital in a car as well. Best wishes to Tommy for a full and speedy recovery too.

Traditionally the club raises money for charities over Christmas and this year the charity game is currently scheduled for Boxing Day - 10.30am kick off at Thurleigh Playing Field in aid of Mental Health Charities in memory of our former player Mark George.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with the club, be it as player, manager, one of the 'backroom team' or supporter, and Nigel and the team at the Royal George for your continued support of Stevington Football Club.

We look forward to seeing you at up and coming games and wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year - so please continue to follow Covid-19 control measures to make sure you, your families, friends and work colleagues stay safe.

Shane King



## ST MARY'S MATTERS

I am writing just after our Remembrance Service at the War Memorial, and it was great to see a good crowd again, as people feel more comfortable to come out and mingle, at least outdoors. The service was taken this year by Peter Evans of the Baptist Church, assisted by Barbara Courtney, LBdr Mollie Jackson who read the Roll of Honour, Hannah Bushby from Bedford Brass Junior section who led our hymns and played the Last Post and Reveille, and Richard Galley our resident piper who played a lament. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Parish Council, The Baptist Church, the PCC and the Borough Council.

The contractor who was tending to the churchyard has ended the contract, but Graham Walker kindly stepped in and tidied up the area for our Remembrance Service. The contract is likely to go out for a new tender over the next months. We are very grateful to the Parish Council for organising and funding this.

Looking ahead, we plan a Crib Service at 4pm on 19 December, followed immediately by a short Service of Lessons and Carols at around 4:30pm.

Our Christmas Service this year is a 9:30pm Eucharist on Christmas Eve, or 9:30am on Christmas Day at Turvey, or 11am at Odell.

St Mary's is still open every day from 10am till 4pm for those who wish to visit. Works on the tower and other areas of the church continue.

### **From the Register:**

<i>Interment of Ashes</i>	<i>29 Sept</i>	<i>Mari Simons</i>
	<i>20 Nov</i>	<i>Di Bailey</i>
<i>Funeral</i>	<i>7 Sept</i>	<i>Bob Coleman</i>
	<i>13 Dec</i>	<i>Jean Edwards</i>

Robert Eadie, Churchwarden

## STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE 100 CLUB CONSIDER THIS.....!

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! We still has a few numbers available, so try your luck and support your village hall.

The 100 Club remains an important means of guaranteed revenue for maintaining the Village Hall so your continued support is crucial.

A dedicated team of volunteers helps keep the building in good order throughout the year and with your help we can secure the future of the building for the customary programme of concerts, films, theatre, ballet, opera, carpet bowls, table tennis, yoga, Pilates, private functions and of course the fabulous fireworks display.

EVERY MONTH four lucky winners receive a cash prize. To join please contact Hugo at [hugovankempen0@gmail.com](mailto:hugovankempen0@gmail.com) or on 01234 824894.

These are the most recent lucky winners:

**Sep** £100 № 43 Stuart Robinson  
 £50 № 40 Trish O'Brien  
 £25 № 87 Geoff Billett  
 £15 № 45 Albert Markham

**Oct** £100 № 25 Emma Freeman  
 £50 № 56 Pauline Indge  
 £25 № 32 Dickie Sear  
 £15 № 13 Barbara Collins

**Nov** £100 № 51 Peter O'Dell  
 £50 № 55 Frances Hirst  
 £25 № 8 Barbara Pheasant  
 £15 № 6 Dave Taylor

Luxury Christmas Hamper      № 22      Linda Penney



Hugo van Kempen



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



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Jean Edwards on 1 November. Jean had been a member of the WI for very many years. She joined in many of the activities and rarely missed our monthly meetings. She was a member of our book club from its commencement and was always ready to contribute her thoughts on the book under review. She was very good company and will be greatly missed by all our members and I am sure by all the villagers who knew her. Our thoughts are with her family at this sad time.

We are at last back in the Church Room!

In September we welcomed our speaker, Bill Hamilton. His story began with his humble beginnings (he was born in Glasgow) to his aspirations of becoming a journalist. He started as a cub reporter and from there, via regional media, he progressed to become a special correspondent on BBC TV News, a role which took him to some of the world's worst trouble spots. All who attended agreed that he was an excellent speaker, and we enjoyed the meeting immensely.

Our Harvest Supper took place in October and once again it was well attended. This is a popular event with delicious food being served and it also gave our members an occasion to catch up with all the latest news. As part of the Big Green Week (18-26 September), Jackie had organised a 'Green' quiz and the answers were given at the Harvest Supper.

An Arts and Crafts evening was arranged for November. Denise and Barbara planned Christmas card making and kindly arranged for kits to be made available to us. It was amazing how many different cards were produced from just two patterns. Refreshments were served later.

We plan to have a Cheese and Wine party in December followed by a games evening.

Two of our members attended the Annual Council meeting at the Addison Centre. The guest speaker was the gardener Nick Bailey who told us about 365 days of colour in the garden. It was a most enjoyable afternoon.

In October, Denise joined in a National Debate on the Restoration of Parliament. Twenty-four participants took part with diverse views including moving Parliament to the Midlands. Food for thought!

During the last three months we have entertained a group of walkers to lunch; have walked two or three of the local footpaths and have restarted our book club meetings. We also took part in the Village Litter Pick on 6 November.

Dates for your diary:

Thurs 9 Dec	Cheese and Wine party
Thurs 13 Jan	The work of the CPRE Bedfordshire
Thurs 10 Feb	A talk from the East Anglia Air Ambulance
Thurs 10 Mar	Relaxation techniques

Please see our noticeboard in the Church Room for future events.

Can we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year? Stay safe and well.

Marilyn Billett

## STEVINGTON HISTORICAL TRUST

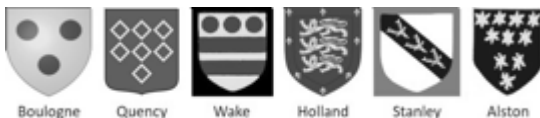
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Our latest work, *Stevington: The Village History Revisited* was published in October. It is an update and rewrite of the first edition of 2001 and is the result of much new research. Moreover, it contains a number of historic photographs which have come to light over the last twenty years.

We printed only 160 copies and I am pleased to report that most have been sold. We are grateful to the Parish Council and the *Stevington Magazine* for their valuable support. If anyone wants a copy of the remaining few, they will be allocated on a first come first served basis at £30.00 per copy.

We still have left a few copies of *St Mary's: History and Architecture* at £20.00 and the *Stevington Enclosure Award 1807* at the same price.

There are plans for further publications but they are in their infancy.



Peter Hart  
Hon Secretary  
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## STEVIINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

How lovely to be able to write and say that the Club is once more up and running.

Twelve members have returned and we've all remembered the 'rules of play'. How about that after 18 months closed down!

At the moment all is running smoothly and we are quite happy with the membership at present. Probably after Christmas we will be looking for new members. So be prepared. Conditions will be the same i.e. first two visits are free, thereafter £2.00 weekly per player. We also run a raffle rota for which tickets are £1.00.

The Club will be closed on Mondays 27 December, 3 January and possibly 10 January. Definitely reopening, weather permitting, on Monday 17 January. Any changes will be advised 'by word of mouth'.

We would like to wish all Spike Islanders a very happy Christmas and a happy, healthy and wealthy 2022. Very best wishes,

Barbara Collins



## KEMPSTON MUSICAL SOCIETY Christmas Carol Concert

Kempston Musical Society will be performing a selection of Christmas carols and festive music on

**Saturday 18 December**

At Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford.

The concert will start at 7.00pm. and tickets will cost £7.50 on the door, which will include refreshments.

**This concert is guaranteed to get you in the mood for Christmas.**

To find out more about all our forthcoming concerts or information about the choir please call

01234 781010 or email [prestissimo@btinternet.com](mailto:prestissimo@btinternet.com).

## ALL IN FAVOUR SAY 'EYE'

Sorry about the awful pun but it seems to sum up the experience I have just had with our wonderful NHS and in particular the wonderful team at Bedford Hospital's eye clinic.

Like many people of advancing years things can start wearing out and I have been troubled by blurring vision in my left eye for some time caused by a cataract. I have been on the waiting list for quite some time. Last week they must have had a cancellation because I had a call to attend for the procedure in four days and of course to have a Covid-19 test the following day.

On the day of the procedure, I reported at the clinic, which is next to the Swannery restaurant marked by a big yellow circle on the floor, but I only discovered this after a tour of the hospital. I knocked on the door and even though I was a bit early they welcomed me into their waiting area and introduced me to all the nursing staff and made sure I was comfortably seated.

There then appeared a man masked and dressed in scrubs. Please not the surgeon I hoped as he didn't seem serious enough! But no, when he turned his back to address me and the other two ladies there was a sign on his back saying 'volunteer' and it turned out that he was there to hold our hands while we went through what I thought was going to be a terrifying procedure. I was so happy he was going to be there.

After being processed by the admin staff where they ask you repeatedly for your date of birth - which I tell them in a very low voice, and they repeat loudly - and no I do not use a hearing aid.

After about a forty-minute wait while I read the paper on my tablet (I won't be able to do this afterwards) I was called into the pre op room. 'Where is the hand holding man?' I asked. He is in the theatre holding someone else's hand at the moment I was told. When I was ready for the procedure, they do put you in a very unbecoming plastic hat, I was wheeled into the theatre where this wonderful man was waiting for me (he had introduced himself earlier).

They then performed what I can only describe as a miracle which seemed to be a lot of water poured over me, a fantastic light show and a running commentary of what he was actually doing. I felt no pain or discomfort. I was then escorted to the recovery area and given a cup of

tea and a biscuit. Best cup of tea ever. The nurse gave me my handbag and tablet and I sat back and resumed reading the paper.

What a team!

Anne Westbrook



## MOBILE LIBRARY

Hello Stevington Readers!

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

The Mobile Library is now back on the road and visiting Stevington. We have also made some changes since the last edition of Stevington magazine. I am delighted to say that customers are now welcome back on the Mobile, and you can pick your own items! When you visit the Library, we request you keep others safe by keeping your distance and making sure you take all the usual standard Covid-19 safety measures. Wear a face covering if you are able and keep those hands as clean as possible when touching all the items.

The usual times for the Stevington stop are as follows:

The Cross - 1.35 to 1.55pm

This is on the following Wednesdays:

December:	1 and 15	January:	12 and 26
February:	9 and 23	March:	9 and 23.

For further information on this, and to request your items, you can visit us at [www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries).

We know a number of you have been using our digital resources through lockdown. We have a fantastic range of online material 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 Libby, Borrowbox and Press Reader. For further information on these, visit [www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries) and browse the eResources section of the virtual library.

Stay safe, and we look forward to you borrowing from us soon!

The Kempston Mobile Library team.



## THE VILLAGER MINIBUS (SHARNBROOK)

The Villager Community minibus is a great way to get out and about. From

Stevington we go to Olney Market, Milton Keynes and Peterborough. The trips make a good social break and if you need help with the shopping, the drivers are always ready to help. The days and times we run from Stevington are below.



It is a simple way to get out and about and, of course, free to ride if you have a concessionary pass. If you know folk who don't use Facebook, do let them know about the Villager Minibus. There is full information at [www.sharnbrookvillagerminibus.co.uk/](http://www.sharnbrookvillagerminibus.co.uk/) and timetables are on some bus stops.

### Every Thursday to Olney Market

Depart the Cross at 10.10, leave Olney for the return at 12.10.

### 4th Tuesday of the month to Milton Keynes

Depart the Cross at 09:20 leave MK for the return at 12.30.

### 2nd Friday of the month to Peterborough

Depart the Cross at 09:12, leave Peterborough for the return at 14.00.

**Christmas/New Year schedules;** Due to the Christmas/New Year holidays, the VL6 service to Milton Keynes on 28/12 and the VL5 service to Olney on 30/12 will not operate.

If you have any questions or require more information or a hard copy of The Villager timetable, please contact the Secretary Andrew Gell on 01234 708191.

### WASTE COLLECTIONS

Month	Rubbish	Recycling	Green
December	14, 29	7, 21	None
January	11, 25	5, 18	None
February	8, 22	1, 15	None
March	8, 22	1, 15, 29	1, 15, 29

# Stevington Baptist Church



Here to serve, support and encourage our community: seeking to bring fun and joy to church life

Every Sunday at 10am - **Morning Worship**

Sunday 12 December at 4pm - **Carol Service**  
Followed by festive refreshments.

Wednesdays at 3pm – **Afternoon Teas**

Join us for our afternoon tea on the fourth Wednesday of every month. The next one is on 26 January at 3pm. Come along and make new friends and try the quiz.

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## THAT WAS THE NEWS THAT WAS

### **The Bedfordshire Times and Standard – 11/10/1940** – A Windy Day in West Bedfordshire – Cycling through Attractive Villages

West of Bedford, towards the Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire borders, there are some attractive villages, and on a recent windy day, writes a representative of The Bedfordshire Times & Standard, I cycled through some of them.

Superficially these villages are not much affected by the war, apart from the fact that the plough has made inroads into the grass fields. The villages look as beautiful as ever on an autumn day. On my visit the trees shook violently in the wind, scattering twigs and heaps of russet-coloured leaves over the narrow roads. The ivy had changed its colour, lending added dignity to the small cottage as well as the stately country house.

The villages were full of children and old people. It was noticeable that the generations between were poorly represented. At the usual meeting-places, such as inns, old but vigorous men predominate and younger men are harder to find.

Turning into Bromham proper, by the 'Swan', I passed some youthful haunts in the park which brought back memories, and came to the houses built sedately round the magnificent green. Once upon a time these houses (or the ones they replace) were the homes of agricultural workers, but a good many of the old Bromham families have died off and the residents are comparative newcomers, generally working in Bedford. Quite often two farm cottages have been converted into one good-sized home. Peculiar to Bromham are the facts that it has no real village inn and no village hall. The 'Swan' is remote from the centre of the village. I am told that the parishioners do not want another inn, but something seemed missing to the outsider. Evacuees and refugees make the village busier than it used to be, and the absence of a hall must be felt these days.

### **A Beautiful Village**

I rode on to Oakley, a village which I had not visited for a long time, and approaching it over the quaint old bridge I had to revive my ideas about Bedfordshire's most beautiful countryside. No part of the County could have equalled Oakley on that particular morning. Oakley House, I was told, will soon have some new tenants. They will have an outlook almost unequalled in its rural magnificence.

In the village I met Mr. A. C. Whitworth, a Londoner, whom city life evidently suited, for he did not look anything like his seventy-five years. He had been staying at the home of a niece, getting some much-needed sleep, and was returning to London this week. Mr. Whitworth was born in Radwell and had paid a visit there to see old friends. He was disappointed. Things change with the years and most of his friends had died or left the district.

This is an anti-climax which many people experience on returning to a place after long absence. Mr. Whitworth is a city lover and he is returning to 'face the music'. Before his visit to Oakley he spent eight or nine nights in a tube station. Previously he had stayed in his Anderson shelter 'until it rocked'. He left Radwell fifty years ago.

### **Stevington Cross**

If I could live in a village Oakley would be one of my first choices. Stevington to which I next cycled, is an interesting and genuine village. I should have liked more time in which to inquire about the history of its ancient cross and the spring of water near to the Parish Church which is reputed never to have dried up or frozen. This is called 'the holy well' and it was once used by invalids and pilgrims. A villager told me that the water from it is the purest for miles around. Stevington's population has been greatly increased by evacuees, perhaps by a hundred – a very large increase of population considering the size of the village.

A tavern at which I called was being used at the time by a number of land workers who had a good deal to say about 'the bad farming' of today. They alleged that we were always trying to get more from the land than we put into it and that this would have disastrous results before long.

Some of the old land workers distrust the tractors and would like to see more horses used on the farms. In this district wheat is averaging about three and a half quarters per acre, and the men say that with good farming the average would be five to six quarters. There is good barley land at Stevington and some yields have been good. I was told of one smallholder who had secured thirty-one sacks off three and a half acres.

### **What the Tramp Said**

Progress in the journey between Stevington and Turvey was slow, because of a wind which threatened at times to uproot even the trees. While wheeling my bicycle after taking the Northampton turn I overhauled an elderly (or so I thought) tramp. Before we had walked two hundred yards he had told most of his dismal history. What it amounted to was loss of employment after the last war and loss of hope after five years on



the 'dole'. After this 'John Jones' left his family without saying good-bye and took to the road, where he had remained. 'Mr. Jones' seemed to have regained some of his peace of mind. He did not bother about the war and did not care who won it. I was surprised to find that this bearded tramp was only just over forty.

### **A Turvey Cynic**

And so on to Turvey (leaving 'Mr. Jones' plodding along behind). Over my lunch I joined in a lively discussion on national and international affairs. One cynic was of the opinion that after the war the land would be allowed 'to go back to rubbish and thistles' if the Government wasn't watched carefully. After rides through countryside which is at last regaining its productivity and tidiness, I agreed that the Government would have to be watched.

'No policy', I was told, 'is more important than that of producing every scrap of food we can at home, even in peace time.' This policy seems to be in favour at Turvey, for the cottage gardens still contain a good deal of produce and have been made spick and span for next season's crop.

Turvey's interesting sights include the block of almshouses endowed by James Barton, a Bedford man, who, I was told, made money in London and decided to build almshouses in recognition of the fact that his parents had lived for many years in the almshouses which stood on the site of Bedford High School. With (dare we say) typical lack of foresight the Bedford authorities turned down Mr. Barton's offer of the almshouses and Turvey had them instead.

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Mark Jackson

## **THE BIG BLUNHAM BOOK SALE IS BACK IN 2022**

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## FARMING NEWS

Hello,

This must be the mildest autumn on record which is good news in so far as it has allowed us to prepare and drill pretty well all our autumn seedbeds with autumn crops - mainly winter wheat and unless I'm very much mistaken, still no Winter Oilseed Rape in the parish for the third year running.

The bad news is that this very mild autumn points all too alarmingly at even more proof that global warming exists and that it is almost certainly man-made.

Workwise, apart from Duck End Farm, who are drilling winter wheat as I write, most of the winter wheat will have had its pre-emergence blackgrass herbicide applied which is 99% of the battle against this pernicious weed. The next job will be an aphicide to kill any aphids clinging to old 'volunteer' cereals left over from last year and other grass weeds. These aphids carry a disease called Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus (BYDV) and because there is not yet a virucide that can kill the virus, we can only kill the disease-carrying vector - which is the aphid. The good news is that late drilling and the sowing of resistant varieties will bring an end to this practice, although late drilling which prevents and controls blackgrass and aphid infestation also means less autumn rooting - this in turn means the crops are less tolerant to winter and spring drought or waterlogging - and lower yields. This is a bad thing if one is in the business of wheat production.

The big news in the parish this month is that 220 acres of arable land at Hart Farm has been sold by the previous owner, Jeremy Witherick at Winsey Farm in Sharnbrook, but - we still don't know who the new owner is. Has it been bought by an eccentric millionaire who will put it down to re-wilding or another farmer from a neighbouring parish (or this one?) wishing to extend his portfolio? All I know for sure at the moment is that it's not me, and it's unlikely to be a working farmer, or else he/she would have had it pulled down by now for autumn cropping. Who knows?

Re-wilding - now there's the contentious word of the moment. Re-wilding means the deliberate non-cropping of productive and more usually less-productive arable land with a view to returning the ground to its natural, wild state. This appears a good idea on the surface as we all want more biodiversity, but in the short term it's not that carbon efficient and it rather messes up any serious efforts at farming next door to it.

There are far more suitable places to do this than Stevington. And you don't get much food or energy out of it. NB this is a farmers' opinion - other opinions are available. Incidentally, I am often asked what would grow here in the parish if humans were to leave it for 1,000 years? The answer is that the drainage would fail over a period of about 20 years, and the resultant brambles that would quickly establish would be slowly taken over by bog oak - that is assuming that temperatures and climate stay vaguely similar as they are today.

As the nights draw in, more time will be spent in the workshop servicing kit and perhaps fabricating new implements. Grain will gradually be moved onto it's final processing destinations and before the end of this month the Christmas trees (Mill Farm) and turkeys (Manor Farm, Stagsden) will be on sale again. Not sure what I'm going to write about in the next issue - any suggestions?

The Farmers



WaveLength

Stevington

We were delighted to be able to restart Wavelength meetings in September.

Meetings are now planned for the last Saturday of the month at 11am in the Church room.

Anyone is welcome to come along, bring any questions about your phone, tablets or laptops. It's possible that between us we might know the answer, if not we can try and find out.

During October we looked at the Google Maps app, how to download it, use it and get the best from it.

In November we looked at ways to preserve battery life and the things that might be running in the background using up large amounts of power.

The Wavelength group is friendly and fun, it's as much about a having a cup of tea and a chat as it is about IT.

John Duffield

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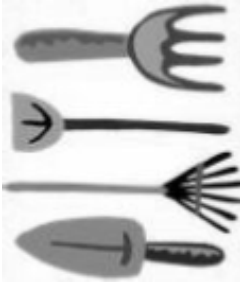
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## GARDENING TIPS AND INSPIRATION FROM PARK END THATCH

By early December most of 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 between perennials.

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 1 or 2 pairs 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, dead stems 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 is hanging over too far. Many birds rely on mature ivy berries for food so it should be left un-pruned until all the berries have been taken. To provide much needed cover for birds and insects to use as shelter from the cold and wet, leave ivy unpruned until after the robins have finished nesting in the summer. Ivy has so many benefits for wildlife!

## **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 2 or 3 pairs 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 right 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 clean spade keeping one bud to each section. Replant each piece in a new position at the same depth using plenty of farmyard manure and as mulch. Allow the new leaves to strengthen the plant by harvesting in summer the following year. By the way, leaving a rhubarb to flower in summer would affect the following year's crop of stems to eat.

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

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. We should all 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 shallow beach with shingle for small animals to drink from and plant up in spring. Ideally fill with rainwater, as tap water has chemicals in it not conducive to watery habitat wildlife.

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 at this time of year 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 wetted 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 daily.

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

If any readers would like information about a specific aspect of horticulture or to encourage wildlife into your gardens, please let me know, by email to [info@susanyoungdesign.co.uk](mailto: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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