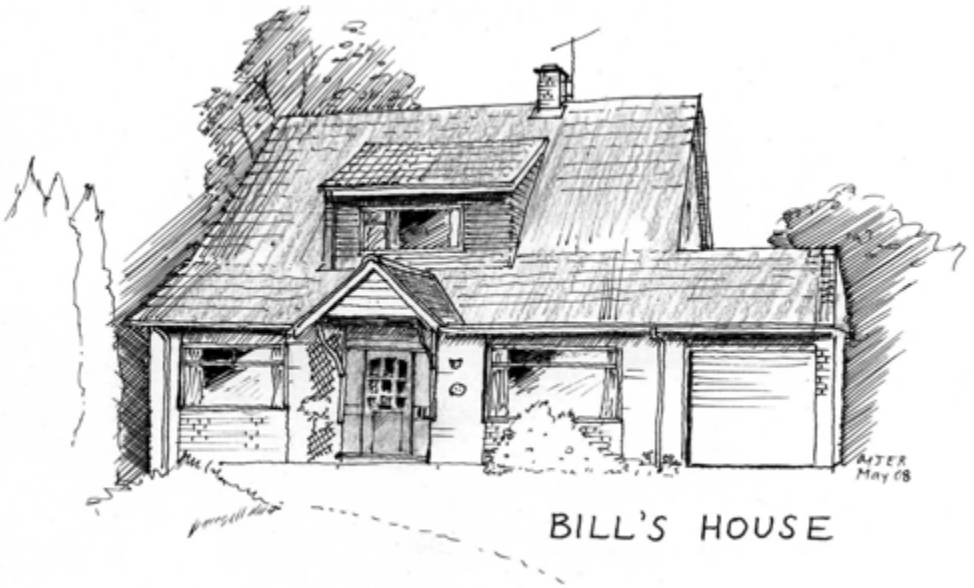


# STEVENINGTON MAGAZINE



**MARCH 2022**  
**Number 200**

## VILLAGE DIARY

### MARCH

- 10 WI. Relaxation Techniques. Church Room. 7.30pm (see page 35)
- 10 Cinema Club. Live Opera Broadcast. Rigoletto. Village Hall.
- 15 Village Choir Restarts. (see page 37)
- 23 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Chapel. 3.00-4.30pm. (see page 40)
- 23 Sailing Club AGM. Royal George. 8.00pm. (see page 47)

### APRIL

- 7 Cinema Club. Film. Belfast. Village Hall.
- 13 Cinema Club. Live Opera Broadcast. La Traviata. Village Hall.
- 14 WI. Craft Evening. Church Room. 7.30pm (see page 35)
- 15 Good Friday Service. St Mary's. 2.00pm (see page 43)
- 17 Easter Day Service. St Mary's. 9.30am (see page 43)
- 17 Easter Day Service. Baptist Chapel. 10.00am
- 21 Cinema Club. Live Theatre Broadcast. Henry V. Village Hall
- 23 Stevington Guitar Concerts. Village Hall. 7.15pm. (see page 16)
- 25 Carpet Bowls AGM. (see page 30)
- 27 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Chapel. 3.00-4.30pm. (see page 40)

### MAY

- 8 Stevington 12K Run. Village Hall. 11.00am.
- 12 WI. Annual Meeting. Church Room. 7.30pm (see page 35)
- 15 Magazine Copy Date (Sunday)
- 19 Cinema Club. Live Ballet Broadcast. Swan Lake. Village Hall.
- 21 WI Produce Stall at The Cross. 10.00am.
- 25 Afternoon Tea. Baptist Chapel. 3.00-4.30pm. (see page 40)
- 26 Live Theatre Broadcast. Straight Line Crazy. Village Hall

### JUNE

- 2 Jubilee Beacon Lighting. Playing Field. 8.45pm (see page 21)
- 4 Live Music. Royal George. Evening
- 5 Jubilee Big Lunch. Playing Field. 12 noon. (see page 21)
- 8 SEG & PC Environment Open Meeting. (see page 25)



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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!**

You will remember that our Christmas Greetings Charity in December was the Primrose Unit at Bedford Hospital, in memory of Bob Coleman who was treated there. Thanks to the generosity of the village, we had 39 greetings and raised £877 plus some Gift Aid. We have received a formal thank you letter which is included on page 5.

We are very grateful to all our regular advertisers who have signed up to continue to support the Magazine during 2022. The annual costs of the Magazine are a little over £1,000 and without our advertisers we wouldn't be able to cover costs so please have a look through the Magazine and use all of these local businesses when you have a need - it's great to support them as they support us! Remember to tell them where you found their details.

This is the 200th edition of Stevington Magazine - amazingly it started back in 1972 so this year is also its 50th anniversary! Advertising started in 1988 and some of our advertisers have supported us since then, albeit with some interruptions. Pat Pickup, a former editor of the Magazine, has written a short history which is included on page 31. It shows just how many people have been involved over the years.

It's the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June - see page 21 for some of the events that will take place in the village. The next issue of the magazine should be delivered the weekend before the Jubilee weekend so do let us know what events you are planning.

Everything seems to finally be getting back to normal and village activities are returning to normal too. If you are new to the village see what is going on and get involved! New contributors to the magazine are very welcome.



Heather and Keith

**NEXT MAGAZINE**

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 28-29 May 2022. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 15 May 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.



## THANK YOU FROM JULIE ROBINSON

I would like to thank you all.

All the people that sent me cards, those that dropped in and those who went to Brian's funeral. Also thank you for the excellent wake provided by the Red Lion. No one could fault it. And also thank you to the people that came to my aid when he went walkabout and fell over. Brian Pell, Tony Homer and Glen Kettle all came and picked him up more than once.

Thank you all.

Julie Robinson

## THANK YOU FROM PRIMROSE UNIT

In recognition of the Christmas Greetings donation we made to the Primrose Unit they have sent us key rings, supermarket trolley 'coins' and pens. If you made a donation then please take some. We have left them in the Church Room - the Community Shop is open 10 to 12 Monday to Saturday.



Heather & Keith Parkinson

### DO YOU NEED HELP?

Do you require a babysitter? Or maybe help with your pets such as dog walking, cat feeding or chicken feeding? Then call Lottie Jackson on 07949 262424.

### 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.*



**Bedfordshire Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Primrose Oncology Unit  
[www.cancernet.co.uk](http://www.cancernet.co.uk)

**Bedford Hospital**  
Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ  
Tel: 01234 355122

[www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk)

11<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Heather and Keith Parkinson  
Old Paddock  
Church Road  
Stevington  
MK43 7QB

Dear Mr and Mrs Parkinson,

**Re: Donation to the Primrose Unit Fund (Folio. BH7A), in memory of Bob**

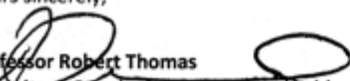
Please accept the sincere condolences of all staff at the Primrose Unit for the loss of your friend and fellow resident of Stevington, Bob, who fought a courageous, positive and dignified 15-month battle against his illness. Bob was cared for by Dr Sarah Smith and our wonderful Primrose Team, who miss him to this day and remember him with great affection. They looked forward to his visits as he was always fun to be around and enjoyed a good chat with everyone. Bob was clearly a central and much loved member of your small village, and I really am so sorry that we could not do more to help him.

It was incredibly kind of the readers of the Stevington Magazine to offer donations totalling £877 in lieu of Christmas cards, and given in Bob's memory. It is always an honour to receive any gift and those which are given in memory of a patient always have a special meaning for us. I thank you both for arranging for this generous gift to be forwarded to us, and please could I ask you to distribute the enclosed to your kind readers, as a very small token of our appreciation.

Please be assured that all monies donated to the Primrose Unit Fund (BH7A) are spent on services which we at the Primrose Unit consider important for additional patient care and comfort. The Fund is managed and controlled by Bedford Hospital Finance, and is part of 'Bedford Hospital Charitable Funds', registered charity number 1061003.

Thank you again for your kindness and generous support for the Primrose Unit Fund, and I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2022.

Yours sincerely,

  
Professor Robert Thomas  
Consultant Oncologist, Bedford and Addenbrooke's Cambridge University Hospitals  
Visiting Professor University of Bedfordshire  
Senior Clinical Tutor Cambridge University  
Encl. Receipt



## **JOYCE ELEANOR KEECH 1925 -2021**

Joyce Keech died on 14 December 2021 in Chipping Norton but for a large part of her life she had been a resident of Stevington and had many great friends in the village.

Joyce was born in Sharnbrook on 14 August 1925 to Walter and Nellie Coleman. She was the youngest of their three daughters, her sisters being Edna and Ivy.

Joyce led a long and eventful life that spanned many great world changes. Joyce's life connected the old world with the new. She had many stories to tell about life in Sharnbrook during the war, Thurleigh being so close, and kept in contact with friends made during those early years.

Joyce left school at 14 years of age and had many local jobs that included working on the land for a local landowner and in the kitchen at Unilever.

She met Jim at a dance in Sharnbrook and they married on 20 September 1952; Joyce came to live in Stevington with Jim where they lived in a caravan opposite 23 - 25 Court Lane where they eventually moved to. She and Jim had two daughters, Rose and Kath born in the village where they grew up.

Joyce worked on the farm at Home Close, Court Lane with Jim and her father-in-law Percy and brother-in-law Peter for many years. It was very hard work milking cows twice a day, every day.

When they left the farm Joyce did housework for many people in the village with whom she stayed great friends. She was the relief post lady for her great friend Betty Bird delivering the post at Christmas and other times of the year when Betty was on holiday.

Joyce ran an open house welcoming visitors at any time of day.

She was an accomplished seamstress making wedding dresses, bridesmaid dresses, going away outfits and much more. In fact, she could turn her hand to most things. She was a keen lacemaker, knitter, did tapestry and had many other skills.

Joyce had four grandchildren, Edward, Katie, Claire and Stuart and more recently four great grandchildren, Eve, Elliott, Ashton and Ellis. Joyce loved all of them dearly.

Joyce was an active member of Stevington village. She used to attend the Chapel when she was able. She was a keen member of the WI and was Captain of the WI darts team. She was also a volunteer at the Community Shop. All came to an end as she gradually lost her sight with Macular Degeneration. After losing her sight her life was never really the same; her only form of communication was having visitors and spending endless hours on the telephone, which she loved. Joyce enjoyed listening to Three Counties radio and keeping up with current affairs.

Joyce had a remarkable memory and was very knowledgeable. She was a point of contact for all in the village for information and the village nicknamed her "GOOGLE," which she loved and found very amusing. Like no one else her memory was truly amazing - names, dates, relationships it was a huge picture in her mind that she could recall instantly.

Latterly, Joyce had poor health including Covid-19 in January last year that she survived before being vaccinated.

Rose and I would like to thank everyone for the many cards, words of condolence, flowers and donations to Sight Concern Bedford. Everyone has been so kind. We would have very much liked to have had a proper village funeral service for Mum but uncertainty with Covid-19 meant we had to reduce the numbers. Such a shame.

Finally, Rose and I would like to give a special thank you to Stevington Baptist Chapel, to Carol and Graham Wareing and Jim Russell for making things happen and to David Eyre for the wonderful service.

Kath & Rose

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## **STEVINGTON COMMUNITY SHOP**

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**10 Bedford Road, Stagsden**

## **STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **A reminder**

Have you signed up to receive the weekly newsletter about the work of the Parish Council which is sent out on Wednesday morning? Go to <https://stevington-pc.gov.uk>. You can see minutes of meetings and other significant documents.



### **New Councillor**

The Parish Council is pleased that Richard Taylor, a resident of Court Lane, has joined the Parish Council. His experience in traffic management and road safety will be invaluable to the Council.

### **Planning applications in the village**

All planning applications continue to be 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. Although Stevington 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).

At the time of publication the hearing date has not yet been set for the Dane Hill Farm planning appeal. Once details are known these will be shared with the village.

### **Stevington Windmill**

We are pleased to report that the windmill repairs were completed ahead of schedule at the start of February, the mill is now in such condition that it will be able to once again turn with its own sails. Bedford Borough Council have agreed an annual maintenance plan for the mill, in conjunction with the millwright Dorothea, and are in discussions with the "Friends of" Group to formalise an inspection rota.

A date for the turning of sails is to be agreed with Bedford Borough Council and Dorothea. This should be this year and we will share the details as soon as we have them.

### **Highways and footpaths**

Problems with traffic have continued to take a high priority. The Parish Council responded favourably to the proposal for a 20MPH speed limit through the centre of the village. Following the Parish Council

meeting in February we have requested that Bedford Borough Council consider other traffic calming measures at West End and Park End. We have also responded to the proposal for a 7.5T weight restriction on Silver Street which we hope will limit the number of HGV vehicles coming into the village from the A428.

At the February meeting the Parish Council agreed to fund a mobile speed sign that will visibly indicate a vehicle's speed to the driver and collect data which can be used to support any future requests for traffic restrictions. The sign will be located at various sites throughout the village over the coming months.

### **Grounds maintenance**

The contract for maintaining parts of the playing field, the enclosed play area and the Churchyard came to an end last year. The Parochial Church Council will now undertake managing the maintenance of the Churchyard with some financial assistance from the Parish Council. Tenders are being obtained for the play areas and part of the playing field.

### **Village Hall and playground**

The hall is open and now holding events again. If you have not already done so it is worth looking at the programme of events for the Cinema Club. A Christmas party for the younger residents of the village was a great success.

### **Stevington Environmental Consultation Group.**

The work of the group is covered in a separate report. Events are being planned with 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 consultation group and its younger members has a significance for us in the village especially as winter and flooding season approach 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 known as a 'riparian owner'

and as such has responsibilities. The full document is available from the Clerk on request.

The Parish Council are 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 are willing to help set up and support such a group. Please contact the Clerk if you would be interested in joining this group.

### **Consultations**

The Parish Council has been consulted on a number of topics since the start of the year and has provided feedback on the following requests:

- Odell NDP open for consultation (support)
- BBC Extra powers to enforce moving traffic consultation (support)
- East/West Rail local group Parish Council representative (accepted, ongoing updates will be provided at future PC meetings and minutes)

### **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.

The Parish Council has been looking at plans for the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** from **Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June 2022**. A programme is on page 21 of the magazine. Some events are already confirmed and others are still in the planning stages but the Parish Council hopes the Jubilee weekend will be an opportunity for all village residents to get together including all the new residents who have moved here during the pandemic.

If you would like to be involved please contact the Clerk or Janet Day.

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*

## **BEDFORD BOROUGH NEWS**

### **Council Tax**

The Council Tax Increase for 2022/23 has been set at 3.99%, this comprises of a core council tax rise of 1.99% and 2% adult social care. The budget for the next financial year was passed unanimously. This once again means that key areas such as buses, roads, social care and children's services have been protected.

### **Extra Powers for Council to Enforce On Our Roads - Have Your Say**

As part of the Traffic Management Act (2022), the Government will be giving councils the option to apply for powers to enforce against 'moving traffic offences'. Currently, only the Police can enforce against these offences.

Bedford Borough Council is considering acquiring these powers, and wants to hear the views of local residents, businesses and interested parties.

These powers would enable the Council to expand the work it already does enforcing against illegal and dangerous parking, and misuse of bus lanes. The Council Parking Services Team would carry out this enforcement work as part of their current duties.

Other offences would be enforced where the appropriate signs are in place. These include one-way streets, no U-turn allowed, no left/right turns, no entry, box junctions, as well as areas where cars are not permitted such as cycle lanes. To see the full list of offences, for further information and to have your say, please visit [www.bedford.gov.uk/mtoconsultation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/mtoconsultation).

You can have your say online at [www.bedford.gov.uk/mtoconsultation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/mtoconsultation), by emailing [highway.consultations@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:highway.consultations@bedford.gov.uk) or by writing to Traffic Operations, Room 109, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP. Hard copies are available on request via the Highways Helpdesk on 01234 718003.

Comments should be received by 18 March 2022 and may be published.

### **Bedford Borough Council Launches Fly-Tipping Information Appeal**

Bedford Borough Council has invested in new, portable CCTV cameras that they are deploying at fly-tipping hotspots around Bedford Borough.

The Council is using footage to help identify vehicles present in the vicinity of fly-tipping or individuals who may have information about fly-tipping so that enforcement action can be taken against the appropriate persons who are engaged in this activity. Fly-tipping is a criminal offence and can be punished with a maximum fine of £50,000 or a 12-month prison sentence if convicted by a Magistrates Court.

The footage will be posted on the Council's 'Caught on Camera' webpage at [www.bedford.gov.uk/caughtoncamera](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/caughtoncamera). If you recognise a vehicle or an individual, you can let the Council know on that webpage. This will assist the Council in deciding if an offence has been committed.

Fly-tipping is a criminal offence which costs the Council thousands of pounds to clean up. It can also be a hazard to local people and wildlife and is a real blight on the environment.

### **New Exhibition at The Higgins - 29 January 2022 – 15 January 2023 Edward Bawden Exhibition: Artist Plantsman**

Artist Plantsman, a new exhibition exploring influential British artist and designer, Edward Bawden (1903-1989), and his lifelong love of plants and gardens, opened at The Higgins Bedford on Saturday 29 January 2022.

Drawn exclusively from the Edward Bawden archive, this exhibition invites visitors to discover Bawden's love of plants and gardens through a wide range of his work, including early wallpaper designs, well-known prints, advertising campaigns and private commissions.

Exotic and favoured plants have been weaved throughout much of Bawden's work, with ivy tendrils wrapped around wallpaper and exhibition invitation designs, whilst architectural plants like gunnera, hosta and hogweed act as framing devices for images of gardeners and greenhouses.

From the grand gardens of Carthage and the botanical gardens at Kew, to Bawden's own gardens at his parent's home in Braintree and his beloved one-acre plot in Great Bardfield, visitors can see Bawden's passion for plants and gardens across decades of his work, featuring pieces that have never before been on public display.

Visitors will also be able to see The Bilstoe Garden Seat on permanent display. Bawden was commissioned to make it in 1956, resulting in a combination of tradition and modernity patterned with a spider's web-like design.

Artist Plantsman is free to visit and will run until 15 January 2023.  
Visit The Higgins Bedford website for more information at  
[www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk](http://www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk).

Councillor Jon Abbott

Telephone 07784 549180

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



## THE STEVIINGTON 12K HAS TURNED 40!

Probably making it Bedfordshire's longest running event.

This year's race is being held on **Sunday 8 May at 11am** and is open to all comers of 17 years old and upwards and is a great event for club and fun runners alike.

As most of you know the course takes runners via the villages of Oakley and Pavenham in an anti-clockwise direction returning to Stevington Village Hall for the finish line.

The event is family friendly with hot and cold refreshments, a licensed bar, BBQ, children's playground and plenty of parking.

We welcome everyone from the village to join in as a spectator or maybe run!

Trophies will be presented to the 1st Senior Male, 1st Senior Female, 1st Veteran Male, 1st Veteran Female plus 1st Stevington resident. Finishing times range from 40 to 95 mins with no cut off time. A perfect distance for a PB!

The Stevington 12k is managed and run by volunteers from the village to raise funds for the maintenance and support of the village hall and playing field. Advance online entry fees are £20.00 non-UK Athletic or £18.00 for UK Athletic affiliated members. On the day entry is welcome but incurs an additional £4.

Please see the website for more details about the event: [www.stevington12k.uk](http://www.stevington12k.uk).

Will Stanbridge



# Stevington Guitar Concerts

We are delighted to have booked Jule Malischke to travel from Germany to play for our next gig.

Supported by Kelvin Davies and Gary Jones

**Saturday 23 April**

Doors open 7.15pm. Show starts 7.45pm

Tickets go on sale Tuesday 1 March from  
[www.stevingtonguitarconcerts.co.uk](http://www.stevingtonguitarconcerts.co.uk) at £20



## **Jule Malischke**

Jule is a classical guitarist who also plays jazz, folk, blues, and her own material. She is a great singer who brings a show with a huge diversity of musical styles. She is an internationally recognised musician of the highest standard. Clive Carroll, one of the best acoustic guitarists in the world, described Jule as one of the most exciting musicians he had seen in recent years. Recommendations don't come any higher than that.

Jule is travelling from Germany specially to play in our village. Without your support over the last 15 years this could never have happened.

## **Kelvin Davies & Gary Jones**

Kelvin Davies already has an amazing portfolio of work behind him including several plays on the BBC Radio 2 Cerys Matthews Blues Show. The great guitar work and singing of this young country blues artist brings



songs of the 20's and 30's to life, as well as an increasing selection of self-penned numbers. Kelvin has played at some fantastic venues such as the 100 Club, Cambridge Junction, Dingwalls, The Bedford, as well as various folk and blues festivals throughout the UK.



## **Primrose Unit Bedford Hospital**

Proceeds from the concert, after costs, will be donated to Bedford Hospital Primrose unit which has touched the lives of so many.

We would be very grateful for raffle prizes for this good cause. Please get in touch with me or Barbara Collins if you wish to donate.

John Duffield



**WaveLength**

**Stevington**

At the beginning of the year Stevington Wavelength group began meeting again to explore IT glitches, online safety on phones, tablets and PCs. We meet at 11.00am on the last Saturday of the month in the Church Room.

Our meetings are very informal, hopefully lots of fun and always involve tea and biscuits. Everyone is welcome. If you are good with phones and tablets and would like to help us please get in touch.

Living in a rural community is lovely but can be challenging particularly if you don't drive. As more and more services are difficult to access without going online, we try to de-mystify the whole www. thing and make it easy for people to access services. We have some tablets which anyone is free to borrow to practise in their own time at home.

We have been fortunate to have been awarded grants to purchase tablets and install Wi-Fi in the Church Room. Our existing grants will be spent by the summer so we are looking for some help to pay for our Wi-Fi in the Church Room for the next year. If anyone knows of an organisation, company or individual who might be minded to make a donation to help us keep our group going we would love to hear from you. Ideally, we are looking for £300 but any donation would be gratefully received.

John Duffield  
duffieldjc@gmail.com

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# Sponsored Bike 'n Hike

BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

**THIS YEAR'S BIKE 'N HIKE WILL BE ON SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER '22**

The planning team for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust Bike 'n Hike does not meet until the end of March, but the Chairman has told me that they will be trying to get it back to pre-Covid-19 detail as far as possible.

This means:

1. The date is fixed.
2. Registers of Visitors were popular - look out for more detail to be re-introduced.
3. Visitors will be welcome to wander around the inside of churches if the individual parishes permit.
4. Refreshments will be up to the individual parish. Stevington has a high reputation for this!
5. Well-sponsored numbers taking part are essential. Half of the sponsored cash (£100k last year!) returns to each parish taking part.

**PLEASE BOOK THIS DATE AND LOOK OUT FOR MORE DETAIL IN THE NEXT MAGAZINE.**

Any queries to:

Stevington Representative, Bob Hart  
01234 823769 or email [roberthart234@btinternet.com](mailto:roberthart234@btinternet.com).

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## QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

THURSDAY 2ND JUNE TO SUNDAY 5TH JUNE 2022

A programme of events is planned in the village for the jubilee and below are some dates for your diary. Other events are being planned and information will be available nearer the time.

Official information about events nationally can be found at [www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend](http://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend).

Thursday  
2 June  
8:45pm

### **Beacon lighting** at the playing field.

Richard Galley has kindly agreed to play the music selected to be played nationally prior to beacons being lit throughout the country.

Saturday  
4 June

### **Live music** at the Royal George in the evening.

Sunday  
5 June  
12 noon  
Onwards

### **Join the Big Lunch**

Bring a picnic up to the playing field and catch up with family and friends in the village. The hall and bar will be open with a marquee in case of bad weather. More details to follow.



### **Tree Planting**

Trees to be planted at the top of the playing field as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. Date to be arranged.

### **Decorating the village**

Thanks to the Women's Institute who will be decorating the Cross.

Do you have a lion head fire hydrant outside your house? If you would like to decorate it for the Jubilee please let the Clerk or Janet Day know.



## STEVINGTON SANTAS



Thanks to all those who joined in the Christmas spirit and persuaded the red-coated visitor to stay a while. There were no

prizes, but the largest must have been along Park Road leaning against a conifer, while in Church Road, Santa had hauled his sack up the wall on his way from the North Pole, watched by a garden sitter just down the road. The preacher was seen outside the chapel, while another was riding on his sledge in Silver Street, just a few doors down from his colleague doing a nice turn on top of the bins, close to where another kept guard by the front door.



If it all caused a smile, it was worth the effort.

Peter Evans

*Photos from Andy Frost, Clare Boniface, The Griffiths Family, Helen Dunster, Jen Thompson & Peter Evans.*



## **STEVINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

SEG is your local community group supporting efforts to protect and enhance the Stevington parish landscape and river. Please do join the group, contribute to discussions and support our growing environmental activities.



### **SEG Communications**

Since our last report, we have made efforts to improve how we communicate with local residents. We now have a Facebook group called Stevington Environmental Group. I very much hope you will join the conversation on Facebook. We have also set up an SEG WhatsApp group for residents who want to take a more active role in SEG activities. If you would like to join this WhatsApp group, please email me with your mobile phone number and I will add you to the group. We have an SEG email address now, seg@btinternet.com so please use this email address on any matters related to SEG.

### **SEG Interest groups**

#### YES Group

With Christmas celebrations, Covid-19 limitation and school priorities, it's been a difficult time to organise meetings and events over December and January for our enthusiastic young environmentalists, but the group is planning to meet in the coming weeks so please get in touch.

#### Biodiversity Group

The main priority of the group since November has been to agree a plan for planting trees for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (see below). As spring approaches, the group will be happy to answer residents' questions and provide advice related to wildlife friendly gardens, hedge cutting and mowing of lawns, as well monitoring the footpaths and bridleways. See Jacky's Green tips. Please do get in touch if you need SEG guidance on any environmental matters. We were delighted to hear about Tim Stanbridge's 5-year environmental plan to encourage birds and pollinators on all 164 acres of his farm. SEG will be providing whatever support we can to ensure its success.

#### Renewables and Energy Group

Over the past two months, the group has focused on organising talks and activities to learn about insulation and heating and what we can do to reduce our carbon footprint. The first talk was given on Zoom by

Nikki Bulteel on "Passiv Haus" design. The talk showed us what can be achieved through insulation if tackled at the house design stage.

In January four members of the group had thermal surveys taken of their homes by Anthony Walker of Thermosurvey Ltd. A thermal survey involves the taking of pictures with a camera sensitive to infrared light which shows where heat is being lost from the house. Following the surveys Anthony gave a presentation at Yew Tree House Barn, on what we should be looking for to insulate our homes better. Examples of key points that were identified were, (i) the need to check that loft hatch doors are insulated, (ii) that your cavity wall insulation may not be as good as it could be, especially if you have any hip joints in your roof (iii) Doors are often poorly insulated and draughty. The old-fashioned thick curtain across the door can be a great help with door insulation.

On Wednesday 23 February we held a talk on "The Climate Agenda after COP26" given by Sir Stephen Gomersall in the Village Hall. The talk was well received by all who attended and raised £630 for the charity SMART. A review of this talk, and all of the other talks we have had, will be pasted on the SEG Facebook page with links to slides and video recordings.

### Stevington Flood Group

The Stevington flood group has now been established with the backing of the Parish Council. The group will be supported by and liaise with the Bedford Borough Council Flood Forum and will be managed through SEG. Our first meeting was held on 8 February when Melanie Bright (Senior Flood Risk Officer Bedford Borough Council) gave an informative presentation with examples of Flood Plans developed by other parishes along the Great Ouse Valley, as well as answering some of our questions. Our first task is to develop a flood management plan for Stevington which is commensurate with the (currently low) level of flood risk in the village. Our next meeting with the BBC Flood Risk Officer will be on 9 March.

### **Queen's Platinum Jubilee (QPJ)**

Following discussions with the Parish Council and Stevington Social Centre Committee, SEG now have support to plant three trees to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee in June at the top of the village playing field. The trees, an Oak and two Rowans, will be selected, bought and planted over the next few days and will be maintained by SEG to ensure they thrive in that location and are ready for QPJ celebrations in June.



We are also planning a nature walk around the parish as part of the QPJ celebrations with opportunities to identify bird, insect and plant species through direct observation or through listening to the soundscape of our Stevington environment.

### **SEG Governance News**

At the last Parish Council meeting it was agreed that SEG will become an independent group from the Parish Council and will build more formal links with the Bedfordshire Great Ouse Valley Environmental Trust. This will enable SEG to access appropriate banking, insurance and safeguarding cover needed for its growing SEG activities. SEG will, however, retain its link to the Parish Council by mandating the inclusion of a parish councillor in the group, who will liaise between the SEG and the SPC, providing feedback and guidance, as needed, on environmental issues.

### **Planning for the Future**

There will be an extraordinary meeting of the Stevington Parish Council on 8 June to explore its environmental policies, before the Stevington NDP is updated in 2025. This meeting will be open to the public. We want your ideas for a 5 to 10 year vision plan for the village. We would like to hear your thoughts about local developments, house insulation, energy management, biodiversity, noise, light and other forms of pollution as they affect Stevington. Further details will be provided on this event in subsequent issues of the magazine.

### **Did you know that.....**

Like trees, hedgerows lock up vast amounts of carbon and store it in their roots and leaves and in the soil. Up to thirteen million tonnes of carbon can be stored this way, equivalent to a quarter of all the yearly emissions from UK farming. Our hedges also have many environmental benefits; they're easier to place into a landscape than whole woods and, once in place and properly managed, they help manage water flows in ditches, protect crops and animals from extreme weather, they provide food, shelter and an incredible habitat for birds. Every gardener, farmer and land manager in our parish can enhance local biodiversity through our hedges. However, we need to ensure they are environmentally managed. Allow them to grow and bush out where not impacting road safety, maintain and replace them as they age or succumb to disease.

John Strutt



## STEVINGTON VILLAGE HALL

*stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk*

The Hall is finally back to normal operating and is seeing a slow but steady increase in use of the facilities. We now have a regular cleaner who is working hard to keep everything spic and span - thank you to Amy and to the several people who have commented how good the Hall is looking.

If you are interested in booking the Hall for a private event, you can easily check availability on the calendar on the website, [stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](http://stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk). 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 on the website, [stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk](http://stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk).

It was lovely to see so many people visiting the **Art & Crafts event** at the end of November. All exhibitors were Stevington residents or have close links with the village - who knew we have such a talented community? Apart from enjoying the work on display and doing some early Christmas shopping, it was a great opportunity to socialise over a cup of tea and delicious home-made cakes. Thank you to the many bakers who donated cakes and to the WI who not only made cakes but also ran the kitchen over the weekend.



For the first time in many years, we ran a **Christmas party** for children and grandchildren of village residents. Entertainment, greatly enjoyed by adults and children alike, was provided by Krisgar, including a magic show, children's games and competitions. After the show, a local Santa took time out of his busy pre-

*Photo courtesy of Amy Bentham*

Christmas schedule to give presents to the children, provided by a very generous donor. Our huge thanks to Becky Kent and Vikki Atkinson who took on much of the planning and organisation and whose efforts made it such a success. Thank you also to those who baked cakes and assisted with refreshments.

**Regular activities** in the Hall 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. See the Stevington Cinema article for details. To receive updates and performance details, subscribe to the mailing list via [stevingtoncinemaclub.uk](http://stevingtoncinemaclub.uk) or keep an eye on the village hall website and posters on the Cross.

**Forthcoming events**

- **Stevington 12K Race - Sunday 8 May 2022.** This year is the 40th anniversary of the race. We hope to see you there, either as a spectator or participant - still plenty of time to start training.
- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee - Sunday, 5th June 2022:** 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 to take you up on your offer at an appropriate time.

Linda Penney  
Stevington Village Hall

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[office@stevingtonbaptistchurch.org](mailto:office@stevingtonbaptistchurch.org)

## STEVINGTON CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Luckily we have not been disrupted by Covid-19 although there was a mother and son scare - fortunately both are OK.

Our regulars are still turning up weekly, so far no arguments between us! It's a happy club.

We did forfeit our meeting on St Valentine's Day as the Romeo and Juliet ballet was being screened. (Romance has to be accommodated doesn't it?)

The club will not be open on 18 April (Easter Monday) nor 2 May (Spring Bank Holiday). Our AGM will be on Monday 25 April 2022 being the culmination of an 'interesting' two years.

Looking forward to the summer months and, hopefully, Covid-19 fading away.

Take care everybody, we hope that we'll have more interesting news in June.

Barbara Collins



## COMMUNITY SHOP

Firstly we would like to wish June a speedy recovery from her recent stay in hospital. We look forward to seeing her back to herself again. She has been greatly missed.

The shop is continuing to support our community and thank you to our volunteers who make this possible. We still need more of you to come forward to volunteer to enable us to open in the afternoons - please get in touch if you can help. Also the shop needs your support, if you are not around during the week, we are open Saturday mornings, so why not pop down and check it out.

Lastly we were very sorry to hear that Ken Allcroft passed away. He was a volunteer with us in the early days and a lovely person. We would like to send his family our condolences.

Take care everyone.

From Jackie Ward and the Committee

## STEVINGTON MAGAZINE - A SHORT HISTORY (COMPILED FOR THIS 200TH EDITION)

During the Easter 1972 meeting of the Parochial Church Council, the idea of a village news sheet was put forward. At that time St. Mary's Church produced a one-page monthly newsletter for distribution to members of the congregation. The idea was welcomed by both Rev. Donald Macrory and Frank Trout of the Baptist Meeting and the enthusiastic response to the idea resulted in a small committee - Avis Clayton, Paul Middleton and Rev. Donald Macrory - being set up. The end

74  
*The  
Stevington  
Magazine*



product was the first edition of the Stevington Magazine in October 1972, with Paul Middleton as Editor. Between 230 and 250 copies were produced, and distribution around the village was organised by Bet Bird and Peggy Chadburn. The magazine was initially produced monthly, though by 1977 it had become quarterly. Paul continued as Editor until 1984 when Ray Wood took over the reins for 12 months. November 1985 saw the last issue until in 1986 the Parish Council distributed a newsletter asking, amongst other things, for volunteers to produce the magazine. Frankie George and Pat Pickup offered their services and for 12 months produced the magazine as a joint effort. Unfortunately, Frankie was unable to continue owing to other commitments, so from 1988 until December 2011 Pat continued as Editor, with a great deal of help from Ian. March 2012 saw the first issue produced by Heather and Keith Parkinson - who are still in post today.

From the beginning to the present the Editor(s) and distributors have, of course, all been volunteers. Production of the Magazine in the early days was, to say the least, a little eccentric. From 1986 the copy was input using an Acorn Electron Computer, to which was attached an electric typewriter. Albert Markham took the final copy to Stimpsons Eves whose in-house printer produced the required number of copies. The cost of the paper was covered by the generosity of Barbara Davies who donated the small sum of money she was paid as the Beds. Times village correspondent. The magazines were collated and folded by the Editors. Of course, things are very different now with high powered

computers, publishing software and electronic transfer of data (in this case the Magazine) to the printer.

In issue no 62 (July 1987), the village directory was first introduced - although it was then called the Colour Supplement.

By issue 63, dated November 1987, we had lost our 'free printing' and the Parish Council paid for the production of this issue. So now we had to find a way of making the Magazine self-financing. In the Editorial we asked for anyone who could offer free printing, or for businesses willing to pay to advertise. Charging for each copy of the magazine as a way of paying our way was considered but decided against as this would be a more difficult and time-consuming way of raising funds. As it turned out we very quickly found sufficient advertisers to cover our costs.

March 1988 carried our first advertisements - Michael & Anne Carnt at the Post Office & General Store, Cowley Di Giorgio Solicitors, Oakley Garage, The Royal George, Enterprise Motors (Colin George's garage in Dean Street, Bedford), Cecil Freeman Butcher, The Red Lion, Inskips Architects & Surveyors, K. Watson Ltd Coal Merchant and someone at 34 Court Lane who sold carpets.

September 1988 was the first issue to be 'stitched' (or stapled to you and me). Mr. Roy Keech who lived in Silver Street kindly volunteered his services and continued until 1994. Also in this issue we have a report from Eddie Dawson, Stevington's first Home Watch Co-ordinator.

Until 1987 the cover illustration was the same as on the original church newsletter. So, following suggestions from some villagers, a competition was launched to find a new cover for the magazine. Unfortunately, there was only one entrant - Ian Jones of 34 Park Road - so he got the prize of a £10 book token, and we used his design until March 1991, when we had our first coloured cover. In this issue we also initiated our second 'Cover Competition', with a prize of £10 for the winner. We had ten entries and, with the help of three anonymous villagers (who did not know the identities of the entrants), we ended up



Cover Nov 1987-Mar 1991

with an adult winner - Jackie Gooding - and joint under-16 winners - Jessica Fraser and Harriet Cole. We used their drawings alternately on the covers until 1997.

In the late 1990s the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity ran various village award schemes in conjunction with partners from industry. In 1997 the Stevington Magazine won first prize, in the Village Newsletter category, for 'Widest Community Involvement'. As winner the magazine received a cheque for £100, a certificate and The George Wood Shield - to be held for one year. The following year the theme for village newsletters was 'Is your Newsletter the Best?'. This time we came joint runner up with Shefford Newslin and Village Link of Wrestlingworth. The winner was Gravenhurst Grapevine.



**Special Edition  
April 1998**



**STEVINGTON**

**MAGAZINE**

To celebrate issue number 100 a 48 page 'Stevington Magazine Special Edition' appeared in April of 1998. This was partly funded by a grant from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. It contained articles and poems suggested and specially written by members of the village, and sketches provided by a number of village artists and some which had appeared in The Bedfordshire Magazine.

From March 1999 to December 2002 the cover sketches were supplied by John Goddard who, very efficiently, produced four different sketches of Stevington houses each year, so that there was a different cover each issue. Also in 2002 Betty Bird retired from her 30-year service as the organiser of magazine distribution. After a short time Anna Hart took this over.

Issue No 64 saw the first of Jackie Gooding's now familiar sketches. She was later joined by Anne Stileman who, in 2003, moved

from producing artwork for inside the magazine to supplying cover sketches (which she did for two years), and Margaret Pryn joined the team to help Jackie with the inside sketches. In 2006 Jackie Gooding supplied the cover artwork, inspired by aspects of the village, before Mike Robinson took over - returning to the theme of village buildings - from 2007 to 2009. It was then that Bob Westwood took on this challenging task.

Over the years, although the aim financially was to 'break even' this very rarely happened. There was a fairly 'thin' time in 1999 when various individuals and clubs in the village saved the day by 'Adopting a Page'. By the end of the millennium things were back on an even keel. In fact, the magazine generally made a modest profit which, over the years, made it possible for donations to be made to the Social Centre, St. Mary's Church, Baptist Chapel and finally the Football Club when they had to purchase a new gang mower for the upkeep of the playing field. In 2017 and 2021 two loans were made to the Historical Society (which have been paid back in full) to help with raising funds to get two of their books printed. They had to pay all of the costs up front and only got the revenue when the books were sold.

The charity donations for Christmas greetings began in 1995. They started off slowly with only five greetings appearing, but they have gradually grown in number until last December when there were thirty-nine greetings. The amount collected has, of course, also increased starting with £46.50, rising to £877 (plus gift aid) in December 2021. Donations have gone to numerous charities, with a different one each year.

So you can see that the Stevington Magazine has come a long way in its 50-year history. It's actual 50th birthday will be in October this year, and this issue is number 200. It is amazing that there have been volunteers in all those years ready and willing to keep its flag flying! Thank you and congratulations to them all.



- 6 -

Pat Pickup

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



We were able to hold our Cheese and Wine party to celebrate our Christmas meeting in the Church Room. During the meeting we held a beetle drive and a game of boggle. It seemed that a little bit of normality had returned!

Unfortunately we came down with a bump in January. Due to the high Covid-19 infection rates it was decided to hold the meeting once again on Zoom. Our speaker from the CPRE expressed a wish to give her talk 'face to face' so we once again postponed this until June. A food and drink quiz was arranged and Frances was the overall winner. Some discussions took place regarding the resolutions and members were asked to make their choice either at the meeting or by the end of the month.

February saw us back in the Church Room with a visit from the East Anglian Air Ambulance which provides helicopter emergency medical services, 24/7, across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. Lynne explained that not only did they provide this service but also offer aftercare support to patients and their families with their recoveries. They are funded by donations so it is important to support this wonderful organisation.

Hopefully for our March meeting our speaker will be advising on relaxation techniques - a much needed talk at the present time!

We are still managing some local walks - trying to avoid the muddy paths.

Our book club is still thriving.

Three of our members will be taking part at the end of February in the County Quiz.

Dates for your diary:

Thurs 10 Mar	Relaxation techniques - Mr. Dimmock
Mon 4 Apr	Walkers' lunch
Thurs 14 Apr	Craft evening
Thurs 12 May	Annual meeting
Sat 21 May	Produce Stall at the Cross
Mon 23 May	Walkers' lunch

Marilyn Billett



**BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE**  
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I am writing to introduce myself; I am Mark HANCOCK your local Community Officer. As part of my role, I have the responsibility to cover Wootton, Bromham, Biddenham, Clapham, Great Denham, Kempston Rural, Oakley, Pavenham, Stagsden, Stevington and Turvey in relation to community concerns. I have previously been a response officer in Bedfordshire Police and have also worked in Bedfordshire Police Domestic Unit "EMERALD", meaning I have had experience in working with vulnerable people in difficult situations. I've always liked to talk to people, and I enjoy looking after the community and making people feel safe. I feel that my previous job roles, as well as my life experience has provided me with skills that I can use in my role in the community within Bedfordshire Police.

I am patrolling the area on a regular basis, and I would love to see more of you out and about within your areas and at future events. I am very approachable, so if you see me around, please come and talk to me, as I'm always keen to hear what's been going on. One way to inform us about the issues arising in your area is to complete 'Have your say surveys' at [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BedsPoliceHaveYourSay](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BedsPoliceHaveYourSay) or the QR code below, which decides the priorities throughout the year. Currently, our community priority is combating speeding, however, depending on data, this is subject to change.



You may see us walking about on patrol or see our social media posts about how to keep yourselves safe, but we still need your help. If you see anything that looks suspicious, please report it, by calling 101 or use the online reporting tool at: [www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report](http://www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report). It's very important that you tell me what's going on, so that we can make a difference within your community.

## MOTHS AND ASTRONOMERS

A strange combination, but what do they both abhor? Light Pollution. What is it, and why has it got worse recently?

The running cost of LED bulbs has dropped so much that it has encouraged many to keep their outside lights switched on through the night. It still costs, but not as much as it would have done with the older 500W floodlights, which would only have been activated by a motion sensor and come on for a few minutes.

Walk outside at night on a clear night and try to identify planets and stars, and you will see the light pollution from Bedford and Milton Keynes quite easily, let alone the lights from the gardens next door, which prevent you from seeing stars in those directions.

Why moths? Here I am on shaky scientific knowledge, but I think the night moths fix on what they think is the moon and use that to navigate. If a brighter closer light appears, they think it is the moon, and the maths suggests that they then spiral towards that light, and .....

What can you do? Please install a motion sensor in your outside lights, rather than keep them on all night. I don't think that should make your property more susceptible to burglars etc, and you should recoup the cost of the motion sensor fairly quickly.

Robert Eadie

P.S. If you haven't seen Venus over the past few weeks in the early morning, if it's clear, and you throw open your curtains around 6:30 – 6:45am, look towards the East where the sun is about to rise, and slightly to the right/south of the sunrise, you should see Venus beaming at you almost at its brightest at the moment.

### CHOIR

After two years of Covid-19 hiatus we plan to restart our village choir in time for Easter Service at St Mary's. The first rehearsal will be on Tuesday 15 March at 7pm in the Church Room. If you think you can sing in tune, (even if you cannot read music) we can help build confidence and you would be very welcome to join us.

Andrew Young  
youngastev@outlook.com

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## STEVEINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

With most New Year's resolutions long since consigned to history, the Baptist Church is well into its forward-looking programme. The first afternoon tea of the year was one of the best yet with people taking every opportunity to catch up with others whom they had not seen for a long time.

As this article is written, the season of Lent is nearly present so the day before, is Shrove Tuesday, better known to most as pancake day: that was on 1 March and Ash Wednesday, the following day, begins a time when Christians look ahead to Easter, that glorious day when God brought His Son, Jesus Christ, to life, opening the door wide to eternal life for true believers.

The next afternoon teas will be on 23 March, 27 April and 25 May at 3pm.

The past quarter however saw the death of two stalwarts of the chapel, namely Joyce Keech and Richard Warwick. Joyce died on 14 December and Richard three days later.

### Joyce Keech 1925 - 2021

.Via the telephone, Joyce kept incredibly close contact with all that was happening in the village, even after she had moved to Turvey and later to Chipping Norton. Indeed, on hearing of her passing, another villager - herself well up-to-date with current events - commented: "However shall we now find out what is happening in Stevington!" More about Joyce is written elsewhere in this issue.

### Richard Warwick 1929 - 2021

Richard, who was 92, arrived in Stevington when he was six weeks old and years later married Betty, the daughter of the then minister, the Rev Victor Whittle. He was an active supporter of the village football club and served as their trainer in the 1950s. While employed at Allen's, Vauxhall and Igranic, when those companies were part of the Bedford scene in Ampthill Road, Richard was part of the works fire brigades. He had seen service in the Royal Navy and was a deacon and treasurer at the chapel, during which time he was also a well-known figure on the hoopla stall at church fetes. He was an excellent baker and always made the hot cross buns on Good Friday and the sheaf of corn for display at Harvest Festival.



His sporting interests remained strong in later life, encourage by Frank James, the leader of the chapel. He would be one of a quartet regularly travelling to watch Northamptonshire County Cricket Club. Richard moved back to Stevington and lived with his sister, Joyce Aspley, in Court Lane until, after a fall, he transferred to a home in Meppershall.

Peter Evans



## **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:

March:	9 and 23	April:	6 and 20
May:	4 and 18	June:	1, 15 and 29

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



## ST MARY'S MATTERS

After a somewhat muted Christmas period, we are gradually getting into the new routine for services, slightly modified since Lynne has now moved on to pastures new. We are generally scheduled for two Eucharists a month, and usually one Morning and one Evening Prayer.

Repair work on St Mary's continues and is expected to finish towards the end of February.

### **Churchyard maintenance**

Responsibility for the contract for maintenance of the Churchyard (mowing and strimming) has now been handed to the PCC rather than the Parish Council. This leaves us with a financial problem. After many years of being able to finance this maintenance, the Parish Council now finds itself unable to finance it fully, though we are grateful for the grant that they have given us.

So the PCC has to pick up some additional costs at a time when we too are struggling, and a suggestion has been made that families of recent interments might be happy to contribute, to ensure that the churchyard does not again get into the state it did in 2021. We are aware that many people already perform a great deal of maintenance and tidying of the site, and are of course very grateful for this help.

If you feel that you or your family would like to donate, either a single or a regular sum, please do contact me, or our Treasurer John Hirst.

There is a potential problem with people planting spring bulbs rather randomly around the Churchyard. At an existing family grave, some small plantings are fine, but bulbs are now springing up at various other places amongst the grass. We are very keen to encourage native wild flowers, and indeed we have just had a visit from Judith Evans who promotes the St Alban's Living Churchyards Project and Lizzy from the Wildlife Trust, who have given us advice on the best way to encourage biodiversity in the Churchyard. However, some of the planted bulbs are non-native species which could dominate the native wild flowers, and could be a major problem for mowing maintenance. Please do ask for permission if you would like to donate any plants, apart from in the

vicinity of an existing family grave, so that we can help advise on the best species and places to plant.

### **Two more pleas**

We have two more requests that we hope villagers might be able to help with. Firstly, our Church and Church Room cleaner, Jules Knight (whom I am sure many will know), has decided that the time has come to hand in her mop and polish, and we are looking for someone who might take on the role. Hours and rates of pay to be negotiated.

Secondly, our PCC (the group/committee who run St. Mary's and the Church Room) are keen to recruit fresh blood. You don't need to be a committed churchgoer, or even 'religious', but just have an interest in helping us manage and keep these two buildings surviving, and vibrant, for generations to come.

### **Easter services**

Palm Sunday	10 April	9:30am	Turvey
			Shared service of Holy Communion
Good Friday	15 April	2.00pm	Stevington
			Service of Contemplation
Easter Day	17 April	9:30am	Stevington
			Easter Communion

Robert Eadie  
Churchwarden  
07791 674976 or robert@eadies.org.uk



### **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**

## GREEN TIPS MARCH 2022

### Wildlife friendly spring cleaning

Watching how you wash and clean is an easy way to help out wildlife. Some of our favourite washing-up liquids and cleaning products can be harmful to wildlife with long-lasting effects because not all the damaging chemicals are removed in water treatment works. Environmentally responsible brands use sustainable methods of manufacture to make cleaning products which contain soap and plant-derived chemicals which break down quickly into their harmless constituents.

Simpler still, use a few things from your larder.

- Distilled malt vinegar mixed 50:50 with water removes both grime and limescale from hard surfaces and used with scrunched up newspaper it leaves windows and mirrors smear-free.
- Half a used lemon is a lovely fresh scented alternative for worktops and draining boards, just polish it up well.
- Scouring with bicarbonate of soda removes grease and smells and the fizzing mixture when sprinkled down a plug hole followed by a glug of vinegar freshens drains.
- A salt and vinegar scrub is good for removing mould from grout.

### Greener money

Where we put our money can make a real difference to the environment by shifting our support from damaging industries to those that are making positive changes. There are lots of options now for ethical banking, mortgages and pensions and, if you are lucky enough, savings. Look online for the Which? Guide to ethical banking.

### No Mow May

Do you remember washing insects off your windscreen? The steep decline in insect numbers means this is a thing of the past. It also means there are far fewer insects to feed birds and bats, function as predators on pests and to pollinate flowers. Doing nothing for parts of your lawn can help to reverse this. You might get a few daisies or a really flowery carpet. Either way the longer grass will shelter a wider variety of bugs, beetles and insects than the very short grass.

The organisation Plantlife is behind the No Mow May campaign. Town parks and stately homes as well as gardeners across Britain and in Stevington now make a decorative feature of this contrast of mown and unmown grass.

On the Plantlife website there are easy instructions for joining their citizen science survey: Every Flower Counts which takes place the end of May.

Plantlife follow this with Let it Bloom June and Knee High July for longer areas of grass. Mowing to get areas of short, medium and long grass is the ideal for catering for the needs of the widest range of invertebrates.

Jacky Gooding  
on behalf of the Stevington Environmental Group



## *The Friends of* ST MARY'S CHURCH

FOSM are looking forward to being able to organise a series of events during the coming year, without social distancing and lockdowns that have had such a big impact on our activities.

That said we decided not to hold our annual quiz in April, believing that despite Covid-19 restrictions being lifted, it was too soon to invite 60 people to sit in close proximity sharing a meal and whispering possible answers to each other.

Our church and Church Room play a valued part of village life; many people choose not to attend church regularly these days but value its role for christenings, weddings and funerals. The cost of maintaining the buildings increases each year and FOSM is a way for members of our community to ensure the church and Church Room remain available for us all to use.

You can join Friends of St. Mary's Church by visiting our web page on the St. Mary's Church website.

We are always pleased to receive new ideas for fund raising initiatives that we could organise or that you would like to run on our behalf.

John Duffield

## 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! 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 and private functions.

EVERY MONTH four lucky winners receive a cash prize. The 100 Club still has a few numbers available, so try your luck and support your village hall.

To join please contact Hugo at [hugovankempen0@gmail.com](mailto:hugovankempen0@gmail.com) or on 01234 824894.

These are the most recent lucky winners:

<b>Dec</b>	£100	Nº 93	Barbara Cattermole
	£50	Nº 89	Sandra Sample
	£25	Nº 59	Mike Grafton
	£15	Nº 76	Terry Indge
<b>Jan</b>	£100	Nº 38	Pete Fisher
	£50	Nº 2	Roger Penney
	£25	Nº 90	A&J Webb
	£15	Nº 93	Barbara Cattermole
<b>Feb</b>	£100	Nº 18	Heather Eadie
	£50	Nº 15	Anne Frost
	£25	Nº 79	Mick Stalley
	£15	Nº 26	Lawrence Kay



Hugo van Kempen





## BEDFORD SAILING CLUB

Spring is coming!

We are again offering our popular FREE TASTER sessions for paddle board, sculling and canoeing, so book early!

Use of club facilities has slowed down over the winter with just a few hardy souls getting out on the water regularly in spite some strong wind conditions. With the imminent lifting of lockdown restrictions we continue to remain vigilant and active for those wishing to enjoy the outdoors.

Members can use a selection of club equipment for canoeing, paddle boarding, rowing and kayaking to explore the river Great Ouse or just relax in our idyllic riverside.

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).

The sailing club AGM will be held at 8pm Wednesday 23 March in the Royal George.

Hugo van Kempen



## STEVINGTON WI PLANT & PRODUCE STALL



**PLANTS - CAKES – JAM – CHUTNEY**

Everything that your village WI does best!



We will be at the Cross from  
**10am on Saturday 21 May.**

Don't be late or we will be sold out!



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Price based on 16 May 2022 departure, other dates may vary in price. Prices are per person based on two people sharing, subject to availability. E&OE

## GARDEN GRASS - GUIDELINES FOR ITS CARE IN THE SPRING

Lawn grass needs its leaf blades to grow and feed its root system to withstand extremes of temperature and drought.

Repeated mowing the lawn and you are weakening the root system, leading to patches where weeds will take root and a poor lawn quality during the summer just when you want to be outside enjoying it.

Healthy grass roots can grow down to 100mm (4"). Therefore in spring, do allow the grass to grow up by the same height 100mm (4") to get those new roots growing and to give you a healthy sustainable lawn.

If you would like to see wildlife in your garden and/or provide a much needed habitat and feeding place for birds and insects, do leave areas of it uncut for a few weeks or longer. Maybe choose areas alongside a hedge or link flowerbeds to create wildlife corridors in your garden.

Use fresh grass clippings as a mulch to suppress weeds and put nitrogen back into the soil or layer in the compost bin with leaves or dried material to fuel the composting process.

Susan Young  
(January 2022)



## STEVINGTON CINEMA SCREENING DIARY

<b>Date</b>	<b>Screening</b>	<b>Production</b>	<b>Type</b>
3 Mar	Ammonite		Film
10 Mar	Rigoletto	The Royal Opera	Live
7 Apr	Belfast		Film
13 Apr	La Traviata	The Royal Opera	Live
21 April	Henry V	Donmar Warehouse	Live
5 May	TBA		Film
19 May	Swan Lake	The Royal Ballet	Live
26 May	Straight Line Crazy	Bridge Theatre	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.

## FARMING NEWS

As you may or may not know all arable farming support subsidies will end in 2024. These were originally designed to maintain a continuity of supply and a stable price of food. However the public have voted to allow government to pay farmers support payments only for Public Goods (hereon PG), hence the phrase "Public Money for Public Goods". These PGs are (in no particular order) clean air, clean water, clean soil and clean environment. So instead of farmers receiving an area-based cheque for growing crops like wheat, oilseed rape, barley and dry pulses, they will receive payments for environmental projects and these will be results-based. So - at the end of a 5-year agreement say, if the project has no measurable objective success, payments will be withdrawn or reduced. This puts pressure on the farmer to do these projects well, rather than just go through the motions and ticking boxes.

Today ex-farm produce prices and are not high enough and input prices are not low enough for farmers to survive on margins from production alone. This means that all working farmers will have to abide by a set of environmentally favourable rules to be able to carry on producing food profitably. Some farmers may even give up growing food altogether and concentrate fully on environmental projects. What will happen to continuity of supply or the food price on the shelf anyone's guess - it *may* work but it also may not. We shall see.

Meanwhile Mill Farm have taken on working the land to the north of the parish, formerly owned by Jeremy Witherick who has sold up to a lady from Carlton. Fortunately she has been persuaded not to go down the "re-wilding" route and has settled on a three-year regenerative farming programme. Again this is not without it's pitfalls - will it make a positive difference to the biodiversity, or will it just make life difficult for the bloke who is farming it? What the general public do not seem to realise is that *farming well* in the past was never achieved by messing up the soil or the environment so (in my personal view - other views are available!), "regenerative" or "sustainable" farming are just new buzzwords given to old farming methodologies that we've employed for generations.

From 1 January this year Duck End Farm will be farmed under a 5-year environmental scheme to primarily encourage pollinators and wild birds across the entire acreage - this year's harvest of winter wheat and spring peas will be the last for a while, until the scheme ends in December 2026. Most of the area will be put down to flower and

herb-rich grazing pasture and there will be three large areas of crops providing winter bird food. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, it will be essential that the public keep to the recognised rights-of-way and keep dogs on short leads at all times. If we cannot increase the biodiversity on the farm, and it will be measured, we shall be penalised, fined, the farm will make a loss and it will have to return to an intensive farming method as before, if not more so. It will be very easy to think that the wide-open spaces that will result from the programme will appear to be a giant recreation ground - but it will actually be a very sensitive environmental area and the village's support will be needed if it is to work. Please.

The Farmers

## **The Composing Cook**

### **CARROT CAKE MUFFINS WITH ORANGE CREAM CHEESE ICING**

These muffins are so easy to make and very light in texture. One is never enough. Go on, give them a go.

#### **For The Carrot Cake Muffins**

- 2 large eggs
- 140ml vegetable oil
- 75g pecans
- 300g grated carrot (grated weight)
- 200g soft light brown sugar
- 100g sultanas
- 180g self raising flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon ground mixed spice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

#### **For The Orange Cream Cheese Icing**

- 140g icing sugar
- 125g cream cheese
- Grated zest of ½ orange
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 25g butter

Makes 12 Muffins

- Preheat oven to 180° Fan, 190°C, gas mark 6 and place 12 muffin cases into your muffin tin.
- Add the eggs to a large bowl and beat. Add the oil, pecans, carrots, brown sugar, sultanas and mix.
- Sift in the self raising flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt, mixed spice, cinnamon and nutmeg and mix well using a wooden spoon.
- Divide the mixture between the 12 muffin cases and bake for 20-25 minutes.
- Remove from oven and cool for 10 minutes before removing from muffin tin and placing on a cooling rack to cool completely.
- To make the Orange Cream Cheese Icing, place all the ingredients into a food processor and blitz until smooth and well combined.
- Using a spoon top each cooled muffin with the icing.
- Sit back, relax and devour.



Michael Antoniou

You can watch me make this recipe, amongst many others, by visiting my YouTube Channel, The Composing Cook. Just head over to: [www.YouTube.com/TheComposingCook](http://www.YouTube.com/TheComposingCook) and there you will find me. Happy Cooking.

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## **GARDEN BIRDS DISEASE AND HYGIENE**

### **Disease**

Wild birds are susceptible to a range of different diseases. Outbreaks of avian flu may occur in those visiting gardens. It is important to be able to recognise the signs of disease and to do what you can in your own garden to minimise the problem. Salmonella damages internal organs and may result in death within a matter of days. Colibacillosis is a disease caused by faecal contamination during March to May. Trichomonosis, a single-cell parasite is spread via food and drinking water freshly contaminated with saliva or possibly droppings. Growths on legs and feet can be caused by a number of agents of disease.

Feeding stations can be a source of disease to birds in gardens. Salmonella and E.coli bacterias are of particular concern because they can be infectious and may lead to a severe outbreak in bird populations under certain conditions. There are some general signs to look out for that would indicate that the bird is suffering from some form of disease. Affected birds often appear lethargic and reluctant to move away from the feeder and may be fluffed-up and show difficulty in swallowing food (food debris around the bill) or with swallowing water.

Evidence suggests that some bird species may be more susceptible to disease than others; examples include Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Siskins, House Sparrows and Collared Doves who are gregarious and tend to feed in flocks. In winter months when food can be scarce, disease transmission can be increased where birds gather together near a food source.

### **Prevention**

As treating sick birds is not practical for the owners of domestic gardens, it is helpful to take a proactive preventative approach to stop an outbreak occurring in the first place. It is also worth knowing that some birds are thought to act as carriers of disease and when they feed at bird tables or hanging feeders and may contaminate the food there.

One of the best things you can do is provide several feeding sites within your garden and not to place all the feeders in just one spot. This helps disperse the feeding birds over a larger area and reduces the potential for disease to build up. It is also important to move the feeding sites around, especially for where birds feed on the ground. By allowing areas to 'rest' you will be helping to reduce levels of contamination. Also think about where you position feeders in relation to other garden features, for example avoid placing a bird table under a tree where pigeons perch or roost as it can soon become heavily contaminated with droppings.

## **Design**

Hanging seed feeders often retain food within a clear plastic tube, giving a very low risk of the food becoming contaminated with droppings or getting wet and going mouldy. The RSPB offer a good range of this type of feeder some of which can be easily disassembled, enabling a thorough scrub with a bottle brush in hot soapy detergent, rinsed and left out to dry.

With good hygiene practice ground feeding trays be made safe from disease; look for one which keeps food dry.

## **Hygiene**

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of bird tables, bird baths and hanging feeders is an important part of good hygiene practice when feeding garden birds. It is also important not to provide more food than the birds visiting your garden need in a day. Ideally the bird tables should be swept clean each day to remove uneaten food and droppings. Table and other feeding surfaces should be disinfected on a weekly or fortnightly cycle using appropriate disinfectant for wildlife, thoroughly rinsed and air dried before reuse. Cleaning equipment should not be used for another purpose and used/kept only outside. Rubber gloves should be worn and hands and forearms washed thoroughly after handling or cleaning feeders. The ground between feeders may be kept clean by regular sweeping and by using disinfectant. Bird baths should also be cleaned in a similar manner.

## **Food Safety**

Purchase foods from reputable sources, especially peanuts. Any sign of mould is to be avoided as it contains dangerous toxins. The mould should be removed and the area disinfected. Bird food should be stored in a clean, dry and cool environment inaccessible to pests. This would minimise the risk of fungal or bacterial contamination and would also avoid encouraging rats and mice, which might also spread the disease further. Keep a regular check on bird food provided in hanging feeders and try not to overfill the feeders, otherwise uneaten food may remain there for too long a period.

For more information about the birds in your garden, look at the following websites or contact the RSPB 0345 034 7733 or the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) on 01842 750050. For bird products also look at Vine House Farm 01775 630208.

My thanks to the BTO for their Garden Birds Hygiene and Disease leaflet used to compile this article.

Susan Young - Park End Thatch

## INTRODUCING THE ANNE ROBSON HELPLINE

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU IS DYING, YOU CAN TALK TO US.**

At the Anne Robson Trust we aim to be there to listen to anyone who is struggling with the imminent death of someone they care about. We know that facing the end of life can leave you isolated and alone.

Calls are free and confidential - **Call us on 0808 801 0688**

Being able to access support whilst a loved one is dying is really important for a number of reasons. Gaining knowledge of what may happen towards the end and having a sense of 'preparedness' helps both the person dying and their family gain as much control as possible.

Please visit [www.annerobsontrust.org.uk/helpline-service](http://www.annerobsontrust.org.uk/helpline-service) to find out more.



time to  
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ANNE ROBSON TRUST  
Supporting Dying 11/2022

AnneRobson Trust logo

### WASTE COLLECTIONS

Month	Rubbish	Recycling	Green
March	8, 22	1, 15, 29	1, 15, 29
April	5, 19	12, 26	12, 26
May	3, 17, 31	10, 24	10, 24
June	14, 28	8, 21	8, 21





## THAT WAS THE NEWS THAT WAS

### **Cambridge Independent Press - 13/04/1872**

BEDFORD DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS. April 6.- Before Lieut.-Col. Stuart, Captain Polhill-Turner, the Rev. R. J. Chalk, and G. Higgins, Esq.- Alexander Field, Stevington, butcher, was fined 10s. 6d., including costs, for assaulting a boy named Andrew Waters.

### **The Bedfordshire Mercury - 05/09/1902**

FOOTBALL - The club is being re-started with Mr Roger Curtis as Captain.

Harvest on The Manor being finished, Mr Norman invited his farm employees to supper last Tuesday evening.

THE ROYAL GEORGE, Silver-street, was the scene of an interested gathering on Tuesday afternoon, when Mr Walter M. Peacock, of Bedford, put up to auction, building materials, furniture, poultry, &c., belonging to Mr George T. Poole, who is going out to South Africa.

### **The Ampthill And District News - 14/01/1911**

WOBURN SANDS STARS V STEVINGTON INSTITUTE - In view of Stevington's lowly position in the League, and the fact that the Stars won 4 - 0 at Stevington in the first match of the season, the Committee placed a Reserve team in the field on Saturday, when the return match was played at Woburn Sands. Some of the critics thought it a bit risky, but considering that the shortest possible time was played and the Stars scored 9 times without response, the Committee's action was quite justified. Stevington came on one at a time about an hour late, dressing as they came on the field, and one of their players had cycled straight from his work at Rushden. Stevington took no notice of the goals being piled on, but seemed to take them as a matter of course. The game was marred by continual offside tactics. The Stars were always pressing for goal, but the referee, Mr. Radford, of Leighton had to check them with the whistle many times. Stevington missed a penalty in the first half. One of the Stars accidentally handled, but Rogers skied it high over the cross-bar, the visitors changed their goalkeeper at half-time and did a bit better in the second half, the spectators cheering the Stevington goalie for some good clearances. The Stars' goals were scored by Griffin 4, Jenkins 3, and Stonebridge 2.

### **Bedfordshire Times and Independent - 30/08/1935**

MR. JOSEPH BIRD DEATH AT OAKLEY OF FORMER GAMEKEEPER  
- On 23rd August a respected inhabitant of Oakley. Mr. Joseph Bird,

died. Mr. Bird will be remembered by many who have fished at Oakley. He was a native of Kempston and his father used to drive the common stage wagon, drawn by four horses, between Bedford and London. It was interesting to hear him speak of his father's varied experience on the roads in those days. At an early age the late Mr. Bird entered the service of the Midland Railway Company, and later he was gamekeeper under the late Mr. Alfred White to the Duke of Bedford. He served on the estate for thirty-seven and half years until the property was sold in 1918. He was then retained by the late Lord Ampthill as water keeper for nine years.

Mr. Bird lived in the Park at Stevington for many years and then removed to Oakley. His first wife died some years ago, and on coming to Oakley he married Miss Margaret Macbeath. They built a home called "The White Bungalow", and there his young wife studied his comfort in every way. He often recalled a day's shooting with the Duke of Bedford and said that it meant a cart-load of game of both the fur and feather varieties. He felt very keenly the death of Lord Ampthill.

#### **Bedfordshire Times & Standard - 24/01/1947**

STEVINGTON FORGE HEATED AGAIN - New Blacksmith Found Horse Waiting! - When Mr. Richard Ruffhead, the Stevington blacksmith, died last summer, his business died with him, instead of having their horses shod in the village, farmers had to take them elsewhere, overworking the few remaining blacksmiths in other villages.

To take a horse to be shod was a day's work for a man, and that was not all for someone usually had to go to the blacksmith the day before to make an appointment. Stevington farmers are thus very pleased that the blacksmith's shop has a tenant. He is Mr. George Woods.

At eight o'clock on Monday morning Mr. Woods began his career as the Stevington blacksmith - and there was a horse ready for his attention. It had been sent by Mr. H. Prentice, of Manor Farm. Mr. A. J. Tandy of Hill Farm, and Mr. Smith, of Duck End, Stevington, were next on the list. No doubt they were pleased that it was no longer necessary to lose time going to Biddenham or Turvey.

Mr. Woods, the brother-in-law of the late Mr. Ruffhead, told our Agricultural Correspondent that he worked for 15 years as a blacksmith at Milton Ernest under the late Mr. Charles Clarke. Later, Mr. Woods worked for Messrs. W. H. Allen, Sons and Co. Ltd, in Bedford for 12 years as an acetylene burner, and for the past 18 months he had worked for Mr. H. Fields, of Stevington.

"I was approached by the local farmers to take over the 'smithy'," said Mr. Woods. "Mr. Horace Prentice bought the premises, and I am renting them from him. The farmers have promised to support me, and there will be plenty of work to do."

So Stevington's blacksmith problem has been solved, and Mr. Woods will be busy with his shoeing at 15s. a set which compares well with the 2s. 4d. or 2s. 8d. a set which was once all that the village blacksmith could get for his labour.

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Mark Jackson



## GARDENING TIPS AND INSPIRATION FROM PARK END THATCH

This late winter has been mainly dry to date of writing this article. So much for last year's wet spring! All plants need water to get them started off in spring, so as soon as you can see the buds coming do give your plants a nice long drink of water. I usually look for moss in the lawn grass at this time of year, however I hope to allow some areas of lawn to grow rough this year in support of No Mow May and the desperate need for a variety of food for our wildlife. Here is some further information for the curious and to those of you who like to keep up to date:

*Mown lawns 'may look neat, tidy and very green, but they are a wildlife desert. But what if a different approach was taken, with less frequent mowing, giving whatever species are present a chance to flower and set seed, providing food for invertebrates, small mammals and birds?' This year could you trial "No Mow May" in your garden, as encouraged by charity Plantlife ([www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may)). They say 'It was a joy to see a varied and colourful sward including buttercups, daisies, cowslips, dandelions, selfheal, dove's foot cranesbill, chickweed and germander speedwell, and a bit later ox eye daisies and yarrow. Some people may view this as lazy gardening but in fact it's a positive step towards better grassland management.' Fiona Danks*

If having a No Mow area of grass is not practical for you this year, then do check to see if you would need to deal with moss in your lawn and plan the scarification job for a dry spell. Once the grass starts growing, begin regular mowing on a dry day, using a high cut. Use new turf to patch worn areas of lawn.

## **MARCH**

- We should be leaving all the cutting back of herbaceous perennials until March, to help insects overwinter under the cover of spent foliage. This waste material is ideal for adding to your garden compost bin or heap. New shoots of herbaceous perennials will begin to emerge if there is a warm spell this month so take care when cutting low down and protect those leaf buds. Lift and divide plants flower in the summer such as Geum, geraniums, Persicaria and Phlox.
- Last chance to spray your apple and pear branches with winter wash to keep the troublesome wooly aphid at bay. This pest hides in the cracks of old wood and pruning scars and can kill an elderly tree.
- Weeds will begin to emerge this month. If you get into the habit of hoeing them when they are just at seedling stage throughout the summer, the job of controlling them will be much easier.
- When ordering tomato seeds choose the blight free kind to avoid the troubles we had last year.
- Coppice Cornus and Salix to stimulate colourful young stems for next winter.
- Plant evergreen trees, hedging and shrubs. Put in stakes to support the taller plants in borders.
- Early potatoes are delicious if you have some spare ground, chit them by standing in an egg box and when the shoots are 1cm long plant them 30cms deep. Plant onion sets and shallots. Late in the month sow seeds of leeks, carrots, broad beans and peas directly into the ground as soil begins to warm.
- Repot houseplants which have become pot-bound or need dividing into clean pots with fresh compost. Feed and begin watering them with fresh rainwater.
- Creatures will be emerging from hibernation: toads from their shallow excavations, hedgehogs from their dry nests and mice, voles and shrews will be more active.

## **APRIL**

- This is the ideal month for sowing a wide range of vegetables directly into the soil. Prepare an area of fine soil, make a drill with the end of a piece of cane for each type of vegetable and sow carrots, turnips, peas, broad beans and spinach. Protect all new shoots from frost.
- If you have a greenhouse, sow French beans, squash and courgette into individual pots and grow on to transplant in the third week of May when frost has passed. Also leeks and brassicas, unless you have a seedbed ready for them. Ventilate greenhouses and cold-frames on warm days.
- Finish tidying borders, pull up weeds, divide and transplant herbaceous perennials, water new plantings, feed with Growmore, put in stakes and then mulch with your home-made compost. Penstemon, Caryopteris and Artemesia can all be cut back towards the end of the month.
- Summer flowering bulbs and corms such as alliums, Eucomis, lilies, cannas, dahlias and gladioli should be planted in pots or borders now. Water all new plantings in dry weather.
- Feed roses, soft fruit and container plants with general purpose fertilizer, diluted liquor made from fresh comfrey leaves left to decay in a lidded bucket or mulch with well-rotted manure.
- On poor soil feed borders with granular Growmore, irrigate and then mulch thickly with home-made compost.
- New rose leaves may display black spot, a cosmetic problem which also causes leaves to fall prematurely. Remove the worst of the leaves, pick up all fallen rose leaves and burn. Sprinkle a sulphur dust around the plant to help fight the problem.
- Keep all newly planted trees, hedges and shrubs watered until established.

## **MAY**

- Try the No Mow May approach somewhere in your garden? The birds and butterflies will love it.
- Deadhead fading daffodils, sprinkle around the foliage with bone-meal and leave the leaves to die naturally. Next year you should get more flowers.
- Start liquid feeding houseplants and all those containers outside.

- This month weeds will grow as fast as the precious seeds and new plants you have put into the ground. Hand weeding and careful hoeing on a weekly basis is recommended.
- Check your seed packets to see which should be sown where and when. Keep young plants watered in dry weather. Earth up potatoes. Continue successional sowing. Sow lettuces in module trays and plant out straight into empty sunny spaces in your garden. Towards the end of May plant out those vegetable modules and protect from any late frost with fleece as with all new shoots from tender plants which you have in your garden.
- Those lilies you planted will be attracting the scarlet lily beetles to their fresh growth, pick off the beetles and squeeze them! Find slugs and snails on the lawn by torchlight and relocate them away from your garden.
- Many garden birds feed their young with aphids and caterpillars. Parent birds need us to provide them with fresh water to drink and bathe in. Put out clean feeders full of sunflower kernels and wild bird seed mix, for the adults to keep up their energy levels up while they search for appropriate live food for their nestlings. Scrub the feeders weekly with soapy water and rinse, filling when dry. This will help our greenfinch declining population and reduce the spread of avian flu.

Please let me know if there is a subject you would like me to write about, by email to [info@susanyoungdesign.co.uk](mailto:info@susanyoungdesign.co.uk) or contact the editors.

Susan Young

## 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.

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



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