

The Loop

November
2019

£1.00

Stories of World War Two

Residents of Biddenham have once again responded to the invitation to share their memories of War, this time the Second World War. Kate and Jon Smith have compiled an edited article which you can read inside.

It is hoped to share some of the stories at the church service on Remembrance Sunday.

In the meantime, here is a lovely picture of Trissa Willmott of Day's Lane with her brother and sister Michael and Angela standing on their air raid shelter at their home in Hitchin.



The 2019 Village Hall quiz was once again a sell-out. The picture shows the quiz setters.

Bellringing

Whilst St James's Church does not currently have its own team of Bellringers, we are lucky to have visiting teams of Bellringers from other Churches who both visit the Church and ring the Church Bells. The visitors will often leave a financial donation as a 'thank you'.

Following a complaint about the unannounced timing and duration of the actual ringing of the Church Bells, the Parochial Church Council has agreed a policy that will place such visits on a more formal basis. This includes informing people who live in the close proximity (this is mainly Church End) and who wish to know of these occasions. The form of notification will hopefully be by email (due to the fact that these visits are sometimes arranged at short notice). Residents who wish to be notified should contact the Church Wardens accordingly.

Laurie Hurn

Remembrance Day in Biddenham

The service at Biddenham War Memorial will start at 10.50am on Sunday 10th November.

*Main Road will be closed
between 10.45am and
11.15am.*



'The Loop' is published by the Parish Church of St James as a service to the communities of Biddenham and Great Denham
The editor welcomes contributions from residents and friends via email to loopeditor@gmail.com

Alpha Course

On Monday 4th November we will be starting an Alpha course at 7.00pm at 15 Church End Biddenham. We will start with a meal and then go on to watch a DVD followed by a discussion.

The aim of Alpha is not to get you to change your mind about anything. It is to present the evidence for the Christian faith and then allow you with the group to think why you don't believe, why you do believe or anything between. Any points of view are not only acceptable but welcome. It is easy to say one believes or does not believe, but why not take the trouble to find out why one does not believe or does believe. Then you will have a reasoned faith or lack of faith. Why not invite friends, perhaps to support your views!

Please let Edwin know if you are coming on edandpete@hotmail.com or 07910530345, or from 26th October on 01234 348718. Alternatively, please contact Eric Lomax.

Edwin Martin

Everyone has questions

Explore more
about life, faith
and meaning
with...



For further information or to book a place
on our new Alpha course starting on
Monday 4 November contact:

Edwin Martin

edandpete@hotmail.com

07910 530345

or

Eric Lomax

01234 852241

Rev.ejlox@gmail.com

The Parish Church of St James, serving Biddenham & Great Denham

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax rev.ejlox@gmail.com	Tel: 852241
Readers	Christopher Dawe Paul Fricker	Tel 363890 Tel 342843
Churchwardens	Laurie Hurn David Dunford	Tel 364251 Tel 07554 151415
Verger	Hilary Hurn	Tel 364251
Secretary	Jacqui Piper	Tel 356993
Treasurer	Michael Hurford	Tel 271746
Organist/Choirmaster	Graham Weeks	Tel 07552 052840
www.stjamesbiddenham.com		

Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends

Just a thought for
Remembrance Day:

One of the great founding fathers of the Jewish and Christian Faith is Abraham. Really the story of Abraham is, according to the Old and New Testament, a story of a promise. God makes a promise to Abraham that he will be the Father of many nations. For this promise to be fulfilled, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had to produce a son. Patiently they waited, and in the story, it was not until Sarah was an old woman that this wish was impossibly granted. They called their son Isaac, and the ancient Sarah, and her more ancient Abraham were very proud of their little boy indeed.

It was then that the story took an unpleasant turn. The book of Genesis records how God, rather cruelly, then instructed Abraham to take his son, Isaac, and sacrifice him. Of course, God would not do such a thing, but the story is a very ancient narrative about obedience. How much would we be prepared to follow God's command?

Abraham is obedient. He takes his son and constructs an altar on which to sacrifice him. He pulls out his knife, and is about to kill Isaac, when God tells him to stop; "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." (Genesis 22:12)

To me it is not enough to say that God prevented Abraham from murdering his son at the last minute. I feel that this whole story goes against the idea of a loving God.

The story became the subject of a book by the philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, called 'Fear and Trembling'. In it, Kierkegaard talks about a universal ethical principle, which would define Abraham's actions as murder, and not grace. Kierkegaard justifies Abraham's obedience, however, by referring to something he describes as a teleological suspension of the ethical. He meant that Abraham was right in ignoring everybody else, in order to do what God told him to do.

I would depart from this view in believing that we can only find God's command by recognising love as the sound of his voice. This is the only way that we can know what God's command is, and what is our own madness. The first world war poet, Wilfred Owen reminds us, instead, how in reality we have more of a tendency to madness than love:

The Parable of the Old Man and the Young

*So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in the thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.
God bless.*

Eric

More foul business

I do apologise for taking up this important space, but I need to inform your readers.

There has been a further spate of incidences involving both dog fouling and dogs being allowed to run off the lead (to the considerable upset of mourners) in the area of the 'new' Churchyard at the rear of St James's Church.

The Parochial Church Council decided to place 'No Dogs except guide dogs' notices on the gates leading to the new Churchyard. The notices were fixed using glue and staples.

Within two weeks all of these notices have been forcibly (criminally?) removed and further dog fouling has occurred within this hallowed space.

Can I please ask that all genuine dog walkers who care for the environment which we all share be alert to the situation and feedback as appropriate.

The notices will be replaced and the gates to the 'new' churchyard will now be padlocked. People with a genuine need to visit this space will know who to ask to gain access. I extend my apologies to these people and pray that those who have caused this problem might see the light!

Laurie Hurn
Churchwarden



Annual General Meeting
Thursday 7th November 2019
8pm
Biddenham Village Hall
www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk

Do you have any ideas on how the Village Hall could be improved or new ways that it could be used?

The Committee is open to hearing ideas about ways to improve the Hall. The Village Hall "belongs" to you, the residents of Biddenham, and the short AGM gives you a chance to hear about the management of the Hall and give your views. Please come along. If you can't make the meeting but have some bright ideas please contact any of the Committee or leave a message on the website.

Biddenham Village Hall Management Committee

Bedford National Trust Association

Tuesday 19th November 2019
Addison Centre, Kempston, MK42 8PN
2.30pm

Everyone welcome. No need to book.

Small admission charge

Speaker: Richard Galley on
"Bedford Highlanders"

Richard has been researching the story of the Highland Division's friendly 'invasion' of Bedford during the first nine months of WW1.

For further information contact Betty Thomas on
01480 860 421

St James's Church Christmas Sale

St James's Church Barn
Church End, Biddenham

1 December

10am – 12noon

Free entry



Christmas Cards

Biddenham Village Gifts
Christmas Cakes & Produce
Decorations & Bulbs
Coffee & Mince Pies

Raffle

CAROLS by candlelight

Festive choral favourites
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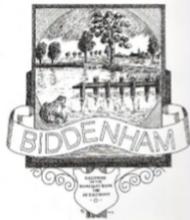
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The Biddenham Society



55th Annual Lunch and AGM

SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2019, 12.30 pm, Village Hall

Tickets: Adults £8 Children free from Garry Fitzhugh, 69 Church End, tel: 07778 004749. Late bookings can be accepted by telephone up to noon on Friday 1st November on a 'pay on the day' basis.

Find out about new planning applications, decisions and appeals relating to the village. Receive an up-to-date briefing on the proposed huge housing development west of Gold Lane, the current status of the borough's local plan, and any imminent threats to Biddenham.

This is a friendly, informal, informative and popular occasion. Don't miss it!

Young residents are especially welcome.

*******A FEW PLACES ARE STILL AVAILABLE, BUT BOOK QUICKLY*******

Celebrating and preserving Biddenham's beauty and heritage



Heart and Music

It was a great pleasure to have Heart and Music return to Biddenham to give us another evening of wonderful music in aid of the Friends of St James.

Many remembered the concert they gave in November 2016 when they supported the Friends of St James and the Friends of Biddenham Pond. Heart and Music was formed in July 2010 to sing concerts to raise funds for good causes. To date, they have raised £30,360 for local charities and churches.

They gave us another excellent performance on 12th October. The church looked beautiful as the magnificent floral displays for the harvest service were still looking fresh and colourful and were a stunning background for the singers. The dahlias and gladioli in shades of orange and reds were particularly striking.

Heart and Music performed a variety of songs. Some came from musicals like 'Memory' from 'Cats' and 'Tonight' from 'West Side Story'. Some were popular songs such as a selection of lesser known Abba songs and 'Monday, Monday' from the 1960s. There was a beautiful arrangement of the folk song 'The Water is Wide'. There was also original composition: the Musical Director, Malcolm Crane, had written a haunting melody, 'Distant Calling', and his daughter, who is a novelist, had supplied the words. Members of the choir gave excellent individual performances, but the unison singing was equally impressive and uplifting.

Heart and Music did not just sing to us. They made us laugh as well. One member of the choir read one of Pam Ayres's poems 'Don't put my dinner on a slate' and got the Gloucester intonations perfectly. Malcolm Crane came up with a list of genuine howlers from GCSE examination answers.

We are very grateful to the choir for so generously giving up their time and entertaining us so well. We are also grateful to John and Nancy Barkas and their daughter, Georgie, who once again supplied delicious and imaginative refreshments for the interval.

Paul and Kathy Fricker

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Biddenham History Society

The next meeting of the Biddenham History Society is on Wednesday 20th November, 2019 at 8.00pm in the Church Barn.

The meeting is on a Wednesday evening as this is when the Biddenham Handbell Ringers usually meet. They will be telling us about the history of handbell ringing in the village and demonstrating techniques of ringing that they use. I hope you will be able to come to hear them.

Kathy Fricker



Thank you
for the
funding

We wish to thank our local Councillors for providing us with the funds to purchase a generator and the Biddenham Show Committee for their generous donation of £500 to purchase some much needed tools and safety equipment, to include a hedge trimmer and strimmer. Such donations make our work so much easier!

In our last article we mentioned how desperate the pond was for rain, and it has certainly rained in the last month! At long last the pond now has some water in it and is also receiving some water from the Manor Hospital roof, after the pipes have been rodded. The flow of this water will need to be monitored to ensure that it continues. We just need to deal with the encroaching bull rushes and the weeds that have grown at the bottom of the pond, which is making the environment look very unsightly.

A further reminder therefore that our Autumn work morning is taking place on Saturday 9th November between 10.00am and noon. Please wear stout footwear, bring gardening gloves and some useful tools and the Committee will provide hot drinks and biscuits mid-morning. Everyone is welcome, although child volunteers must be aged 14 or over and supervised at all times by a responsible adult, who is a family member. All help will be very much appreciated.

During the grass growing season (March to September) we rely on our wonderful volunteers to cut the grass and empty the bin. But we do need more volunteers. It takes about 2 hours to mow, and each volunteer picks a two week slot from a rota (some pick more than one) and during that period you can mow on any day that suits you. We provide the mower (it is a medium sized petrol mower), all safety equipment and instruction. If you can help us at all next year, please contact Paul Godden, whose details are below.

The Pond Team

Contact Details

Chris Jones	chrishj49@gmail.com
Paul Godden	pgodden@btinternet.com
Jane Knight	jane@80kLtd.co.uk
Cathy Eckett-Brown	ceckett@gmail.com
Kit Ram	kitram01@gmail.com
Sophie Applewhite-Rees	dansop1@googlemail.com

www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond



Peregrine Recorder Orchestra

Musical Director: David Pugh

Registered Charity No. 1111928

Bells & Whistles

A joint concert by

Biddenham Handbell Ringers

and

Peregrine Recorder Orchestra

Saturday 9th November 2019

7:30pm

at Putnoe Heights Church, Putnoe,
Bedford MK41 8EB

All proceeds to charities supporting
Fair Trade farmers

Tickets: £7.50 accompanied children
Free

Light Refreshments Included

Contact: Anthea: 01234 350644

Ron: 01767 641501

I.E.F.



Christmas Fair British Red Cross Bedfordshire

Saturday 23rd November 2019

10.00am to 4pm,

Entry Fee £4, under 10s free

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St Joseph and St Gregory's Primary School



Bedford Mobile Library Service

Reading is one of the most fundamental skills children need to learn to be successful. Not only do good reading skills benefit students academically, they are also a skill required for lifelong success.

Reading develops vocabulary, increases attention span, and promotes stronger analytical thinking.

We have been given the wonderful opportunity of having a Mobile Library stop on the Biddenham Turn site fortnightly on a Thursday morning. Years 4, 5 & 6 will borrow books in rotation. It stocks a fabulous wide range of up-to-date fiction and non-fiction leisure reading for children, which will enhance what we are already able to offer in the school library. Children must apply for a membership card through the school to be able to borrow from the mobile library.



Herrings Green Farm Trip

Year 3 very much enjoyed a visit to Herrings Green Farm where they were able to meet their class animals. They were introduced to eagles and owls and found out about where they lived and what they ate. They also got up close and personal with some beautiful owls, guinea pigs, snakes and a blue tongued skink!



A great time was had by all.

Bikeability

Bikeability is government-recognised, practical and professional training, and cyclists are more skilled and more confident once they've taken part. Riders are usually trained in small groups, up to 6 trainee riders per instructor, though individual training may also be available.

At level 2, riders:

- Cycle safely and responsibly
- Identify and respond to hazards
- Start and stop on-road journeys
- Maintain suitable riding positions
- Share the road with others and communicate with other road users
- Comply with signals, signs and road markings
- Manage risk when cycling
- Negotiate junctions (pass side roads, turn at T junctions, and crossroads and roundabouts if present).

Monday 9th September

Children were excited to begin their cycle training this morning on the school playground. All bikes were deemed roadworthy and the children enjoyed their first lesson. This ran until Thursday 12th September.

Friday 13th September

Children were awarded their Bikeability certificates and badges during assembly for passing Level 1 or Level 2.

Scenes of Biddenham Christmas Cards



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for further details

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barn@2 Samaritans

We all know the story of The Good Samaritan but John Simpson, who came to talk to our group in October, is truly a good Samaritan as he has been a volunteer with the charity for ten years and, for three of those years, has been a Branch Director on the National Council. He was accompanied by Sue, his wife, who is also a volunteer with administrative functions and role of Office Manager.

There are about 15,000 volunteers across the UK with 110 of them based in Bedford. They each spend 3 or 4 hours per week giving their time to supporting callers.

People may text or email the Samaritans now but 75% of contact is by telephone and typically calls might be 10 to 30 minutes long but can be much longer. Mental health problems, with so many high-profile people willing to speak out, are well observed and callers will talk to Samaritans about a broad range of issues. Social media and peer pressure mean that many more young people aged between 16 and 24 years are taking advantage of the service.

Trained volunteers are ready to listen at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Rather than trying to solve callers' problems, Samaritans give people space and time to talk in a completely safe and confidential environment and try to help them find solutions or better ways of coping. Callers, though, may be signposted to other agencies such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau or Childline, if appropriate.

In total, Samaritans receive 5 million contacts each year. Peak times for calls tend to be during the evenings and that's typically when most volunteers are on duty. Not surprisingly, there are fewest volunteers available to take calls at 3.00am to 5.00am and that's when callers sometimes have to wait for a volunteer to be available.

Shockingly, a staggering 6,500 people take their own lives each year. No statistics are kept on those attempting suicide but, according to A & E figures, it could be ten times that number with men being in the 'high risk group', especially those aged 25 to 50 years where suicide is the single most likely cause of death. Many older people ring due often to loneliness and/or ill-health.

Not only do they listen to callers; the Samaritans organisation is active in schools, prisons, immigration centres, Network Rail, Crisis at Christmas and various local festivals. All this is done locally on a modest budget of £20,000 per annum with resources being spent on utilities, publicity and a very large telephone bill!

Recruitment teams, training teams and personal mentoring teams will support those willing to commit to the thirty hours of initial training required to become a volunteer. For further information please contact volunteering@samaritans.org.

The free phone number for anyone requiring the service is 116123.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 12th November when there will be a presentation and sale of vintage clothes by Sue Keane.

Val Fitzhugh



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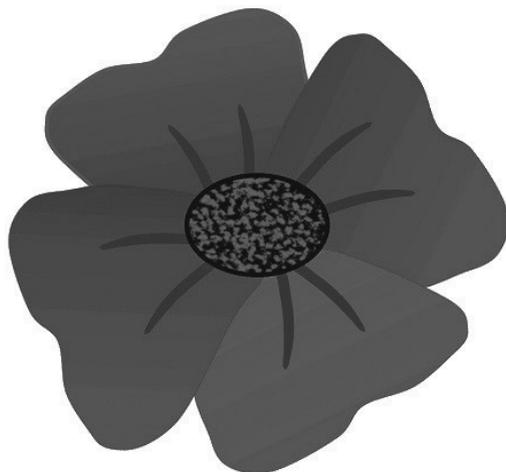
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1939-1945
World War 2 memories of the people of
the parish of St James

Following the stories of the First Word War published in the November 2018 Loop, Kate and Jon Smith have collected the following stories of the second war from Biddenham residents.

Jane and David George, of Darlow Drive shared their memories. Jane remembers her wartime childhood in Queen's Park, complete with German bomber aircraft, bombs and Digging for Victory:

'At the beginning of WW2, my mother and I left Oxford and came to live with my Grandmother and Grandfather in Queen's Park, Bedford. My mother was a widow and needed to return to work and my grandparents looked after me. My mother had obtained a teaching post at Pearcey Road School. Qualified teachers were in short supply as many male staff had been called up for war service.

My grandmother was a fanatical gardener and our back garden, apart from a few rose bushes, was turned into an allotment. Dig for Victory and Waste Not Want Not were her everyday slogans.

I think I must have been about 4 years old, too young for school, and Grandma and I were watering her beloved vegetable patch early in the morning. I remember hearing a strange noise, and looking up I saw an aeroplane flying very low overhead with a weird design on the side; subsequently I learned it was a Swastika. I pointed it out to my grandmother and the next thing I knew I was face down in the vegetable patch with Grandma on top of me. My mouth was full of earth and I was still trying to speak. Seconds later we heard a loud bang, it was a bomb exploding. It damaged the County Theatre in Midland Road, narrowly missing the railway station and the main line to London, which was the actual target. I can taste that wet earth in my mouth to this day whenever I recall the incident.

Half-an-hour later the School Caretaker came around on his bicycle, all hot and bothered sent by Mother to check we were safe. She was unsure how near to us the bomb had dropped and feared the worst. Thankfully all was well and the vegetable patch survived too!

A very vivid memory of just post-war was a regular Saturday morning trip to the Gas Works in Queen's Park. My mother and I would cycle down to Ford End Road where the Gas

Works was situated and join a lengthy queue of local people waiting patiently for bags of coke. Coke was the residue from the gas making process. The bags were sold cheaply and were a godsend as coal for heating was strictly rationed. We carried the two bags we were allocated back home on our bicycles. A good wash was needed on our return. Quite a way to spend your day off from school, that and the endless work on the allotments. We had three by then!!'

David meanwhile, was living through the Blitz and recalls hunting for shrapnel as a schoolboy :

'My memories of WW2 are most vividly associated with things in the sky. Whilst spending time in our Anderson Shelter, dug in at the bottom of our garden in North London, I listened to the aeroplanes flying overhead and could distinguish the German bombers by their characteristic intermittent drone as compared with the constant drone of the British planes. Some nights during the Blitz, when looking out to the South, I could see in the distance a red glow caused by the devastation of the London Docks.

When I was at school in Kent a popular morning activity by the pupils was hunting for shrapnel in the school grounds. The shrapnel came from misdirected bombs and anti-aircraft fire. We were in Bomb Alley! One night a bomb destroyed an ornamental pond in the school grounds.

Later the school was in the flight path of the Doodlebugs, which were directed from Germany towards London and attempts were made to destroy them with anti-aircraft guns over the Kentish countryside. On one occasion, a Doodlebug was shot down overhead but fortunately glided two miles further on before reaching the ground and exploding. My sister was staying with her grandmother in Pembrey, South Wales at this time where there was a Munitions Works which then became a target for German bombers. Incidentally, my mother as a young woman worked in this same Munitions factory during WW1. Nobel had built several factories making explosives in supposedly safe parts of the country where population was scarce. Ironically my sister was moved back for safety to London just in time for the Blitz!!! Nowhere was safe.

Diana Shooter has a copy of every surviving letter her father Cyril Crombie wrote to his fiancée, later wife, Nancy or Nan, between 1939 and 1945. For 42 years Nancy kept them safe, tied up in a ribbon. The originals are in the Imperial War Museum.

Diana explained that Cyril joined the Territorials in 1939, before the outbreak of war, because his bosses at the building society in Leek, Staffs, where he worked as a clerk, said it might improve his promotion chances.

Cyril's service in the Royal Artillery mirrored the progress and setbacks of British and Allied forces. He went with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France, was evacuated from the beaches, probably at Le Havre rather than Dunkirk, guarded enemy PoWs on the Isle of Man, then returned to Europe via Egypt, Libya and Italy before, after the German surrender, hunting down Gestapo and other Nazis posing as civilians while he was attached to the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). Here are some extracts from his letters.

The BEF embarked for France on the 2/3/4 September, 1939. This is Cyril's typewritten, unusually, letter to Nan, dated, 'Hartshill [Stoke-on-Trent] August 26, 1939'.

'Dear Nan,

I am sorry if I appeared to be short-tempered on the 'phone, but you see I was very annoyed with you at the time.

You were forgiven practically straight away of course darling. I will now endeavour to point out to you the terrible agony I suffered from your innocent hands.

The Sergeant called out my name in the darkness of the night, and said that I was wanted on the 'phone in the Brigade Office. This office is where the only 'phone on the premises is housed. When I arrived the Adjutant was outside and I saluted and he informed me that I was to go inside. When I got inside I had to salute the Colonel who was there together with several other Officers. You see we are waiting for the word GO and they were all sitting round that 'phone like vultures. We have called up all the Signallers in, [sic] order that this 'phone can be manned NIGHT AND DAY in shifts [...]

It was hardly the time or the place for a lovers chat darling. In fact my endeavour to convey a lot to you without saying anything was warmly

applauded by the Colonel, who informed me that my non-committal answers were beginning to make him quite curious, and that my ability to say a lot about nothing was assuring my position as a politician or diplomat. PLEASE DARLING FOR THE LOVE OF MIKE DON'T RING THE REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS AGAIN. You can if you like come down on Monday night if I don't return. You get off the bus [...] where the Bus Stop shelter is and ask for Wilfred Place [...] You can't miss it. Ask for me, but probably I shall be knocking about. BUT DO NOT PHONE PLEASE.

So long,
Cyril'

The retreat from France:
'No 891061
215 BATTERY,
51 MEDIUM REGT., R.A.,
B.E.F

May 16th 1940.
1800 hrs.

My Darling Sweetheart,

I hope you are receiving my short epistles [...]

I think it's about twenty years since our last meeting. It certainly seems that long. The only thing one can squeeze around here is a machine gun trigger.

Things are O.K. here except of course that I am not quite so fat. Perhaps this is for the better.

Are the ARP wardens and firemen tendering their resignations yet? I suppose they are as anxious to resign now as they were to join in September.

I bet that quite a number of people have now given up their "dig for victory" campaign and started "digging" a new way to Australia. [...]

Much love,
Cyril.'

Cyril, who was at one time billeted in Bedford, where he married his persistent and much-loved sweetheart in December 1941 was with the 8th Army as it fought its way through Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. He supplemented his pay with card game winnings and his rations with buying food from enterprising locals. And although WW2 is not associated with poetry in quite the same way as WW1, he also relates the verse efforts of fellow NCOs:

'891061 L/Sgt. CROMBIE. C.
215/51st Medium Regiment, R.A.
M.E.F.
9.7.44.

My Dearest Darling Nan,
I know it's naughty typing your letter, but I love you such a lot, and I'm very busy. The answer is, therefore, to start your heart fluttering with a letter, and to save my valuable time by typing it [...]

I shall send you some poetry soon which is the product of a very fertile brain in the Battery - one of the Sergeant Majors is quite good - he scribbles the stuff down and I type it. Anything out of the ordinary that happens he turns into the wittiest (sic) poetry you've ever set eyes on. Even after I've typed it I can read it any time and laugh my insides out. The people who get mixed up in it are usually narrated in their proper light.

Here's one.

The day we ran for the)))))))
I clearly recall it in my mind
I remember the march to ---
The RSM riding behind.

As fast as our blisters could bear it
We swarmed on the docks to the ship
And there by the quayside we waited
With dreams of a nice restful trip

For once times were well coincided
We waited an hour unperturbed
Sucking our Mecaprine Tablets
Whilst the crew slept on undisturbed.'

The poem goes on to contrast the conditions which Warrant Officers and enlisted men enjoyed aboard ship and the (unknown) author imagines being hauled off to the Brig.

Cyril continues, in handwritten script, the poem having been typed:

'I have quite a number of these efforts, and having a keen sense of humour you will see the funny side of them. Of course, there are some of a more serious nature: one written after we found a gunners (sic) grave right in the middle of the desert - just on it's (sic) own. He has also written his own obituary.
Well darling I hope this extra effort hasn't disappointed you - my only wish is to make you the happiest wife in the world (sic)
Good night dearest,
Happy?
So am I!
Yours Cyril.'

Cyril's life with the RA in Germany was far from plain sailing even when there

were no Nazis to fight or find. In an undated letter from early June 1945 he writes to his 'Darling Nan':

'We are up to the neck in trouble here. The Poles and the Russians are playing hell. I have turned out for the last three nights up to the Russian quarter. These things start like lightening (sic). The first time a Russian with a bicycle is stopped by two other Russians. When he does not give up his bike they shoot him down - eight bullets to be precise. The Russian Officer at the camp arrives and shoots both the miscreants. A mob then gathers and threatens to lynch him (this shooting on the spot being a common thing with him). He runs into his house, and the howling mob follow. He locks the door and shoots two of the mob dead; in addition 'chucks' a few grenades through the window and down the stairs. Some of my chaps going to enter the house to rescue him decide to keep away. He runs out of ammo for his pistol and a few get inside and throw him through the window. He lands on the ground. Someone bashes him with a club. We get orders not to fire on the mob. Whilst he is on the ground the Russians rush at him and cut him to ribbons, and kick at what was once a Russian officer. They were all round the body when it was obviously devoid of any life: sticking everything in it from daggers to penknives. I am afraid that short of a massacre of the mob, we were powerless to help him. The mob started to go to another house with two more Russian officers in it. These two fired warning shots through the window, and we through quick action put a cordon of troops round it, and got them away in an armoured car. Tonight a new Russian Commandant arrived and was greeted with hand grenades. So back we go again, me in charge of the armoured car. We don't get much pay, but we do see life.'

Greta Stewart, of Regent's Mews, shared A Child's Memories of World War II in Lincoln:

'On Sunday 3rd September 1939 I was at my grandma's when Mrs Clayton, who lived opposite, opened her bedroom window and shouted, 'It's War'. Then the church bells in Lincoln rang out. Thereafter, they remained silent as they were only to ring again if Britain was invaded. Later that month, while I was out with my aunt (with whom I lived), evacuee children from Leeds were

dropped off at the end of our road. When we returned home, a neighbour called and said, 'I've taken two for you, they're here with me'. The little girls aged 5 and 6 stayed with us for several months. My aunt was horrified to learn that back home in the slum where they lived, they slept under the bed that their father shared with their auntie mother. I remember that one of them arrived with nits and another wet the bed. Our next visitors were a mother and daughter from Portsmouth, who had been bombed out. They had two rooms in our house and doted on the little dog they brought with them. The dog was put out every night to do his 'diddy pops' and my uncle feared for his precious vegetable crop!

Remarkably I was not aware of being short of food during the war. My grandpa had two allotments and both families had fruit trees and soft fruit in the garden so jam making and fruit bottling went on all summer. My father worked in the oil business in Iran and was stranded there for six years in the war. He paid for food parcels to be sent to us from Australia – a great treat to have tinned fruit and delicious apricot jam. I used to take tins of the jam over to the family across the road, who had five children, in exchange for some of their bacon ration. In the school holidays, my friend Billy and I took the bus into town to queue for cakes and sausages when deliveries were expected. And every Saturday I was sent to queue for at least an hour at the local 'fish and chip' shop in all weathers as fish was not on ration.

After the Coventry blitz, the whole of the Bablake school was evacuated to Lincoln – boys and masters. We had Frank for two years. He was about two years older than me. But even more interesting to me was the fact that my grandmother had two sixth formers who seemed exotic as they went to school on racing bikes. The parents visited by coach once a month.

Lincoln was surrounded by airfields and the nearest to our house was one mile away. Nearly every evening, about 9pm, the bombers would take off on a mission to occupied Europe. My uncle would guess by the direction they took which country they were aiming for and would check on the wireless next morning which country had been raided. Mostly the war was fun for me, an only child, with a constant stream of visitors to the house including

soldiers on Sunday who my uncle would bring from the pub for lunch and a hot bath.

When the siren went, I would pull on my siren suit, kept at the bottom of the bed, and race Billy next door down to the Anderson shelter that the two families had erected in our garden. The only scary moments were about 3am when for three years I would hear bombers returning from their raids over Europe. Sometimes they were flying so low I could see their under-carriage as they flew over the house and I would guess by the noise they made how many engines were functioning. One night, one crashed on a house two streets away. Crews from the Dam Busters squadron used to swim in our local swimming baths. They were a crazy lot – throwing each other in and diving recklessly from the top board. They wore their uniform RAF jackets over their trunks. One day after school, I stood on Lindum Hill and waved to the King and Queen who had just been to award Guy Gibson his Victoria Cross.

On the night of 5th June 1944 my uncle was watching the departure of bombers as usual but that evening it was different. They just kept coming until the whole sky was filled with planes. He spent most of the night sitting on the bed watching them. The next morning (6th June) I got off the bus for school near the cathedral as usual. A lady got on the bus and called out to the conductor, 'They've landed!' It was D-Day.

My uncle was involved in the requisition of buildings and construction of new ones for war use. After the war, he told us that one project had been the construction of an underground bunker on a hill in the village of Canwick just outside Lincoln. This was where Eisenhower met with Montgomery as part of their planning for D-Day. Similarly, we were unaware that there was a German prisoner of war camp less than 2 miles from our house near an airfield. We only realised after V-E Day when PoWs were allowed to walk into Lincoln. They were not allowed to take public transport but were easily recognisable by their distinctive uniforms. That same summer, Italian prisoners of war helped out on my paternal grandparents' farm in Scotland as they were short of manpower. Their youngest son, my uncle John, was still fighting in the jungle with the Chindits in Burma aged 20.'

Hugh Clifton of Church End writes of his family memories:

My father, Major H. C. Clifton, served in the Central India Horse in North Africa, Italy and Greece, from 1940-45. In 1944, at San Marino, he won the Military Cross.

My mother, Phyllis Clifton, who was a Biddenham resident for several years, served as an Admiralty Cipher Clerk, including a three-week posting at Bletchley Park.

My uncle, Colonel Cuthbert Clifton, saw action with the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry, and was mentioned in dispatches.

My aunt, Christian Clifton, served in the ATS (Auxiliary Transport Service), and drove a ten-ton truck in convoys to Portsmouth during the D-Day campaign.

Paul Fricker and wife Kathy write of the remarkable impact WW2 had on several members of their family, who experienced the full horrors and fear of the conflict:

'The outbreak of the Second World War on September 3rd, 1939 had a huge impact on the lives of the members of our family who were in their late teens and early twenties.

My mother, Eiddwen Beddow, was 19 and she was an undergraduate studying History at Manchester University. She remembered listening to the radio with her family in South



Wales when the outbreak of war was announced. It was the end of the summer vacation and she returned to Manchester with her gas mask expecting bombing and not knowing whether she would be able to continue with her course. However, student life did continue as normal during the so called 'Phony War'.

By the spring of 1940, with the invasion of the Low Countries and France, the war was more serious. My uncle, Eiddwen's older brother, Handel, was called up to serve in the Welsh Regiment. He was sent to the south coast to help with the evacuation of the wounded from Dunkirk. He was then moved to Aintree Racecourse along with the survivors from Dunkirk to await embarkation for service in the Middle East.

My mother was determined to see him before he left, so she travelled by train and tram from Manchester to

Aintree and persuaded the Australian on guard duty at the gate to let her into the camp.

She was shocked to see men in tatty uniforms and without weapons (they had all been abandoned at Dunkirk) though Dunkirk had been portrayed as a success in the media. Handel's commanding officer allowed him to go out for a meal with his sister and to see her off at the station. She wondered if she would ever see him again.

My mother graduated with a First in June 1941. This was despite the fact that air raids meant that most of her essays were written in the underground shelters beneath the public library! She was not allowed to take up the postgraduate research studentship she was awarded nor was she allowed to become a hospital almoner, which is what she wanted to do. She was told she must be a teacher, to replace the men who had been called up, so in the autumn of 1941, she set off for Cambridge from Swansea to do teacher training. She remembered a Cambridge devoid of men students but, by 1942, ringed by U.S. air bases, full of bored GIs, who wolf-whistled any girls who cycled by. In the summer of 1942 she heard the 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne flying over Cambridge. The caretaker of the college ran along the corridors shouting, 'It's us, it's us! It's a big raid on the continent!' to reassure the students.

In September 1942 my mother started teaching at Howells School, Denbigh, in North Wales. It was away from the bombing and the main issue was keeping the girls away from the GIs at the nearby army base! She travelled by train to Chester to meet her boyfriend, my father, on her days off, and spent other spare time knitting jumpers to eke out her wardrobe which depended on juggling clothing coupons. The backdrop to teaching at Howells until 1945



was anxiety over the fate of her brother. Handel had landed on Crete in 1941 just a couple of days before the German paratrooper invasion. Despite a retreat over

the mountains, and help from the Cretan guerillas, when they reached the beach on the south coast of Crete, there was no Royal Navy to evacuate them.

The navy had withdrawn to Alexandria. Handel and his companions were forced to surrender

on the beach, marched back over the mountains, shipped to mainland Greece and then marched through the Balkans to a Prisoner of War camp near Munich. My mother got postcards through the Red Cross and at least knew where he was.

In 1943, Handel was moved to Poland to Stalagluft 8 near to Auschwitz, and against the Geneva Convention, the British Prisoners of War were made to work in the salt mines alongside Jews from the concentration camp. Handel ended up in solitary and getting flogged for giving food to a Jewish man.

He survived and went on to survive the 'death' march in 1944, when, on the approach of the Red Army, the Germans turned the prisoners out of the camp and marched them towards Czechoslovakia, depending on raw potatoes and turnips from the fields for food. Luckily, the American army advancing from Germany found them and saved them. My mother said he was still very thin when he came home and this after care from the Americans. The family were always very grateful to the Americans. Handel would never talk about his war experiences to us children, and he was unable to become a professional footballer (he had a signing from Swansea Town before he was called up) but he did make a successful career as a site manager for Wimpey and project manager for the Mumbles development in Swansea.

My father, Edwin Young, was also at Manchester University. He expected to be called up into the Signals as he had been in the OTC before the war broke out. However, as



he was studying Chemistry, he was drafted into medicinal research, in particular to work on anti-malarials once the fighting in the Far East became serious from 1942 onwards. He got to know his Professors well as they spent most evenings fire-watching on the university roof! Paul's father, Alan Fricker, also spent his war years fire watching as a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service. He worked in the City by day and spent the evenings and nights on the roofs of London buildings, especially on the dome of St Paul's Cathedral. He was 30 when war broke out and had married Paul's mother, Constance, in 1941. Constance worked in the Civil Service in the Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall.



She was responsible for collating information about which factories were producing arms and sending reports on these to Winston Churchill. She always told the story that in 1940, she was given a

revolver to protect her staff in case the Germans came and at first no one showed her how to use it. When someone experimented with the revolver, the bullet went into the radiator and this caused a major leak of water!

My brother-in-law's father, Flying Officer William Thomas Bourne joined the RAF as a volunteer in 1941 aged 19. He was trained as a wireless operator and gunner before starting operational flying mostly in Stirlings in June 1943. He survived a full tour of 30 combat operations, over 300 hours' daytime and over 300 hours' night flying, including operations on Dusseldorf, Aachen, Hamburg, Essen, Nuremberg, Turin, Berlin, Hanover and Mannheim. His last posting was to command a radar station on the Aberdeenshire coast before being demobbed in June, 1946. He died in 2007 before the service of Bomber Command was officially recognised. My brother-in-law has now obtained the recognition for him and his family.'

Peter Culverwell of Day's Lane recalls his wartime career in the Royal Navy:

'In 1938 we lived in Watford and I first realised that things were serious when we had an air raid shelter dug at the bottom of our garden. It was very rudimentary - just a square hole with the surplus soil on timbers to form the roof plus a short ladder for access. In the August we evacuated ourselves to my paternal grandfather in Wellington, Somerset and I remember listening to the wireless and hearing the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain stating, "Peace in our time". After two weeks we returned to Watford only to repeat the exercise the following year, 1939, when I have a very clear recollection of hearing on the wireless the sombre statement by the Prime Minister that we were at war with Germany; that night when in bed I remember thinking that I was too young to die. I was fourteen-and-a-half years old. In 1942 I chose to leave school because I was eager to join the Royal Navy and at that time you could join at 17-and-a-half years. My parents

were not in favour and by chance my Father saw an advertisement in The Times, issued by the then Board of Education, asking for school leavers to volunteer to be trained as engineers. At that time there was a shortage of engineers in the army, particularly in the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers. My father persuaded me to apply and I reluctantly agreed, was accepted and spent 21 months at the Wolverhampton & Staffordshire Technical College. We were civilians called Engineering Cadets on a grant, staying in homes and had to join the Home Guard. During this period the Government extended the entry to include the Royal Navy which pleased me.

On passing the final exams, I volunteered to join the Royal Navy and in particular the Fleet Air Arm, and after two interviews in London, I was accepted with the rank of Midshipman (A) RNVR. Following



the usual period of six weeks of basic training on HMS Gosling, I was sent to the Royal Naval Engineering College in Plymouth, together with 30 colleagues, for a six month training in basic aeronautical engineering plus detailed information of the engines and airframes of all the aircraft then currently in the Fleet Air Arm. I passed the final exams and the practical tests, just, and was promoted to Sub/Lt (A) and, following two further practical courses, I was posted as the AEO, Air Engineer Officer, to 816 Squadron responsible for the maintenance of the eighteen Fairy Firefly Mark I aircraft based at Lee-on-Solent, Southampton. At that time the pilots were learning on the aerodrome the special techniques for landing on an aircraft carrier at sea. Subsequently, we embarked on the HMS Theseus, an escort carrier, to put their training into practice while sailing from Glasgow round Scotland during which there were a few accidents. We disembarked on the Firth of Forth to return to Lee-on-Solent.

Our squadron was included in the celebration flypast in London for VJ Day in August 1946; the aircraft had two seats and one of the pilots offered me the navigator's seat as he considered he could fly from



Southampton to London without a navigator. The weather was not good, low cloud, bad visibility, with the result that he missed the rendezvous and on returning found ourselves over the English Channel. This was my first flight and I was not impressed. The squadron was then transferred to HMS Ocean, a light fleet carrier, together with 805 Squadron with SeaFire aircraft. On 28th July while sailing in the Channel, there was considerable interest on board because it was the occasion when the first aircraft was to land and take off on an aircraft carrier.



The aircraft was a Vampire which had been converted and was named Sea Vampire and the exercise was a success. We then sailed to the Mediterranean on patrol calling at Gibraltar, Malta, Argostoli in Greece and Cyprus. On one occasion there was a tense situation when the ship's company was called to "Action Stations" - two destroyers, HMS Volage and HMS Saumarez, struck unexpected mines in the Adriatic Sea off Corfu. There were a number of casualties including fatalities from both vessels and as HMS Ocean had the larger sick-bay facilities, we went alongside to take all the casualties on board.

In January 1947 I flew from Malta to be demobbed in England, in a Dakota aircraft - not very comfortable.

In retrospect I have always been thankful that I had been so very fortunate throughout the period of World War Two compared with many of my colleagues.'

Squadron Leader Ian Alexander Robertson DFC (1919 - 2011) lived in Biddenham from 1957 until his death and is buried at St. James' Church on the East Wall of the old graveyard.

This is a summary of Ian's military service during WW2 compiled by his son Jim Robertson from handwritten memoirs, flight log books and historical publications

'Born in Glasgow in January 1919

Ian became fascinated by flight after watching the Royal Navy summer exercises in the Moray Firth with his Father. He had his first flight on 19/07/1933 at Nairn National Aviation Day. He moved to Luton in 1937 to become an apprentice at Percival Aviation and joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1938 where he learned to fly. He was called up on 01/09/1939.

In April 1940 his service started in earnest being posted to 22 EFTS (Elementary Flying Training School) at Marshalls Cambridge, flying Tiger Moths. With 85 hours under his belt (quite a lot for wartime pilots) he was posted to RAF Little Rissington for intermediate training and conversion to twin-engine aircraft on Avro Ansons. He has many recollections of his time in the RAF during WW2 and some of them show great humour with very little inkling as to the worry and fear at the time.

One of these recollections which he described to me, as well as noting it in his memoirs happened whilst he was stationed at Little Rissington. During a spell being trained on low flying his instructor and Ian were court-marshalled for flying at 50ft down the main street at Bourton-on-the-Water. His defending officer got him off by proving that the poplar trees lining the street were more than 50 feet high and neither the instructor nor my father were found guilty (the charge should have been flying too low not at a specific height). This let-off saved Ian's career and he was commissioned in October 1940.

Next was advanced navigation training at St Athan as he was destined to go to an operational squadron of Handley Page Hampdens.

Hampdens had cramped cockpits and second pilots could not change seats in the air due to cockpit layout but my Father considered this arrangement had some benefits as a new pilot would get a taste of operations before having to be captain, I can only imagine the discomfort though as most operational flights were at least 7 hours and usually involved being shot at for part of the journey. His training on Hampdens began at 14 OTU (Operational Training and Conversion Unit) based at RAF Cottesmore. Dad always considered himself fortunate to have the best of the best training him, and indeed his instructor at Cottesmore, John Nettleton, went on to win the Victoria Cross. Passing out from

OTU with 245 hours' flying logged he was posted to his first operational squadron, 83, based at RAF Scampton (today's home of the Red Arrows). He married my mother (Pat) on the 5th of April 1941 and their wedding photograph is always a poignant reminder of wartime loss, as every one of the six young RAF pilots from bomber command in that photo other than my father were killed. His first Op (combat flight) was a bombing raid over Hamburg on the 26th April 1941, and his log book shows several raids over Hamburg and Kiel as they fought to hamper the German preparations for operation Sea Lion (the invasion of Britain) during the summer of 1941. When the squadron's history was being updated about 10 years ago I remember Dad creating some excitement as he had the only known photograph of the squadron mascot: Kipper (because he slept a lot) the tortoise. Dad had a picture of him as it was said he invented Kippers anti-lawn-mower defence system, a bicycle spoke fixed to the back of his shell as a pennant which showed his location in long grass.

As if to underline my father's belief that he was lucky to rub shoulders, be trained by and follow in the footsteps of the best of the best his commanding officer at Scampton was "Babe" Learoyd who had been awarded the Victoria Cross in August 1940. His captain on his first ops was Dennis Lyster a distinguished bomber pilot already awarded a DFC and later the DSO. Sgt John Hannah a Hampden wireless operator/gunner in 83 squadron was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1940 and most famous of all was Guy Gibson who led 83 squadron in late 1940 before 617 squadron was formed in 1943. In August 1941 as a Pilot Officer Ian was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for his service and bravery during that summer period, particularly for the precision bombing at low level of search light batteries around Essen. He received the award from King George VI at an investiture in Buckingham palace. This was the end of his first "tour", but not the end of his operational service, as he was now deemed experienced enough to be an instructor and he joined 16 OTU at Upper Heyford. Here he was training new pilots in the art of night-time bombing whilst the RAF formulated their plans for how to form and manage large groups of bombers for major raids culminating in the

famous 1,000 bomber raids. It was the first posting where Mum and Dad were allowed to "live out" and they rented a small cottage in North Aston at £1.10s per week, he also converted to flying Vickers Wellingtons. These were some of the older aircraft left in service as they were being used for training but on the 30th May 1942 Dad was called to join the first 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne, a trip which turned out to be rather eventful as he described to the BBC for their WW2 archive in 2005 (article number 4120246). The crash landing did not impress his



CO, but the red endorsement to his record was successfully quashed and Dad got his first command of the gunnery flight at RAF Hixon in Staffordshire. This was a crew of staff transferred from other OTUs who were considered not to fit in, but Dad loved his posting there and soon had the team gelled together training new air gunners before they were sent to operational squadrons. During July and August 1942 Dad trained in the "blind flying" (instruments only) course at the central flying school based at RAF Upavon and, in December 1942, it was time for a change of role. After a nine-month course in engineering and armaments at RAF Manby he became an armaments officer. For this he had to be able to strip and maintain guns ranging from Browning 303s to 20mm canons, and determine any reasons for jamming or stopping. They learnt the details of bombs and fuses blowing up a bomb on Mablethorpe beach as part of the learning process. In July 1943 Ian was appointed CO of the flying wing at Manby which became the empire armaments school where he stayed until December 1944. Ian's final posting of the war was to become OC of the twin-engine armament flight at Boscombe Down, part of the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) which later became the Empire School of Test Pilots. This was a huge change in flying, with his unit being equipped with some of the latest American and British twin-engine fighter-bombers such as the Mosquito, Beaufighter and several

B25 Mitchell variants, working on the development of air to ground rockets for close air support. During his flying career, Ian flew 72 different aircraft types and between 1939 and 1945 was stationed at 10 different RAF bases.

He was awarded 6 medals:

- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Air Crew Europe Star
- The 1939-1945 Star (Bomber Command)
- The War Medal 1939-1945
- The Defence Medal World War 2
- The Air Efficiency award

He was demobilised on the 5th of December 1945.

Former Biddenham resident Penny, daughter of John Bricknell Miller (8/11/1921-13/5/2013), contributed John's own account of his war, after working as an engineer with Wimpey building wartime airfields:

'In 1942 I was called up into the Army, going to the school of Survey R.A. at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain where I was taught surveying etc. I also learnt how to ride a motorbike. Whilst setting up a triangulation on a church tower in the Wylie Valley we knocked a bell which was 'up' and set the bells ringing, an alarm signal in those days for the start of an invasion! After some seven months I passed out with flying colours and was posted to the 12th Survey Regiment then based in Kent. I joined the 'Flash Spotting' troop which was billeted in the grounds of Brede Place. Apart from the German Luftwaffe having a go at us and trips to the baths on Hastings front, we started to train and get to know each other.

After a few months we moved as a regiment to billets in Hessle, near Hull, from where we took part in various exercises with Field Regiments R.A. on the Yorkshire Wolds and in the late autumn we went up to the Borders for exercises with guns in very cold wet and windy conditions when we lived under a tarpaulin attached to the side of a 30cwt lorry, and in the lorry's back, soft covered! We lived off '14-day man packs' cooking on non-returnable 4 gal. petrol cans with a hole cut to fit a dixie part filled with sand soaked in petrol. We learnt not to add petrol to hot sand, some eyebrows were lost.

In May 1944 we moved from Hessle to Broadlands in Hampshire in a regimental convoy. I understood that the leading vehicle travelled at a steady 18mph. We travelled some

way back and were either crawling along in bottom gear or going flat out in the otherwise deserted war-time roads. The weather was very warm and I still recall that I was driving with my [personal] driver who shouted to me to wake up! I had dropped off and was headed for a telegraph pole! My driver/signaller, Titch Moore, was a guardian angel in disguise and saved me on other occasions. At Broadlands we waterproofed our vehicles before going to Bucklers Hard shortly after D-Day where we put our two trunks on a tank landing craft and crossed the Channel to Sword Beach where we got wet bottoms as we drove up the beach in rather deep water and promptly started to observe for the guns in the 'Bocage'. Titch Moore again told me that every time I put my head up in a cornfield a bullet passed rather close. A sniper was having a go at us, I might add that we were in advance of the infantry. So we moved on to Caen and finally had a rest as the German Army retreated. We then moved on to the Low Countries, initially to a place called Heist Opten Berg occupying a café built on the hill from where, in conjunction with other troop members spanning many miles, we observed the V2 rockets being fired to London from Holland; we located the firing points, our headquarters sent an alarm to London and to the RAF who would bomb/strafe the firing point. It was from that I must have seen the armada of transport aeroplanes and gliders which dropped troops at Arnham. We then moved into Holland close to the Masse river. On the way we stopped as it got dark to spend the night in a thatched cottage. As we set up to cook a meal and settle down a shell hit the roof which was not penetrated but the inside of the cottage was full of dust and lime plaster from the shock. We then deployed to open countryside, building an observation post some twenty feet above ground level near the front of a conifer wood from where we could see the enemy. For accommodation we found a log cabin type of barn in which we cooked on a home made fire. It was quite interesting at night when both our own and enemy patrols passed beneath our post. The weather was very cold, after a couple of hours observing one was frozen to the bone. The enemy retreated across the Rhine and our next observation post was at the top of a factory with a view

across the river. The assault across the river started with several hours of shelling from guns about half-a-mile behind us which were spaced about ten yards apart. They opened up at about six p.m. and within an hour we were unable to see anything due to the smoke from the guns. The next morning we crossed the river on a pontoon bridge into Germany and made our way up the eastern side. The last observation post was in a windmill over-looking the Elbe where we felt very safe as we had large grain sacks to protect us from bullets and shells. I later found that the stopping power of grain is very poor. From there we went to Hamburg, then into Eastern Germany where we did some hunting for wild game before handing over to horse mounted Russians and went to Magdeburg where we checked that a prison being run by Polish troops did not lead to the ill-treatment of prisoners.'

Dudley Graham (Johnny) Johnson, D.F.C. A.F.C. RAFVR (1915-2000) lived in Bedford and Biddenham between 1966 and 1985 then again from 1994 until his death. Here is an account of his wartime service:

'Johnny was in India when war broke out. Having finished his training as a mechanical engineer, he was sent to [then] Calcutta in 1938 by his company. Then he immediately joined the RAFVR, which his mother in England had not wanted him to. Obsessed with flying since being taken as a boy to the Flying Circus which were popular in the thirties, he eagerly took the chance which India offered and gained his wings and the rank of pilot officer. He also joined the Calcutta Light Horse, (one of those privately raised units, common in India in those times) where he was taught to ride by a fearsome cavalry sergeant, bought two polo ponies, (Scharnhorst and Gneisenau) and took part in polo matches, pig-sticking (!) squash matches and enjoyed it all.

At the outbreak of war he was posted to the N.W. Frontier Province (now Pakistan), on the frontline with Afghanistan, near the Khyber Pass, where the squadron's job was to keep unruly tribesmen in check (not much has changed!) and an eye on India's northern borders. They flew very old aircraft (the Hawker Hart was one) as anything newer was needed in Europe. Their aircraft carried a large sign on the fuselage promising gold sovereigns for the return of any

downed pilot "intact". Tribesmen had a nasty habit of removing certain body parts before releasing an airman.

At some stage Johnny was awarded the A.F.C. I cannot find the citation for this medal but I have vague memories of being told that he flew a Lysander over enemy territory (Burma?) to pick up some stranded diplomats after the Japanese invasion.

He loved that part of the world, spent leave time in Kashmir, Simla, Poona, and much admired the local people, especially the soldiers.

In 1943 he was posted back to RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland for conversion training to multi-engined aircraft. (Even in old age he would proudly say that he was given the pilot rating of "exceptional", a rare accolade.)

Whilst there an old friend telephoned to say there was a vacancy on a Pathfinder unit flying Mosquitos. Was he interested? He accepted at once. What could be better than flying the then fastest aircraft in the RAF built by his favourite company, de Havilland? He arrived at RAF Wyton near Huntingdon to find he had joined 1409 Met Flight. These Mosquitos were painted duck egg blue, not the usual camouflage colours. They were designated to fly in daylight at height (40,000ft?) - very high for those days - and were unarmed. They carried cameras, operated by the navigator, and the job was to fly over the designated target for that night's bombing raid and bring back accurate photos of the target and of the met conditions en route. Other Pathfinder Mosquitos had to drop flares to illuminate the target immediately before the bombers arrived that night. These tactics were devised by Air Commodore Donald Bennett, of whom more later, to improve the accuracy of Bomber Command.

When the war ended in August 1945, Johnny was in command of the unit with the rank of Squadron Leader and a DFC. He applied for a permanent commission in the RAF, didn't get it and returned to his old job in Calcutta. A short time later, he received a cable from Don Bennett, offering him a captain's job in the new airline he was forming, British South American Airways, flying converted York and Lancaster bombers to the east and west coasts of that continent.'

Patricia Applewhite's father, William Elliott, enlisted in the Territorial Army in February 1939, joining the The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, and was in the UK until October 1942 when he was posted to North Africa.

'Before leaving he married Patricia's mother, Mary, who worked at Elliott Brothers (no relation to William), technical instrument manufacturers, in Lewisham.

In North Africa, serving with



General Montgomery's Eighth Army, William was injured and spent some time in hospital. He was awarded the Africa Star and later the Star clasp. In September 1944 he was posted to Italy to join the Central Mediterranean Force. He returned from Italy to the

UK in April 1946 and was discharged from the Army in August that year. In addition to the Africa Star, he was awarded the Italy Star, the 1939-1945 Star, the 1939-1945 War Medal, and the Defence Medal. Mary recalled times spent sheltering overnight both in Chislehurst Caves and also in the Anderson shelter in the back garden of her parents' house in Bromley. One morning her sister Lydia woke in the shelter with her feet feeling cosy on something warm, which turned out not so well when she discovered it was a dead cat which must have been injured and crawled into the shelter during the night.

Peter Applewhite's father, Norman, worked in military equipment production and undertook Air Raid Warden and Auxiliary Fire Service duties for the village near Burton upon Trent where he lived with Peter's mother Vera:

'For some time two American airmen were billeted at their house, and the mother of one of them used to send parcels from America for the family, including clothes for Peter's sister, Helen.

Vera often recounted how in the early days of the 'phoney war' in 1939 when the first air raid sounded one night, they and neighbours in night attire and slippers ran down to the River Trent nearby. It was only later that they wondered why they



Norman Applewhite far left

had thought, if bombs had been dropped, they would have been any safer there than anywhere else!

Vera's brother, Thomas, joined the Army in the Royal Army Service Corps the day the Second World War broke out, and was eventually demobbed as an Acting Staff Sergeant. He served in north-west Europe and was mentioned in Despatches. He was awarded the 1939-1945 War Medal, the 1939-45 Star, and the France and Germany Star, the campaign medal awarded for operational service in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Germany from 6 June 1944 (D-Day) to 8 May 1945. Vera's cousin, Sheila, was a Corporal in the WAAF during the Second World War and worked in the Operations Room at RAF Biggin Hill.'

Ann Manze, 85, of The Old Barns, contributed what she describes as 'a few of my experiences in WW2', recalling, not least, the kindness of her family's elderly German neighbours who let them shelter in their cellar from the Luftwaffe:

'Early on in the war when I was 5, with the lawn dug up for vegetables, we watched the dogfights overhead in the evening sky. Our home in south London, under the German bombers' flight path to the capital, received a bomb in our small front garden which blew in the front door, severely damaged walls, blew the chimney stack off, but didn't break a single window! We had been sleeping on the floor in the hall which was considered the strongest part of the house so it was fortunate that we were not at home at the time.. We had some walls propped up (courtesy of the Ministry of Works, I presume) with huge baulks of timber, over which we had to clamber for the duration. It seemed like the warning went every night after we were asleep, with regular, heavy bombing, so we had to get out of the house.

I was zipped into my siren-suit and

off over the road my mother and I went to friends who had a small, narrow cellar in which we sat on the floor on cushions, leaning against the wall, waiting and waiting for the all-clear. The owners were an elderly German couple who were too old to be interned, but reported weekly to the police, and had two daughters in Germany, they knew not where.

After the war we discovered my mother's cousin in the Luftwaffe had been bombing us!

My father, too old to be called up having lived through WW1 in China, was on ARP duty and mostly slept at a local ARP post when it was quiet, and help not needed by local bombed-out people. It was never really quiet, with a searchlight and ack-ack gun blasting away on the nearby tennis courts. Doodlebugs were alarming and kept us counting to 11 when the motor stopped clattering, waiting in the silence for the explosion. In the garden we picked up chunks of shrapnel and strips of glitter which had been dropped to interrupt radio signals.

Much later, at a co-ed boarding school in Hampshire, where we also picked potatoes, worked on the farm for the war effort and knitted balaclavas in oiled wool for the men in the Atlantic convoys, we woke up one day to find a large part, it seemed, of the Canadian and Scots armies camping on our extensive playing fields, where they remained for some days, much to our delight, before D-Day.

The sweet ration was very small (12oz per month if you could find any in the shops at all) for which we cycled 4 miles to Petersfield to get it on the first possible day when the coupons became due, so the sweet chewing gum we were given by the US troops was much appreciated, although at first we had no idea it wasn't meant to be swallowed; we had never heard of it and there was no publicity or advertising of such things that came our way! As very young boarders with a craving for sweet things we discovered that eating small quantities of Eurcyl tooth powder was pretty satisfactory.

My mother ran a Services' canteen on the A3, the main London to Portsmouth road, where convoys stopped for refreshments, there being no means of getting anything to eat or drink by the roadside in those days.'

The Vendange

It's that time of the year again.

People all over the hamlet dig out their oldest grottiest gardening clothes and turn up to the vineyard armed with secateurs, a big trug or bucket and a hat of various sizes, designs cleanliness and antiquity. People station themselves either side of the line of vines and the main aim is to cut off the grape bunches and throw them in the bucket. The secondary aim is to prevent your fingers being cut off by an overenthusiastic person on the other side of the vine who is going for the same bunch of grapes as you are.



When the buckets are full, they are passed over the lines of vines to be emptied into the special trailer on the back of the tractor (driven by a thirteen-year-old boy) to be taken to the cuve, the fermentation chamber. Tall stories are told and even those that are true are exaggerated. The tall stories are exactly the same ones that were told last year. One catches up with the demeanours and misdemeanours of all the children and grandchildren of friends one has known for 27 years and in response to

incessant questions, one desperately tries to find a reason why a stable tolerant country like ours finds itself governed

by an unelected megalomaniac. Finally, the vendange is done, the grapes have all gone to the fermentation chamber and one has a beer, strictly of course to replace one's plasma volume.

A pause of an hour or two then takes place when everybody returns home, has a shower, puts on different clothes that do not make one look quite so much like a scarecrow, and wonders what on earth one actually said during the afternoon to that rather prim lady that made her blush so strongly. Then one returns to the home of the owner of the vineyard and the real hard work of the day follows. Which is, of course, the skilled and delicate project of drinking up the remains of last year's wine. It's odd at this stage that there is no lingering taste of the several lizards one saw disappearing into the fermentation mixture last year together with grapes. In fact, by the third glass it could be a well-aged Margaux.

The meal served to thirty people starts with a rich onion soup followed by a salad that had the whole content of an average meal included in it and looked like a painting by Monet. Then the homemade pâté, then wild boar in a hugely rich black sauce. Through all of this the wine arrived and departed down the throats of all present. The bonhomie was palpable. There are some divisions in our hamlet but not on vendange night, they can wait for tomorrow, that is if anybody can remember anything about how the divisions started at least 20 years ago.



At this point there is a trou Normand. This is a rather large shot of eau de vie distilled in the village, and the idea is that we are all so stuffed full that there is no room left for the sweet and a hole has to be bored through the contents of our upper gut. The 60% firewater appears to have done the trick and people tuck into the 6 puds, lavishly accompanied by Champagne. The digestif of course was treated with due respect before everybody said goodbye with a kiss on each cheek, several people getting several kisses from the same people who could not quite remember who they had already kissed. The ladies were not offended. The vendangers moved off in a somewhat unsteady manner to the end of the long drive, where several people were seen to look left, then right, then left again, not because they were using the green cross code for a road that had about 5 cars a day passing, but because they were just having a wonder which way it was to home. Finally, they decided it was the same way as last year and they staggered off to bed.

It will be a good wine this year!

Edwin and Peta Martin

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This month in the garden

As this year draws near to its end we are seeing a repeat of last year's weather; a long period of drought followed by a wet October. There is a difference, though, as the period of drought was neither as prolonged or as hot as last year and particularly noticeable is the fact that lawns have recovered really quickly. After last year's damage when the traditional advice of 'not watering the lawn in a dry period as it will quickly recover after rain' proved wrong, not watering has been the right thing to do this time.

Another gardening tradition is that any ground in the vegetable area which has been cleared should now be prepared for next year by digging it over, preferably with the addition of well-rotted manure or compost. The back-breaking task of double digging (turning over the soil to a depth of two spade lengths) has largely been abandoned, but many gardeners, including me, still do a one spade length turnover with the addition of compost. People who grow vegetables in raised beds will be used to the idea of not doing any winter digging and, this October, I have been interested to see a major article in the magazine of the Royal Horticultural Society on the benefit of non-digging in open ground. It is increasingly thought that the more soil is disturbed the more weed growth will be encouraged and therefore, without digging, productivity can be maintained provided manure or compost is still added. With non-digging, compost can be added as a mulch. When the time comes for sowing the ground can be raked over and any weeds removed by hoeing. Not digging the soil sounds attractive so I will try it this winter.

November is the time for preparing for next year's gardening and it is the best time for making changes in the position of shrubs and for dividing or moving perennial plants. With shrubs, try to dig up as much as possible of the root ball. With young shrubs this isn't difficult but more mature specimens should be moved by cutting a trench round the circumference of the branch spread and then, from the bottom of the trench, cutting underneath the shrub. Try to ease the root ball out on to plastic sheeting so

that the plant can be slid out and dragged to its new home where a hole has already been prepared, incorporating compost. Divide perennials by digging up a clump and prising it apart with two forks held back-to-back. Many perennials benefit from having a worn-out centre discarded with just the outer growth re-used.

From November onwards during the winter months many new plants can be put in. Roses, raspberry canes, fruit bushes and trees are cheaper now, bought as bare root plants rather than in containers.

Having recently been at their best, dahlias will soon need to be prepared for the winter. Once the plants have been blackened by frost, cut the stems down to a few inches above ground level. Chop the stems up and compost them. If you plan to leave the plants in the ground cover them with a thick layer of compost (up to 9 inches deep if you can spare it). Alternatively, lift the tubers carefully and store in a frost free garage or shed. I think the best way to do this is to bury them in dry compost in a pot or box and leave them unwatered until the spring, when watering will get them to start sprouting. If you want to increase the number of dahlias, use the new shoots for cuttings. Otherwise thin them to not more than three shoots when planting them out in late May.

Tulip bulbs should be planted now, either in containers or in the open ground. Many tulips give their best show in the first spring after planting and need to be replaced for the next year. If you want to naturalise them from one year to another, say in grass, Darwin tulips are the best.

From now on through the winter months shrubs and trees can be pruned or cut back, although evergreens are best left until nearer the spring. Avoid pruning in frosty weather and, if you have access to a shredder, shred and bag up the off-cuts for mixing with grass cuttings and other green material in the compost heap.

Jeremy Arthern

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Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 9th October in the upstairs room of the Pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Alan Jacobs and Francia Slade. Clerk Lyn Lyman and 6 members of the public were also present. Councillors Chris Gee, Krys Osuch and Joe Warren and Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby sent their apologies.



The village centre

I don't mean this column to be a sort of personal version of the minutes of each meeting – you can read them (once ratified) on the Biddenham website at <http://biddenham.org.uk/documents/>. Rather, I will collect things together for you so as to hopefully make things sensibly themed and, with any luck, moderately interesting.

So I will start this month with a round-up of various matters relating to the centre of the village that were all discussed at one point or another during the last meeting.

The first thing to say is that we hope you like the newly re-surfaced footpath along Main Road. This has cost £11,300 of your Council Tax contributions to the Parish, which we saved up over the last two years. It will hopefully now last for a good few years yet, before it needs doing again.

You may also have noticed the new, replacement St George's flag now flying atop the flagpole next to the War Memorial. This was purchased in the last few weeks, although we will actually be flying the Union Flag shortly, for the Remembrance period. You may also have seen that Tommy has returned.

Secondly, and as I reported in the last edition, a house will now be built behind the shabby fence next to Lavender Lodge, as the developer won their appeal. I have spoken personally to them, and asked them to keep me informed of

their plans for works. These are unlikely to start until the new year. The hedge we tried to grow has not done very well, and this will be replaced with a decent new boundary along the fence-line, by the developer (at their expense) in due course.

Thirdly, the Three Tuns is now under interim management while the brewery (Green King) find a new, permanent tenant. We are very concerned that the pub does not disappear from the village and so have considered whether to apply for it to become an "Asset of Community Value". This would afford it some protection if the brewery wanted to sell it and/or change its use in future. We will wait and see what happens for a few weeks before deciding whether to press ahead with this.

If you see Sid...

When British Gas was privatised in 1986, "If you see Sid... Tell him!" was the rather innovative slogan used to promote buying shares in it, and it went viral (even though we only got the Internet about ten years later!).

Well if you see Sid around Biddenham from now on, you will in fact be looking at our new "speed indicator device" (see?... SID). If you see Sid and he smiles at you, or shows some other positive hieroglyph, then it means you are driving at a sensible speed. If he frowns at you, or worse, then you are going too fast.

We're grateful to Bryan Glasper, who lives off Gold Lane, for pushing forward this initiative. The sign comes with complex software and the ability to generate reports which show trends of traffic speeds at different times of the day. And it can be moved around the Parish, so we maximise its potential.

Bryan has been learning all about it, and testing it in his dining room by running up the back garden and through the French windows to see if he can make it frown.

Watch out for Sid in a road near you soon.

Our next meeting

We meet every second Wednesday of most months at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney, and very much welcome hearing from residents. There is a public "open session" near the start for anyone wanting to say something. Please come along and let us know anything concerning you about our village, or just come and listen. The next meeting is on Wednesday 13th November.

Peter Chase
Chairman

Café B...



Tuesday 19th November

Biddenham Village Hall

10.30 am - 12.00 noon

*Selection of teas, coffees,
hot chocolate and juice*

Home baked cakes

Book Swap

Next café 17th December



Great Denham Events

Parish Council Meetings

Mondays 4th November and 2nd December.

All meetings start at 7.30pm and are held at Great Denham Community Hall; there is 15 minutes for public questions at the start of each meeting.

Events at Great Denham Community Hall

For further details and information please email: events@greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Friday 1st November	Freaky Film
Friday 1st November	Quiz Night
Saturday 30th November	Comedy Night
Saturday 7th December	Winter Wonderland

To keep up to date with developments at Great Denham log on to <http://www.greatdenham.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>

Peter's Picturehouse 'Fisherman's Friends'

Our film showing this month is 'Fisherman's Friends', where a Cornish village is the venue for a music executive's stag weekend. A prank to sign a group of singing fisherman gives opportunities to view the contrasts between rural and city life as well as community and fame and fortune. Daniel May and Tuppence Middleton lead the cast in this comedy drama with plenty of music and Cornish scenery and it is loosely based on a real-life story.

Do come along and bring your friends (apparently some people in the village have not yet heard of our friendly film nights!). The film was released this year and has a 12A certificate.

The date is Tuesday 5th November in Biddenham village hall. We shall be serving ice creams and hot and cold drinks from 7:00pm, tickets available on the door, priced £5. The film will start at 7:30pm and we will have a short interval during the film.

Future showings at Peter's Picturehouse:

- Tuesday 3rd December: 'The Holiday' (12A), an epic Christmas film starring Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet and Jude Law
- Tuesday 7th January: 'Kursk: the Last Mission' (12A), based on the Kursk submarine disaster in 2000, starring Colin Firth as Commodore David Russell. We are delighted that David will be joining us at this showing.
- Tuesday 4th February: 'The Zookeeper's Wife' (12A), a war drama released in 2017.

Rose Houghton

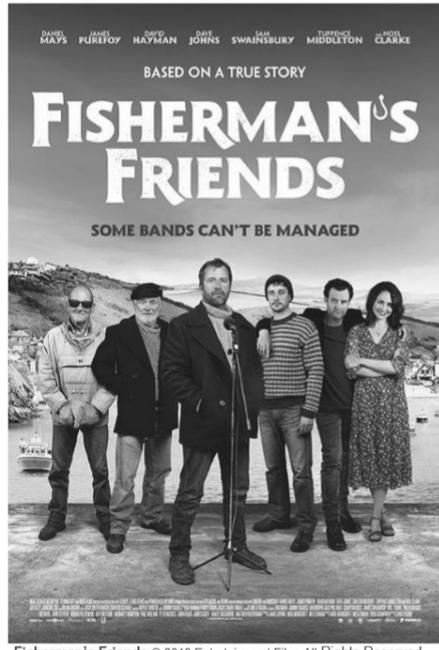


Peter's Picturehouse
proudly presents

Date: Tuesday 5th November 2019
Bar Open: 7:00pm
Film Showing Starts: 7:30pm
Location: Biddenham Village Hall

Ticket price: £5





FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS
SOME BANDS CAN'T BE MANAGED

Fisherman's Friends © 2019 Entertainment Film. All Rights Reserved

Certificate: 12A

If you need a lift to the Village Hall in order to see the film, please phone Marihelen on 07710288933

Coming soon to Peter's Picturehouse

Tues 3rd Dec: *The Holiday*, by popular request!

Tues 7th Jan: *Kursk: The Last Mission*, with special guest appearance.

Christingle Service

St James's Church
Biddenham

Sunday 1 December
9.00am



A short informal service for all ages!

Supporting The Children's Society



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Have fun
Hear bible stories
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St James's Church Barn, Biddenham

Tuesday 17 September
Tuesday 15 October
Tuesday 19 November
Tuesday 10 December

4.30pm - 6.00pm
St James's Church Barn, Biddenham

For children of all ages
(accompanied by an adult)

Free - No need to book - Just come along!

Everybody Welcome!

St James's Church, Biddenham
All Saints Church, Kempston

Biddenham Gardeners Association

A Labour of Love. Alpines, plants and bulbs.

The speaker at our meeting on 15th October was Rob Potterton of Potterton's Nursery near Caistor in Lincolnshire. His highly informative and entertaining talk was illustrated with excellent photographs and a great many pictures of alpine plants showing the huge range of plants and their vibrant colours. The easiest way to be reminded of the plants that Rob talked about is to visit the nursery website, www.pottertons.co.uk.

The nursery was started by Rob's father in the 1970s and currently occupies a five acre site developed over the last twenty-five years. Two thirds of the site is a garden open to the public at nursery opening times and the remainder is devoted to the nursery. The garden has a large pond, a rockery and a variety of beds and containers demonstrating the many ways in which alpines can be grown. This is very much a family business run by Rob and his wife with the help of his daughter and two staff.

In a quick introduction to alpines Rob said that many people will know alpines as rockery plants like aubretia, gentian, saxifrage and potentilla. There are also many bulbs that go with alpines such as crocus and miniature varieties of tulip, narcissus, iris and cyclamen. Alpines are small, compact plants with masses of flowers which bloom from April to July. They like well-drained soil, good light and exposure to wind to dry the foliage. Foliage is liable to rot in wet conditions and there are some alpines that need to be grown in an alpine house where the plants can be kept dry and where there is plenty of ventilation. Heat is

not needed as alpines are very hardy. The best soil mix is two parts of John Innes No 2, one part peat substitute (such as coir) and one part horticultural grit. Alpines can be grown on a rockery, in raised beds, troughs and a variety of containers, including old boots! All containers must have holes for drainage. An attractive way of presenting alpines is in a 'crevice' bed where the surface is covered with grit (a good thing for all alpine planting) and divided with low vertically placed pieces of stone paving.

The nursery also sells a range of small humus, acid or shade loving (woodland) plants such as corydalis, daphne and jeffersonia and bulbs like trillium, narcissus, erythronium, hepatica and fritilaria.

Rob then spoke about and illustrated the history and construction of the nursery. His father was originally a 'lumper' (unloading fish) at Grimsby docks with a love of gardening. Initially he grew carnations but, after a visit to Compton Acres garden in Devon, he developed a love of alpines. He converted a greenhouse into an alpine house and, with a friend Alan Martin, he started propagating alpines. They started a small part-time business which grew in 1978 to a full-time proper business on a one acre site with a large greenhouse. When Rob left school he had no interest in the business but took an office job and went travelling. It was in the course of a long visit to New Zealand walking all round South Island that he discovered New Zealand alpines and fell in love with them. On his return he joined his father and did good business selling New Zealand alpines. Shortly after that he met Jackie and, in time, they married and subsequently took over the business. In 1994 they bought land adjoining the nursery and expanded to a seven acre site with five acres devoted to the nursery and garden and land where they could build their own house

In a "behind the scenes" look at the nursery Rob showed us the methods of propagation and growing on and the areas devoted to this and to packing plants for mail order. Growing a plant from propagation to sales-ready can take up to seven years although many alpines will grow from sowing to sale in two years.

For many years Rob took part in the major flower shows such as Chelsea, Malvern and Gardeners' World, winning many gold medals. He has now stopped doing this and, instead, attends one-day shows and displays.

On 24th May 2020 the nursery will be open for the National Gardens Scheme; following the success of an NGS open day this year when he had a thousand visitors and raised £3,000 pounds for the NGS charities.

The next talk, on Tuesday 19th November at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall is 'From fields to Floribunda' by Alison Green

Jeremy Arthern

New members and visitors are always welcome. For more information contact Linda Truscott on 01234 270747. www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk



NEW BRUNCH MENU MONDAY TO SATURDAY OPEN 10AM

- Cumberland sausage or Woburn bacon, fried egg bap (G) (GFO) (E) 7.00
- Smoked haddock and mature cheddar omelette (D) (E) 9.00
- Smoked salmon and scrambled egg, toasted sourdough (D) (E) 8.00
- Smashed avocado, chilli, poached egg, toasted sourdough (G) (GFO) (E) 7.00
- Baked eggs, chorizo, burrata, sweet pepper breakfast bowl (D) (E) 8.00
- Flat-capped mushrooms, Parma ham, poached egg, toasted sourdough 8.00 (G) (GFO) (E)
- Gluten-free pancakes, blue berries, bananas, honey and crema fraiche (GF) (D) 7.00
- French brioche toast, cinnamon glazed apples, ricotta 7.00 (G) (D)

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Draw for 2 free lunch tickets every month
Book swap
Friday, 1st November, 6th December

To book: email firstfridaylunch@outlook.com
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100 CLUB



September draw

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----|
| 1. | M. Litchfield | 204 |
| 2. | D. Watson | 156 |
| 3. | D. Reilly | 58 |

Drawn by Sheila Frossell



The Friends of St James
- the charity which helps conserve the church, churchyard and barn for future generations

Membership	Peter Leverkus	Tel: 353662
Treasurer	Paul Fricker	Tel: 342843

Hall Booking Details

Biddenham Village Hall

From the Village Hall website you can check availability on the diary, look at the facilities and download a booking form. Contact details for regular events are also there.
www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk

Church Barn

Contact the Booking Officer, Jan Burns on 344019 or janburns@gmx.com if you would like to hire the barn. Smaller than the Village Hall, it is ideal for a small party or meeting.

Pavilion

The hall is available for children's parties, anniversary lunches, christening receptions, meetings etc. We can also hire the small upstairs meeting room which has tea and coffee making facilities.
Booking enquiries to biddenhampavilion@hotmail.co.uk or Debs Slade on 07808 579330.

Great Denham Community Hall

www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Regular Events in Biddenham

Monday

10.00am	Cha Char Chimps	Village Hall
10.00am	Yoga	Pavilion
2.30pm	Cardiac Rehab exercise	Pavilion
6.30pm	Pilates	Pavilion
6.30pm	Mat Pilates	Church Barn
7.15pm	Guides (term-time)	Village Hall
7.45pm	Martial Arts	Pavilion

Tuesday

10.00am	Art	Church Barn
10.00am	Personal Fitness	Pavilion
7.00pm	Personal Fitness/Circuits	Pavilion
8.00pm	Country Dancing (2nd & 4th in month)	Village Hall

Wednesday

9.45am	Hopping Bunnies (music for toddlers)	Pavilion
10.00am	Tai Chi	Church Barn
10.00,11.00 & 12.00	Baby College (term-time)	Village Hall
2.00pm	Table Tennis	Pavilion
2.30pm	Art	Church Barn
6.30pm	Aerobics	Pavilion
6.30pm	Handbell Ringing Practice	Church Barn
7.30pm	Ballroom Dancing (term-time)	Village Hall

Thursday

9.45am	Hopping Bunnies (music for toddlers)	Pavilion
9.30-11.30am	Under 5's (term-time)	Village Hall
2.00pm	U3A Handbells	Church Barn
2.00pm	Love to Dance	Pavilion
7.00pm	Fit-Steps	Pavilion
7.30pm	Whist (2nd & 4th in month)	Village Hall

Friday

8.30 & 9.30am	Pilates	Village Hall
9.30am	Jo Jingles (Children's musical group)	Pavilion
11.00am	Mother & Baby Yoga (except 1st Friday)	Village Hall
3.30-7.30pm	Ballet classes (term-time)	Village Hall
1.45-4.45pm	Duplicate Bridge	Church Barn
7.00pm	Martial Arts	Pavilion
7.00pm	Choir Practice	Church Barn
8.00pm	Tango	Village Hall

Saturday

9.30am	Pregnancy Yoga	Village Hall
9.30am	Zumba	Pavilion
10.45am	Zumbini	Pavilion

Sunday

9.00 -10.00am	Explorers	Church Barn
7.30pm	Karma Yoga	Village Hall

For regular events at Great Denham Community Hall, go to www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk/



Mobile Library



Great Denham Community Centre

Saturdays, 2nd, 16th, 30th
November
2.20pm-2.40pm

Biddenham NOTE NEW TIMES

Thursdays, 7th, 21st November
Three Tuns 10.45am-11.00am
Church End 11.05am-11.25am

November

- Fri 1 Nov First Friday Lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p23
 Fri 1 Nov Freaky film, Great Denham Community Hall, see p20
 Fri 1 Nov Quiz night, Great Denham Community Hall, see p20
 Sat 2 Nov Mobile Library, Great Denham Community Centre, 2.20-2.40pm, see p23
Sun 3 Nov All Age Service, St James's, **9.00am**
 All Souls Service, St James's, **3.00pm**,
 No evening service
 Sun 3 Nov Biddenham Society AGM, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p4
 Sun 3 Nov Moggerhanger Park Fireworks Festival, 4.00-7.00pm, see p3
 Mon 4 Nov Alpha Course, 15 Church End, 7.00pm, see p2
 Mon 4 Nov Great Denham Parish Council meeting, GD Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p20
 Tue 5 Nov Peter's Picturehouse, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p21
 Thu 7 Nov Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p23
 Thu 7 Nov Biddenham Village Hall AGM, 8.00pm, see p3
 Sat 9 Nov Pond Work Morning, 10.00am-noon, see p5
 Sat 9 Nov Bells & Whistles, Putnoe Heights Church, 7.30pm, see p5
Sun 10 Nov Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
 Remembrance Service, Biddenham War Memorial, 10.50am, see p1
 Evening Prayer, All Saints, **6.00pm**
 barn@2, Church Barn, 2.00pm, see p8
 Tue 12 Nov Biddenham Parish Council, Biddenham Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p20
 Wed 13 Nov Mobile Library, Great Denham Community Centre, 2.20-2.40pm, see p23
 Sat 16 Nov Jazz Evening, All Saints, Kempston, 7.30pm, see p19
Sun 17 Nov Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
 Evensong, St James's, **6.00pm**
 Tue 19 Nov Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am-12.00noon, see p20
 Tue 19 Nov Bedford National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.30pm, see p3
 Tue 19 Nov Messy Church, St James's Church Barn, 4.30-6.00pm, see p21
 Tue 19 Nov Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm, see p22
 Wed 20 Nov Biddenham History Society, Church Barn, 8.00pm, see p5
 Thu 21 Nov Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p23
 Sat 23 Nov British Red Cross Christmas Fair, Bedford School, 10.00am-4.00pm, see p5
Sun 24 Nov Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
 No evening service
 Sat 30 Nov Mobile Library, Great Denham Community Centre, 2.20-2.40pm, see p23
 Sat 30 Nov Comedy Night, Great Denham Community Hall, see p20

December

- Sun 1 Dec** All Age Christingle Service, St James's, **9.00am**, see p21
 Holy Communion, St James's, **6.00pm**
 Sun 1 Dec Christmas Sale, Church Barn, 10.00am, see p3
 Mon 2 Dec Great Denham Parish Council meeting, GD Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p20
 Tue 3 Dec Peter's Picturehouse, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p21
 Fri 6 Dec First Friday Lunch, Biddenham Village Hall,
 12.30pm, see p23
 Sat 7 Dec Winter Wonderland, Great Denham
 Community Hall, see p20
Sun 8 Dec Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
 Evening Prayer, All Saints, **6.00pm**
 Tue 10 Dec Messy Church, St James's Church Barn,
 4.30-6.00pm, see p21
 Tue 17 Dec Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am-
 12.00noon, see p20
 Wed 18 Dec Carols by Candlelight, Bedford School
 Chapel, 7.30pm, see p3
 20-21 Dec Apres ski Christmas Party, Moggerhanger
 Park, 7.00pm, see p6

Contributors please note that next month's edition will cover both December and January.

For regular events listings see page 23

The Loop

Editor	Jean Gambold	Tel 349849
Proof Reader	Jacqui Piper	Tel 356993
Church correspondent	Peta Martin	Tel 348718
Advertising	Clare Sugars	Tel 355262
Subscriptions	Richard Harris	Tel 210434
Distribution	Richard Church	Tel 214805

All **December/January** articles, preferably by e-mail in Word format, to loopeditor@gmail.com or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to 3 Queen's Close (cj.sugars@talktalk.net) by **Wednesday 20th November please.**



The views expressed in 'The Loop' by various community groups do not necessarily represent the views of St James's Church or the Parochial Church Council.