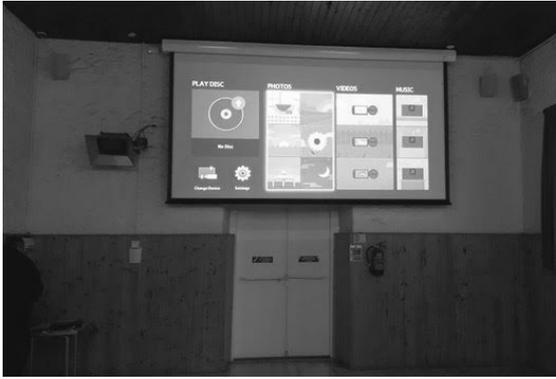


The Loop

February
2020

£1.00



Biddenham Village Hall projector and screen upgraded

A new projector and screen have been installed at Biddenham Village Hall. Both the Gardeners Association and Peter's Picturehouse are regular users of the projector and screen and all attendees will appreciate the improved clarity of image.

Peter's Picturehouse has just completed its first year of operation and has been very well supported. As its popularity grows, the new equipment will allow a useful increase in seating capacity. Details of the next films are on page 9.

The old projector and screen are to be relocated to the Church Barn so the upgrade will indirectly improve facilities there as well.

John Esam

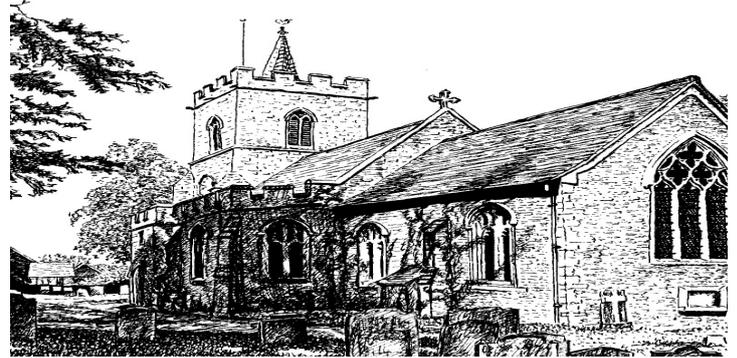
2020 Loop subscriptions now due

Your annual subscription to The Loop is now due. The price for the ten issues in 2020 will be £10 (minimum). Any profits go to the church funds so if you can manage to donate more, please do.

Please make cheques payable to Biddenham PCC.

Subscriptions should be delivered to Richard Harris, 6 Nodders Way or Jacqui Piper, 27 St Mellion Drive as soon as possible please.

There was a renewal form with last month's Loop. If you have mislaid it please put your subscription in an envelope with your name and address and deliver as above.



Significant donation for Friends of St James

It's always a testament to our community here in Biddenham when a donation to the work of The Friends of St James turns up out of the blue.

Stephen and Mary Doherty lived in Church End from 1986 to 1997, in some ways a relatively short period but enough to establish many friendships and a love of the community. Though not churchgoers at St James's they recognised the community benefits that such a wonderful building as ours inspires. Stephen writes in his unexpected letter how he cut the churchyard grass, went to village events and was a church keyholder. We have fond memories of them both, as do others in the village.

Sadly, Mary passed away in 1995 after an illness bravely borne and is buried in the churchyard. The epitaph on her gravestone is poignant and seems now very appropriate. An excerpt reads 'Her bright presence made the world a better place'. Stephen left the village and moved over the big pond to New York, where he still resides.

Thank you for your generous donation, Stephen, and for supporting the work of The Friends of St James to maintain and improve the church, barn and churchyards. We retain many happy memories of both you and Mary.

Chris Haydn Jones and Diana Shooter

'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

Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends

I was born on the Wirral, surrounded on three sides by water, and when the storms came in across the Irish Sea, my mum would throw us in the back of her old Bedford Van, and take us to either New Brighton, Harrison Drive or West Kirby. There we would watch the high waves as they smashed against the sea front. If it was safe, she would take us outside, and we could feel the wind and taste the salt-water on our lips.

At New Brighton, there remains a tall lighthouse, that always seemed so still and steadfast against the forces of nature. We loved these places and, when the summer came and the storms had ended, we could play in the sand at the base of this same lighthouse, with our parents nearby.



New Brighton lighthouse

It may be difficult for the people of landlocked Bedford to understand, but these coastal storms, the smell of the sea, the sound of the waves, and the power of the natural world, become a part of who I am.

Simon Peter, the disciple of Jesus, spent, according to tradition, his last days in Rome. That great city must have been so far removed from Galilee where he had finally left his fishing boats behind. In Rome, Peter, like many early Christians was facing the storm of persecution under the emperor Nero. The story tellers, who helped write the pages of the New Testament, were trying to reach the hearts of those who found it so difficult to hold on. They

wanted to remind these people that God had not abandoned them, and that they should hold onto faith when so much was falling apart.

Peace, for them, was so hard to find, when God seemed so distant, and far removed. I wonder if Peter, in the storm of persecution, thought back to the Sea of Galilee, and longed again for the still waters. It was the place of distant memories, and the whisper of the tide must have been the last thing he heard as he lay down, as a child, to sleep. This is the peace that we all, at times, long for.

The truth is that, like the Wirral Peninsula, the place of my childhood, the Sea of Galilee had its storms as well. The stories remind us of one in particular. Peter and his friends wrestled with this storm while trying to hold on to a fragile fishing boat.

Of course, Jesus, in the story, is painted as utterly useless; fast asleep in the side of the boat, oblivious to the fear and the panic around him.

I guess this is just like God who appears so silent and dysfunctional in the fear, the despair, the grief, and the hopelessness that so many of us experience. Why does he sleep? Why does he not help? Why is God so useless while we struggle so much, simply to survive the storm?

In the story, Peter and his friends wake Him, and gently, He commands the waves to be still. The storm stops and once again, Peter and his friends can return to the gentle rhythm of truth. The story was there just to remind those who face fear and the storm that, even when things seem hopeless, God never leaves us or abandons us.

Our Father is with us, always loving us, so we can rest in peace, and play in the sand of peace. We are not alone.

God bless.

Eric

Ash Wednesday Communion Service

7pm

26 February 2020

All Saints Church

Kempston

All Welcome

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

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax rev.ejlomax@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		



Ruth and Anthony

Ruth Laing

Ruth died on 4th November at her home in Oxfordshire. We are grateful to Kate Jones for this tribute.

Ruth was born in Sheffield before the end of the 1st World War was in sight and moved to Maidenhead where her father, an engineer was relocated by his firm.

During the 2nd World War she joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment and it was while she was nursing that Ruth met her future husband, Anthony, who was a burns patient. After he was discharged Anthony rejoined his regiment, then was captured at Tobruk and was in a prisoner of war camp at Fontanellato in Italy.

Ruth and Anthony were married in 1945 and lived in Taplow as Anthony, who was an architect, worked in

London. Later he was offered two partnerships one in Winchester and one in Bedford. He couldn't decide which to take but they saw that the two towns were rowing against each other at the Maidenhead regatta, so Ruth immediately said go for the winner which was why they ended up in Bedford! While they were in Taplow, Ian was born followed by Hugh.

In 1955 they bought a plot in Vicars Close, had a house built and lived in Biddenham for over 50 years.

Ruth loved playing tennis. She joined the Biddenham tennis club when it started and played until she was eighty with the Monday afternoon ladies. She also loved cooking and if she knew of any new neighbours who were moving in, arrived on their doorstep with a hot meal. One of those was our former vicar John Schofield who Pippa and I chatted to at Ruth's funeral. He told us how kind Anthony and Ruth were, especially during his marriage problems, and he had kept in touch with Ruth when they moved to Oxford after Anthony became ill. Ian had persuaded them to move there so he could keep an eye on them.

Ruth was so kind to my daughter Pippa too when she was ill and often had us round to tea and to teach us bridge.

Anthony and Ruth instigated the building of Charterhouse home for the elderly which he designed, and Ruth spent much time there visiting the residents. She was very popular.

After Anthony died Ruth became very involved in her local church and the vicars used to pop round for tea and cake. Her favourite vicar came back to give her eulogy at the funeral. Ruth managed to stay at home until the end, with care for the last eighteen months of her life. Pippa and I last visited her a year before and she was her usual fun self with a wonderful memory but then almost blind. She would have been 102 in February.

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Biddenham History Society

Over 30 people braved Storm Brendan to attend the January meeting of the History Society. They were rewarded with an excellent presentation by Susan Claremont who is a volunteer guide at Moggerhanger Park. She gave us a tour of the house and grounds illustrated by some lovely photographs taken by her husband.



Susan started with the outside of the house, which was remodeled by Sir John Soane at the request of Godfrey Thornton who was a director of the Bank of England. Soane began work on the house in 1791 and work continued on

and off for Godfrey and his son for 22 years. Susan had some very attractive photographs to illustrate the pleasing elevation of the house that Soane created and the lovely colour of the walls so that the house looks impressive in different lights.

The Estate was landscaped in the 1790s by Humphrey Repton and still includes a Walled Garden, Ice House and woodlands which are well worth a visit to see the wonderful display of snowdrops and bluebells in the Spring. Susan took us inside the house on her tour via the northerly entrance created by Soane. She said that the Entrance Hall surprises many people as it seems small and wooden. In fact, the walls and their colour are a clever use of plaster. She had some excellent photographs to illustrate the main features of the interior of the house that earned it its Grade I listing.

The soaring cantilevered staircase still looks magnificent and is a favourite with brides for their photographs if they book their wedding at Moggerhanger.

Susan revealed that the now painted walls of the Library were originally covered in mica-flecked wallpaper which would have sparkled in candlelight. The dining room, known as the eating room in the eighteenth century, has Biddenham connections as Dorothy Richards, a Biddenham resident, who worked to preserve the house after it had ceased to be used as a hospital in 1987, commissioned a Biddenham artist to make a copy of a portrait of one of the Thorntons to go in the room.



Upstairs, Susan described and showed us photographs of Mrs Thornton's boudoir. This is an attractive room that Soane created as a private sitting room for the Lady of the House. She even had a secret door so that she could slip away into her bedroom. The room has now been consecrated and is used as Moggerhanger Park's wedding chapel. Susan also showed us pictures of other bedrooms that can be used if a family hires Moggerhanger as a wedding venue.



The light well or tribune came across in its full glory in a well angled photograph.

Our tour ended downstairs in the servants' hall that can be used for refreshments, though there is also an outdoor café near the Walled Garden. Many of us felt inspired to see more – whether on a guided tour actually at Moggerhanger Park or through a visit to the Sir John Soane's Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London. Susan had whetted our appetites through her informative talk and beautiful photographs.

The next meeting of the Society will be on Monday 20th April at 8.00pm in the Church Barn. Peter Applewhite has been busy with his research on the History of Biddenham. He will give us Part 1 of the results of his research which he has called: Biddenham: 2 things you may have wondered about and the search for answers. I hope you will be able to come, and learn more!

Kathy Fricker

Music for Memory

Thanks to Bedford School website for this account.

Boys from the Bedford School Chapel Choir and girls from Bedford Girls' School delighted a group of elderly people from the charity Music 4 Memory on Thursday 12th December with a delightful rendition of an old school song, *Bedford by the River*.

Included in the group were Old Bedfordians John and Clive both of whom suffer from dementia. John and Clive attend a group held every Thursday by Music for Memory and, after suddenly remembering *Bedford by the River*, have been singing it at the session for a little while, they become more animated, they dance and laugh and their spirits lift.

Their love of the song, which obviously takes them right back to their days at Bedford School, inspired Director of Services at Music 4 Memory Jeni Melia to contact the Old Bedfordians Club to ask if they recognised the old school song. The Club immediately recognised the song and arranged to give them a tour of their old school. They then contacted Director of Music Joss Sanders and, thanks to his heart-warming response, the Chapel Choir joined forces with girls from Bedford Girls' School to perform a beautiful arrangement of the song.

John and Clive were then invited to sing with the choir, which they did with such enthusiasm and passion. It was an absolute joy to watch; children of today and the Old Bedfordians joined together through the power of music. It was a beautiful moment with not a dry eye in the house.

Jeni told us, "It has been truly wonderful to witness this occasion for John and Clive. They have a renewed sense of who they are and where they have come from, as do the family and friends who care for them.

Since the song came back to John, we have witnessed his obvious pride and fondness for his school days. He used to sing in the Chapel Choir, and it was a privilege to see both John and Clive singing the old school song with current pupils at Bedford School and Bedford Girls' School.

June Kuria



Rain, rain & yet more rain!

At last the pond is full of water (after a very wet few weeks) at a level higher than this time last year, the ducks have returned and the whole area is looking extremely picturesque. Long may this last!

The encroachment of reeds into the pond has been a problem but individual commitments meant that we were unable to get a work party together to deal with this before Christmas. However, on Sunday 19th January, six volunteers, three in waders and three on the bank, set about removing reeds from the front and left-hand side of the pond. Not an easy task, given the water level. Luckily the weather was bright and sunny, although it was cold for those in the pond itself, but refreshments were supplied, and we thank Sophie and Paul for these. A further work party has been arranged for 9th February to continue and hopefully complete the task, once again improving the views of and from the pond, for everyone to enjoy as spring approaches.

Sadly, our requests for additional volunteers to help with the mowing rota, made in the last two magazines, have elicited no response at all. We appreciate that many of our Friends who support us financially are unable to physically volunteer, but we also know that a lot more people (and their dogs) enjoy their walks to the pond, but in order to keep this area accessible to everyone, we do need some help with grass cutting.

Just contemplate for a moment what this area would be like if the grass was not cut. One two-hour session a year is all it would take to help make a difference! (If you can help us at all, please contact Paul Godden, whose details are below).

I would also like to give you all advance notice of our Spring work morning, which will take place on Saturday 4th April 10.00am to 12.00 noon, with refreshments provided. Please come along and help – it really is very enjoyable.

We welcome all support from our community and if you would like to join us as a Friend, please email Jane Knight (details below) for a membership form.

Thank you and do come and visit and enjoy the pond.

The Pond Team

Contact Details

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

www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com
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Bedford National Trust Association

Tuesday 18th February 2020

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Tuesday 11th March 2020

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Golf Club Prizewinners

Prizes for The Bedford Golf Club Senior competitions 2019 were awarded at the club on 11th December.

From left to right:

Graham Shennan won the Summer Pairs knockout with Paul Robinson, and was the Senior Championships Plate winner.

Fran Eyre won the Jubilee Trophy for the second year running.

Alan Merrifield won the Summer Singles Knockout, and Golfer of the Year.

Bernard Henry

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Café B...



Tuesday 18th February

*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 March

St Joseph and St Gregory's Primary School



Advent was a busy period for staff and children with rehearsals for Christmas concerts and performances to parents of 'Winter Wonderland' by Years 1 & 2, 'The Inn Crowd' by Reception and Year 3 and 'Memories of the First Christmas' by Years 4, 5 & 6.

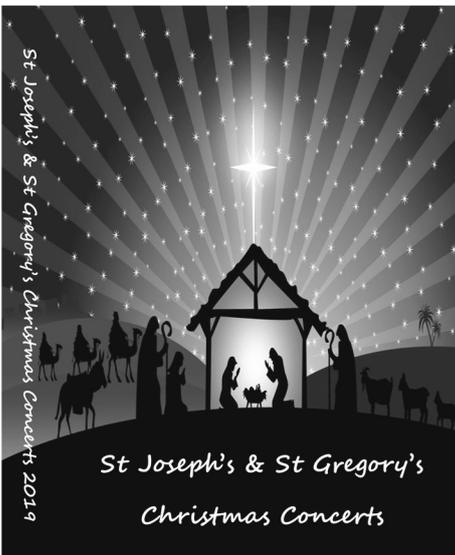
The school choir sang Christmas carols at various local places including Bedford train station, Dial House and St Paul's church, Bedford.

Christmas jumpers were worn for a traditional Christmas dinner which was served to all the children.

Children in Reception to Year 2 had great fun singing Christmas songs and playing games along with eating ice cream and sweets whilst children in Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 had a film night with the choice of 3 different Christmas movies to watch along with sweets and popcorn to enjoy too.

The Bedford mobile library stop at the Upper Primary site continues to be very popular with children and staff with books being borrowed every fortnight from the van.

New books have been bought for the library for the children to enjoy and borrow.



The Christmas Concerts DVD

St Joseph's & St Gregory's Christmas Concerts 2019

Blunham's Big Book Sale Saturday 22nd February 2020 10:00am to 3:00pm

Come and browse and buy at our Big Book Sale in Blunham Parish Church, St Edmunds or St James, Park Lane Beds MK44 3NQ.

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Tuesday 21 April

Tuesday 19 May

Tuesday 16 June

Tuesday 7 July

Tuesday 15 September

Tuesday 20 October

Tuesday 17 November

Tuesday 15 December

Free - No need to book - Just come along after school!

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St James's Church, Biddenham

barn@2

TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

CHURCH BARN @ 2PM



ARMCHAIR YOGA

A TALK AND DEMONSTRATION

By Keeley Frampton

ALL WELCOME - £3 MEMBERS - £5 VISITORS

barn@2 Food Additives

Claire Slaney, of belly dancing fame, has other 'strings to her bow' as we discovered when she came to talk to the group about Food Additives.

Being glamorous and slim (and with more youth on her side than any of us) she was perhaps a good ambassador for the company of which she is an independent consultant, Arbonne. This is an international, direct selling company which was founded in the United States of America in 1980 by a Norwegian entrepreneur, Petter Morck.

The company boasts 500 different products including skin care, make up and nutritional items. The products, which Claire brought to show us, are all plant based, vegan certified, paraben and gluten free. The company, though, does not claim that all products are natural or organic.

For more information you can go to www.claireslaney.arbonne.com or do a Google search.

Please note;

It is always wise, when taking food supplements or additional nutrients, to check with a doctor or qualified nutritionist that they are suitable for you.

We learnt ways that one company was trying to meet the needs of those on special diets but we did not cover many scientific facts about food additives.

That's a subject we'd like to address in future.

Our next meeting is being led by Keeley Frampton, on 11th February, when we take part in Armchair Yoga. Do come along and join us. We are an open group (not just a women's group) and welcome anyone who wants to come for a specific session. Our programme for the year is now available.

Val Fitzhugh

Are you looking for bridge lessons?

No Fear, who run Friday afternoon and Sunday night bridge sessions in Biddenham, are running beginners' classes at Wixams retirement village restarting on 14th January at 10.00am.

Please contact Bernard Henry on 07866 456769 or bahenry0309@gmail.com if you are interested.

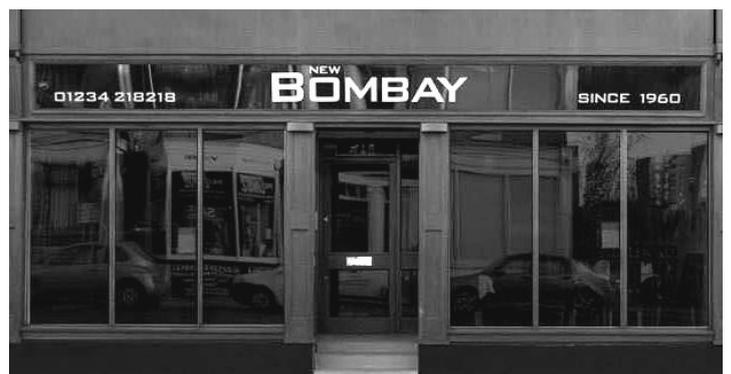
Biddenham man reopens New Bombay



The New Bombay restaurant in Harpur Street was closed for a year after suffering fire damage at the end of 2018. St Mary's resident Shish Miah has now taken over the premises and, following extensive refurbishment, reopened the restaurant just before Christmas.

Shish previously operated the Bengal Brasserie on Broadway and, together with the former owner of the New Bombay, saw an opportunity to merge the two businesses in the bigger and more convenient site while following the traditions of both restaurants.

A dark grey rectangular box containing the logo for New Bombay restaurant. The logo features the letters 'NB' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, the words 'NEW BOMBAY' are written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. Underneath that, in an even smaller font, is the text 'BEDFORD'S MOST ESTABLISHED INDIAN RESTAURANT'. At the bottom of the box, the phone number '01234 218 218' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below the phone number, it says 'ORDER ONLINE AT' followed by the website address 'www.newbombay.co.uk' in a smaller font.



Peter's Picturehouse

Peter's Picturehouse has now been running for a year and we are delighted with the support we are getting in Biddenham. In December, a festive crowd came to enjoy The Holiday and in January, a packed village hall had a very memorable evening as we showed Kursk – the last mission.

The film told the story of the race to rescue survivors in a stricken Russian submarine. The Kursk was the pride of the Russian fleet but in August 2000 lay at the bottom of the Barents Sea following a catastrophic explosion. Commodore David Russell was the Royal Naval officer in charge of the UK operation to offer all possible assistance, including a sophisticated rescue submersible.

After retiring from the Royal Navy, David became the CEO of the Harpur Trust and now lives in Biddenham. David gave a brief introductory talk and then took questions after the screening of the film. It was fascinating to hear about the political intrigue behind the scenes. The Russians were very reluctant to allow access to the Kursk which was packed with top secret technology. You will need to watch the film to see how it pans out.

I suspect what most people will remember will be the lovely nuggets of information about the film and life aboard submarines. David had high praise for Colin Firth who was cast to play him in the film. Although David's final command was HMS Vanguard, a Trident nuclear submarine, his first was a much more humble vessel, though as captain he had the luxury of one small basin of water per day to wash his face, shave and clean his teeth. "The trick was to do them in the right order".

On to what we have coming up in Peter's Picturehouse for 2020. In February we are showing the war drama film The Zookeeper's Wife, which came out in 2017. Based on a true story, the film shows some of the turmoil experienced by the husband and wife keepers of Warsaw Zoo when Germany invaded and occupied Poland. They then became active in the Polish underground resistance and many Jews survived the war with their help.

As usual, doors open at 7.00pm and the film will start at 7.30pm. Come along to the Village Hall on Tuesday 4th February to see more about the real life story of a working wife and mother who became a hero. The film certification is 12A. We look forward to welcoming you!

On Tuesday 3rd March our film is Downton Abbey, certification PG, which came out in 2019.

Rose Houghton

Spring Harvest comes to Bedford

For some years a group of people from St James's Church has attended Spring Harvest, a Christian Conference in Lincolnshire, and have found this a great encouragement to their Christian faith. This year the subject for the conference will be the early church. How did eleven men and a small and motley group of men and women spread the message about Jesus all over the known world, peacefully and in a few years? This was even more surprising because the communications and travel in those days were difficult and slow.

If you are interested in all this, I have some good news for you! St Peter de Merton Church in De Parys Avenue in the centre of Bedford has invited the Spring Harvest Team to come to their church on Tuesday 4th February for an evening of teaching and worship. If you would like to join the group from St James's Church please contact Edwin on edandpete@hotmail.com. Tickets are £8.00 or £6.00 for concessions when purchased in advance or £10.00 on the door.

Edwin Martin



Peter's Picturehouse
proudly presents

Ticket price: £5

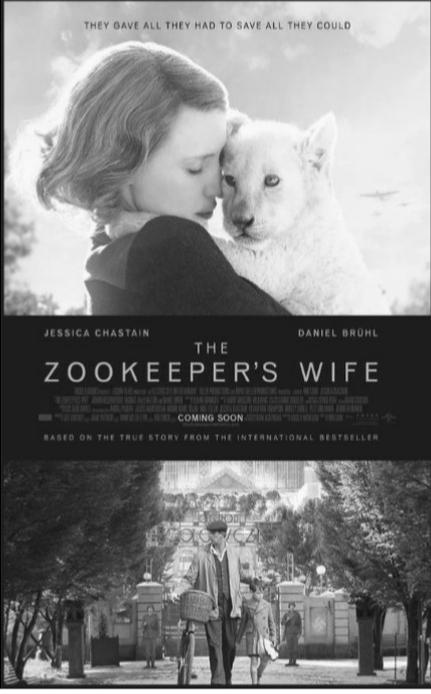
Date: **Tuesday 4th February 2020**

Bar Open: **7:00pm**

Film Showing Starts: **7:30pm**

Location: **Biddenham Village Hall.**





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JESSICA CHASTAIN DANIEL BRÜHL

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The Zookeeper's Wife © Universal Pictures 2017 All Rights Reserved

Coming soon to Peter's Picturehouse

Tues 3rd March: **Downton Abbey**

Certificate: **12A**

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

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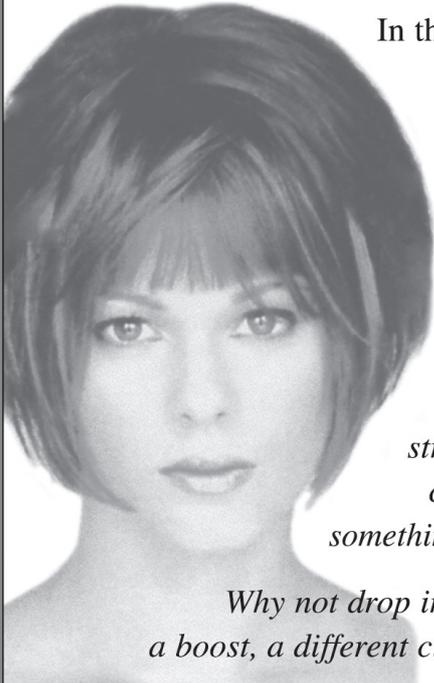
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Guilds

Lantra



Russell Shreeves

We are sorry to report the death of Russell Shreeves of The Paddock, Biddenham on 5th December 2019. We send our condolences to Sharon and his family.

We are grateful to Kempston Rovers for this tribute to Russell, published on their website.

Russell first became involved with Kempston when he signed as a player in 1977 having previously played for Bedford Town. He went on to make just shy of three hundred appearances for the Walnut Boys over two spells, including briefly as player manager in the mid nineties.

Having hung up his boots, Russell found his way into the board room at Hillgrounds in 1999 as Vice-Chairman of the club, an office that he held for a solitary season before becoming outright chair in 2000. He presided over the most successful period of Kempston Rovers history with the team collecting four cup wins, three promotions and two league titles in his twenty year stretch as chairman.

Despite Russell's deteriorating health due to illness, he was always keen to see his beloved Kempston play and attended matches until he was too unwell to do so. He will be deeply missed by all at Kempston Rovers and the club would like to pass its sincerest condolences to Sharon, Hannah, Rob and Russell's close family and friends at this very sad time.



Great Denham Events

Parish Council Meetings

Mondays 3rd February and 2nd March. The 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.

The Annual Parish Meeting is on Saturday 28th March., 6.00pm at the Community Hall.

Events at Great Denham Community Hall

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

7th February – Community Cinema

7th February – Quiz night

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



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This month in the garden

How are your New Year resolutions going? If paying more attention to the garden featured amongst them this is the time to start putting your resolve to the test. Busy times lie ahead and it is a good idea to get going as soon as possible.

The best place to start is with pruning. You can prune apples and pears much earlier than this but you do need to get it done by the end of February. This is also the best month for pruning currants and gooseberries. Reduce last year's growth by a third or so. You may find that a gooseberry bush is growing new little plants from 'layered' branches and these should be cut away from the branch and grown on elsewhere (or potted up and given to someone else). Autumn fruiting raspberries should be cut down now to a few inches above ground level and they will fruit in the autumn this year. Summer fruiting raspberry canes need cutting back immediately after fruiting so don't prune them now. This is, however, the right time for planting new raspberry canes. These should be cut back to grow new canes this year for fruiting next year. Clematis that flowered in the summer (generally, the larger flowered varieties) will be a mass of tangled dead stems now but they will probably be showing green shoots. Cut the stems back just above a new shoot about a foot (30cm) above the ground.

It's too early to do much in the way of sowing things but you can start tomatoes if you have a heated green house. You can start salad crops, like early lettuce or radish, in a cold green house either in seed trays or in a border in the green house. You can also start things in a seed tray on a window sill but there is a danger that plants will grow straggly rather than being compact. Putting a foil-covered sheet of cardboard behind the seed tray will help to prevent this and keep plants growing straight.

If you have followed the current trend and left perennial flowers for their stems and seed heads during winter they will need cutting down. Flower beds can be weeded and the soil lightly turned over. Wait until the soil is not too wet before doing this. You can add compost as a mulch round plants and spread a general purpose fertiliser towards the end of the month or in March. This will be flowering time for hellebores and the flowers will show best if you cut back old foliage. Winter-flowering pansies in containers or hanging baskets should be dead-headed to prolong flowering. They will probably begin to flower more profusely now than during December or January. Dahlias that have been stored as dry tubers should be potted up in soil or compost, watered sparingly and put in the light under frost free cover to start them into growth.

If the weather is fairly mild, grass may have started growing and can be mown on a high setting. If you haven't had the mower serviced yet it needs to be done as soon as possible so that the mower is available when it is most needed. Fallen leaves should have been cleared up by now as dead leaves left in any quantity on a lawn will damage the grass.

If you have a pond and netted it to keep leaves out you can take the net off now. Clear out any leaves that have got into the water and cut back any foliage on the pond plants that has died. As the water warms up, blanket weed and duck weed will begin to do their evil thing and the sooner you start clearing it the better. It probably won't go away but you can keep it under control.

In the vegetable garden use any remaining winter crops like leeks or sprouts. If you believe in winter digging get this finished and hoe over any areas cleared earlier. You can also spread garden compost on the cleared soil or warm it up with a covering of horticultural fleece or with cloches or plastic tunnelling. If you plan to grow potatoes, the seed potatoes should be spread out in the light with the bulk of the eyes upwards to start the shoots developing (chitting).

Jeremy Arthern

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Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 8th January 2020 in the upstairs room of the pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Francia Slade and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk Lyn Lyman and 10 members of the public were also present. Councillor Krys Osuch sent his apologies.



Looking Ahead

Happy New Year everyone. That seems a little belated now, but I hope you had a good time over the Christmas break and saw in the new decade however you might. So here we now are in the “twenties”! This year marks the 75th anniversary of the ending of the second World War and, in case you didn’t know, the first Bank Holiday in May is being moved. Instead of Monday 4th May it will instead be on Friday 8th, to coincide with VE day (8th May 1945).

We have been encouraged to mark the occasion by holding an act of remembrance at the War memorial that day, and are seeking both a bugler and a piper to help do so. More details will be announced nearer the time.

January’s meeting is always a time for looking ahead, anyway. This is when we decide on the budget we need for the next financial year, which starts in April. The meeting considered a draft budget which made modest rises to some items of expenditure and set aside a contingency fund of £2,000.

Nevertheless, in overall terms there was no need to increase the overall “precept”, that being the amount we get from you, the taxpayer. It was agreed this should remain at £43,000. As a result of extra housing in Biddenham, that amount will be shared amongst more residents, and so you will actually see a modest fall in the amount you have to pay to support the Parish Council’s activities.

Finally, if it’s not too early to look ahead a whole year to next Christmas, we solemnly swear to try to get a taller Christmas tree for 2020! Although we ordered a 24-footer for 2019, we clearly didn’t get one. We are in discussion with our supplier and will make sure they allocate us something better in 11 months’ time.

What’s more, we also agreed at the meeting to allow a charity called Hospice Care to have a street collection in the run-up to next Christmas. This will apparently involve Santa’s sleigh, so will surely be fun.

New Doctors’ Surgery and Care Home

Some of you may know that the patch of land to the right of the Great Ouse Way bypass, as you leave Deep Spinney roundabout and head down the hill to the next roundabout, is to be used to build a new GP practice and care home. We reviewed the plans for these some months ago, and they have now been approved by the Borough Council.

More detailed matters are now being discussed. Jon and Roger, our Borough Councillors, let the meeting know that their only misgiving was the amount of parking spaces set aside for these facilities. It seems there is an unwritten policy by Borough to under-provide for parking outside larger buildings, presumably to discourage use of non-public transport.

So it is here, and there is little to be done about it since the amount of land is finite. Quite possibly cars will end up parking on nearby residential streets, although may be there is a possible arrangement to be made with the local sports centre across the roundabout, who have lots of parking spaces.

Gold Lane SID

You may remember me telling you about SID – not a person, but our new Speed Indication Device now mounted in Gold Lane. Mr Bryan Glasper, who has been instrumental in its purchase and deployment, reported that it is seeing generally good traffic speeds from most motorists, but that there are definitely some lunatics who drive much too fast.

The device reports on traffic passing in both directions, even though it only lights up for those travelling south. Indeed, northbound traffic seems to be going faster. So, as of the start of February, Bryan is going to turn the sign around and we will find out whether it has a moderating effect on the speed of northbound motorists (and indeed whether southbound traffic gets faster). This will be interesting to see.

Former Parish Clerk, Alison Southern

It is with enormous sadness that I must report to you that our former clerk, Alison Southern, died on 14th January. She was diagnosed with cancer in her spine back in the spring of 2018. From then on she fought bravely to combat her condition and do the best for her and her family in what became very difficult circumstances.

Alison became our clerk in around 2008, so gave many years of service to us as a community. She was very effective, having an eye for detail, a proactive nature and an ability to get the best out of people, especially those who also help our village with the services they provide. What’s more she was also clerk for a number of other places. Trying to keep on top of who is doing what where would probably stump most of us, but she had it all under control.

What’s more she was, of course, a great support to all us Parish Councillors, especially those who have acted as chairman. When that role fell to me in 2015 she made everything very easy, and was excellent at reminding me of things I needed to do. I won’t say I took her for granted. I never did. But her diagnosis did make me realise very abruptly what a tremendously admirable person she was.

I am not alone in having kept up visits to see her, and I would like to have gone more often. But I really am honoured to have known her and to have remained her friend. I last saw her just before Christmas.

Alison leaves her husband and two teenage children. I know you would join me in sending them our deepest sympathies. For us, we say goodbye – and thanks – to someone who not only performed her role superbly well, but was a friend to many of us and a friend of Biddenham.

Our next meeting

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of most months at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney. We very much welcome hearing from residents, there being 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 12th February.

Peter Chase
Chairman

Don't forget the Foodbank



Please continue to bring in-date non-perishable food. The container is at the back of the church.

You can find the latest list of items needed by Bedford food bank at <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



Major John Charles Rea

Major Rea from Aberystwyth, later to become Lieutenant Colonel Rea, was a Welsh territorial soldier who spent time in Bedford in 1915 with the Welsh Division.

In 1902 he was a Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers). But in 1908 volunteer units were reorganised after the creation of the Territorial Force and one new unit formed was the 2nd Welsh Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. One battery of the

new field artillery brigade was provided by the 1st Cardigan Royal Garrison Artillery Brigade (Volunteers) becoming the Cardiganshire Battery with Captain, later Major, Rea by 1912 its commanding officer and training with the Battery in the years leading up to the Great War.

John Charles Rea was a man of many parts, as we will see: a highly rated soccer player, a grocer and wine merchant, a hotel and restaurant keeper, a Mason, a soldier, a son, a husband and a father.

Born on 21st December 1868 in Aberystwyth, then in the historic county of Cardiganshire, John Charles was the son of John Rea, from Worcester, and his wife Mary Anne Williams, from Newtown, Montgomeryshire. Father John, with a Mr Bosley of Hereford, had previously run the mail coach to Shrewsbury and Hereford for many years. When the railway to Borth was opened in 1863, John Rea realised that coaching days were over and in 1864 took over the White Horse Hotel in Terrace Road, Aberystwyth.

Father John died in 1879 but his widow continued to run the hotel and in 1892 purchased the leasehold and also that of an adjoining property in Upper Portland Street to extend the hotel and incorporate in it a grocery shop.

In the meantime John Charles had taken up football, playing first for Ardwyn School, and afterwards moving to London playing as a winger for the Upton Club and then the London Caledonians. In 1891 he was lodging in Tufnell Park Road, Islington, employed whilst playing his football, as a commercial clerk. He returned home in 1893 to manage the grocery and provisions store and to play for Aberystwyth Town. He also played one game for West Bromwich Albion in the 1894/95 season, returning to Aberystwyth Town. During his time as a footballer he was capped a number of times for Wales.

John Charles took over the licence and lease for the hotel from his mother in 1906, converted the hotel to a first class restaurant with a comfortable lounge, added a sweet and confectionery department and cold meat counter to the grocery store, naming the business 'Rea's Restaurant and Stores'.

In 1908 John Charles married Florence Isabel Elkes in Birkenhead and they had by 1911 three children. But in August 1914 war was declared, the order to mobilise was given, Territorial Force members were invited to volunteer for overseas service, and Major Rea took up his military duties as battery commander within the first line division of the Welsh Division.

The Division concentrated at Northampton, moving in December to Cambridge, and in May 1915 to Bedford. In July the infantry of the first line division, by now renamed the 53rd (Welsh) Division, embarked for Gallipoli, but the divisional artillery remained in Bedford until November when they were ordered to France to join the British Expeditionary Force. On the two evenings before they left Bedford, farewell dinners were held for the artillery officers at the Embankment Hotel. Major Rea's Medal Card records France, where he arrived on 21st November 1915, as the Theatre of War first served in. It records too his award of the Victory, British and Star Medals, which he

received in 1922 at Terrace Road, Aberystwyth.

The 53rd Division suffered appalling casualties at Gallipoli and was withdrawn to Egypt. The divisional artillery, having served briefly in the Somme region, was ordered in January 1916 to rejoin the rest of the division in Egypt, and subsequently saw action in Palestine.

At some point John Charles had joined the Aberystwyth Lodge of Freemasons and is remembered in its archives as one of the brethren who served in the forces during the war. Happily Lt Colonel Rea survived the war.

His mother died in 1928 and six years later John Charles retired from the business and the licence for the hotel transferred to W Hancock and Co Ltd of Cardiff. His wife Florence died two years later in 1936 and he lived on in Aberystwyth, until his death, aged 75, in 1944.



In 1906 John Charles had also rebuilt the façade of the hotel, and much of the work he commissioned can still be seen today, the building having been Grade II listed, with the name 'Rea's' remembered on the glazed tile bay front with Art Nouveau lettering over and on

the windows. After a name change to Varsity at the end of the century, the old White Horse name was restored in 2015.

If you are ever in that neck of the woods, it's something to seek out and to remember this man of many parts, Lt Colonel J C Rea.

Peter Applewhite



A Prayer after Epiphany

Thank you, Lord, that some rich people, some educated and wealthy people were willing to take a great deal of trouble and travel hundreds of miles to find a baby in a cowshed.

We think Lord about how the three wealthy, respected comfortable men, the three kings, rejoiced to find the star stopping over a shed which was a home for animals, and how they willingly went in, full of joy to worship God in human nature.

We think too Lord how they were willing, not only to bear hardship and wearisome travel to find God in this vulnerable dirty situation, but they spent a large part of their wealth to bring gifts of great worth.

Lord by comparison with most people in the world we are all wealthy here.

Please help us to be willing to make great endeavours, to spend a lot of time, to get out of our comfort zones and to spend much of our wealth too, to find and serve Jesus.

May we be bearers of your love and the good news of the gospel.

Lord in your mercy

Edwin Martin

Biddenham Gardeners Association

My Garden

We started our new Biddenham Gardeners Association year with an excellent turn out of members and visitors. The "My Garden" talks, which we feature every January, are always very popular and this year was no exception. Two very different gardens were described.

First up was Jan Page who lives in The Old Barns. Jan's garden came into being in 1987. It is a small plot 40 ft x 30 ft and originally consisted of just grass and gravel. However, Jan had other plans and over the years has created a very special oasis for many exotic and unusual plants. Walls were built and we enjoyed seeing the photograph of the concrete being piped in over the roof top of the house during the wall's construction. A most attractive brick shed was built, a pond was formed from an up-ended sewer pipe, an acid bed was made and a raised bed was constructed from stone dug out from the wall foundations. Fresh top soil was brought in to ensure that the many exotic plants were given a good start. Much of Jan's garden is quite shady but she capitalises on this with a variety of ferns, hostas, azaleas, bamboos and other shade loving plants. In 2014 Jan dug everything out of her garden, she potted plants up and asked friends to look after them for her whilst her garden became a construction site as a new conservatory was built. The garden was replanted with the green and textured plants that Jan favours. Fatsia Japonica, Calthifolia, Asarum, and Zantedeschia to name but a few. Plants are crammed into every space giving an almost tropical feel. A sambucus has not only a rose but also a clematis growing through it. Jan is a true plants person and we were delighted that she was able to share her passion with us this evening.

Our second speakers were Jeremy Reynolds and Helen Humphreys who live in Kings Close. Their house, built in 1908, is in the Arts and Crafts style and was designed by the well know local architect Baillie Scott. No plans of the garden, as it was originally created, exist as the Baillie Scott office was burnt down. However, with the help of some photographic evidence and much research, the current owners have incorporated the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement i.e. the garden being linked to the house as an extra room. This one acre garden has been lovingly restored taking into account these principles. The garden room nearest to the house is the most formal, leading on to a lawned area with a wilder less formal orchard/meadow area beyond. The front garden still has its original archways and typical of the period is a flag garden consisting of three areas with a rigid structure - in this case a low hedge around the beds - but more free flowing and informal planting within the beds. At the back of the house the garden room nearest to the house has the formality of hedging and topiary one would expect and the beds are now planted with short varieties of David Austin roses plus lavender and bulbs. Thousands of bulbs have been planted throughout the garden, tulips and alliums in the more formal areas and narcissus and fritillary in the informal orchard area. Flowers, colours and scents abound and there appears to be a purple colour theme for some of the year most notably from the alliums but also a dark purple lupin called Masterpiece which was much admired by the audience. Seats and benches have been sited in sunny spots so that this splendid garden can be fully appreciated.

What a delightful evening we all enjoyed and many thanks to Jan, Helen and Jeremy for their excellent presentations. How lucky we are in Biddenham to have such wonderful gardens and with owners and custodians who are committed to ensuring that these "special" spaces continue to develop and thrive.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 18th February when Joanna Baxter, who is one of our members, will be talking about "The Mythology of Plants". Joanna is an excellent speaker and we look forward to welcoming members and visitors to this meeting. Just come along to the village hall for a 7.30pm start - you will be made very welcome.

Linda Truscott

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

Are you Struggling? Help is at Hand - Just Ask!

Our Village Agent is here to help older people to access the services and support they might need. Her services are free of charge, and she can phone or visit you at home. Just call 0800 039 1234.



Worried About Power Cuts This Winter? Contact UK Power Networks to report the problem:

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Call free on 0800 169 9970 or email psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk

Do You Need Help from Others for Your Personal Care? If you cannot manage to live without support, and are over pension age, you should be able to claim Attendance Allowance of £58.70 or more per week. This is not means tested. If you are paying care home fees you are also eligible to claim, including the Higher Level for night-time care (£87.65.). If your carer is below pension age and is caring for 35 hours a week they might be able to claim Carers' Allowance of £64.60. Contact your Village Agent for help.

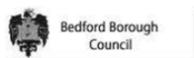
Are You Eligible for Pension Credit? If your weekly income is below £167.25 (single person) or £255.25 (couple) then contact your Village Agent and she will help you to apply for Pension Credit. You may also be eligible for a rebate on your energy bill, Housing Benefit, help with NHS costs, and a free TV licence, so it is worth applying even if your income is only just below the threshold.

Need Help to Fill in a Form? If you are struggling with paperwork, such as Blue Badge, Bus Pass, Council Tax Reduction, Housing Benefit and Attendance Allowance applications, our Village Agent can come and help you.

Any queries or worries – JUST ASK!

Contact your Village Agent on Freephone 0800 039 1234

(This is an answerphone service, so please be ready to leave your name, address & telephone number, & we will aim to call you back within 48 hours.)



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First Friday Lunch



Soup, sandwich or baked potato, pudding and a drink, on the first Friday of every month in Biddenham Village Hall from 12.30pm
£7.00

Draw for 2 free lunch tickets every month
Book swap
Friday, 7th February, 6th March

To book: email firstfridaylunch@outlook.com
Or text/leave a message on **07412 559584**

100 CLUB



November draw

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----|
| 1. | Bob Hutchinson | 516 |
| 2. | Rosemary Harris | 98 |
| 3. | Richard McCann | 34 |

December draw

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----|
| 1. | Caroline French | 50 |
| 2. | Peter Culverwell | 136 |
| 3. | Tom Perry | 48 |

Drawn by Sheila Frossell

Hall Booking Details

Biddenham Village Hall

From the Village Hall website you can check availability on the diary, look at the facilities and fill in 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
1.00pm	Mother & Baby Yoga	Village Hall
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
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
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For regular events at Great Denham Community Hall, go to
www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk/



**Welcome Packs for
New Biddenham Residents**
Contact Richard Church Tel: 214805

Mobile Library



Great Denham Community Hall

Saturdays, 8th, 22nd February
2.20pm-2.40pm

Biddenham

Thursdays, 13th, 27th February
Three Tuns 10.45am-11.00am
Church End 11.05am-11.25am

February

- Sun 2 Feb** All Age Service, St James's, **9.00am**
Holy Communion, St James's, **6.00pm**
- Mon 3 Feb** Great Denham Parish Council meeting, GD Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p10
- Tue 4 Feb** Spring Harvest Local, St Peter de Merton Church, 7.30pm, see p9
- Tue 4 Feb** Peter's Picturehouse, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p9
- Fri 7 Feb** First Friday Lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p15
- Fri 7 Feb** Community Cinema and Quiz Night, GD Community Hall, see p10
- Sat 8 Feb** Mobile Library, Great Denham Community Hall, 2.20pm-2.40pm, see p15
- Sun 9 Feb** Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
No evening service
- Sun 9 Feb** Pond Work Party, see p5
- Tue 11 Feb** barn@2, Church Barn, 2.00pm, see p8
- Wed 12 Feb** Biddenham Parish Council, Biddenham Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p12
- Thu 13 Feb** Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p15
- Sun 16 Feb** Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
Evensong, St James's, **6.00pm**
- Tue 18 Feb** Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30-12.00 noon, see p6
- Tue 18 Feb** Bedford National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.00pm, see p5
- Tue 18 Feb** Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm, see p14
- Sat 22 Feb** Blunham's Big Book Sale, Blunham Parish Church, 10.00am-3.00pm, see p7
- Sat 22 Feb** Mobile Library, Great Denham Community Hall, 2.20pm-2.40pm, see p15
- Sun 23 Feb** Parish Communion, St James's, **9.00am**
No evening service
- Tue 25 Feb** Messy Church, Church Barn, 3.30pm-5.30pm, see p7
- Wed 26 Feb** Ash Wednesday Service, All Saints. **7.00pm**
- Thu 27 Feb** Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p15
- Fri 28 Feb** Great Denham Dinkies, Great Denham Community Hall, 9.30-11.30am

March

- Sun 1 Mar** All Age Service, St James's, **9.00am**
Holy Communion, St James's, **6.00pm**
- Mon 2 Mar** Great Denham Parish Council meeting, GD Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p10
- Tue 3 Mar** Peter's Picturehouse, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p9
- Fri 6 Mar** First Friday Lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p15
- Tue 11 Mar** Bedford National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.00pm, see p5
- Tue 17 Mar** Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30-12.00 noon, see p6
- Tue 17 Mar** Messy Church, Church Barn, 3.30pm-5.30pm, see p7
- Sat 28 Mar** Great Denham Annual Parish Meeting, GD Community Hall, 6.00pm, see p10

April

- Sat 4 Apr** Pond Work Morning, 10.00am-12.00 noon, see p5
- Mon 20 Apr** Biddenham History Society, Church Barn, 8.00pm, see p4
- Tue 21 Apr** Messy Church, Church Barn, 3.30pm-5.30pm, see p7

For regular events listings see page 15

The Loop

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All **March** 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 19th February 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.