

The Loop

May 2020

£1.00

Strange times continue for The Loop

The lockdown has some seemingly odd consequences, one being that Church of England guidance says it is unsafe for both volunteers and recipients to deliver parish magazines by hand. It is suspected that Covid 19 can live on paper for up to 24 hours.

So, you will either have received this edition by email or via the Royal Mail. The built in delay for items sent through the post means that the risk of transmission via the magazine is nullified.

No-one knows how long this situation will continue so, if you have received a postal copy and would prefer to receive via email please email me on loopeditor@gmail.com.

Jean Gambold

8pm Thursday 23rd April

Social distancing doesn't really lend itself to good photography but see who you can spot in these pictures of Clap for Carers in Darlow Drive and Main Road.

There are a few more inside.



Clapping for carers

To all Biddenham and Great Denham NHS and care workers:

Most of us can't help you do your jobs but the one thing we have been doing enthusiastically is coming out every Thursday night at 8.00pm to clap for you.

The cheers have echoed from St Mary's Estate north of the A428, through Deep Spinney, across Darlow Drive, Biddenham Turn, Day's Lane, Main Road, Vicars Close and more and then on across Great Denham.

It may seem a little act but it's meant as a huge gesture of solidarity. It began with noisy clapping the first week and has evolved over time. Couples in their nineties have been out banging their pots and pans while schoolchildren have been whacking drums. Families have been turning on their outdoor Christmas lights and playing recordings of You Will Never Walk Alone on amplifiers.

The additional great benefit of this short moment of solidarity is that we all get to see our immediate neighbours, albeit at a distance. People who are having to self-isolate have said how wonderful it is, after a week of isolation, to come to their front doors and actually see their neighbours out waving, cheering, smiling and clapping. People have also been clapping the binmen or leaving messages of thanks taped to the bins and cheering the supermarket delivery staff.

To you all: Thank You

Kate Smith

'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

What strange times these are for the Church. Normally Easter is so different; a time in which we act out the drama of Christ's passion, from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the tension of Maundy Thursday, to the sorrow of Good Friday, and finally the joy of Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the resurrection.



The Liturgy hopefully runs like clockwork, and the celebration runs into our personal lives as well. Many of us share family gatherings in our homes, celebratory meals, and an ocean of chocolate. Of course, like Christmas, this is something that we look forward to, but what happens when uncontrollable events make Easter time unpredictable, and we find ourselves locked away in our homes, isolated and in fear?

The trouble is that in the first century the actual events of holy week were a complete surprise. The events of Palm Sunday were astounding, Jesus turning the tables over in the Temple was outrageous, the language of Jesus at the last supper was shocking and, in the Jewish consciousness, the crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday was a scandal. Following this, however, the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, with an encounter with the risen Christ, left the disciples utterly gob-smacked.

We, of course, usually plan Easter meticulously. The reason for this is that we want to avoid any kind of disruption ever happening again. At Easter we want predictable, we look forward to its smooth running, so, actually, the last thing the Church of England really wants to happen is shock, awe and a miracle. We want Easter to be nothing like the first Easter at all.

Unfortunately, like the first Easter, this year could not be what we had planned it to be. The coronavirus epidemic made it impossible for the Church to do what it has always done. We did try and make do. We climbed the steep learning curve of the online Zoom software so that we could have our services online, but everything around us had changed. We could not meet, worship, sing hymns or

embrace as we have done in previous years. Everything was different, in just the same way as everything around was, and is, different.

While most of us are finding this painful and difficult, there is something in me that made Easter 2020, somehow, for the first time, more authentic. I believe that this has the potential to intimately reconnect us with the cross of Jesus Christ.

The crucifixion transformed history, not because it was a predictable, controllable event, but because the very God who we believe to be in control, placed himself at our mercy. In doing so, he entered into solidarity with us as human beings, who at times have no power over events that surround us. He allowed himself to be crushed, and then, by being raised from the dead, he revealed the miracle of hope out of hopelessness. For many of us, this is a recipe for chaos, but chaos is God's chosen domain.

At this time, like Jesus on the cross, the church has found itself, like Christ, in solidarity with those who find themselves in the midst of uncertainty and fear. We are powerless; confined and limited in order to protect others and ourselves from this illness. Instead of being authors of our own circumstances, we find ourselves confined in locked rooms and houses, isolated and, at times, afraid.

Perhaps it is good to remember that, in the new testament, the locked room was the scene of God's transforming intervention. The locked room was the place in which the last supper took place. It was there that the disciples later hid out of fear and it is the place where Thomas, the doubter, met the risen Christ. Ultimately, in such a room, the Church was born, by the powerful indwelling of God's Spirit at Pentecost.

How do we see this difficult and challenging time? Do we let it crush us, or do we see it as an opportunity to grow closer to God? Can we find here the energy to renew our faith, and to engage deeper with him, and the world to which he sends us? Is this the time, when we could rediscover the disruptive power of God that creates very real possibilities of change and transformation, and perhaps even, dare I say it, the possibility of miracle?

God bless.

Eric



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Joyce Cashman

We are sorry to report the death of Joyce Cashman at the age of 100. Joyce used to live in Church End and had been living in a care home in Leeds near her daughter for about a year.

Joyce was a great supporter of the church and could often be heard playing the organ there.



Church End Clap for Carers

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK: UPDATE

Need local help? Ring 01234 815393 or email help@biddenham.org.uk

Biddenham & Great Denham have responded amazingly to the coronavirus pandemic. The response to the call from St James's Church and Biddenham Parish Council for neighbours to come together has been incredible. There is a huge willingness to help each other through this.

We now have a village helpline 01234 815393 up and running, monitored seven days a week, 8.00am-6.00pm by church and community volunteers. If you can't get through, you can leave a message or email help@biddenham.org.uk and we will get back to you.

Neighbours' WhatsApp groups – the heart of the support network - are now operating in most streets. One representative from each street is also on a parish wide WhatsApp group so we can rapidly spread information across the village.

What the WhatsApp neighbours' groups do:

Carry out shopping and other practical tasks for self-isolating neighbours.

Share issues or problems – and then solve them collectively.

Share information about offers from local businesses, appeals for help and information from the police, the NHS or other key public sector services.

And above all, they have built a wonderful new sense of community and friendship between neighbours.

If you cannot get out: Do you need something delivered? The chances are one of your neighbours or other village residents will be able to help. If you don't know who to ask on your street, then just call the village helpline on 01234 815393 or email help@biddenham.org.uk and we will all do our best to help you out.

How are you coping mentally? This matters so much. Rev Eric Lomax is providing pastoral support or just a friendly chat to all who need it. You can contact Eric directly on 01234 852241 or 07805 879537 or email rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

We also have a team of people, some with professional expertise, ready to spend time on the phone with anyone who wants a chat. Just ring the helpline 01234 815393 or email help@biddenham.org.uk and again, we will find someone who can help, either locally or direct you to an organisation who can help.

We are grateful to Biddenham Parish Council for funding the helpline and setting up the help email.

Facebook Groups

Help, tips and local news can be found on the following Facebook Groups

Great Denham Community Volunteers <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3109131869110476/>

Biddenham Residents <https://www.facebook.com/groups/biddenhamresidents>

St Andrews Residents' Association, Biddenham <https://www.facebook.com/groups/166310557507200/>

St Mary's, Biddenham <https://www.facebook.com/groups/354635615475350/>

St Mary's Biddenham Residents <https://www.facebook.com/groups/690599814653173/>

St James's Church <https://www.facebook.com/St-Jamess-Church-Biddenham-428040160888713/>

Plus The Cocooned – national group run by Biddenham resident Colin Talbot for people with underlying health issues who are already self-isolating <https://www.facebook.com/groups/267422292863105/>



Day's Lane Clap for Carers

Bedford Borough Council Community Hub

We seem to be pretty well sorted in this parish but if you need additional help and support or if you want to volunteer to help the wider Bedford community call the Borough Council Community Hub on 718101.

Amazing

One of the features of the 'lockdown' during the current awful pandemic, exemplifying the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity, like so much of what is being done by so many, is the amount of free entertainment streamed over the internet by professional performers and thousands of enthusiastic amateurs. One such was a performance on Easter Sunday by Andrea Bocelli in the Cathedral in Milan. His finale, performed as a lonely figure to the empty piazza outside, was *Amazing Grace*, one of the most beloved hymns of the last two centuries.

Whilst the words of that hymn were not penned in this parish, they were penned only ten miles away in Olney in 1772 by the Reverend John Newton and were written from his personal experience. It is said to be his spiritual biography in verse.

Newton, born in 1725, had an adventurous and troubled early life, being pressed into the Royal Navy and later involved in the Atlantic slave trade. His seagoing career was marked by headstrong disobedience and in 1745 on board the *Pegasus*, after disagreements with the crew, he was left behind in Sierra Leone and enslaved himself for three years. On his voyage back to England in 1748 after his rescue, the *Greyhound* encountered a violent storm off the coast of Ireland and, the ship seeming about to sink, Newton called out to God for mercy. History has it the cargo miraculously shifted to fill a hole in the hull and the *Greyhound* and Newton made it safely to port. This marked the start of his spiritual conversion, although not yet the end of his slave trading, leading eventually to his ordination in 1764 and appointment as curate of Olney, where he began to write hymns with the poet William Cowper.



Reverend John Newton

The words of *Amazing Grace* first appeared in print in 1779 in Newton and Cowper's *Olney Hymns* and whilst the hymn later fell into relative obscurity in England it became popular in the early 19th century in the southern states of America, used by Baptist and Methodist preachers as part of their evangelising. The words have been attached over the years to various melodies but the tune best known and most sung today, *New Britain*, was composed in 1835 by American, William Walker.

It was not until 1788 that Newton apologised publicly for his active participation in the slave trade. He became an ally of William Wilberforce, leader of the Parliamentary campaign to abolish the Atlantic slave trade, and lived to see the enactment of the Slave Trade Act 1807, dying later that year on 21st December.

It is estimated that *Amazing Grace* is performed many millions of times annually, and has been recorded many thousands of times, its universal message being a significant factor in its successful crossover into secular music. Would Reverend John Newton have ever thought that his words would reach so far in so many ways and would have such a tremendous impact around the world. Would he be even more amazed that in the 21st century he, his life and those words were the subject of a Broadway musical, *Amazing Grace*. Truly amazing!

Peter Applewhite



As we all take advantage of this lovely weather and the chance to take our daily exercise as a walk, jog or run around the village – have you included a trip to the Pond yet? The Pond is full of water and looks beautiful in the sunshine. The ducks are certainly taking full advantage of the welcome return of the water, and long may this continue.

As mentioned in the last edition, the coronavirus restrictions mean that we do not have our volunteers mowing the grass or emptying the bins, and we don't know when we can restart. There is nothing that we can do about the grass as it grows, but please help us by taking your rubbish home with you.

We have received a few comments about the difficulty of opening the wooden gate, particularly as people try to do this with the minimal amount of touch. Our plans to replace the gate have been put on hold at the moment, so in the meantime the gate has been tied open to make access easier, but please bear this in mind when walking with dogs and children because the pond as well as being beautiful is a water hazard.

While dogs are permitted on the public right of way that passes through the pond site, may we remind everyone that they should not be allowed to swim in the pond since this disturbs the wildlife and ideally should be kept on a lead. In previous editions, we mentioned that we had increased incidents of people not clearing up the poo left by their dogs, even though a poo bin is available on the footpath between the pond and Gold Lane. Our thanks however go to one young resident for using her time at home to make a Poo Bottle which is now attached to the post by the wooden gate. You can't miss it, it is very brightly decorated and contains poo bags for use by dog owners who have unfortunately forgotten their own. Please, please use them – you just can't be too careful.

Please continue to enjoy your walks to the Pond.

The Pond Team

Contact Details

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Paul Godden	pgodden@btinternet.com
Jane Knight	jane@80klt.co.uk
Cathy Eckett-Brown	ceckett@gmail.com
Kit Ram	kitram01@gmail.com
Sophie Applewhite-Rees	dansopl@googlemail.com

www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond

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Dine With Us Community Larder

As many of you will now know, I have been doing a little bit of voluntary work for "Dine With Us Community Larder", Bedford. Over the last few weeks, I have been putting some flowers and some homemade jam and marmalade (made by one of the numerous volunteers) in the centre of the village by the memorial, asking those on their daily exercise jaunts to take something in exchange for a small donation.

In doing this, the kind residents of Biddenham have raised over £1,000 for Dine With Us, an enormously generous contribution that will help towards the bills that the charity incurs (rent, electricity etc). I would like to thank you all for your generosity and hope you will be able to keep doing so as the flowers, and possibly other things, become available.

Dine With Us is a growing organisation that runs a number of projects with over 100 volunteers.

- The Community Larder currently collects food daily from 34 providers across the region from as far as Milton Keynes. The excess food would end up in landfill but instead is collected by the volunteers for handing out daily; it includes bread, cakes, fruit and veg, sandwiches and frequently flowers.
- Cherrie's Legacy provides a hot meal and sandwiches etc. on Saturday evenings.
- They provide food care packages to families and breakfast to children who may not get breakfast before school.
- They run a social supermarket (stock permitting) providing meat and food products at an affordable price to all.

If you want to know more, have a look at their Facebook page - search for Dine with Us, Bedford.

Wishing you all the best in these difficult times and hoping that these flowers brighten up your day.

Will Jenkin

Bromham Road Railway Bridge

You may have noticed that the bridge didn't re-open as planned on 13th April. Work is continuing slowly due to the Coronavirus restrictions and opening is now expected for September.

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Peacock's is currently closed. See their website for updated information.

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Biddenham Cricket Club

A Tale of Two Garys



In this time of no cricket Richard Fone has looked back in the Club archives to find this piece from the memorable summer of 2012.

2012 will be remembered as a very exceptional summer in many respects. With other more notable events taking place cricket has taken very much a 'back seat' in many peoples' minds, not least because there has been less played than in a normal English summer. We were talking of a drought and hosepipe ban in April which seems ludicrous now!

For many of the younger players this has been their 'chance to shine'. The U10s and U12s when they managed to play performed very well winning the majority of games. The U10s under Elliot Smith's excellent guidance have reached the County Development play-off which at the time of writing is to take place on 26th August at Bedford CC vs Langford.

2012 has seen some changes, not least in our coaching where Gary Flower has settled near Bedford to our benefit and particularly that of the U12s and U14s. His enthusiasm has been infectious inspiring the younger players to greater achievements. This he has done in spite of the number of Monday and Friday coaching sessions lost to the weather.

Any mention of junior cricket at Biddenham cannot pass without a tribute to Sian Rosser to whom I'm sure a tribute has been made elsewhere in this Bulletin. Sian followed on from Jon Gambold as youth co-ordinator in 2003 and guided the club through the maze of gaining Sport England Clubmark Accreditation that paved the way for the youth set-up we have enjoyed for nearly 10 years. We marked her achievements and sad passing by hanging a framed collage of pictures she took of our juniors in 2005. This can now be seen in the upstairs room at the Pavilion.

Since the last report there has been a significant improvement in results for the Saturday League side. From the end of June 7 out of 8 games played have been won and we have moved from bottom position in the league to second. A narrow defeat against leaders

Thurleigh being the only setback. We hope that promotion may result.

In a year of cricket success for South Africa, much of our success is down to our own Gary Linton-Walls who has now been with Biddenham for just over a year. It seems strange that it took Gary almost that long to play in a winning Biddenham team, but once this had been achieved he has inspired, cajoled and driven us on to keep winning games. Our captain David Morrish has also remembered how to score runs again to give the side a solid and competitive look.

The Midweek side has also done well securing promotion back to the top division. Sunday cricket has been a disappointment suffering much the worst of the weather and very mixed results. We hope for better things in 2013.

Finally, great thanks are due to all those who give their valuable time to make the club function effectively. David Watson as groundsman has had a record-breaking season that he will want to forget with the quantity of grass cut! Junior and Senior team managers have suffered the frustration of organising teams only to have to contact all the players again to inform them that games are cancelled.

A few weeks of the season remain for the 2012 summer to prove that it does have some good things saved up for us!

Richard Fone

Up to date news appears on the website at: <http://biddenham.play-cricket.com>

The 100 club provides the club with useful income and also raises its profile within the village amongst the residents for an annual fee of £12. If you would like to join the cricket club as a member, you will also gain automatic entry into the 100 club draw, which is held each month.

Contact numbers:

Chairman	Glenn Taylor	07778 479479
Cricket Secretary	Richard Fone	07818 678697
Junior Chairman	Chris Spurgeon	07707 771606
Club Welfare Officer	Maija Bissett	589473
100 Club	Judith O'Quinn	363489

Biddenham Village Hall

The Village Hall Management Committee has decided to extend the closure of the Hall until the end of May. Any queries can be made through the email on the website.

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Tips for Surviving Lockdown

Biddenham nonogenarians Anna and Matteo, better known as Nonna and Nonno, made it onto the BBC with their top tips on surviving lockdown.

They were filmed (safely) - Matteo in his fetching bright red dressing-gown and Panama hat, Anna with the biggest smile in the world, bashing pots and pans at the 8pm clap for carers and playing hide and seek in their home off Main Road.

The video was featured on the BBC's Victoria Derbyshire and on the BBC News online site.

You can find it by searching BBC Grandmas' top tips for surviving lockdown.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-52376726/coronavirus-grandmas-top-tips-to-get-through-lockdown>

This month in the garden

For a while now, the RHS has been running a campaign promoting the benefit of gardening for mental health and wellbeing for individuals and communities and the prolonged lock-down is bringing home to those of us lucky enough to have a garden what a huge benefit they are. We are not confined to four walls, there is always something to do and we can enjoy all the benefits of being in the open air, hearing the birds sing and revelling in a long period of wonderful sunshine. Lovely as it has been to see the April sun, gardeners will have been thinking it was time for rain and today, as I write this, there has been some really good rainfall; perfect timing to save me putting the sprinkler on the lawn after a treatment of fertiliser.

Extra time available for gardening means that this could be the year of doing things when they should be done rather than feeling that we are always trying to catch up. It's always worth spending a while just looking round and seeing what needs to be done. Apart from growing things that also means getting sheds and greenhouses clean and tidy and getting tools into good shape with tools clean and secateurs, shears and loppers kept sharp. With regard to sharpening I have used a few special gadgets but, last year, I bought a sharpening stone that you wet during use and this has been better than anything else.

May is the month for planting out annual bedding but this may be difficult this year with garden centres and nurseries closed. If you grow your own from seed you will be well away. They can be hardened off now by putting them outside in their seed trays or pots on warmer days or opening a cold frame but don't plant them out until the second half of the month in case of a late frost. You may have been able to order plug plants on-line from the major seed companies like Suttons or Thompson and Morgan and you may be able to find a garden centre or nursery offering a delivery service. I understand Cottage Garden Plants at Cardington is making deliveries and it will be worth trying other local nurseries at Kempston or Box End. If you have overwintered dahlias, geranium and fuschias indoors they should be growing now and can be planted out also from the second half of May. They can be left in pots or planted in the open ground. Plants kept in last year's soil will do better if repotted in fresh compost (John Innes no. 3 is good). Plant with bonemeal or other general fertiliser and

dahlias should be planted together with a strong stake put in first to avoid damaging the tuber. Dahlia plants in growth should be restricted to a maximum of three shoots. Spare shoots cut off can be used for cuttings.

You may have already sown tender vegetables, such as courgettes, cucumbers, sweetcorn, french beans and runner beans, under glass but it is not too late to do so. It is best to sow them in small individual pots or start them off in a seed tray and prick out into individual pots. Courgettes, cucumber and sweet corn need to be started off with some heat, either in a propagator or in an airing cupboard or other warm place. Remove from heat immediately after germination. Brassicas sown under glass will soon be ready for planting outside. If possible, provide protection with netting or with black cotton strung across them; I tie the cotton to small sticks from apple and pear tree prunings. You have, hopefully, already made sowings of root vegetables but you can prolong harvest by later successional sowing, especially with carrot and beetroot. Beetroot thinnings make good salad leaves. Lettuce needs to be sown every couple of weeks in small quantities. They can be sown in open ground but I generally start them off in a pot or small seed tray for planting out later. This helps to reduce losses from slugs and snails.

Plants will grow strongly in May if they are fed and watered. Roses need plenty of water but only two feeds a year; in spring and late summer. Clematis amply repay fortnightly high potash feeds such as seaweed or tomato fertiliser. Tomatoes under glass need feed applied weekly once the first truss has set fruit and every three or four days after the second truss. Outdoor tomatoes should be fed every ten days or so and potatoes fed every couple of weeks with tomato feed, seaweed fertiliser or occasionally with chicken manure pellets. Potatoes should be earthed up as the plants grow as a good depth of soil will stop potatoes becoming green.

Jeremy Arthern



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Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 8th April 2020 using the "Zoom" conferencing facility. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Krys Osuch, Francia Slade and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk Lyn Lyman and 2 members of the public were also present.



Public Open Session

The constant concern about speeding traffic and pedestrian safety, particularly on Gold Lane and Bromham Road, was raised. We are still yet to hear from the Borough Council about their recent consultation on raising the speed limit on Bromham Road from 30mph to 40mph (see my article in the last edition). During the lock-down, the lower volume of traffic has led to many obvious incidents of people driving much too fast along this stretch of road.

The suggestion was made to move the recently purchased Speed Indication Device (otherwise known as SID) from Gold Lane to a point on Bromham Road. This may have some effect, but since there is already a similar, if less sophisticated, sign erected there it is questionable what effect it might have. The current lock-down means it would be difficult to move SID anyway, as two people are needed. So it was agreed we will keep this under review.

Green Waste

I raised the matter of green waste to see what others felt about this. The fact is that, on top of there being no green wheelie bin collections for the foreseeable future, the tidy tip is closed and the bulk waste collection service has been suspended. Despite central government pleas to restart some of these services, the Bedford Mayor Dave Hodgson and his merry minions have decided we must all continue to get by without them, in our area.

Given the springtime growing season is now upon us, this may pose a challenge to some. The main advice for grass-cuttings and weeding is to compost your waste. Over time it will break down and reduce in size. For larger "trimmings" you may just have to store these until services resume.

If you have a particularly large amount to dispose of, please don't fly-tip it. Contact me or the clerk (clerk@biddenham.org.uk) and we may well be able to help you.

Coronavirus Measures

Since the meeting before last, so much has changed. We sat in rather blissful ignorance of what was to come back in March. But thanks to some quick thinking, a few meetings (all but one online) and the action of a wide and diverse set of volunteers across our village, we now have a functioning support network which can reach every part of our community. Every street, or collection of streets, has a WhatsApp group, each with its own volunteer leader. Messages for all the leaders, so they can share information and cascade it down to their local areas, are sent in to an over-arching "street teams" WhatsApp group for just these leaders.

The number and variety of things I've seen going on over this network are just amazing. From publicising Will Jenkin's flower stall by the memorial (which has raised so much money for charity), to finding a lost cat in double-quick time, to rallying support for the posting of rainbows, teddy bears and, of course the Thursday evening clap for the NHS – it's all just gobsmackingly brilliant.

I've seen emergency plumbing arranged, links to some brilliantly funny videos to cheer us all up, online shopping delivery slot coordination, donations to Bedford hospital of

much needed supplies and people simply reaching out for a chat and being connected to someone with a listening ear.

It hardly seems my place to say so – all the Parish Council has done is spend a tiny amount of money to help set things in motion – but I really want to pay tribute to how you, the residents of Biddenham, have rallied around to help each other at this incredibly difficult time. To every street coordinator, every volunteer, and everyone involved in pulling us all together – thank you.

Indeed, all across our country, people are pulling together in the face of this massive and unexpected crisis. We can be proud of our response here in Biddenham, but we should also be proud of what is happening all over our British Isles. Love and empathy for our friends and neighbours; acts of kindness and charity, offered without thought of reward.

It is salutary to note that two people in their nineties have recently crystalized the need for this attitude, this response, for us all. As Her Majesty the Queen and Captain Tom Moore have so effectively said, we will get through this, the clouds will lift and we will meet again. Whatever your situation, whether helping or needing help, let the love in your heart show itself to others today, and let your outlook for the future be one of optimism and hope.

Our Next Meeting – IMPORTANT INFO

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of most months. Our May meeting was meant to be the Annual Parish Meeting, but this will be held later this year when we can all get together in person. May's meeting will be an ordinary one, conducted via the Zoom conference call service.

We very much welcome hearing from residents, there being a public "open session" near the start for anyone wanting to say something. Please call in and let us know anything concerning you about our village, or just listen. The date for the next meeting is Wednesday 13th May at 7.30pm.

To participate, please ring 0203 051 2874 and then use your phone keypad to enter the code 912 526 0859 followed by the # key. Calls are national rate, I'm afraid. We cannot stretch to a service where we pay for your phone call via a toll free number.

Alternatively, and at no charge, you can use a computer or tablet by opening your web browser (Safari / Chrome / Edge) and carefully entering <https://zoom.us/j/9125260859>

This information will be posted on our village website at biddenham.org.uk. Please keep viewing the site for important communications about Coronavirus measures.

STAY HOME, PROTECT THE NHS, SAVE LIVES

Peter Chase
Chairman

Update: Green bin collections

These are to be reinstated monthly and Biddenham's first collection will be 6th May alongside the orange bins. Great Denham's first collection will be 20th May.

St Joseph's and St Gregory's Primary School



Our school kitchen manager has recently taught staff and children of Key Workers how to make fresh pasta from her kitchen whilst parents are busy working on the front line. The children and staff had all of the ingredients to hand, whilst Marianne talked them through how to mix, knead, roll and cut the pasta. The video can be found on the school website at: www.stjosephsandstgregorys.com

This recipe serves 3

Ingredients

1 egg, beaten
140g plain flour
Half a teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons water

Method

- Combine flour and salt in a medium sized bowl. Make a well in the flour, add the slightly beaten egg and mix. The mixture should form a stiff dough. Stir in 1 or 2 tablespoons of water if required.
- Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 3 or 4 minutes.
- Hand roll out to your desired thickness.
- Roll the sheet of dough in the form of a swiss roll and then cut into strips of desired width.

To cook fresh pasta

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add salt for seasoning. Add the pasta and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Fresh pasta cooks very quickly. It will float to the surface when fully cooked. Drain and enjoy with a sauce.

Peter's Picturehouse

As we wait for news on when the Village Hall will reopen, we will sadly not be showing our May film. Our plan for June and July, previously published and with a reminder below, will only go ahead if we publish further updates. Updates will be posted on the noticeboards around the village, on the Biddenham village website and in next month's Loop.

Tuesday 2nd June Stan and Ollie
Tuesday 7th July Bridge of Spies

Rose Houghton

**Don't forget the
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DIFFICULT TIMES
THE NEED IS URGENT**



You can find the latest list of items needed by Bedford food bank and details of how to make a financial donation at <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

Pandemic

An American friend of Edwin Martin's sent this slightly different view of the lockdown.

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider the Sabbath, the most sacred of times. Cease from travel. Cease from buying and selling. Give up, just for now, on trying to make the world different than it is. Sing. Pray. Touch only those to whom you commit your life. Center down. And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart. Know that we are connected in ways that are terrifying and beautiful. (You could hardly deny it now.) Know that our lives are in one another's hands. (Surely, that has come clear.) Do not reach out your hands. Reach out your heart. Reach out your words. Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly, where we cannot touch. Promise this world your love; for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, so long as we all shall live.

Lynn Unger

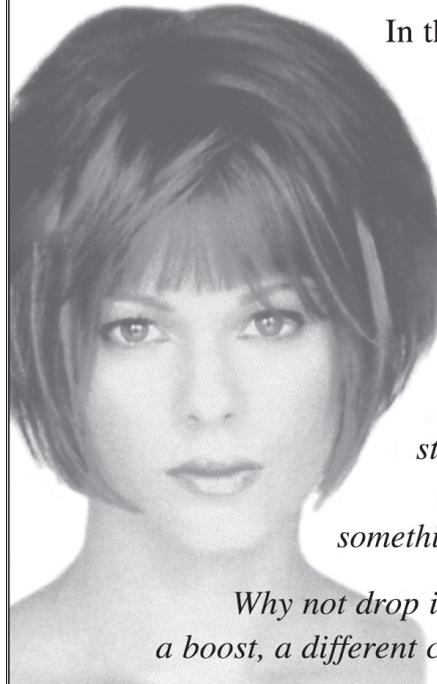
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Biddenham History Society

Peter Applewhite and I have reviewed the situation with regard to the talks that he was going to give to the Biddenham History Society. We have decided that in view of the uncertainty about the next few months because of the Coronavirus epidemic, it would be best to postpone his talks until April 2021 and July 2021. There will therefore be no July 2020 meeting of the Society and the planned October 2020 meeting will have to be kept under review in accordance with the government guidelines.

In the meantime, if you are able to get out for walks, the village is looking beautiful. We are so lucky to live in such a lovely place. The blossom and the cowslip meadow have been particularly attractive this year. You may want to read up about and, as you walk along, look carefully at the buildings featured in the 'A Walk Round Biddenham Village' section in the village history 'The Village of Biddenham Through the Ages.' If you are advised not to go out and you have a copy of the book, you may enjoy reading some of the chapters and looking at the illustrations. If you want to see pictures of other peoples' gardens in the village, the Biddenham Gardeners' Association website has a nice photo gallery of photos that members have taken.

I hope that you will all stay well and we shall certainly enjoy our meetings when restrictions are lifted.

Kathy Fricker



Cowslip Meadow

At this time the meadow looks fabulous with blooms of countless cowslips giving a yellow carpet of delight beneath your feet. I hope you are all enjoying your walks through but not over them.

Soon they will be gone and other summer blooms will appear. Near the northern corner is an area of damper, shorter, unimproved sward where marsh plants appear in time, sedges and rushes grow interspersed with orchids. I hope the village website will soon have some flower lists added to a cowslip meadow page along with other pages covering footpaths and tree planting. Some of these are now historic but these records should be shared for future researchers.

We will continue to cut a wide path along the top this summer and another through the churchyard extension.

Chris Haydn Jones

'Friends' plan a Family Games Event for the Autumn

Many of you will remember the popularity in the past of a beetle drive, where family teams had to construct a plastic beetle from its many parts using paper and dice. Prizes were awarded for speed and accuracy.

Others will remember family games when we attempted to suck up peas, find hidden objects in the room, fish with magnets or even sort buttons from mother's button box into pairs - all running to strict times and with family groups competing for Points and Prizes!

The Friends of St James would like to run something similar in the autumn but we need family support. It would probably be on a Saturday afternoon or early evening in October or November (Covid-19 permitting!). So could you please contact Chris Haydn Jones (211759 or chrishj49@gmail.com) or Peter Leverkus (353662 or peter@leverkus.plus.com) if you would like to get involved and potentially enter a team.

Thank you.

Chris Haydn Jones

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

Membership Treasurer	Peter Leverkus Paul Fricker	Tel: 353662 Tel: 342843
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May's Monday: a mystery

One day, a long time ago, Florence sent a postcard to Miss May Larkins, Bunyan Road, Kempston, Bedford. She wrote: 'Dear May I hope you will like this. Are you not longing for Monday? This x is the school where I teach. Love from Florence.' An intriguing message. And who is Florence?

Postmarked both Biddenham and Bedford, 7th April 1906 6.30pm, the picture on the front of the postcard is indeed of Biddenham, looking down the main road from the village green with, on the left, the village school (marked with the x) and, beyond, the row of Post Office



cottages.

What do we know so far? We know May's name and where she lives. We know the postcard was posted in Biddenham. We know Florence is a teacher at the village school in Biddenham. Having checked the calendar for 1906 we know 7th April was a Saturday.

Could Florence with her postcard safely posted ever have imagined, even for a fleeting second, that villagers living in that same village of Biddenham more than a century on would be wondering why her friend May might be longing for that Monday and, can we imply from her words, that Florence herself is longing for it as well?

And which Monday did Florence mean? The Monday then coming, 9th April, or the Monday after, 16th April, which was Easter Monday in 1906. What might May and Florence have been longing for: a special outing together, a tryst with their beaus, an Easter treat?

And who is Florence? After a bit of seek and ye shall find, we believe it's safe to say she is Florence Dorothea Hebbes who lived in Duck End, Biddenham, and was the infants' teacher at the village school. She's mentioned in Kathy, Mary and Diana's 2012 village history, and in Dorothy Richards' earlier 1991 history we find Florence's father, Alfred Hebbes, the village wheelwright for 50 years, who retired aged 70, followed by son in law Albert Ernest Seale. Alfred was also parish clerk for 20 years and caretaker of the village school and its school bell.

In his memoirs, Albert Church, a pupil before and during the Great War, remembers the ringing of the bell which hung outside the village school by one of the older boys, often urged on by his pals to pull the bell rope as hard as possible and then let it go so that it would quickly wrap round the spindle. One of the girls would then be sent to the Vicarage with the bad news, and the Vicar would have to go to Mr Hebbes for him to come with a ladder to turn the bell over and let the rope down. Albert was sorry that after the ringing of bells was stopped during World War II, the school bell wasn't rung again.

But back to the postcard. Neither of the girls had a birthday in April, Florence being born on 9th November 1888 in Biddenham and Eleanor May Larkins on 17th May 1889 in Kempston, so they were not looking forward to a birthday. We're lucky though to have three censuses, the most recent being that for 1911, and also the 1939 Register compiled as the Second World War began, to learn a little more about the girls.

The 1891 Census confirms the Hebbes family is living in Duck End, Biddenham. By 1911, mum and dad have been married for 31 years and have had two children, Florence Dorothea, 22, single and a school teacher, and sister Beatrice Miriam, 20, and also single.

In 1891 the Larkins family is living in a cottage in Bunyan Road, Kempston, and father Charles is a bricklayer. In addition to May they have an older daughter, Agnes who is 15, single and a dressmaker. By 1911 mum and dad have been married for 37 years and have had two children, though only May, now 21 and an elementary school teacher, is living with them at 22 Bunyan Road.

In 1924 Florence married her Albert Ernest Seale, who we believe to be the Albert Ernest Seale born in Preston on Wye, Herefordshire, who in 1911 is 18, single, and a groom at Credenhill Court, near Hereford. May had married eight years earlier in 1916 to Sydney Leonard Shreeves, who in 1911 was 21, a planer in a timber yard, and living with his mother, father and siblings in Kempston.

Both couples in due course had one child, Florence a son Bernard Albert Hebbes Seale born in 1926, and May a daughter Madeline Edith Lucy born in 1920. In 1939 Albert is a special constable in addition to his day job as carpenter and wheelwright, Florence is back in teaching as a temporary school teacher, and sister Beatrice, probably living with them in Duck End, is single, and a tobacconist and confectioner. Was Florence teaching again at the village school in Biddenham? Still at 22 Bunyan Road in 1939 Sydney is a wood machinist, May is on unpaid domestic duties, and Madeline is a student.

Florence died on 1st April 1954 aged 65, living at Way-Side, 22 Duck End, Biddenham: it's probable she lived all her life in 22 Duck End, the house, unless numbers have changed over the years, now occupied by our own Jan and Chris Jones. May had died almost two years earlier on 7th May 1952 just a few days short of her 63rd birthday, living still at 22 Bunyan Road, where it is probable she lived for most of her life.

When she sent her postcard Florence was only 17 and May just 16 going on 17, their lives before them full of promise, neither knowing what the future might hold for them. We hope they found fulfilment, with many happy times, though as we now know for their world there lay ahead many troubled times.

It was just a simple postcard with only a few words written on it, yet echoing now down the years, catching our imagination and touching our heart, leaving us with many questions. When and how did Florence and May first meet? As children, as teenagers? Were they related? Did they remain close friends until May's death? As the years rolled by did they muse together over a cup of tea about the remarkable parallels their paths of life had taken: both becoming teachers, both having only one child, and both probably spending most of their lives in one house, with both those houses, what are the chances, being numbered 22?

And still most intriguing of all, what was so special about that Monday in April 1906: what pleasure, what thrills, what excitement, what joy then lay ahead, in just a few days' time, for our two postcard girls?

We'll probably never know any of the answers. Unless you do?

One final thought. Might the old school bell ring once more the day the children return to the village school when the crisis now facing Biddenham, the United Kingdom, the world has diminished and reached the point where life can return to something verging on the pre-virus normality.

Peter Applewhite



Florence Dorothea Hebbes in 1910 (Courtesy of John Wainwright)

100 CLUB

March draw

- | | | |
|----|---------------|----|
| 1. | D. McCall | 60 |
| 2. | P. Culverwell | 24 |
| 3. | J. Winger | 29 |

Drawn by Derek Frossell



Annual subscriptions are normally due on 1st May but for a number of reasons we have taken the decision to suspend the 100 Club temporarily. The result of the April Draw, the last one of the previous season, will be published next month. We will let you know when the Draw is up and running again.

Biddenham Cricket Club values the support that it has received over the years from members of the 100 Club Draw. Sporting activities across the UK and beyond have been put on hold, and we must wait for a directive from The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) before resuming any organised cricket activities. The cricket club is currently investigating the possibility of obtaining funds either from the ECB or Sport England to "soften the blow" of not currently being able to receive any subscription income for either senior or junior members for 2020.

With the 100 Club Draw currently suspended, it may be that some would like to make a small donation direct to Biddenham Cricket Club - this would be much appreciated. If you would like to do this please email richard.fone@yahoo.com.

Thank you.

What's On?

Unfortunately the short answer is 'Nothing'! All the community halls and the church are still closed until the Government restrictions are lifted. So there is no First Friday, Café B, barn@2, Gardeners Association, etc.

The Borough council have also had to suspend their mobile library service.

St James's church are continuing to hold services via Zoom so keep an eye on your email for details.

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.

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The Loop

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All **June** 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 May 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.