

# The Loop

July 2020

£1.00

## St James's church building

You may be aware that the Government has said that Church Buildings may be opened for private prayer from 15th June and for worship from 4th July.

Having considered this, along with guidance from the Church of England, we have concluded that it is not currently feasible for our church building to re-open at the current time.

Please be assured that we are continuing to monitor the situation in respect of both the Church and the Barn and will let you know should there be any change.

Jacqui Piper,  
PCC Secretary



## Show marquees help stretch school space

Following an appeal from St James' School for gazebos to provide cover on the school field, it was suggested to them that the loan of the Show marquees

might be helpful. This was swiftly agreed and the marquees were erected by a team of Day's Lane volunteers including Jon Gambold and Will Jenkin so there was plenty of Show experience and expertise on hand. The tents have been very well anchored to withstand any wild winds.

This is what deputy head Sarah said: 'I really want to thank you very much for loaning the marquees. It has made a massive difference to what we are able to offer our families. More children will now be able to return to school and reconnect with their friends and teachers. This is something that otherwise wouldn't have happened until September.'

## Mums on the Run

Caz, Kerry & Eleanor between them have run 320km during June. Yes, a whopping 320km to raise money for St James' Primary school! As we go to press the ladies have already raised over £975. But they want more!

Due to the current Covid-19 situation the school needs funds to help the children and teachers maintain that all important safety. To do this the children will be required to be outdoors, when possible. This will require more equipment.

Please help Caz, Kerry and Eleanor raise the funds for outdoor learning/activities, for example:

- A playtime box for each group, with age related toys/activities (eg dolls/cars for the younger children, puzzles, rubix cubes, etc for the older pupils) or...
- Art boxes (similar to PE): 5 sets of watercolour paints, oil pastels, etc for each group.
- Gazebos

To support these ladies you can donate via <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/mums-on-the-run>

You can also track their progress via a private 'Mums on the Run' Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/244090167035807/edit/>

Your support would mean so much to the school, to our village.

*It takes a village to raise a child.*

'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](mailto:loopeditor@gmail.com)



Village Agent, Teresa Moon

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

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



**Do You Need a Face Mask?** We must now wear a face covering at all times on public transport or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient. We must also wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces, including hairdressers, chiropodists, doctor's surgeries etc. Fabric masks can be washed and reused, to avoid creating unnecessary waste. If you would like a washable fabric mask, we have some to distribute to people who need them. Just call our Freephone 0800 039 1234.

**Cause for Applause** Are you a carer? Have you received special help recently? Carers are invited go public about help or a kindness that has made a difference to you. This is your chance to show your appreciation. A panel of carers will look at all nominations and pick out a few for special recognition. Everyone nominated will receive a token of appreciation. Nomination form available online from carersinbeds.org.uk Closing date for nominations 31 August 2020.

**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 – 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.)



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

- |                          |   |                          |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Vicar                    | Rev Eric Lomax<br>rev.ejlomax@gmail.com | Tel: 328452              |
| Readers                  | Christopher Dawe<br>Paul Fricker        | Tel 363890<br>Tel 342843 |
| Churchwardens            | Laurie Hurn                             | Tel 364251               |
| 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 |   |                          |

# Always keep a-hold of Nurse....

Eric is heavily embroiled in moving house as we put *The Loop* together. We are grateful to Christopher Dawe for stepping into his shoes this month.

**‘Always keep a-hold of Nurse....** for fear of finding something worse.’ So Hilaire Belloc wrote in his *Cautionary Tales for Children*. Humorous these tales may be, but, as they say, many a truth is spoken in jest.

I have found myself wondering, in recent times, on many aspects of life as we find them these days. We are over-fearful of taking risks.

Particularly I find that children are prevented from simply going out by themselves to play and explore and take their chances with what may come. I think they lose so much. Not only that, but parents today feel they need to provide their children with entertainment or interesting things to do all the time. They are not left to become bored, and start looking for themselves into their new world.

We have embraced Health and Safety to the point of it becoming bureaucratic and burdensome. Covid-19 has hardly improved matters. I am not saying that our precautions to avoid the spread of this dangerous virus are either unnecessary or excessive, but I am saying that life is never safe and that is the world that God has made.

Though the world is a dangerous place, we should never fear. Of course our bodies feel fear at danger, but we are more than flesh and blood. Jesus said perfect love casts out fear, and God loves us, you may be sure of that if nothing else.

A dangerous world appears to us as life threatening. But I would suggest that a dangerous world is life creating. Many years ago I heard a preacher say that when men make things in large quantities, they are all the same, at least they seem so to the common eye, but when God makes things in large quantities, they are all different. So it is that a lamb can recognise its mother even when just shorn as I saw on *Country File* last Sunday. I remember a friend of mine at university telling me how he had seen, when doing his National Service in the Middle East, how at the end of the day he saw shepherds on hills round about calling their sheep who were in one flock in the valley. The sheep knew their own shepherd's voice and came to their own shepherd.

I believe that God makes all creatures different by a process that inevitably involves danger. But we are never alone. God is always with us. Jesus is the guarantor of our eternal existence and safety. Jesus himself in creating the world, included himself in it. He is the Word made flesh and so our eternal existence is not just a pious hope but a fact.

This has been a difficult time for all of us in one way or another, and for humanity it has been and is a shock. It has made us all review our priorities in life, and that is good. It has also made many of us realise what a wonderful world we live in and how amazing it is that we exist at all and enjoy so many aspects of God's creation.

When I took funerals, I often finished with assuring those present that God loves us and would see to it that nothing good is lost. I firmly believe that to be true. We have no need to keep a-hold of Nurse, for there is love and joy to come with Jesus.

Christopher Dawe

# CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT NETWORK

Need local help? Ring 01234 815393 or email [help@biddenham.org.uk](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk)

The helpline 01234 815393 is 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](mailto: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.

## 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](mailto: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 328452 or 07805 879537 or email [rev.ejlomax@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk) and again, we will find someone who can help, either locally or direct you to an organisation who can help.

## Facebook Groups

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

Great Denham Community

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/>

## 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 01234 718101.

## Terry Allen

*We are sorry to report the death of Terry Allen. Our sympathies go to his family.*

*He was a Parish Councillor in Biddenham when he lived here and heavily involved with the Friends of Biddenham Pond.*

*We are grateful to Graham Bates for these memories of Terry and you can read more on page 5.*



I first meet Terry when he became a member of the Rotary Club of Bedford in 1994 and came to know him as a very quiet but very wise man. He was always willing to help people and was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by the Club for all his work and good counselling, which is a great honour.

Later he became a member of Biddenham Parish Council. One of the projects he did for the Parish Council was to install the power cables and the pit in the village green for the Christmas Tree so that the tree could be easily installed.

He once told me that he went to Bedford School as a boy. He was married to Pat and they lived in the part of Bromham Road which leads down to the Bromham Bridge and his daughter and son in law lived in Deep Spinney with their grandchildren. He later moved to Kimbolton Road, opposite St Andrew's Church.

I understand that he and his family were well travelled mainly in Africa, having worked in the Petroleum Industry there for most of his working life.

Terry was a real gentleman, we will miss him greatly.



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# Finding ourselves in Solihull

Greetings from the West Midlands!

Let me admit, straight away, that I have 'stolen' the title for this article. That is, I have just read a book by American Christian writer and speaker Amy Boucher Pye, entitled 'Finding Myself in Britain'. The double meaning of the book's title mirrors the details described in it of how the author came to find herself living in Britain (in short, she married a vicar), her Christian walk through the seasons of the year and, with God's help, 'finding herself' in Britain.

So, as I write, we are seven months into our new lives in Solihull. We moved exactly seven months ago today (where did that time go?), and are almost three months into lockdown. So, how are we finding ourselves in Solihull and in lockdown? Here's how.



## Suzette

From my licensing at the end of November until lockdown was announced on 23rd March I was busy being there, listening and discovering my new 'patch', essentially finding out where people were. However, although in pioneering I know that I must resist the pressure for early results, in arriving at the beginning of Advent I felt that I couldn't ignore the fact that I had set the parish the task of reading a chapter of Luke's Gospel every day. I joined in with this by reading the Bible in the local pub, The Greville Arms, accompanied by several cups of coffee and, on a couple of occasions, people from the local area who had seen it advertised. This became a real 'talking point' with other customers and with the staff, who would pour my coffee as soon as they saw me coming in the door!

After the 'busyness' of Advent and Christmas, the New Year brought a less frenetic pace and gave me the opportunity to begin to develop relationships with the local school, as well as the pub and local shop-owners. For Lent I advertised Lent walks, which were taken up by a handful of locals before lockdown was announced. Since lockdown I have been working from home and, although I can find

plenty to do, my main occupation has been prayer. But more of that in a moment.

## David

As of 24th November I was employed as Father Christmas at Dobbie's Garden Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon. This was part-time but very enjoyable work. I can now say that I am a professional Father Christmas, having been a voluntary one for years!

As 2020 began I found myself job-hunting once again: there are very few ministry jobs around at the moment, but I was enjoying not having the pressures of ministry for a while and I found myself a local church, St. Nicholas's (well, it had to be, didn't it?) which soon felt like home.

The job hunt, for any kind of job, was a long, slow, laborious activity and was beginning to bring me down until, at the beginning of March, I was offered a job back at Dobbie's in their plant section. I remained there until just after lockdown started, when they were forced to close and, not having been there long enough to be furloughed, I was once again redundant.

## Suzette

'If a man (*or woman*) wants to be used by God, he (*or she*) cannot spend all of (their) time with people.' A. W. Tozer, *with PC language inserted by me!*

While I can find plenty to do, during lockdown I am rediscovering my contemplative self: the self who recognises that being comes before doing; the self who recognises that there is no substitute for spending time with God; the self who cries 'Yes!' when she hears Jesus say - "What does it profit someone if they gain the whole world and lose or forfeit their true self?" (Luke 9:25) This self is the self that Jesus called to this place at this time, knowing me, and knowing how 2020 would play out. Amongst all of the busyness, this self sits with our Lord in prayer and waits. It's both challenging and liberating.

## David

'If you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat.' John Ortberg.

I am back at Dobbies part-time, while also discovering that I am missing being in full-time ministry. However, I am learning that I need to trust God more with my future path, and give to him any fear I might harbour about it. The hours that I have been given at Dobbies at the moment enable me to mix with people, while also having enough time to refuel spiritually. I'm doing a lot of reading around Christian spirituality as well as being creative in our garden.

## So, over to you

How are you finding yourself, both where you are physically *and* spiritually in lockdown, remembering that God is in both and can minister to us in different ways? We'd love to hear from you!

Thanks for listening!

Suzette & David. Maguire

*If you would like quarterly updates about our lives and work here in Solihull, please email [s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk) to subscribe to our Prayer-Mail newsletter. Thank you.*

## The Leprosy Mission

A big thank you to all those with Leprosy Mission collecting boxes who contributed to the grand total of £377.64 raised this year. Anyone who would like to have a collecting box in their home for their unwanted coins (to be emptied in May each year) please contact me on 01234 346550.

John Gardner



Our news is somewhat clouded by the passing of Terry Allen who was a committee member for nearly 20 years. He served as our very able Treasurer for most of this time and was always an active member of the committee. He was not only possessed of much financial acumen but could also be found wielding a paintbrush or a fork on workdays and other occasions, often supervised (as we all were) by our founder Dorothy Richards. This is also an opportunity to thank his wife Pat for her many contributions to the life of the pond and especially at the much-missed pond nights held in the village hall in past years where much fun was had. We send our sympathies to all his family.



*Terry Allen (right) with Councillor Roger Rigby and Ed Burnett receiving an award at the pond.*

We continue to work on our outstanding projects, so that we are ready to go once the lockdown restrictions are eased and our volunteers can return. We have already made a start on cutting the hedge and grass around the seats, so this area looks less neglected and gives visitors a place to relax and enjoy the views. We are also repairing the benches where needed and look forward to our new one arriving soon. We thank you for your patience regarding the replacement of the gate, but we hope to start work on this soon.

Unfortunately, there has recently been an increase in rubbish being left at the site, some of which is associated with the shady seat up under the chestnut canopy. It seems visitors are sitting there and throwing their empty beverage cans and bottles into the ditch or the bushes. We realise the importance of the pond to people's relaxation and wellbeing especially in this difficult time, but lobbing rubbish is not part of this. So, as well as some repairs to the bench we may cut back some of the vegetation to make the area less hidden and users more visible, hopefully preventing some rubbish.

In this weather, which seems to move from wet to dry and hot with increasing rapidity, the pond water level is gradually dropping by evaporation and transpiration and then rises a little when it rains. There is enough water for the pond ecosystem to survive and the occupants both large and small to thrive, but we hope it doesn't run too dry because then the green vegetation gets a hold and is difficult to remove. Wood piles, undergrowth, stones and

vegetation all help to sustain life in and around the pond during these dry periods.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to have a pond dipping afternoon this year, but we hope to try some socially distanced filmed pond dipping which we will put on our web page if we are successful. We will let you know when this is available.

Please remember that we continue to need support both now and into the future. The cost is minimal and our Treasurer, Jane, (email address below) will help you to make your payment and join our group of supporters. We would especially like to hear from new residents of the village both in "old" and "new" Biddenham.

Our pond project is important and regarded as such in the County and may well be unique.

Stay safe and continue to enjoy the Pond.

The Pond Team

#### Contact Details

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

[www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com](http://www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com)  
[www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond](http://www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond)

## The Midwife Toad

Lots of people in the Church End WhatsApp group recently commented about hearing the midwife toads, particularly after all that rain which we so desperately needed for our gardens.

Midwife toads were introduced to this area at the end of the 1800s, from France. They came over in a consignment of ferns and pond plants and have spread from a pond in Bromham Road.

I discovered that nearly everyone in Church End and The Old Barns has midwife toads in their gardens and, if you haven't seen one of these small amphibians, you know that you have them from their loud, electronic sounding beeps.

Here's one I sketched when it was pouring with rain. It's the males that carry the eggs, hence the name Midwife Toad.

Val Fitzhugh



# This month in the garden

Many of us living in Biddenham during the period of lockdown are lucky enough to have a garden and what a boon that has been! Two months of lovely sunny dry weather was an added bonus and a garden and good weather, plus more time than usual, have kept us busy and active and given us a lot of pleasure. You probably had to spend quite a bit of the available time on watering the garden but rain has now come to our rescue and my garden has probably never looked better. A spectacular display of roses is just beginning to fade.

It is now three months since restrictions were imposed and as I enjoyed sowing seeds in March I never thought that I would still be living in isolation when I harvested the results. That is how it has turned out and we are now overcoming some of the shopping restrictions with lettuce, radishes, watercress, broad beans and spinach. As I write towards the end of June we have had two or three helpings of raspberries and our first taste of new potatoes.

There have also been problems in the vegetable garden. My onion sets and some of the cabbages have been growing in a strangely twisted sort of way, blackfly and whitefly are getting rather too busy and I had yellow spots that I didn't recognise on some of the raspberry leaves. At least the dry weather in April and May meant that slugs and snails weren't a problem. RHS members will know that the Society offers an advice service and during coronavirus the identification of problem samples sent in the post has been replaced by an on-line facility where you can ask questions and attach photos to illustrate the problem. I used the service and received a very detailed reply. Sprays against aphids are available to amateur gardeners but it is important to follow manufacturers' instructions for each vegetable concerned and many of us are not happy about using chemicals on foodstuffs, if at all. The best treatment for black fly and greenfly is early removal by hand (washing off is easier than just rubbing off) or spraying with soapy water. I asked if the twisted growth might be due to using compost which included grass treated with weed killer and they thought this unlikely while stressing the importance of not using treated grass from the first cut after treatment and to check manufacturers' instructions for the weed killer used. The spots on the raspberries are caused by a fungal infection probably due to a lack of air amongst overcrowded canes. I cut off all the infected leaves shortly after I noticed them and this seems to have dealt with the problem. I have been feeding the onions generously with Miracle-gro and most of them are recovering. If you are not an RHS member you can get a lot of help from the Q & A section on their website.

The main activity in the garden in July will be maintenance. That means keeping the grass cut (high and not often in dry weather) and edges trimmed, dead heading flowered plants regularly, weeding and trimming back excessive or untidy growth on shrubs. Depending on whether or not soft fruit are in abundance and the amount

of bird damage, you can net the bushes. Strawberries must be netted. I have netted out a blueberry bush and immature cherry tree but not the raspberries so far.

You can take cuttings of softwood shrubs either to increase plant numbers or as insurance against winter losses. The dahlia cuttings I took in May are doing well and I shall take cuttings from the perennial wallflower, Erysimum 'Bowles mauve', which is not hardy in severe frost. Take cuttings three or four inches long from healthy and not flowering shoots and cut just below a leaf joint. Remove the lower leaves and reduce the amount or size of upper leaves. Dip the bottom end of the cutting in rooting powder (Monty Don didn't think this necessary in a recent programme). Insert the cutting in multi-purpose compost in a plastic pot or other container, either singly in a small pot or several around the edge of a larger one (say a three or four inch pot). Water and cover with an inverted plastic bag. I put a thin stick a little taller than the cutting in the middle of the pot to keep the sides of the bag off the cuttings. Keep out of hot sunshine and shake moisture off the inside of the bag every day or so. I then turn the bag inside out so the dry side is next to the cutting. Watch for signs of new growth on the cuttings and then remove the bag and repot plants as necessary.

Jeremy Arthern



*My broad beans are a bit behind Jeremy's but they are coming! Ed.*

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# Biddenham Cricket Club

An email received from the Buckinghamshire Cricket Board outlines the current situation as it also applies to Bedfordshire.

*'The ECB's Return to Recreational Cricket Roadmap and FAQs was published on 10th June.*

*'The FAQs make it very clear that the chances of a normal 11-a-side game of cricket this summer are close to non-existent.*

*'This is because the current social distancing restrictions are for groups of 6 people and whilst we would all love it to get to groups of 24+ that would allow us to play the game as we all want to, this seems very unlikely.*

*'However, the chances of group size restrictions going to 12 or 16 are hopefully much better, which would allow for some 'adapted gameplay' whether that is 6-a-side, 8-a-side, etc.*

*'This might lend itself more to junior cricket but I am sure a number of senior teams would be keen for cricket in whatever form they can.*

*'This is obviously hugely frustrating for all of us.*

*'We hope the situation moves quickly, but remain pragmatic about the reality of the bigger picture.*

*'As soon as we can move into Step 4, we will work with you to make sense of what that means in reality and put a plan into action immediately.*

*'If we get the chance to go to Step 5 then it will be an extremely pleasant surprise for us all, and again we will do whatever we can to get the game on with you.'*

Richard Fone

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

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



## Pollinator strip

If you walk down the lane by the church, take a minute to look down. Garry is creating a wildflower bed.

In this picture you can see borage, crimson flax, cornflower and phacelia.

Who knows what else will appear?

Val Fitzhugh



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## Ted Brooks - a star of the Biddenham Show

*Quite what will happen with the Biddenham Show this year is anybody's guess. The Show committee members are considering their options. In these days of uncertainty we were pleased to receive these photographs and notes from Helen Coutts that recall a*

*happier time.*

Ted Brooks was the father in law of my Aunt and he won many prizes in the Biddenham Show for his exhibits of vegetables. I have five of his medals between 1956 & 1962 but I'm unsure how many he won in total.



He was born in Box End, Kempston in 1889 and when he grew up he was a horse keeper at a farm in Wick End, Stagsden. He served in the Driver Royal Engineers during WW1 and was awarded the Silver War and Victory medals.

In later years he worked as a brewery labourer at Charles Wells in Queens Park.

He married Lizzie Faulkner in 1920 and my Uncle, also Ted Brooks (Edward Albert Brooks) was born shortly after. They lived at 56 Main Road, then 51 Main Road in Biddenham.

Ted Jnr married my Aunt, Bertha Stevens in 1937 and moved to Kempston.

It is not known, but it is thought, that Ted Brooks Snr used the spent hops from the brewery to feed his plants. My father once asked him how he grew his veg so large but he said he would take that knowledge to the grave with him, which he sadly did in February 1969 aged 80 years.

In July 1971 a bonfire in a neighbouring garden set fire to the thatch of 51 Main Road and Ted and Bertha moved back to Biddenham to help rebuild the burnt out property.

Helen Coutts



*Bertha and Ted Junior*



**PAIN AND LOSS OF COTTAGE BLAZE**

SIR. — With reference to "Fear of just one spark" (Letters, last week), being the present occupant of the cottages in question, I, too, was most concerned with the bonfire mentioned by your correspondent.

With our next-door neighbours, we go in constant fear of history repeating itself, dreading a repetition of the tragedy of July 24, 1971. Our appeals for sympathetic co-operation to refrain from this extremely dangerous practice, of lighting fires in such close proximity are either ignored or conveniently forgotten.

It is only when one has been the victim of such a tragedy, and experienced the shock of seeing one's home, together with the close treasures of the past, in a tangled heap of saturated debris, along with the acrid stench of burning in your nostrils, that the pain and loss sustained can be understood.

With reference to the insurance, there must be many things of great sentimental value that money cannot replace. As for rebuilding, one has only to consider inflation in this direction, to realise what a painful experience this has been, financially, for my family.

Thank you, "Visitor", for your concern. Please visit us when next you return to Biddenham.

**E. A. BROOKS**  
51 Main Road,  
Bedford.

*Tragedy: Biddenham, 1971.*



## Care bags for NHS workers

I was recently asked to help the Bedford Hospital Charity & Friends to pack care bags for NHS workers. We needed extra tables so I contacted Jan Burns who very kindly facilitated me borrowing a couple from the church barn.

The resulting effort produced an impressive array of bags.

Julie Clay

## Café B...

We are crossing our fingers and hoping that depending on government guidelines, it might be possible to reopen Café B on Tuesday 21st July for the first time since March.

The venue would be a garden (which one to be confirmed!) and of course it would be a case of 'weather permitting'.

We won't be able to confirm details until nearer the time so please contact Maggie Gardner on 346550 after 14th July.

Finally, we would like to say how much we appreciate the support of our regular customers - thanks to YOU, every month we make a small profit and we are delighted to confirm that we have just been able to make a donation of £150 to Macmillan Cancer Support.

We are sure this will be much appreciated at a time when all charities are struggling.

Judith O'Quinn

## Early summer in Biddenham

*We are grateful to Kate Smith for her photographs taken around Biddenham in June. How lucky are we?*



# Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 10th June 2020 using the Zoom conferencing facility. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Krys Osuch, and Joe Warren. Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs and Francina Slade. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk Lyn Lyman and 3 members of the public were also present.



## Public Open Session

This month's meeting was dominated by the very serious matter of inconsiderate parking near the Pavilion building in Deep Spinney. Since the lockdown, events at the Pavilion stopped and we (the Parish Council, who run the building on behalf of the community) decided to close and lock the gates of the Pavilion car park. This did not create a parking problem at first, but as lockdown measures have eased, the number of people parking outside the gates has increased.

The problem parkers seemed, from what local residents told us, to be people wishing to use the Pavilion playing field and tennis courts. Parking across driveways, on the recently painted double-yellow lines, and even blocking the gates themselves has been reported. Blocking the gates is dangerous. An ambulance trying to attend someone injured on the field would not be able to enter the grounds (they are entitled to cut the padlock and chain on the gates to gain entry in an emergency).

And so, we made the decision at our meeting to reopen the gates during the daytime, as always used to be the case. Since the meeting, however, two key things have happened.

First of all, attempts to find volunteers to open and close the gates daily have come to nought. We will however, definitely reinstate the opening of the car park from 4th July, when hirers are going to start holding events at the building once more.

Secondly, it turns out a lot of the cars being parked belonged to Manor Hospital staff, and not just those arriving to do a bit of jogging or to play tennis. Hospital staff have traditionally used the car park during the day, something they pay for the privilege of being allowed to do. Without us knowing, some had returned to work, found the gates locked and just parked, not always considerably, for the whole day outside the gates. Congestion ensued, and local residents were inconvenienced and put at risk.

Our Pavilion manager, Deb Slade, has now talked to the hospital and we believe the problem has got considerably better. Hopefully, in a couple of weeks, things will be back to normal.

## Website

As things start to return to normal, you may know of someone keen to publicise an event or service. Do please remember the village website, [www.biddenham.org.uk](http://www.biddenham.org.uk), is here to help. You can email submissions to the Parish Clerk at [clerk@biddenham.org.uk](mailto:clerk@biddenham.org.uk), or our webmaster at [info@biddenham.org.uk](mailto:info@biddenham.org.uk).

## Important information about our next meeting

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of most months. 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 8th July at 7.30pm.

**The following details have changed.** To participate, please ring **0208 080 6592** and then use your phone keypad to enter the code **524 544 164** 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 accessing the Internet and carefully entering <https://zoom.us/j/524544164>

This information will be posted on our village website at [biddenham.org.uk](http://biddenham.org.uk).

Peter Chase  
Chairman



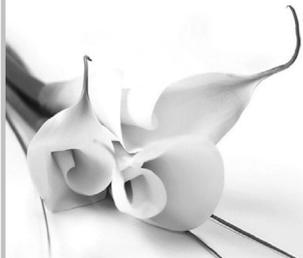
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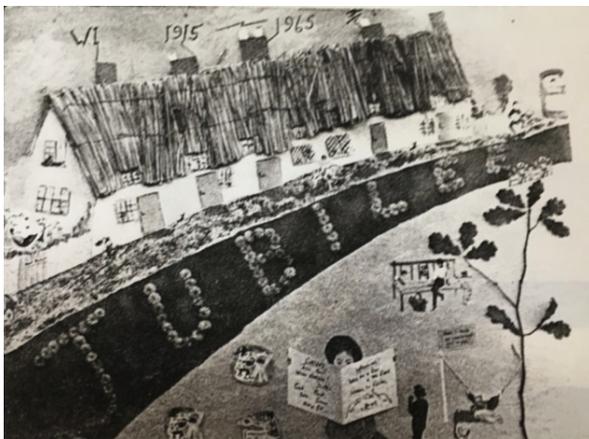
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# Biddenham History Society

In my article in the June edition of the Loop, I mentioned that the scrapbooks produced by Women's Institutes throughout England were a useful source for local historians. The scrapbook that Biddenham WI made in 1965 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the WI movement contains details of local celebrations including an outing to Holkham Hall in Norfolk on 1st July 1965 which was 'much enjoyed by 28 members'.



The highlight of the year was the Jubilee Harvest Supper on 15th October 1965 in the Village Hall. A Jubilee collage (5 feet by 4 feet) was hung in the Village Hall. It illustrated buildings in the village, local activities, the oak tree planted by a WI member in March 1965 at the corner of Vicars Close and Main Road and the seat that was presented by the WI to the village and placed on the village green. The ladies had a rest at the supper, as a firm of caterers was employed to prepare and serve a delicious three course meal followed by coffee, games and dancing. Mrs West, a founder member, and Mrs Lilly, a former President then in her 80s, who had attended the meetings regularly until 1964, were able to be at the supper.

The Biddenham ladies included a picture of a pressed flower arrangement of Biddenham poppies in their scrapbook. Those of us who have been able to walk through the fields near the church this year will have noticed that the poppies are still a feature, adding colour to the edges of the fields of wheat.



A rather fun page towards the end of the scrapbook is illustrated by sketches of women's activities in Biddenham in 1965; washing, serving teas at the Village Hall, painting, digging, and cleaning. Those of us living in Biddenham in 2020 can empathize with the description that goes along with the pictures:

## Woman's World

'Time never hangs heavily in Biddenham! The chores in the house are done as quickly as possible with vacuum



cleaners, washing machines and, for the lucky ones, floor polishers and dishwashers. Some have jobs, some do voluntary social work in Bedford and many help in running the various Village organisations. Most people enjoy a variety of hobbies. During 1965 women from the village have attended evening classes in handicrafts, art, languages and photography. Many women do some gardening and enjoy it. Some do home decorating, painting walls, and hanging wallpaper. As time permits, some make clothes for themselves and their children, and others make soft furnishings such as lampshades, chair covers and cushions.

Clearly, labour saving appliances had started to make women's life easier in the home. We do not find out much from the scrapbook about the jobs the women did outside the home. We do learn that the postmistress at the Post Office on Main Road was Mrs Davis, who many of us remember. The Biddenham Voluntary Primary Aided School was staffed by women: Miss Cork was Headmistress and she was assisted by Mrs Lane, the Infants' teacher from September 1965, Miss Dufton in the Spring term and Mrs Dickinson, Mrs Butler and Mrs Jeffcoat (part time teachers in the Summer term).

We do not learn about other jobs that women in Biddenham did in 1965 or where precisely they all volunteered when they did voluntary social work in Bedford. This information has to come from other sources.

We do find out that the women helped to run and took part in village organisations as well as the Women's Institute: Girls Guides, Young Wives, Mothers' Union, the Parochial Church Council, Sunday School, the Church Choir, bell ringing, the Biddenham Flower Arrangement Club and the Biddenham Village Choir. A lady was Area Representative and Membership Secretary of the Biddenham Society, but there were no women on the Parish Council. However, there was clearly a lively and busy group of women living in Biddenham in 1965!

Kathy Fricker



*Poppies in the fields beyond Duck End Lane pictured recently by Kate Smith*

# The Biddenham-Navrongo Link Part 2

Perhaps you've spotted the small brown leather plaque hanging on the wall at the back of St James's Church, recording the Biddenham/Navrongo link?

It's over thirty years now since Perry Adamba used to be seen on weekends around Biddenham, drinking beer in the Three Tuns or joining in so many social events in what became his English home community. He became the 'white Bean', accepted into the Bean family much as I was into his extended family in Ghana as the 'white Adamba' after my second Sahara crossing on my motorbike, and my first visit to his family at Christmas 1989. Unbeknown to me then, as I rode down, he had been sent back to UK to complete his studies, and spent that Christmas once again in Biddenham! Many visits to Ghana followed for me, and our friendship has lasted for half our lifetimes.

Perry became part of Biddenham life for those years. Back in 1988, Peter Culverwell, who had befriended Perry, wondered what Biddenham village could do to help Navrongo?

"Oh, Peter, we always want books!" Perry told us. So started our link. For several years we collected donated books in one of the Village Hall barns. On visits home, I sorted them into potato boxes kept for the purpose by Alan and Tina at the Three Tuns. Peter researched and negotiated with a church organisation that shipped books to Africa. Once or twice a year they shipped a container to Ghana. Over the next years we sent hundreds of boxes of books, driven by Peter to a warehouse in London in a van kindly lent by David Hume. Thousands of books arrived in Accra and were sent by road to Navrongo, 500 miles north. We held many events in Biddenham to raise the funds we needed for all this.

Looking back at my travel journals, I see that it was on 17th January 1995 that I attended the opening of the

'Biddenham Library' in Navrongo. The library was attached to the secondary school, 100 metres from the great 1910 mud cathedral, now a protected ancient monument in Ghana. A reporter from the Ghanaian Times attended and two incidental books ('Elementary Science, Vol 1.' and 'The English Heritage') were handed back and forth between the dignitaries and me for the cameras. The assembled guests and 6th form students were photographed beneath a temporary printed sign, 'Biddenham Library', with me representing Biddenham. The Director of Education declared the Biddenham Library open, then, formalities over, we went into the library, where students posed at the tables, and dignitaries began to delve enthusiastically into the boxes, turning the pages of the more lurid novels and giving an occasional dutiful look at a worthy text book. The library, I had insisted, should be for all comers, not just the Technical School.

The next year, 10th January 1996, I met Lawrencia, the new librarian that the school had been able to recruit now they had some books for their previously empty library. She was sorting the books, and Perry's brother Wechiga and I bought 250 feet of shelving timber with Biddenham donations I brought that year. The school would make its own shelf units.

At the end of January, another load of books arrived in boxes labelled 'Three Tuns' and the school organised another event for me to formally hand them over. Everyone who was anyone in local government and education was there. Speeches were long and many. Over the double doors now was fixed a proud painted sign: 'Biddenham Library'. I presented a Scrabble set and dictionary, donated by the Biddenham Bulletin. The game is highly valued in Ghana but beyond the purse of most. They presented me, as a representative of Biddenham, with the plaque that now hangs in St James's. Another reporter was there from the Ghanaian Times and I hoped his writing would be better than his notes: 'asorted libry books'.

Over my many visits, Biddenham had a large influence in Navrongo. Biddenham held many events, favours auctions, talks, donations from various societies and church events, personal gifts by generous villagers, to raise funds that I took down to Ghana. We invested in a kindergarten school, roofing sheets for rural schools, a wheelchair for my polio-stricken friend Logojay, a craft teacher, musician and inspiration to many, who had been carried about on the carrier of bicycles by young members of his family. We raised the money for his chariot in one evening in Biddenham village hall. The party thrown in Navrongo to celebrate his new hand-cranked wheelchair remains bright in my memory. He pronounced me 'less than God but more than Man' in an old Navrongo phrase, and drummed the night away on a broken bucket, singing many of his own songs of the mightiness of the donors in Biddenham.

Now, 33 years later, and after 20 more visits to Ghana, Perry and I remain friends. His junior brother Wechiga - whom I managed to bring to Biddenham three times - rings me every few days. We are the closest of friends. Ghana surges forward, more stable than much of the continent. Times have changed in Navrongo. It's always been well regarded for its education institutions and production of leaders. In some small ways, Biddenham takes its place in that development.

Time fades the significance of objects like that plaque now hanging on the wall by the tower in St James's Church, but stories are still told by Perry and his family of his experiences in Biddenham. In spring 2019, he visited Peter Culverwell, paying respect to one who kick-started his fortunes. Perry still keeps Biddenham in fond memory. The modest plaque, made in local style in Navrongo from cardboard, leather and silver cigarette papers, records many generous projects. A worthy friendship between the two communities.

Jonathan Bean  
May 2020.

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## Imogen's Foodbank collections

For the past few weeks, Imogen Sanctuary of Church End, Biddenham, has been busy collecting items for Bedford Foodbank from Biddenham residents (after completing her schoolwork!). The Covid-19 pandemic has created major challenges for the Foodbank. Demand for household items has doubled since March, with 11 tonnes (that's 11,000 kg!) required every month compared to the

normal 5-6 tonnes. Donors have not only been struggling to source their own supplies of food and household goods, but some have also found it difficult to get to Foodbank drop-off points.

With everyone consuming more at home, we all found that supermarkets couldn't keep up with demand. And on top of all this, at least two large Foodbank collections located in supermarkets were "misappropriated". In addition, the established local Foodbank finds it hard to secure financial grants, as newer charities tend to be favoured. So, Bedford Foodbank needs all the help it can get!

Imogen had also been affected by the pandemic, as her original volunteering project for her Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award could not continue. Hence the Biddenham project was born, with the aim of supporting the Foodbank through weekly collections by Imogen (plus rucksack) of household items from doorsteps. Her volunteering work would also publicise much needed financial donations to the Foodbank, which can benefit from Gift Aid.

Imogen's collections have been very successfully piloted for a month along Church End, The Old Barns and Manor Road. In the best weeks, her collections have topped 88kg, which provide 37 meals for needy visitors to the Foodbank. And there's been an unexpected bonus for Imogen, as all the walking, cycling and weightlifting has improved her stamina! Another spin-off benefit is that the project has led to an increase in donations of goods to the Foodbank box in St James's Church porch, which is regularly emptied by another volunteer.

Given the success in the Church End area, Imogen's project is now being rolled out to other roads. See below.

Please text Imogen's mother, Sarah Sanctuary, on 07779 438922 to arrange collection from your doorstep after 5.00pm on a Friday once a month, the date depending on where you live.

A reminder is sent out to each road's WhatsApp group at the start of its collection week. At other times goods can be dropped off in St James's Church porch. If your road is not listed above and you would like it to be considered for a Foodbank collection, please email Imogen and Sarah at [sarah.sanctuary@yahoo.com](mailto:sarah.sanctuary@yahoo.com). Alternatively contact Carol Leverkus on 01234 353662 or [carol.leverkus@gmail.com](mailto:carol.leverkus@gmail.com) as she is supporting Imogen on her Duke of Edinburgh Foodbank project. What's more, do tell your neighbours about this very worthwhile project. Imogen is setting a fine example to us all!

The Foodbank accepts *non-perishable* food and essential household items, such as canned and bottled food, cereals, long-life milk, grains, pulses, dried fruit, crackers, washing-up liquid, clothes washing powder/liquid, soap, toothpaste, shower gel, toilet rolls, etc.

Monetary donations can be made by cheque payable to "Bedford Foodbank", adding the reference "Biddenham" and posting to: Bedford Foodbank, 71 Murdock Road, Manton Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7PL.

Alternatively, drop cheques off to Carol Leverkus, 61A Church End, Biddenham. Gift Aid forms are available in the church porch. Or donate online at <https://bedfordfoodbank.org.uk>.

Thank you for your support for Bedford Foodbank: "*Helping local people in crisis*".

P.S. Imogen bravely went on Three Counties Radio on 22nd June, on Nana Akua's show about making a difference, talking about the Biddenham project supporting Bedford Foodbank and doing her DofE.



Carol Leverkus

*Bedford Foodbank is a registered charity and is part of the national Foodbank scheme. Other initiatives such as Dine With Us and Community Larder are separate from the Foodbank but have complementary objectives.*

Area	Roads	When?	Summer dates
1	Church End, The Old Barns, Manor Road	1st Friday	3rd July, 7th August
2	Gold Lane, Duck End Lane, Hampden Court, Thorpe Close, Franklyn Gardens	2nd Friday	10th July, 14th August
3	Main Road ( <i>Gold Lane to Day's Lane</i> ), Nodders Way, Vicars Close	3rd Friday	17th July, 21st August
4	Day's Lane, Queens Close, Regents Mews, Main Road ( <i>Day's Lane to Old Oaks Drive</i> ), The Paddock, Cooper Close, Merrill's Field	4th Friday	23rd July, 28th August

# Biddenham Gardeners Association

## An historic meeting

Tuesday 16th June 2020 provided a "first" for Biddenham Gardeners Association: our first virtual meeting that is. Who would have thought, this time last year, that we would be doing this. At 7.30 pm thirty three members of the BGA came together on Zoom to meet each other and listen to Paula Church's presentation.

Paula gave a brief overview of her garden. She told us that the land was originally an old orchard although none of the apple or pear trees remain. The soil is dry and sandy consisting of river-bed gravel. The plot is 112ft by 70ft and has lots of trees and shrubs. Neighbouring willow and poplar trees provide shade. Paula has a large lawn with many shrubs and flowers and grows all her vegetables in containers. Following lockdown on 23rd March Paula managed to buy compost online, her seeds had already been ordered in January and she cut up plastic butter tubs to make labels. Paula then proceeded to show a slide presentation on the six best performers in her garden.

First up was the Iceberg rose which grows around her porch. She trains the stems horizontally so that they break to form flowering spurs. The second plant to feature was Hesperis or sweet rocket which Paula sows directly into the ground. This provides excellent scent at night and the pure white flowers really stand out in the darkness - very good for moths. A small pond was featured as number three - within a few days of being filled with water it had attracted

wildlife. Of particular interest now are the water hawthorn and the water lilies. The foxgloves Alba and Sutton's Apricot came in at number four: Alba being particularly good for shady parts of the garden. Oriental poppies provided colour at number five. Allegro is bright orange, Turkenlouis has a frilled edge and Victoria Louise is pale pink. Paula also mentioned Escholia known as California poppies which readily self seed. Number six was the Echium or Giant Viper Bugloss which needs a sheltered location and winter protection but its many flowers are a haven for pollinators; the ones growing in Paula's garden are most impressive. Many thanks to Paula for an excellent presentation and for her hard work in ensuring that this online meeting ran without a hitch. We really enjoyed seeing the photos of your lovely garden Paula.

Paul Fricker then updated us on jobs to be doing now and throughout the summer. Dead heading - roses in particular to ensure a succession of flowers. Netting over soft fruits to protect from the birds. Succession sowing of salad crops. Thinning out in order to give plants space to grow. Edging borders to give gardens a smart appearance.

Following this members of the BGA all had an opportunity to tell the other participants about what had done well in their garden this year. Roses, tulips, acers, passion flowers, beech hedging, delphiniums, clematis, wisteria, pelargoniums, echinops, foxgloves, a vine, sisyrinchium, mock orange, magnolia, dianthus, salvia, honeysuckle, cherry trees, hardy geraniums all featured. It was so nice to see how all the members spoke with such enthusiasm and passion for their plants and clearly have gained great pleasure, enjoyment and therapy from their gardens during these lockdown days. As Paula quoted at the beginning of her talk "In a garden you can lose your worries and find yourself."

Hurrah for plants and somewhere to grow them - however small! .... and hurrah for technology!

We decided to meet again on Tuesday 21st July at 7.30pm. Please do join us. Paul Fricker and Peter Carter will be leading the session and details will be emailed to members nearer the time. In the meantime do take a look at the BGA Website which is updated very regularly and where you can find photos of the plants and gardens sent in by members over the last few months and which are giving us such joy in these strange times.

Linda Truscott

New members and visitors are always welcome. For more information contact: Linda Truscott on 01234 270747

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

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Peacock's has now re-opened. See their website for updated information.

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# Biddenham Gardeners Association

## Exotic Plants

Have you thought about growing exotic plants in your garden? It certainly seems to be a trend at the moment, and one doesn't need a large garden in order to grow exotics. A sheltered corner or a wall, preferably next to the house will often be sufficient. All exotic plants will need winter protection, be it a horticultural fleece or by being taken in to a frost free environment. I mostly grow my cannas in pots. That way, I can then easily move them into my carport once winter arrives. However, this past winter, I left my two Echiiums without protection and not only did they survive, they have thrived. Perhaps our last winter was not as harsh as I thought...

Give exotics a go in your garden, they won't disappoint. There is a wealth of information on the internet regarding exotics which is very helpful to the novice exotic grower. Here are some photos of exotics growing in Biddenham at this moment. Thank you to Jan and Linda for sharing the pics of their beautiful gardens.

Paula Church



*Banana tree*



*Chusan Palm tree*



*Echium*



*Canna Lily*



*Calycanthus*



*Zantedeschia*



*Amaranthus*



*Eucharis*

## What's On?

**11.00am Sundays and 6.00pm Wednesdays:** St James's church is continuing to hold services via Zoom so keep an eye on your email for details.

**Wed 8th July 7.30pm** Biddenham Parish Council will be meeting via Zoom. Details of how to join the meeting are on page 10.

**Tues 21st July** Café B, see page 9 for details

**Tues 21st July 7.30pm** Biddenham Gardeners Association meeting via Zoom. Details will be emailed to members. See page 14.

**Friday evenings:** Doorstep collections for Bedford food Bank. See page 13.

From 4th July Biddenham Pavilion will be open to hirers.

### Welcome Packs for

### New Biddenham Residents

Contact Richard Church Tel: 214805



*Daisies in Cowslip Meadow and sunset over the fields at Duck End taken by Kate Smith*



## 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](http://www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk)

### Church Barn

Contact the Booking Officer, Jan Burns on 344019 or [janburns@gmx.com](mailto: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](mailto:biddenhampavilion@hotmail.co.uk) or Debs Slade on 07808 579330.

### Great Denham Community Hall

[www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk](http://www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk)



### The Friends of St James

*- the charity which helps conserve the church, churchyard and barn for future generations*

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Treasurer

Peter Leverkus  
Paul Fricker

Tel: 353662  
Tel: 342843

## The Loop this summer

This month's edition would normally cover July and August but given the uncertainty of our times and the possibility of the world beginning to open up again in the next few months I plan to do a separate edition for August.

Jean

## The Loop

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All **August** articles, preferably by e-mail in Word format, to [loopeditor@gmail.com](mailto:loopeditor@gmail.com) or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to 3 Queen's Close ([cj.sugars@talktalk.net](mailto:cj.sugars@talktalk.net)) by

**Wednesday 22nd July 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.*