

# The Loop

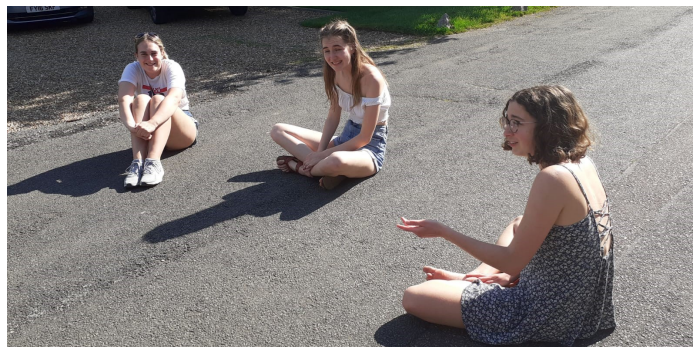
June 2020

£1.00



## Fun in the sun for VE Day

And all within the constraints of social distancing.  
More pictures inside.



‘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)



# Letter from the Vicar

Dear All

'Stay alert!' This is what the Prime Minister told us a few weeks ago, though quite what is meant by that is a little unclear. Lots of people on TV and on social media are making light of this because the enemy we are dealing with is invisible. We cannot see a virus and easily avoid it like other enemies.

I do, however, understand what St Peter meant in the Bible reading we had in Virtch (Virtual Church) the other week. 'Be alert,' St Peter wrote, 'Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.' (1 Peter 5:8)

Peter, nearly two thousand years ago, was writing to several different groups of Christian people who were facing terrible persecution at the hands of the Roman authorities. Communities were experiencing immense suffering and many were running out of hope that God would ever help them in the circumstances they faced.

Peter wanted them to know that the real enemy was the invisible hopelessness and fear that many of them were experiencing. The first stage in the restoration of everything was to show faith in Jesus Christ and courage in the face of that suffering. The real, invisible enemy was within themselves.

At the start of February my wife, Liz, had a hip operation and when she came out of hospital it took her some time to regain the confidence to walk again. I remember how frustrating it was for her to gather enough courage to do very simple things like climb into the shower, take a walk down to the end of our driveway and then to get into the car so that we could travel outside the boundaries of the road we live in. Everything happened in stages. First a few steps, then a little further, until she felt confident enough to walk without crutches. I remember people in our churches being so kind in providing food and support, to make life easier for us in those difficult days. It may be some time before things are even close to perfect but, through a gradual rebuilding of confidence and with



the measured support of others, she has set off on that journey.

The issue of confidence seems to have impacted on us all. I found myself strangely anxious the other day about driving into town to pay some cheques into All Saints Church Account. Walking through Bedford, it felt like a ghost town, and everyone who was there was looking vague and distant, many wearing masks to protect themselves from this virus. To me, it emphasised the terrible nature of the situation we find ourselves in but still, in the kindness that many people are prepared to show, we are reminded that the real solution to so much of this lies with the profound love that people are so capable of showing to one another. My Christian belief always reminds me that the real enemy can thrive within our hearts, and faith in the Lord Jesus is what can ultimately defeat that enemy.

There are so many people who are experiencing emotional and psychological suffering at this time. I see lots of isolation and fear. So much pressure is placed on parents struggling to home educate their children, while trying to deal with all the other issues they face. Older parents desperately miss the children they are cut off from and those who grieve are robbed of the mechanisms to deal with that grief. In all of this, the virus itself is only the tip of the iceberg, while the real enemy lies deep beneath the surface. We face, in our society, a psychological timebomb.

St Peter offers us hope, by telling us that we must not try to carry this weight alone. Cast your cares on Jesus. As he managed to carry the burden of his own cross, his shoulders are easily broad enough to carry the weight of the burdens on your shoulders. In the same way, he tells us something even more significant. 'Cast your cares upon him, because he cares for you.' (1 Peter 5:7) This is really, for me, the most important part of the Christian message. We have a battle to face, but there is no need to face this battle alone. Christ is prepared to carry the weight of our burdens, simply because he loves us and cares for us.

I suppose it is fair to say that the journey we face at the end of all of this will not be easy, but placing our trust and faith in him will help us to take the first steps towards healing and restoration. It is my prayer that you will find faith and courage at this time, because you are loved.

God bless

Eric



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

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*A stone for VE Day placed at the War Memorial*

## Matteo Alario

The 8.00pm Clap for Carers in Main Road struck a different note on 21st May. After an initial clap, neighbours stood silently outside their front doors, paying their respects to 93-year-old Matteo of The Farm House off Main Road, who had died the previous week, and to Jo's family from the Old Vicarage. Jo had lost her stepfather to cancer the previous night.

Matteo had been married to Anna for over 70 years and the couple had been a cheery sight around the village and could be often spotted laughing and waving at the bus stop.

As Main Road stood in respect, Matteo's favourite song, Borcelli's 'Time To Say Goodbye' boomed out over the trees.

Anna and the rest of the family came out to watch. Anna and Matteo had featured recently on BBC's Victoria Derbyshire Show's segment Grandmas' Tips for Lockdown, playing hide & seek and enthusiastically joining in an earlier clap for carers. You can see the video here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzYvryyP9c>.



*Anna and her family*

## Betty Kitchen

We are sorry to report the death of Betty Kitchen at the age of 100.

Betty and her husband, Doug, lived for many years on Biddenham Turn and were very active in the Biddenham Society.

Betty died in May. She had been living in a care home in the north of England.



*Doug and Betty Kitchen pictured with the collage celebrating 50 years of the Biddenham Society in 2015.*

## 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 852241 or 07805 879537 or email [rev.ejloxam@gmail.com](mailto:rev.ejloxam@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 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-James-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.



# Graham Humphrey

*We are sorry to report the death of Graham Humphrey of Day's Lane on 1st May.*

*We send our deep sympathy to Agnes, Chris and Claire.*

*Due to the current crisis Graham's funeral could only be attended in person by 20 people but it is hoped to hold a memorial service later.*

*I am grateful to Graham's family for permission to reproduce the tribute that Claire paid to her father at the funeral.*

Good afternoon, we are gathered today, in person and online all the way around the world to say goodbye to my Father, Graham Humphrey. We have been overwhelmed by so many messages and tributes to Dad, thank you. Whilst it is with great sadness that we look back over recent months and years, we know he is at peace after his struggle with Parkinson's. In writing this tribute, my brother and I have found strength in revisiting Dad's longer life. Time only permits a few details to be shared today.

Dad was born in 1949 to very loving parents, both working in education. He spent his childhood years in Winchester and subsequently moved to Bedford for A-levels when his father became principal of Bedford College. After studying Law at University College London, he returned to Bedford and started as a trainee at Borneo Martell & Partners in 1972.

This is when he met our Mother, aged 21, who was only in England for one year after her degree, the rest is history. For Dad it was love at first sight and he courted her during parties at their friends' houses. Mum found she wasn't able to move back to Paris after all and they have been very happily married since 1975.

He became a solicitor, then partner and remained at the same firm his entire law career.

Dad was always dedicated to his work, and became a respected lawyer in Bedford. As well as showing us a rigorous work ethic, he made good friends out of colleagues and clients, and participated in the sports teams of the office.

Dad made very special, quality time for us, friends, and

the wider family in England and France. We have very fond memories of holidays spent camping in France, windsurfing in the Mediterranean, skiing and hiking. On weekends we went sailing and windsurfing together at the local lake, and played tennis at Riverside. My brother recalls a father & son scout camp where dad did not take to caving but helped Chris up the climbing wall. Dad's love of the outdoors has been passed on to us, and his enjoyment of creating and tending the garden has been enjoyed by all who visit. He and Mum loved hosting together and we remember many fun dinner parties (which we overheard from upstairs). Finally, after we had flown the nest mum and dad's travels extended beyond Europe to faraway lands including many visits to Chris in Australia. It was clear that Dad enjoyed life and made many many good friendships.

He placed great value on our education, showing a great interest in our work, praising and valuing our achievements. This is one of the many benefits he bestowed that will remain with us throughout our lives.

Looking back on Dad's life, on which there is so much more to say at his memorial service, we find ourselves reflecting on a caring, considerate, respectful, highly capable and unassuming man. Patient and tolerant, he revealed his dry sense of humour and more private opinions in trusted company. If we had to use one word, it would be exceptional – an exceptional man who we are proud to call our Father. He will be remembered and his legacy will continue in our values, actions and characteristics, and I'm sure for the many others whom he mentored and shared friendships with over his 71 years.



*Agnes and Graham*

## Coronavirus (or Covid 19)

*I am grateful to Robin Salter who has encapsulated the thoughts of many of us in her poem.*

If you get Coronavirus  
It makes it hard to breathe;  
Thank God for our great NHS -  
It is a very bad disease.

It's caused a World pandemic  
And it very often kills;  
So, seek advice of masked medics  
If you have under-lying ills.

Governments around the world  
Are seeking masks and gowns,  
Have told us not to move about  
Declaring their 'Lock-downs'.

We've not done testing very much  
Although some people say we should  
Or cover faces with a mask  
To prevent the spread; we could.

The people clap at 8.00pm  
To meet on Thursdays, just to thank  
Doctors and nurses, women, men  
Who risk their lives whatever rank.

Schools closed, no restaurants or cafes  
Thank God for TV, books and fun  
To keep us sane and always safe  
Until this great Battle's won.

Cancelled holidays and visits booked  
Have caused us great distress.  
Peace-time and healthy wealth it looked,  
Now Countries' finances a mess.

Traffic little, empty roads,  
And empty beaches, cafes, shops,  
Great lorries with their smaller loads;  
The Lock-down's hard, when will it stop?

Have hope, my friends, the scientists  
Will find the right vaccine.  
They're working round the clock to test  
The cells created; what a scene!

However, when we moan and chide  
Just spare a thought for those who've gone  
Without their loved ones by their side,  
So pray to God, whichever one.

24th April 2020





I expect that most of you have seen the damaged bench down at the pond. We are not sure how it happened, but it has now been removed. As a precautionary measure we have inspected the other benches and repairs will be undertaken where necessary. The good news is that our Parish Council have agreed to fund a new bench for us, and this one will be dedicated to Alison Southern, the former Parish Council Clerk who sadly died earlier this year. We are extremely grateful to the Parish Council for stepping in and helping us.



Once again, we wish to apologise for the messy nature of the area surrounding the pond. The mower has been locked away and is not accessible during the current crisis and we have for obvious reasons not been able to mobilise our volunteers. We are hopeful of organising a couple of work mornings later in the year but only when it is safe to do so. Meanwhile everything is growing profusely!

Sadly, we have had more instances reported to us of dogs being allowed to enter the pond. This is something where we have to rely on people doing the right thing. The pond is for the wildlife and dogs **must** be kept on a lead while they are within the area surrounding the pond. The ducks are trying to breed and raise their young, and do not need to be distressed by dogs. Two of our younger supporters have designed and put up notices reminding people of their responsibilities, and we thank them.

Finally, and not unexpectedly we are cancelling our Pond Summer Event on Sunday 7th June and the Pond Dip on Sunday 5th July. The Summer Event also included the AGM, which according to our Constitution should be held within 6 months of the year end. Given the exceptional circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic the Committee has decided to cancel the AGM for 2020, and so this year we will be sending the Accounts for 2019 (that have been independently examined) and a Summary of Activities to all Friends. We would normally reappoint the committee members at the AGM, but as this cannot happen this year, we are very pleased to say that five of our six committee members agreed to serve for a further 12 months. Sadly, Kit has had to resign, but we thank him for his contribution, and hope that he will continue to support us where he can. Which means that we have a vacancy for a new committee member, so if you are enjoying your walks to the pond and would like to help us look after this valuable and popular village amenity, please contact one of us (details below).

We all regularly walk the coffin path from Gold Lane to the church, and it is great to see so many people at the pond spending time enjoying nature. May we remind everyone that you should continue to adopt social

distancing when sitting or standing with people who are not from your household.

Stay safe and enjoy the Pond.

The Pond Team

#### Contact Details

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

[www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond](https://www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond)





# This month in the garden

This month's publication date of The Loop coincides with the traditional advice that the best date for trimming box topiary is Derby Day, 1st June. The race itself won't be run this year but perhaps you can celebrate it by cutting any box topiary in your garden. I have got 25 box balls to cut in my front garden plus one in a pot on the patio. Finding the time to do it on the right day may not be a problem just now but the amount of sunshine we have been getting lately may be because the advice is to cut box only on a cloudy day; doing this reduces the risk of cut leaves going brown on the edges. You can buy special shears for topiary or an electric cutter but I find that sharp shears (held upside down for a curved shape) get the most satisfying result. I enjoy doing it.

Box, of course, is not the only hedge that needs cutting. Privet should be cut several times a year, Cupressus only once a year and August is a good time for doing it. However hard you try to keep them under control hedges always get thicker and taller so do plant them far enough away from your boundary line to prevent them being a nuisance to neighbours or passers-by. The ideal is to slope a hedge so that it gets narrower on both sides towards the top.

Another job that you can't ignore is mowing the lawn. The benefit for wildlife of leaving grass long is frequently advocated nowadays but if you aim to keep a traditional well-trimmed lawn don't be tempted to cut it too short. Especially in prolonged dry weather the lawn will stay greener if you cut it reasonably high. Leaving cuttings on the lawn is also suggested by some garden writers but if I tried that I would be deluged by grass from the backward throwing rotary blade on my mower. By all means use the cuttings as mulch under shrubs rather than composting them.

June is probably a less busy month in the garden than April and May but there is still plenty to do. Regular maintenance means frequently dead-heading flowers, annuals and perennials, keeping up with weeding and keeping lawn edges trimmed. A little and often applies to all of these. Frequent dead-heading will reward you with more flowers over a longer period. If you have a pond this will also need regular attention. Blanket weed will probably be the biggest problem. You can remove this by hand in a small pond, winding it round a stick, collecting it on a children's fishing net or, as I do in a fairly large pond, with a garden rake. As with all material gathered from a pond, leave it on the edge of the pond for a day or so to allow any wild life to get back in the water. The use of chemical controls for blanket weed is not recommended. Keep the pond topped up with water. Rain water is always best as tap water introduces unwanted chemicals but a shortage of rain doesn't leave much choice.

A prolonged dry spell, which seems to be an increasing feature in our part of the world means that time needs to be spent on watering. A sprinkler saves time but uses a lot of water, some of it randomly. If you use a sprinkler try to find one where the spread is variable in width and extent so that the water goes only where it is needed. An oscillating sprinkler with a rectangular spread covers an area more efficiently than a circular spray. Watering by hand with a hose or watering can means that all the water can be concentrated round plants where it is most needed. Keep watering newly planted trees and shrubs at least for their first year.

Watch out for aphids. An early infestation can often be controlled by picking them off by hand. Broad beans are particularly susceptible to black fly and this is best dealt with by nipping out the tops of all the plants when you first see any. Green fly on roses can be controlled with a soapy spray of well-diluted washing up liquid. White fly on vegetables in a greenhouse or confined space (particularly tomatoes) can be controlled by companion planting. French marigolds are very effective.

Nip out the side shoots of tomato plants except bush varieties and restrict to four trusses outdoors and up to eight in a greenhouse. Keep cucumber plants to a single stem for best yield. Earth up potato plants as they grow taller to keep a good depth of soil over the potatoes and stop them growing green. Keep up successional sowing for lettuce and carrots.

Jeremy Arthern

## St Joseph's and St Gregory's Primary School



### Marks & Spencer's Little Garden Competition Winner

Last term, Year 3 entered a Marks & Spencer's Little Garden competition. Each child in the year group had to design their dream garden, thinking about nature at the same time. All the designs were handed into Marks & Spencer and one entry was chosen by the store manager. Amin's was the winning design, and has won the school seeds which will be planted for both our benefit and to help the environment.

Well done everyone who took part, and congratulations to Amin!





# Flags, bunting and memorabilia for VE Day



Happy Liberation day.



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

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



Biddenham has a strong neighbourhood network, and hopefully you are being well supported, and have access to food and medicines. If you don't know who to ask for help, call our Freephone 0800 039 1234.

Here are some more resources which you might find useful.

### Are You Bored?

Bedford Borough Council has collected over 1250 crafts kits, games, jigsaws, and books for all ages and interests from members of the public, to distribute to people who can't get out. These have been cleaned and are safe to pass on, and the Council is keen to give these to people who want them. If you, or someone you know, would benefit from receiving one of the 'Active Minds' gifts, please get in touch with the Council. You can call 01234 718101, or order online at [www.bedford.gov.uk/activeminds](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/activeminds). The team will drop off the donation to your doorstep, so you don't have to leave the house.

### Are You Watching Birds in Your Garden?

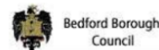
Would you like to count the numbers and types of birds visiting your garden, to contribute to the British Trust for Ornithology's 'citizen science' project? The BTO Garden BirdWatch would like to know which species you see, and you can optionally record other wildlife (mammals, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, bumblebees and dragonflies). If you can't identify the less common birds in your garden, it's ok to leave them off. You can submit your data online or by post. Contact the BTO by email: [gbw@bto.org](mailto:gbw@bto.org) by phone: 01842 750050, on Twitter or Facebook.

### Are You Struggling to Get Online Food Deliveries?

Morrisons are doing a really good basic food box for £35, delivered to your door free of charge. You can order online or by phone: Tel 0345 611 6111 option 5. If you order before 5.00pm it will be delivered the next day. They do a variety of boxes e.g. vegetarian, meat-based, fish-based, gluten free etc, or just fresh fruit and vegetables. You can find more information online at [www.morrisons.com/food-boxes](http://www.morrisons.com/food-boxes). Several companies deliver frozen ready meals. Two examples are Oakhouse Foods 0333 370 6700 or Wiltshire Farm Foods 0800 077 3100.

### 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.)



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\*Based on a lawn size up to 40m²

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## Biddenham Tennis Club Playing Tennis During Lockdown

- Max 2 people per court (unless all players are from the same household).
- Only handle your own racquet and personal (named) balls.
- Only one to one coaching allowed.
- Avoid changing ends or change at opposite sides of net.
- Maintain social distancing (2metre rule) at all times.
- Follow public health guidelines for hygiene.
- Use hand sanitiser after touching surfaces such as locks, gate handles, benches and ALL hard surfaces. The club cannot be held accountable for these.
- Do not play if you are self-isolating.

Since we do not have a booking system please vacate the court at the end of your set if there are people waiting.

Full guidelines for players, coaches and venues at [lta.org.uk/coronavirus](http://lta.org.uk/coronavirus)

During the lockdown the courts have been swept by committee members to keep them reasonably clean. Unfortunately, one of the courts has developed a ripple. For safety reasons this court is not available to play on. Take great care if you have to walk on this court.

We have arranged for the courts to be cleaned and the ripple repaired. When this takes place, the courts will be out of action for a few days.

Biddenham Tennis Club Committee  
May 2020

## ‘What’s so amazing about grace?’ by Philip Yancey

Here's a thought! How about using a bit of the time we are not using in buying lattes, going to the cinema and even perhaps working, on getting to know a tad more about your faith?

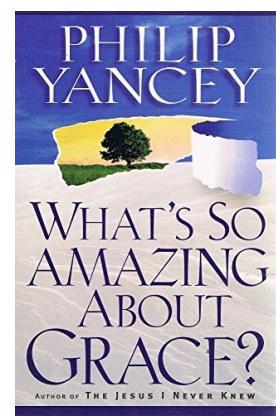
One of my favourite books is ‘What's so amazing about grace?’ by Philip Yancey. So why should you read it? Well, in this book author Philip Yancey explores grace at street level. If grace is God's love for the undeserving, he asks, then what does it look like in action? And if Christians are its dispensers, then how are we doing at lavishing grace on a world that knows far more of cruelty and unforgiveness than it does of mercy?

Yancey sets grace in the midst of life's stark images, tests its mettle against horrific "ungrace". Can grace survive in the midst of such atrocities as the Nazi holocaust? Can it triumph over the brutality of the Ku Klux Klan? Should any grace at all be shown to the likes of Jeffrey Dahmer, who killed and cannibalized seventeen young men? Grace does not excuse sin, says Yancey, but it treasures the sinner.

True grace is shocking, scandalous. It shakes our conventions with its insistence on getting close to sinners and touching them with mercy and hope. It forgives the unfaithful spouse, the racist, the child abuser as well as ordinary people like you and me. It loves today's AIDS-ridden addict as much as the tax collector of Jesus' day.

So, have a go and read it. You will enjoy it!

Edwin Martin



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# Newton and Scott

No, not a new TV detective duo, rather a clerical duo from the past who both spent time nearby, in Olney.

Reverend John Newton, who we met last month, was succeeded as curate of Olney by Reverend Thomas Scott, who had also experienced a troubled early life. Scott was ordained a priest in 1772, aged 25, admitting later that he went into the ministry for a comfortable career and did not



Rev. Thomas Scott

believe in most of the doctrine he was required to preach.

Scott was curate at Stoke Goldington and Weston Underwood and later from 1775 to 1777 at nearby Ravenstone, all in Buckinghamshire and all not far from Olney. During that time he began a friendship and correspondence with Newton, then curate at Olney, who was instrumental in converting Scott from a cynical 'career priest' to a true believer and evangelical Christian.

Scott succeeded Newton in 1781 as curate of Olney when Newton went to London. Later, in 1785, Scott also went to London to take up the post of hospital chaplain at Lock Hospital. While in London Scott started publishing his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, which originally appeared in 174 weekly numbers starting in January 1788, and which made his name. Scott with Newton was one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, and became its founding secretary.

Scott left the hospital in 1803 to become Rector of Aston Sandford in Buckinghamshire where he remained until his death in 1821.

Saint John Henry Newman wrote of Scott as '*the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul ...*' and Scott provided him with two lifelong maxims '*Holiness rather than peace*' and '*Growth the only evidence of life*'.

Reverend Scott had three sons, all of whom entered the Anglican ministry, and he was the grandfather of Sir Gilbert Scott, the prolific Gothic revival architect, whose many works include the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial, and who was connected with work on some 476 churches between 1847 and 1878.



Reverend Scott's son John, born in Ravenstone, who edited and published in 12 volumes his late father's works, papers and letters, became vicar of St Mary's in Hull. He was succeeded there as vicar by first his son John and then his grandson John, the three presiding in succession from 1816 until 1883. There is today a Wetherspoon pub in Hull, opposite the church, called *The Three John Scotts*, in part of Hull's former General Post Office.

The second John Scott invited his cousin, architect Gilbert Scott, to carry out a restoration of St Mary's, which now very much reflects that restoration work of 1861 to 1863. Gilbert created a 'forest of pillars' effect by adding a new aisle to replace seating lost by his removal of galleries, a new vestry, porch and reredos were built, the tower was raised in height, encased in stone and a walkway cut

through its ground floor, the whole of the exterior was encased in ashlar, and all internal fittings including altar, pulpit and font were renewed.

And five of this second John's sons were part of a group of former public schoolboys mainly from Rugby School but also from St Peter's, York, Marlborough and Cheltenham who in 1865 founded Hull FC, now more than 150 years later a professional rugby league football club.

The third John made St Mary's not only a spiritual centre but also an initiator of social action in the parish, setting up a soup kitchen, a penny bank for the poor, instigating teaching missions for the instruction of the people, and the funding of a parish nurse.

Quite a family, those Scotts!

Peter Applewhite

## barn@2

Dear Members and Friends of barn@2

It is unlikely that we shall meet again, in the near future, as most of us in the group fall into the 'vulnerable' category with some of us in the 'very vulnerable' group.

As soon as the committee has a chance to get together to discuss how we adjust to the 'new normal' I will be in touch with you.

Until then stay safe and well.

With best wishes,

Val

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



# Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 13th May 2020 using the Zoom conferencing facility. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Kryss Osuch, Francia Slade and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk Lyn Lyman, Pavilion manager Deb Slade and 2 members of the public were also present.



## Annual appointments

At our May meeting every year, we ensure there are holders for every type of role the Parish Council needs to carry out. There are three sub-committees which divvy up scrutiny of planning applications for different parts of the village, a vice chair, notice board management, highways rep and even an inspector of the Pavilion children's play areas. My thanks go to my fellow Councillors for their willingness to carry out these duties.

As regards my position as chairman, I was proposed and seconded to be so for another twelve months. However, I made clear beforehand that I will not be able to do the role beyond that period, i.e. after April 2021. It will be time for a change. I am taking up a new post as chair of a charity, and simply won't have time to do both roles.

The clock is ticking and my successor must be found.

## Public Open Session

This is the time of year when things grow most vigorously. Chris Horne, our contractor who looks after mowing all the verges in the village does not, however, have time (nor we the money) to go trimming trees and hedges all over the place. A member of the public complained, nevertheless, that weeds were sprouting from under people's fences onto footpaths, and boundary hedges were unkempt in places, never mind footpaths becoming overgrown.

We will do what we can as your Parish Council. I have – since the meeting – had one modest success with a householder near where I live who dealt very promptly with an impressive array of errant foliage growing out from under his side fence panels.

But may I please implore those of you with bushy frontages to please keep them trimmed and tidy. Those of us out for our daily exercise do not want to have to stray into the road (for example at the corner of Gold Lane and Main Road) because the footpath has become more the domain of plants than pedestrians.

Cllr Gambold, on behalf of Mr Culverwell who could not attend, asked about Tommy – our soldier figure who stands beside the war memorial – and whether or not he would be disappearing now VE Day has passed. We decided not, as it is possible VJ Day may take on a greater significance given how the lockdown spoiled so many plans for VE Day 75th anniversary celebrations. VJ Day is in mid-August, so it was decided Tommy should stand guard right through the year, all the way to remembrance in November and beyond.

I must say, Tommy is a subtle and most poignant addition to our village scene.

My thanks must go this month to Cllr Kryss Osuch, who took it upon himself to repaint the wooden bus shelter on Main Road. He did a fine job, at minimal expense to the public purse, and even ended up with a commendation from the Chairman of the Biddenham Society for his efforts. We further agreed to now varnish the bench within the shelter, and also the one by the war memorial at the same time.

## Pavilion matters

Deb Slade, who nowadays manages the Biddenham Pavilion in Deep Spinney on behalf of the Parish Council,

attended our meeting. She reported that, since the lockdown, all bookings have ceased, as has income from the Manor Hospital for allowing staff to park their cars there on weekdays. We are thus devoid of income for a facility which will continue to cost money to keep in good order. Cleaning and caretaking staff have reduced their hours, but are not laid off altogether.

It was agreed to seek grant funding from Bedford Borough Council, to try to alleviate our financial plight. This looks quite involved, as the Parish Council is not a business, does not pay rates and doesn't fall under various other criteria for schemes the Borough have on offer. Nevertheless, we feel we are in no different a situation to many other bodies which would qualify for support, and we will try to find out how we may be helped.

Hopefully, some bookings may resume in the coming months, and this ghastly period will seem like a nasty blip in history. Even as soon as 4th July apparently, when the government is expected to relax constraints on using community facilities.

Parking outside the Pavilion, since the gates are permanently locked, is becoming an issue again. Councillors decided to continue to keep the car park closed for now, since there are no bookings, cricket or other official events happening. Unfortunately, the car park is also used at times for nefarious purposes, and we wish to discourage these.

Since the meeting, I have had an email exchange with a resident living close by. Even though she wrote to complain about the anti-social parking in the Pavilion approach road of some arriving to play tennis or other ball games, she agreed with our decision to keep the car park shut.

We recently asked for a quotation from the Borough Council to convert a small patch of grass outside the gates into overflow parking spaces. This would alleviate the issue somewhat, but it turns out this grassy patch is also valued as somewhere children sometimes play. We will see what the cost estimate is and then decide what to do.

## Our next meeting – IMPORTANT INFO

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 10th June 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 accessing the Internet and carefully entering **<https://zoom.us/j/9125260859>**

This information will be posted on our village website at [biddenham.org.uk](http://biddenham.org.uk). Please keep viewing the site for important communications about Coronavirus measures.

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Peter Chase  
Chairman

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# Biddenham History Society

## Sources for Biddenham history

A wonderful source for Biddenham History in the late twentieth century is the scrapbooks made by the members of the Women's Institute. The originals have been deposited in the County Record Office, but luckily we have kept copies in the village, so we can refer to them now.

The W.I.s made a particular effort with the scrapbooks in 1965, the Golden Jubilee of the W.I. movement. Nationally, some 2,600 scrapbooks were produced, including one in Biddenham. They cover many aspects of rural life: farming, transport, dialect, customs, recipes, education and nature observations amongst other things.

Biddenham W.I. produced a scrapbook in 1965, but they had also produced one in 1956, focusing on the History of the Village. An interesting page at present, with hair and beauty salons still closed, is the page entitled 'Our Grandmothers' Recipes for Cosmetics'. The page is beautifully illustrated with pictures of wild flowers growing in the village. The recipes have not been tested with regard to modern safety standards, but in view of all the hand washing we have to do, you may be interested in the recommendations for keeping your hands soft and white:

'Put a pinch of powdered alum into a basin and break into it the white of an egg. Mix this up and spread over the hands before retiring.'

You can read other recipes on the page from the scrapbook shown below.

I hope you all stay safe and well and enjoy your exercise in our beautiful village if you are able to go out.

Kathy Fricker



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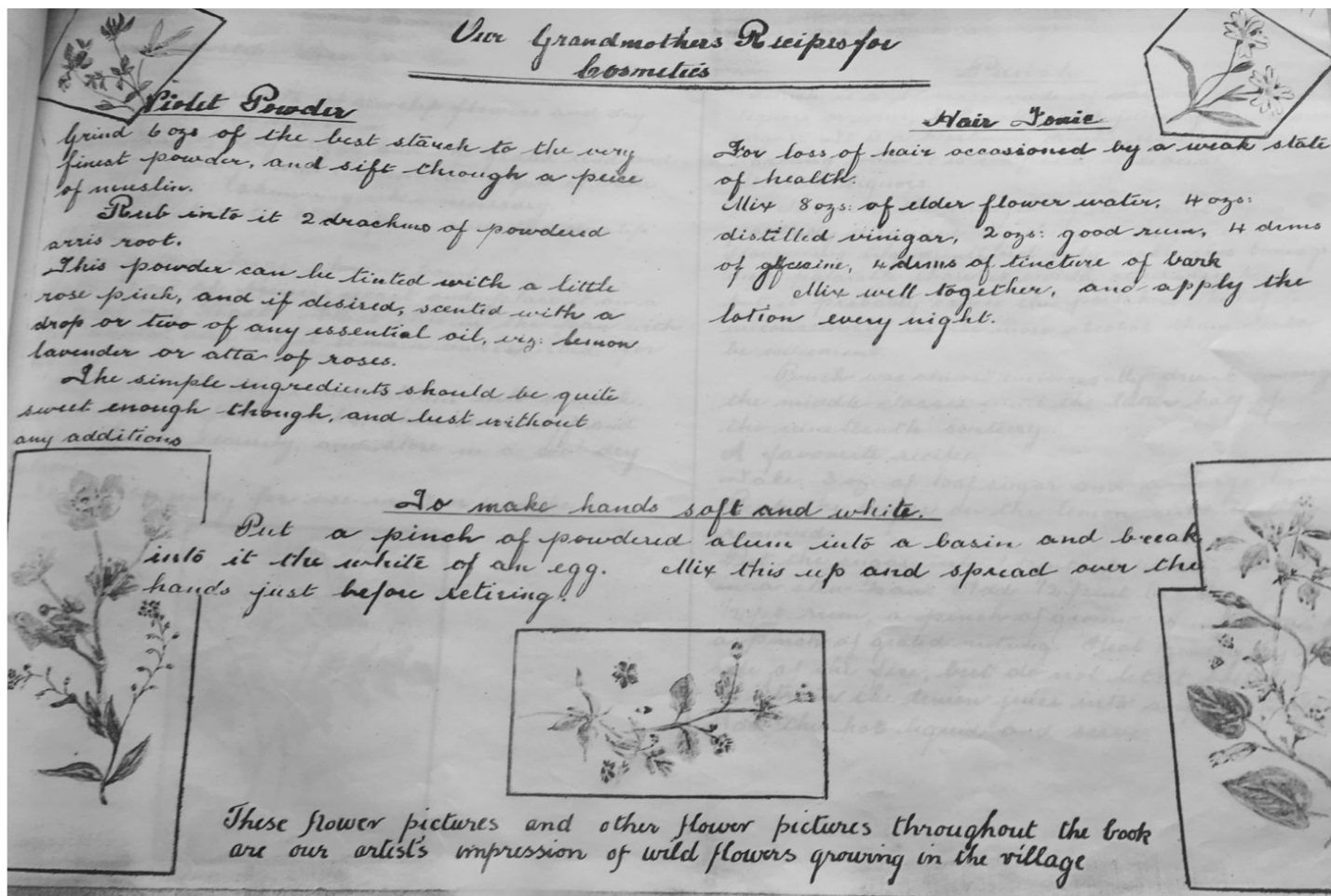
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# Free, online boredom busters

Chatterpack was set up by Claire Ryan, an NHS worker, and provides a list of free online resources to keep boredom at bay.

You can become a virtual tourist - even going into space with NASA, visit museums and art galleries, learn new skills, watch birds and animals in their habitats and enjoy or join in musical events.

Resources are for both entertainment and education and there really is something for everyone.

You will find Chatterpack at <https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>



## Captain Sir Thomas Moore, his birthday cards and the stamps

It cannot have escaped your notice that vast numbers of birthday cards for Sir/Captain/Colonel Tom have been posted, delivered and the cards then put on display at Bedford School. His mantelpiece is presumably not long enough for them all.

In the background there has been a steady accumulation of envelopes of all shapes and sizes with addresses varying from just "Captain Tom" to elaborate ones with messages and colourful address details and never mind the glitter!

All however found their man and then accumulated as a part of a steadily growing pile.

The school and family hope to save as many stamps as possible to help raise money for two charities, St John's Hospice at Moggerhanger and the RNIB.

Biddenham has been contributing to the collection with a team of volunteers busy snipping the stamps for the RNIB who then recycle them into much needed funds.

The stamps themselves are worth very little initially but when sold to collectors they are valuable. No doubt if you are a philatelist and live in far flung Ishmaelia, or somewhere like it, a portrait of Her Majesty is coveted, however small.

Whether any demon barber of Bedford has ever achieved so much snipping I am not sure but certainly in Bedford, this town of hairdressers (the Federation HQ is still here), this work seems appropriate while the scissors are down.

150,000 cards for Tom. We didn't get all of them, some were franked, some had no stamp so maybe 145,000 might have had stamps; did we really get half of them?

Maybe 50,000 was our share and about 5 snips each. Enough! The maths could be staggering.

Now that we have accumulated a final large "ruck" (a Cheshire expression for a potato heap) of stamps, have thanked everybody on behalf of the charity, Bedford School and the family, all that remains is to hand them over to a representative of the RNIB charity which we will be doing shortly with hopefully a photo opportunity for the magazine.

Thank you again everyone for all your support and cheers especially to all those new village people we met in the process. The picture is courtesy of the Cottie family.

By the way don't forget to recycle your stamps if you get the occasional letter with a stamp on it.

Chris and Jan Jones



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# Don Sherwood: a tireless worker for the village pond

Many things have happened to secure the future of the village pond behind the Manor House, now Manor Hospital, in the 35 years or so of the pond project



Don Sherwood of Duck End Lane, who died last year, was involved in many of these schemes and worked tirelessly towards their success. He was enthusiastic and had many skills that were put to good use for us. His right hand man was usually Jim Brooks, another Duck End stalwart, who died about 10 years ago.

The eastern jetty was one of his first initiatives soon after the pond was cleaned up. Working with Jim and David Eyre amongst others, they constructed and bolted together a strong structure which has survived with some repairs to this day.



Don then helped source the stone and helped rebuild the fallen end of the old stone wall that used to fringe the pond all across the northern side. The wall was breached many years ago to give cattle access to the pond for water

The wall was difficult to repair where it was falling down due to mud and water all around

As well as this work he was also a committee member for some time on the initiative of the late Dorothy Richards who started the whole pond project off. We enjoyed many amusing committee meetings at Dorothy's house "New Moon" during this period.

Don was in many ways a quiet unassuming man who possessed an outstanding knowledge of rural crafts, the arts and, his main love, antiques.

He was backed up in all of this by Sheila who encouraged him in his endeavours. They worked as a team on for example the sign which Don made and Sheila painted.

Don helped with the new kissing gate on the footpath by making it! Some funding was supplied by P3 (Parish Paths Partnership), a Countryside Commission initiative of the 1970s.

It was a truly amazing task using the old steelwork from the gate which, when removed, provided a template for the process. The old gate with its cross bracing even provided a maths lesson or two at the village school. The gate was constructed at his house and delivered, then installed using our pond team. It was a replica of the previous one which may have been made in the estate workshop or the local blacksmiths and must have survived a considerable period.

Finally, and this seems impossible now, he was for a time in the 1990s the water bailiff for the pond as we had a fishing club recreating an activity from the 50s and 60s when the pond was previously fished.

These redoubtable country characters have existed in one form or other for centuries and Don provided the perfect bulky, stern example to would be illegal fishers.

Maybe on his night off you would have been OK for a spot of poaching.

PS There are no fish in the pond currently. Thank you Don for all you did.

Chris Jones (with help from David Eyre)



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# The Biddenham-Navrongo Link

Maybe you've noticed a small plaque hanging on the wall at the back of St James's Church, recording the Biddenham/Navrongo link? It's hung there since the early 1990s. It's made of leather, cardboard and the silver paper from cigarette packets - local materials in Navrongo, a town in northern Ghana, West Africa.

My friend Peter Culverwell, one of those involved in our link, asked me to explain its significance, which many have now forgotten.

In 1987, my mother Joy Bean, whom older Biddenham residents will still remember for her community enthusiasm and efforts, spotted a request in her Bedford paper, asking for volunteers to host foreign students staying in England over the holiday, to enjoy a British Christmas. "Where shall I ask for?" she prompted me. She'd like to repay some of the kindnesses shown to me in my travels. I'd just returned from my first motorbike ride across the Sahara - a journey that changed my life.

"See if they have any Ghanaians," I suggested, for I had much enjoyed the optimism, cheerfulness and humour of that nation on my first visit.

On 23rd December 1987, coincidentally his 30th birthday, we met Perry Adamba at Bedford station. He was intelligent, congenial and curious, with a determination to make everything he could of the unique chance that had been thrown his way - the opportunity for a man of humble background to get education in Europe. His archbishop had recommended him for a brief course in African Development Studies at a small Jesuit college in London. Perry had sold anything he could, taken his wife and then two small children home to the extended family compound in Navrongo and accepted the challenge to come to the UK.

"Where do you come from, Perry?" I asked as we drove back to lunch at the Three Tuns.

"From a small town in the north of Ghana. You won't have heard of it. It's called Navrongo," he said.

"Why, I rode my motorbike through Navrongo in March!" I exclaimed, laughing. It was perhaps that remote chance, with a recognition of Perry's innate integrity and determination, that cemented a friendship that has continued for the rest of our lives.

That Christmas was memorable. Having a man from a poor African family in our Biddenham midst, amongst the excesses of English Christmas, was illuminating.

"Does your daughter play with dolls?" asked my mother at a table groaning with Christmas fare.

"Oh, we are poor people, Mum, my children don't have dolls..."

Perry started out his educational life in a poor rural primary school. Pupils sat on the earth floor or brought stools from their kitchen yards. "My mother understood the value of education, even though she's illiterate herself. She sold her peanut biscuits in Navrongo market for many years to send me to school, and my brother and sister. It's thanks to her wisdom we were educated." He had risen from garden boy - the lowest rung on the career ladder in West Africa, via messenger boy and junior clerk positions to Office Superintendent in a branch office of the State Insurance Corporation of Ghana.

One night during that holiday, Glenys and Peter Culverwell threw a dinner party. Sitting next to Peter, who always followed my travels with interest, he asked me to tell me about our guest, Perry. I told him of Perry's determination and hard work; how he was running across London to clean offices at dawn and washing up in a restaurant at night - all the while continuing his studies in Victoria, with no money for comforts at all. "He's doing all that because he intends to take a course in Chartered Insurance when he completes this initial course. He's applied to the college in Greenwich. It's a seven-part course, and most do it over several years, but Perry says he'll try to do it in a year. He has to go back to his job in the Ghana State Insurance Corporation by late 1989!"

"Would he accept help?" asked Peter.

"Oh yes," I replied with a smile, "one thing I learned on my African trip, is that Africans will accept any help they are fortunate to receive! They'll accept it from the heart."

Next day, Peter started Perry's ball rolling faster with a generous cheque. He befriended and questioned Perry and soon afterwards invited a dozen Biddenham people to lend Perry £100 each to help with his studies. After his course, Perry worked at Boots in the Strand to earn the money needed to repay those lenders - who philanthropically refused the repayments, leaving Perry with a useful investment for family life at home, that has changed his extended family's life over the past three decades.

Perry became a well-known face at Biddenham events over the next year or two. True to his agreement with his employers, he returned to Ghana in October 1989. He'd already passed two of the Chartered Insurers' exams. His employer was embarrassed that he had done this without their help and instructed him to return to London for a further two years, with minimal financial support, to study further. Over the next two years he was to complete many of the exam papers - which most students took over several years - one of them with a distinction. The final qualifications, he quickly won by correspondence course in the early 90s. He became a member of the Chartered Insurers' Institute, one of a handful in Ghana.

In later years, Perry would rise through the ranks of the insurance world in Ghana to set up a new Catholic Church insurance company, become MD of the fourth largest national company for the Methodist Church, manager of the foremost private company, and eventually to form his own insurance company, in which he now employs his sons.

There are many aphorisms in the vernacular language of northern Ghana. One of them is: 'You must lift the water pot to your knee before someone helps you to put it on your head'. Biddenham lifted Perry's pot from his knee to his head. Later, Biddenham helped to lift many more Navrongo pots. I'll tell that story in the next issue.

Jonathan Bean  
May 2020.

**Nick Sleap**  
Proprietor

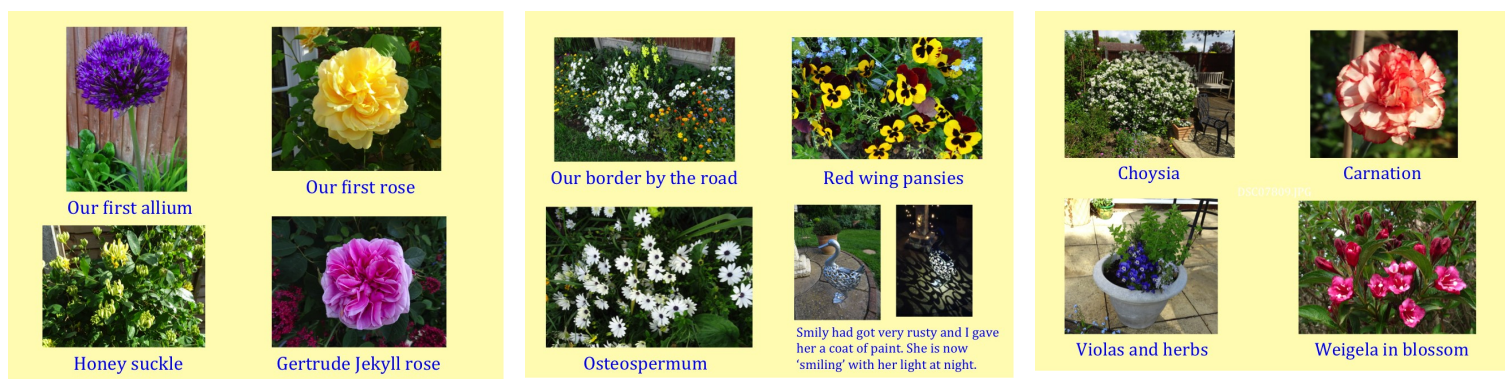
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# Biddenham Gardeners Association



## The joy of gardens

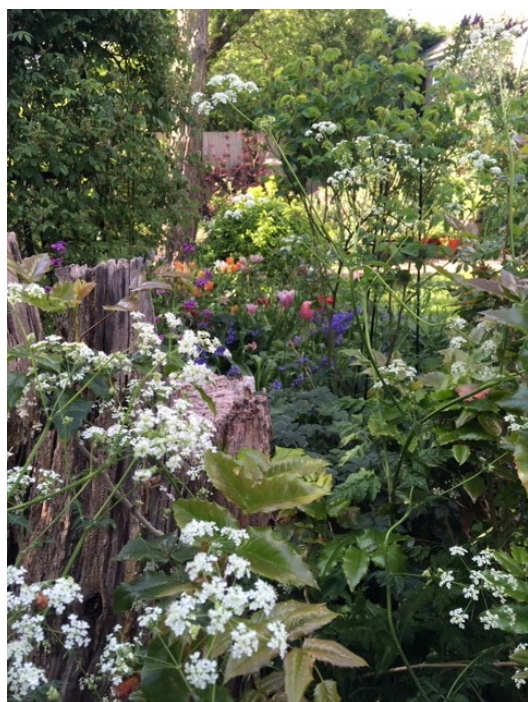
Many of us in this parish are fortunate to have gardens where we can both work and relax, helping us through the anxiety and frustrations of lockdown. It is frequently said that our gardens have never had so much attention.

I am grateful to Paul and Kathy Fricker for the series of photographs above showing late Spring colour in their garden and to Linda Truscott for the photographs of her lovely garden shown here.

Members of the Biddenham Gardeners' Association have been sending in photos of their gardens to the website and there are some stunning pictures.

Please do look up the Biddenham Gardeners' Association website and find Photo Gallery. Click on Members Photos and do the same when the next page comes up. You will be very impressed with the standard of the members' gardens.

Jean Gambold



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# 100 CLUB



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|----|------------|-----|
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| 2. | R. Rowland | 476 |
| 3. | N. Morrish | 278 |

Drawn by Sheila Frossell

**NB This is the final draw of 2019 Season. There will be no further draws until the 100 Club resumes.**

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

## Biddenham Village Hall

Biddenham Village Hall will remain closed for the foreseeable future and the Management Committee will monitor government advice and review the situation regularly.

We would like to thank all our hirers and users for their continued support and patience. If you have a query regarding a booking please use the Contact Us tab on our website [www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk](http://www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk) to get in touch.

Thank you.



## The Friends of St James

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

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

## The Loop this summer

Next 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

## What's On?

Unfortunately the short answer is still '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 is continuing to hold services via Zoom so keep an eye on your email for details.

Biddenham Parish Council will be meeting via Zoom on Wednesday 10th June at 7.30pm. Details of how to join the meeting are on page 10.

## 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)

**Welcome Packs for  
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Contact Richard Church Tel: 214805

## The Loop

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All **July** 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 24th June 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.*