

The Loop

February
2022

£1.00



As is traditional in January, Biddenham Gardeners Association members shared the stories of their gardens.

This picture featured in Peter and Heather Marks' presentation on their garden.

For more pictures and an account of both the presentations see page 13.



Biddenham Handbell Ringers would like to recruit two or more new members for the training team known as the Barn Ringers. We meet on a Wednesday at the Church Barn from 2.15-3.30pm. The ability to read music is essential but no previous experience of handbell ringing is required. If you would like to have a go then please contact Anthea on 01234 350644 for further details.

Help needed

St James's Church is currently in the process of updating its website. However, we are in need of someone who would be able to do the necessary coding. If anyone has website development experience and would be happy to help with this on a voluntary basis, please do get in touch. It should be a relatively small job for someone who knows what they are doing!

Many thanks.

Jacqui Piper
stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Happy New Year! 2022 Loop subscriptions now due

Your annual subscription to The Loop is now due. The price for the ten issues in 2022 will remain £10 (minimum). Any profits go to the church funds so if you can manage to donate more, please do.

You can pay by bank transfer to:

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IMPORTANT: Please also send an email to loopsubs@gmail.com headed 'Loop subscription paid by bank transfer' and including your name and full address. Please state whether you prefer to receive The Loop by email or have the magazine delivered through your letterbox.

You can also pay by cash or cheque, payable to Biddenham PCC. Please place your payment in an envelope with your name and address and whether you prefer email or hard copy of the magazine. If you want delivery by email please include your email address. Please deliver or post to Richard Harris, 6 Nodders Way, Biddenham MK40 4BJ or Jacqui Piper, 27 St Mellion Drive, Great Denham MK40 4BF.

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



Letter from the Vicar

Dear All

In my last parish I was involved in a network funded by the arts council for putting art installations in ancient churches. I remember spending time with two Bristol based artists, Kristin and Davy McGuire, who were able to install a digital art installation called 'Ophelia's Ghost' in my church in

Colsterworth. Over the week it was on display thousands of people came to visit the installation and we also involved the children from the village school in the whole process. Davy and Kristin were able to host several workshops on creativity for the children and their teachers.

I am an artist, whose individual expression is through the medium of photography, and I have been lucky enough to have been surrounded by creatives for most of my life. I suppose the fact that my mother was an artist and my wife has spent most of her working life as an educator in performing arts has helped. Many of my friends are artists and I, like many of them, feel saddened that in recent years the church has adopted a functionalist, utilitarian approach to mission and ministry that places more demands on people's time and energy. The attitude should be more one of stillness and reflection, freeing people to be themselves in new creative ways.

This is articulated beautifully in the book 'Art and Faith, The Theology of Making' by the American artist Makoto Fujimura. Fujimura sees this as a legacy of the dehumanising culture of the Industrial Revolution which removed people from the whole creative process by placing increasing repetitive demands on people's time, preventing them from being free to think and create. Fujimura finds his inspiration from what appears to be the most insignificant passage in the New Testament (John 11:35). It tells us how 'Jesus wept,' at the death of Lazarus, his friend whom he loved.

This he sees as the most non-utilitarian, and, at the same time, creative act of Jesus in the Gospels. Christ's passive response of compassion and vulnerability demonstrated not powerful activity but divine powerlessness, compassion and vulnerability. In taking time to create, to be still and to

listen, metaphorically dipping our paintbrush in the tears of Christ, we go against the grain of busy strategies and plans, to instead become a more compassionate, more Christlike and more connected church.

Fujimura was present at Ground Zero when two civil aircraft were flown by terrorists into the twin towers of the world trade centre on 11th September 2001. He speaks about the fractures that impacted on people as a consequence of the disaster and describes how those fractures will take generations to work their way out of people's consciousness. He then refers to the current COVID pandemic, the experience of which has had a devastating impact on the mental health of so many people both inside and outside the church. Beautifully, he relates these fractures to the Japanese art of Kintsugi in which broken pots are mended in a way which does not try and disguise fractures, but rather emphasises, decorates and celebrates them. Pots, usually ones of particular sentimental value, are mended with lacquer, and then the wounds are emphasised by being covered over with gold. He applies this principle to the similar fractures that so many human beings have experienced as a consequence of the events that impact on our lives. The church, he believes, should not try to disguise these fractures, but rather embrace and celebrate the wounds that people have experienced, encouraging the light and the beauty of God's love to shine through.

As we emerge from this pandemic the fractures of our lives, our church and our society have become painfully obvious. I believe it is a mistake to try and mend things with busy plans and strategies. Instead, we should take and, more importantly than that, give people time for healing and space. This way, waged by the tears of Christ, we can enter this new stage in our history reflecting the beauty and compassion of our creative God.

God bless.

Eric



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

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Vicar | Rev Eric Lomax rev.ejlomax@gmail.com | Tel: 328452 |
| Readers | Christopher Dawe Paul Fricker Sue Richards | Tel 363890 Tel 342843 |
| Churchwardens | Laurie Hurn Lois Price | Tel 364251 Tel 961826 |
| Verger | Hilary Hurn | Tel 364251 |
| Secretary | Jacqui Piper | Tel 356993 |
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Makoto Fujimura. Picture taken from his website <https://makotofujimura.com/>

Sixteen years of First Friday Lunch



On the first Friday of every month a team of 8 volunteers prepares and serves a three course lunch to just under 50 people. The 'First Friday Lunch' is now in its 17th year and since it started in 2006 has served over 8000 lunches and donated over £13,000 to a variety of local and national charities!

It was never the intention to make a cash surplus, the sole aim was to bring villagers together for a couple of hours once a month in a social setting. However, it soon became clear that in spite of reimbursing food expenses and covering the costs of Hall hire, there was a regular monthly surplus which we were able to donate to a variety of charities chosen by the volunteers. Recent examples include £100 to Parkinson's UK, £100 to Alzheimer's Research UK and £150 to Bedford Hospital A&E.

Although COVID meant our doors were closed from April 2020 to July 2021, we were delighted to reopen in August and welcome back our regular customers as well as get to know some new ones!

The First Friday Team totals around 20 volunteers who all enjoy being able to make this regular event happen. We also value being able to make worthwhile donations to a range of good causes. It's important to us to maintain our charitable giving and with food costs rising, to achieve this we have decided to increase the price by £1.00. We will be charging £8.00 with effect from March and we hope our customers still see this as great value for money.

First Friday Team

From Our Biddenham Village Agent

Our Village Agent, Teresa Moon, is here to help older people in Bedford Borough villages to access the services and support they might need. Her services are free and she can visit you at home.



Just call Freephone 0800 039 1234.

Not Sure Where to Turn for Help?

Do call our Freephone if you need advice. For example, do you need a Care Alarm (panic button), do you need grab rails in your shower, are you struggling to use your stairs, can you no longer hear the tv, phone or doorbell, is your smoke detector on the blink? I can help arrange these things and put your mind at rest.

Need help with filling in forms?

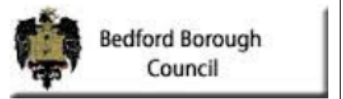
If you are struggling with paperwork, such as Blue Badge, Bus Pass or Attendance Allowance applications, just call for my help by calling Freephone 0800 039 1234.

Would a helpful gadget make your life easier?

We have a range of handy gadgets to distribute free of charge, including a jar opener; button hook and zip puller; automatic night light; potato peeler; handy reacher; extra-long shoe horn or seat belt helper. Just call and ask for the item you would like.

Contact our 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.)



St James's
Church
Biddenham

30th
January
6pm

CHORAL EVENSONG

Everyone
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Join us for our quarterly Choral Evensong service with choir.

Following the Book of Common Prayer, this service, often only held in larger churches and cathedrals, has something for everyone!



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This month in the garden

Last year when I was asked if I would take over from Jeremy in writing this column I was very reluctant to follow him. Jeremy has provided us all with such excellent gardening advice during the last eight years. However, after some deliberation, I have agreed to give it a go. So, with fear and trepidation, here goes and many thanks to Jeremy and enjoy your "retirement".

Firstly, I thought perhaps I should introduce myself. My interest in all things horticultural stems from the late 1940s when, at the age of 4 or 5, my sister and I would help our grandfather on his allotment. My grandfather was a champion vegetable grower and one of my earliest memories is spending afternoons picking off the caterpillars, of which there were hundreds, from the brassicas and gooseberry bushes. The poor creatures were then thrown into a small pit and covered with soil. My grandfather was, by and large, an advocate of organic gardening. A lot of my horticultural knowledge stems from watching what he did and hearing his take on how to produce the best crops. At home I had my own small patch of garden and planted vegetables and flowers. In the sixth form I investigated the possibility of going on to a Horticultural College and visited a couple. However, in the early sixties horticulture was not in vogue as it is now and so I decided upon another career path.

The first garden I owned, with my late husband, was a mature 1940s corner plot. The gardens all around seemed to be owned by older keen gardeners - so no pressure there then! But we were young and enthusiastic and did our best to keep up the high standard. Seven years later we moved to a brand new house and had to set about designing a garden from scratch. During this time we also took on an allotment and grew many of our own vegetables. Most afternoons, accompanied by our two young children I would take a picnic and dig and plant and harvest and encourage them to do the same. Little wonder, I guess, that my son was a keen horticulturalist from a very early age and pursued this as a career. We moved to Biddenham in 1982. My garden is small, however, I have a conservatory and an unheated plant house which I keep well ventilated, even throughout the winter, as this provides ideal conditions for the auriculas which I love. The garden has a pond, built by my son when he was thirteen and a huge Chusan Palm which he grew from a seed when he was eight or nine and then planted out - far too close to the house. Like most gardens it has lots of happy memories. So that is me and I hope that over the months you will enjoy reading my column.

Wrest Park Volunteer Open Day

Wrest Park Mansion, Drawing Room
Sunday 13th February 2022 11.00am -1.00pm

Would you like to be a part of a great team? Would you like to spend time in one of England's most prestigious and fascinating Gardens? Would you like to share your enthusiasm and love of history? Then come and volunteer for English Heritage at Wrest Park.

Whether it's getting your hands dirty with the team in the garden, welcoming and chatting to visitors as a Meet & Greeter or telling the stories of our unique house and garden as a steward or guide, there are plenty of ways to get involved.

Come along to one of our drop in sessions and find out more about what's involved and how you can help our visitors step into England's Story.

So on to the actual 'what should we doing this month?' Having re read Jeremy's article for January I think we could probably all do with a rest. But gardening isn't like that is it - there is always something to be done. Gardening is like life - in two parts a) enjoying the here and now and b) planning ahead. As I write this who knows what February has in store for us. Our gardens may be covered with a thick blanket of snow or the weather may be sunny and mild. If it is snowy or wet better to keep off the garden altogether and reflect on what we want from our gardens.

So February, the month of the returning sun, when 2nd February marks a tipping point and the pace of the returning sun accelerates rapidly leading up to the Spring Equinox. Now is the time to plan ahead to look at the bare bones of the garden, to reflect on its structure. Frost on trees and shrubs and the grasses and herbaceous perennials that we may have left uncut provide a lovely backdrop at this time of the year. I am a great believer in taking photographs of the garden and now is a good time. It will help us to review any gaps or plants in the wrong place. When I retired 16 years ago I started a Gardening Diary, just noting every so often what I had done in the garden, failures as well as successes and also commenting on the weather, which now makes quite interesting reading. In February 2007 we had thick snow and in February 2008 it was brilliantly sunny and warm.

As I look out into my garden the Cornus Sanguinea (the common dogwood) are shining beacons of colour. Midwinter Fire is a good variety aptly named as it looks like flames. During the latter part of this month prune hard - coppicing to 5-7cm from the base, cutting just above a bud. Mulch with compost after pruning to encourage the new growth which will provide the colour next winter. If planting a young plant do not prune too hard in the first year or two. Place them in a location where they will catch the late winter sun and, if you can, with a few evergreens as a backdrop then the colour will really sing out. To see them in their full glory do visit the winter walk at The Cambridge Botanic Garden or Anglesey Abbey. Here you can also find snowdrops a plenty. However, my favourite place to see snowdrops is Chippenham Park, near Newmarket, but do check their website as they are only open on selected dates. Closer to home, of course, the snowdrops in St James' Churchyard are always lovely. When we moved to Biddenham we had no snowdrops in our garden and it is now carpeted with thousands. Now is the ideal time to plant them, in the green, i.e. when they have finished flowering but their leaves are intact. The gardening sections of newspapers are filled with advertisements for snowdrops and I usually buy mine from a supplier in Lincolnshire. Plant a hundred or so, if possible. It's cheaper to buy them in bulk and after the first year they will spread and self-seed and be so uplifting on dark winter days.

February is also a key time for pruning Wisterias. At this time of the year prune back to 2 or 3 buds from the main stem and layer the stems horizontally. Most of the clematis in my garden are the Viticella variety which means that they flower in late summer. At this time of year they are a tangle of dried growth from the previous year but the new growth will be starting to show. Now is the time to cut back the old dead growth to 30cm or so above ground. It is also not too late to plant sweet peas, if you didn't do so in October. They need a good long root run so planting them in root trainers or toilet roll tubes will provide this. I usually soak the seeds in tepid water for 24 hours prior to planting as their seed cases are quite hard and I find this helps with germination. Other than that, chit your seed potatoes in egg boxes in a cool, light, frost free place and warm up the soil for sowing vegetables by covering the ground with a cloche or polythene. But most of all enjoy leafing through the seed catalogues with a mug or glass of something and reflect on how wonderful our gardens will look later on in the year.

Linda Truscott

Biddenham History Society

St James's Church: a village treasure

On Sunday 19th December 2021, I went to the Carol Service, which fortunately could be held in Biddenham Church. As I entered the building, I was struck once more how beautiful it is inside and what a perfect example of a village church it is: intimate, inviting and with several attractive features, without being ostentatious. In the soft light, with the candles and the lovely floral decorations, it was as if time had stood still.



Looking down the church, the most striking feature is the large round arch, much restored, which separates the nave from the chancel. It has been suggested that the arch could be Saxon, but it certainly dates from Norman times. Above the arch, is the large wooden cross, made from

oak grown at Southill Park, Old Warden Bedfordshire. It is a memorial to Charles Duigan (1905) and Edith Duigan (1912) who are buried in the churchyard. The cross was carved in 1912 – 1914 at J.P. White's Pyghtle Works, Bedford and fixed up by some of their workers who lived in Biddenham.

Before the choir took their places in the chancel, it was possible to see through to the beautiful east window of 1897, designed by Charles Kempe. The details of the window could not be seen in the dim light, but in daylight, the green, blue and ruby colours are clear, as is the delicate detailed painting of flowers. Each tracery light has an angel in a white gown. The central figure of Christ the King with a gold crown is seated on the throne. On the left is St. Peter, holding a key and a book, with the Archangel Michael and sword behind him. On the right is St Paul, dressed in a sumptuous red gown, seated and holding an open book. Behind him stands St James of Compostela, holding a staff with a bag. The church and the school are named after St James.



The other fine windows in the church can be appreciated in daylight, but the Millennium Window, at the west end of the bell tower, shines out over the churchyard as you approach the church if the lights are on on a dark evening. The rich greens, blues and reds stand out and highlight the features of the village: the Church and the symbols of St James, the crook and scallop shell, the village green with the cedar tree in the garden of the Old Vicarage, the war memorial, the Post Office row and cricket on the



pavilion field.

As I looked down the church and listened to the prayers, the choir and the readings, I was impressed once again by

the fittings designed by C.E.Mallows, the Arts and Crafts architect who lived in Biddenham, that were made at the J.P. White Pyghtle Works in Bedford. The lectern, made in 1902, is particularly fine. It was possible to make out the hammered brass bookstand, supported on two brass columns, between which is a decorative iron tree of life bearing copper apples. Opposite the lectern is the carved oak vicar's stall, made in 1903.



The pulpit and pews, though not designed by Mallows, are also of beautiful, rich oak, which looked magnificent in the candlelight. As I left the church, I passed the fine octagonal font, which is fifteenth century work, standing inside the south main door. Once outside, it was possible to admire the



church, its stained glass lit up and the striking nativity figures that have been placed in the churchyard. We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful building in our village and to have the comfort of knowing that people have gathered and worshipped there for centuries.

Kathy Fricker

The COVID situation permitting, we are hoping that the Biddenham History Society will meet on Monday 25th April at 2.30pm in the Church Barn when Peter Applewhite will give a presentation: 'Biddenham: 2 things you have wondered about and the search for answers'.

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Biddenham Parish Council

The Parish Council met on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at the Pavilion. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase, Karen Cotton, Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Irina Madan-Sau, Krzys Osuch and Francia Slade, the Clerk, David Brough and myself. Apologies were received from Borough Councillors, Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby. I was pleased to see four members of the public attending.

The January meeting was our first meeting after the Christmas break and there was a full Agenda with several important items for Councillors to consider. One item of particular interest raised by a member of the public present, and on our Agenda to discuss, was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event in June. While the Parish had no formal plans to organise a parish wide event it recognised individuals or groups may want to organise something locally and agreed where it could help with tangible support to these events it would do so. So please do keep us informed if you have any plans as it would be great to see families and local groups coming together to celebrate this special occasion.

Speeding is a regular concern raised by residents. At our last meeting, following the matter being raised by a member of the public, the Parish Council committed to ask residents whether they would support 20mph streets within parts of the Parish. It is important to understand the outcome of the Parish consultation is not the end of the process as only the Borough Council can make changes to speed limits. Our consultation was intended as a litmus test to inform our view on whether to ask the Borough to



consider 20mph for Biddenham. It was really pleasing to see 167 responses to our questionnaire; the headline was that there was overwhelming support for 20 mph but of course the devil is in the detail. It was clear from comments received that there was a desire for the main spine roads – Bromham Road, Biddenham Turn, Main Road and part of Deep Spinney – to remain at 30 mph. There was also support for part time 20mph zones outside the schools during term time only. Armed with this feedback from our community the Parish Council agreed it will approach the Borough Council and ask it to consider developing a scheme for consultation in line with the main outcomes of our consultation. Should the Borough be minded to consider this, they will undertake a much more thorough consultation which will give residents the opportunity to express their views, either for the first time or again and to comments on any proposals put forward.

The Parish Council also considered street naming suggestions for the new Gold Lane development. It was pleasing that many of the suggestions put forward by a local resident had been taken up by the developer. We will suggest a few tweaks to the Council and Developer which hopefully they will take on board. There will now be an overall theme to the street names which celebrates the village's agricultural and farming heritage.

One of the key tasks for this meeting was for the Parish Council to set its budget and agree the precept for 2022/23. Our precept makes up a small proportion of your Council Tax and the sum raised by the Parish is in the lower quartile of the 47 parish precepts levied. The money raised helps us to pay for additional items that help improve the village, for example the Christmas trees and lights. In considering our expenditure for the year from April 2022, we have allotted additional sums for minor highways works (such as additional weed killing) and a sum for allocating grants to help support local groups during these difficult times. Previously we had funded these items of expenditure from our reserves as one-off items and I am pleased to report this year we were able to fund a defibrillator at Kings Field and to contribute to the 'Bobby' scheme which supports the elderly and vulnerable in our community by improving their Home Security. After much discussion on the precept there was a majority vote that the increase in the Parish precept for 2022/23, based on a band D household would be an annual increase of circa £1.43, just under 3 pence per week.

Date of the next meeting

Our next meeting will be Tuesday 15th February 2022 at 7.30pm at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney and all are welcome.

Stewart Briggs
Chair

Bedford National Trust Association

The next meeting will start promptly at 2.15pm on Tuesday, 15th February 2022 at the Addison Centre, Kempston MK42 8PN.

The speaker will be Fran Saltmarsh. We recently enjoyed a very good talk by her daughter.

Fran specialises in Fashion, and her subject on this occasion will be 'Corsets, Crinolines and Camisoles'.

There will be a small admission fee. Everyone welcome. No need to book,

Plenty of parking space.

For further information contact Garry Telling on 014980 819 625.

REVIVE

Coffee
Bible
Fellowship

St James's Church Barn

7.00pm

Third Sunday of the Month

Everyone Welcome

Making Bedford Greener - one street at a time

Bedford Borough Council has partnered with Trees for Streets to make it easy for local people to green their streets by sponsoring new trees to be planted.

Trees for Streets is a project from the UK urban tree charity Trees for Cities, and we're working with local councils to fund additional tree planting in towns and cities across the UK.

You can sponsor a tree in the street outside your house, or in one of Bedford's parks.



By sponsoring a tree, you'll be helping to:

- fight climate change and pollution
- improve the health of everyone in your neighbourhood
- bring nature closer to home
- leave a legacy that will last for generations
- make your street a nicer place to live

Lots of residents from all over Bedford got involved last year, and Biddenham Parish Council also sponsored 40 trees to be planted in the village.

Want to play your part in greening your neighbourhood?

Find out more: <https://treesforstreets.org/Bedford>

Cassandra Oliver

Conservation Matters

The freshly minted, oven ready Biddenham Conservation Volunteers should be getting into action in February. We are grateful to Biddenham Parish Council for paying our insurance and for all the support we have received.

Our free training was superbly organised by Sarah Culverwell of Groundworks and we were pleased to receive certificates and a file of information to help us do the right thing by way of conservation in the village

In the absence of grazing animals and traditional farm hedging or ditching, nature often needs a bit of help. Our farmers as custodians of the countryside can help us but these days we don't have any resident here so this is a bit more difficult than when I arrived in 1975.

We have plans for coppice management, tree planting, hedge work and even painting Redgates.

There may also be the possibility of some cooperation with The Biddenham Estate as well as Bedford Borough Council.

Watch out for us on the web and The Loop.

Interested in joining? Let me know

Chris Jones
chrishj49@gmail.com

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St Joseph's & St Gregory's Primary School



Children In Need: The Big Fancy Dress Sing-along

The children had a big surprise on 5th November when singer/songwriter Tom Grennan (past pupil) paid a visit to us along with Pudsey Bear for BBC Children in Need 2021. The occasion was the BBC Big Fancy Dress Sing-along and we were singing 'By Your Side' on 3 Counties Radio. There were cameras, presenters, live radio interviews and lots of flashing lights. The children were so excited and the BBC commented on how well-behaved and engaged our children were. We are so very proud of all of them.



Christmas Tree Festival

Children from St Joseph's and St Gregory's choir sang beautifully at the Christmas Tree Festival at St Paul's church in Bedford in December. They were accompanied on the piano by a skilled pianist from Year 5. We offer keyboard lessons as part of the music curriculum.

Visit by the Bishop of Northampton

We were pleased to have Bishop David Oakley, the Bishop of Northampton, visit us on Friday 7th January.

He toured both sites and met with all the children.

The Junior Chaplaincy Team led the school in a Liturgy for Epiphany and Bishop David lit the Advent candles. As well as taking part in the reading of the Liturgy, some of the team also performed scenes from the Gospel according to Matthew as it was read out loud, the Magi setting out on their journey to visit the infant Jesus. The worship included carols, accompanied on the piano by a music student in Year 5.

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High Flyer

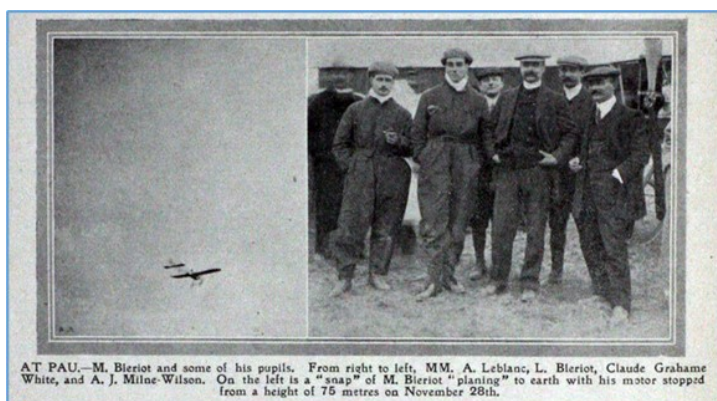
Claude Grahame-White was an English pioneer of aviation and the first to make a night flight, during the 1910 Daily Mail London to Manchester air race. And in 1911 he was the first to land an aeroplane in Biddenham, in a field below the church for a Primrose League event.

Claude, born in Hampshire in 1879, was educated at Bedford Grammar School. During his time there, as Kathy Fricker recalled in the December issue of *The Loop*, he became friends with Bill Davison, Biddenham's blacksmith, who let him tinker in the Forge off Main Road. Bill and his brother started to build a car with Claude's help, but never got very far with it. Bill eventually made a car and also bicycles inscribed with his name and his 'Cable' brand. Claude however went on to higher things, qualifying in France in 1909 as a pilot, one of the first Englishmen to do so.

Earlier aged 16 he convinced his parents to let him train as an engineer and was apprenticed to a Bedford firm. Later he worked at his uncle's wool combing company replacing shire horses with motor vehicles. Recognising the potential of motor vehicles for public transport he set up his Yorkshire Motor Vehicle Company, which unfortunately failed due to a lack of skilled drivers.

After time in London and Monte Carlo he met George Wilder and wife, for whom he bought cars and taught both to drive, and spent three years as agent for George's estate at Stansted Park, Sussex. In 1907 he visited South Africa, and on return established a motor engineering business in London, C Grahame-White & Co. At the age of 27 he was a successful businessman but not satisfied with his life.

And then flying took over, sparked by Louis Blériot's crossing of the English Channel. Claude promptly went to France, met Blériot, enrolled in his flying school and qualified as a pilot.



AT PAU.—M. Bleriot and some of his pupils. From right to left, MM. A. Leblanc, L. Bleriot, Claude Grahame White, and A. J. Milne-Wilson. On the left is a "snap" of M. Bleriot "planing" to earth with his motor stopped from a height of 75 metres on November 28th.

Thereafter Claude became one of the first Britons to exploit aviation commercially and whilst not winning the Daily Mail race he did win others, and the prize money, in England and America. Whilst in Washington DC he flew over the city and landed on an avenue near the White House, to applause in the newspapers rather than arrest.

In 1911 investing his winnings in 220 acres of pasture at Hendon, he established a flying school, created London's first aerodrome, and set up the first official English airmail delivery. His company, the Grahame-White Aviation Company, covered his wide range of aviation interests, including aerodromes and aircraft design, development and construction. Before the outbreak of the Great War the weekend flying displays at Hendon were the greatest attraction in London and his aircraft, which were of boxkite design, were the backbone of his flying school.

In 1912 Claude gave H G Wells his first flight; and the

first Hendon Aerial Derby, a race around London, was watched by an estimated 500,000 people. He wrote books on aviation and contributed to newspapers, reviews and magazines on aviation in the commercial and military fields. He promoted the military application of air power with a campaign called 'Wake up Britain', and experimented with fitting various weapons and bombs to aircraft. Earlier he had given demonstrations to the Parliamentary Aerial Defence Committee, dropping flour bombs on the painted outline of a battleship.

In September 1914, with a temporary appointment as Flight Commander in the Royal Naval Air Service, he made the first night patrol mission over London in response to a threat of bombing from German airships. In February 1915 he took part in a raid on German-held ports on the Belgian coast but in appalling conditions was forced to ditch in the sea and was eventually rescued by a French minesweeper. In June he resigned his commission to concentrate for the remainder of the war on government aircraft construction contracts, his company mainly manufacturing the designs of others.

Hendon Aerodrome was lent to the Admiralty in 1916 and was eventually taken over by the Royal Air Force in 1919. That year Claude co-founded Aerofilms Ltd, as early as 1910 having been convinced the aeroplane had a key role to play in the future of the military and seeing the potential value of aerial photography. In 1925 Hendon was purchased by the RAF. Thereafter Claude lost his interest in aviation, made a fortune in property development in the UK and the USA, and moved in his old age to Nice, where he died in 1959.

Back now to 1911 and that historic event when Claude paid his flying visit to Biddenham. This account in the 2012 village history book is taken from the Biddenham WI's 1956 scrapbook:

'White was due to arrive at 11.30 am but did not arrive until 2.30 pm, because of trouble with the plane, as he had flown to France the day before. We believe that this was the first occasion when a plane landed in any village in Bedfordshire. Never before or since have so many people congregated in Biddenham. They came by pony and trap, on cycles, and on foot (some villagers made money by storing the bicycles). The crowd was so large and curious that a guard had to be put round the plane to prevent souvenir hunters demolishing it in their efforts to obtain pieces of the plane as souvenirs.'

Claude may have been the first to land in Biddenham, but he wasn't the last. The 1991 history of the village records that in 1919 Robert Peacock's uncle who was in the Royal Flying Corps invited a friend for lunch, who landed his bi-plane fixed with two machine guns in Chibnall's Field, now where runs Darlow Drive. Uncle went up for a spin, doing two loop-the-loops, a spinning nose dive, a falling leaf descent and other aerobatics, which he found caused his fountain pen to misbehave. Such times!

Peter Applewhite



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Scenes of Christmas 2021



Nativity at St James's. Picture Lois Price.



Biddenham Under Fives Christmas Party - 'Who is this man?' Picture Jean Gambold

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

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

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Peter's Picturehouse

As the Loop goes to press, the February film, Judy (12A), telling part of the story of Judy Garland is being shown at Biddenham Village Hall on Tuesday 1st February 2022, closely followed on Tuesday 1st March when the film being shown is a golden oldie, In the Heat of the Night (12A).

Judy is a musical drama set in London when Judy Garland arrives to perform at the Talk of the Town nightclub. It features a magnificent performance from Renee Zellweger alongside some subplots and is a warm tribute to Garland.

The 1967 film, In the Heat of the Night, starring Sidney Poitier as Virgil Tibbs is our March film. The plot involves a black Philadelphia police detective being suspected of the murder of a prominent businessman and the subsequent investigation of the murder. The film is often cited as Sidney Poitier's favourite film and, on its release, there were fears that there would be potential for trouble and violence due to the racial theme of the film.

As always, doors and bar open at 7.00pm in Biddenham Village Hall and tickets are £5 on the door. Our ice creams and wine were enthusiastically bought at our January showing and it was great to see some new faces joining in the fun at Peter's Picturehouse in 2022! We would love to see you at any or all of our planned showings coming up. Please do wear masks in the village hall unless you are exempt. If you have any queries, contact Marihelen, details in the poster.

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Tuesday 1st February | Judy |
| Tuesday 1st March | In the Heat of the Night |
| Tuesday 5th April | The Intern |

Rose Houghton



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Peter's Picturehouse In February

Date: **Tuesday 1st February 2022**

Time: **Doors open 7:00pm, Film starts 7:30pm**

Location: **Biddenham Village Hall**

Tickets available on the door, price: **£5**

Certificate: **12A**

For further information contact
Marihelen
07710288933
marihelen@btinternet.com

Judy - © PATHE PRODUCTIONS LIMITED AND BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION 2019

Coming soon...

Tues 1st March 2022: In the Heat of the Night (12A)

Tues 5th April 2022: The Intern (PG-13)

THE BIG BLUNHAM BOOK SALE IS BACK

The Big Blunham Book sale will be held on
Saturday 26th February 2022

10.00 am to 3.00 pm

at Blunham Parish Church, MK44 3NQ,
There will be an enormous selection of
nearly new books - specialist and fiction,
sorted into categories.

Home made soup with bread, home made
cakes, hot dogs, teas and coffees served
all day. Plus a raffle.

Please see www.riversmeetbenefice.co.uk
for up-to-date information or contact Sue
01767 640572.

All profits to Blunham Church Fabric Fund



Photo by Tom Hermans on Unsplash



New Year and fresh activity down at the Pond.



Fourteen volunteers from our Pond Workforce Group got together on 2nd January to move pallets from Day's Lane down to the pond to supplement those already collected. The task was to build and line three compost bins made from these redundant pallets and fill them with the reeds removed from the pond and our pile of grass cuttings. You will see



from the photo that these bins are impressive, and we thank our volunteers for their humour and incredibly hard work. Thanks to Chris Jones for the pictures.

If you are interested in joining our WhatsApp Pond Workforce Group and volunteering for occasional projects down at the pond (which supplement our Spring and Autumn work mornings) please send your mobile number to Cathy at ceckett@gmail.com.

We have always generated a lot of cut material from the site (grass, weeds, reeds, branches etc) but not known how to dispose of it effectively. In the past, a lot has been burnt, but mindful of our carbon footprint we have decided to try a 'permaculture' approach to our land management, which uses arrangements that complement and flourish in natural ecosystems. Our plan is to compost as much material as possible and unsuitable woody material will be stacked and used to provide homes for our wildlife.

We have come to the end of our financial year and with the help of a grant from the Parish Council and individual donations earlier in the year, we have ended only making a small loss. But we have purchased a new shed and had a second session of reed clearance in the pond and so we are pleased with what has been achieved and thank everyone for their practical and financial help in making this possible.

The pond can be found behind the Manor Hospital and the footpath that will take you to it is at the junction of Main Road and Gold Lane, where there is a signpost with a kingfisher. Alternatively, it can be reached from the footpath behind St James Church along the ancient coffin path that takes you across the fields and back to the village.



The Pond Team

Contact Details

Chris Jones
Cathy Eckett-Brown
Jane Knight
Sophie Applewhite-Rees
Jonathan Field

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dansop1@googlemail.com
jfield21st@mail.com

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

Café B...



Tuesday 15th February
Biddenham Village Hall
10.15 am - 11.45am

Selection of teas, coffees,
hot chocolate and juice
Home baked cakes
Book Swap

Next café 15th March



The Pond in winter by Jonathan Field.

Biddenham Gardeners Association

My garden

We started our new Biddenham Gardeners Association year with an excellent turn out of members and visitors, on Zoom. The 'My Garden' talks which we feature every January are always popular and this year was no exception. We were treated to presentations on two stunning gardens in the heart of the village. Marihelen and John's garden on Main Road and Heather and Peter's garden on Biddenham Turn.

First up was Marihelen who told us that she and John had had no gardening experience before they came to Biddenham in 2006 although when they were first married they had owned a farm and had grown and sold soft fruit.

On moving to their present house they inherited a well-stocked and once much loved but subsequently neglected garden. A trellis cut the garden in half and tall pine trees shaded the garden on three sides. There was an old greenhouse and industrial paving surrounded the pool. The garden was generally dark and damp, pine tree debris covered large areas and perennials and ground cover plants had taken over. Fortunately, a neighbour, new to the house next door to them, had a line of fir trees cut down so that the light came streaming in. Marihelen and John then set about having their own trees pollarded.

Marihelen continued her talk by showing photos of the transformation. A beech hedge has been planted, a pond constructed, a wild garden and a wet garden created, roses planted, pots and hanging baskets put in place. The garden now has an abundance of soft fruit, roses, dahlias, tulips and even a foxglove tree. It is clear that John is an enthusiastic designer and builder and his handiwork is seen everywhere in the brick built raised beds, planters and seats. I particularly liked the twelve squared raised herb garden, where all the herbs looked in superb condition. Breaking up the paved area with stones and pots was also a good idea.

The garden is now a haven for wildlife and it was lovely to see the video footage of the birds enjoying a bath in the pond. What a fabulous garden and many thanks to Marihelen for sharing her gardening journey with us. Following this presentation there was much discussion about the midwife toads which are in plentiful supply in Biddenham.

We were then treated to another delightful garden presented by Heather. Peter and Heather moved to Biddenham Turn in 1990 and almost didn't buy the house as they felt there was so much work to be done. However, when they looked out of the window on to the back garden they were won over as they could see the potential for creating something lovely in the half acre plot.

The garden is made up of river bed gravel and the soil is neutral. Random trees and shrubs had been allowed to self-seed. The lawn, like most lawns in the large gardens in Biddenham had originally, when the house was built in the 1920s, been a tennis court so the ground was well and truly compacted. In the 1960s the garden had been redesigned and, in the fashion of that time, planted with conifers which, after nearly forty years were coming to the end of their lives.

So, Heather and Peter set about improving the lawn, removing some trees, constructing a pergola and archway in the middle of the garden and planting, at the last count, seventy-seven roses. Following a visit to Chelsea they also treated themselves to a new green house. When Heather's father visited from New Zealand in 1993 he wanted to plant a tree. A mulberry was chosen - it is now huge and attracts the parakeets.

Like Marihelen and John's garden there are now vegetables and soft fruit and an abundance of flowers and shrubs. Not forgetting the phormiums by the front gates in

a nod to New Zealand. The garden has been opened in the past to raise money for the Red Cross. Now that the kitchen has been extended Heather and Peter can enjoy the view to the west and Heather showed us some stunning sunset photos.

The enthusiasm of Marihelen and Heather shone through as they shared their garden experiences recounting the failures as well as the successes - like all of us who garden! Both couples have delightful gardens and we really appreciated the time and effort that they had given in order that we could enjoy two excellent presentations. Many thanks to you both.

We invite you to join us on Tuesday 15th February, on Zoom, for Lucy Hartley's Part 3 of "Designing a Border from Scratch". Details can be found on our website. As usual this meeting will be open to all members and visitors. For our March meeting we hope, all things being well, to be back in action in the Village Hall.

Linda Truscott

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

Views of Heather's garden



First Friday Lunch



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

£7.00 (£8.00 from March, see page 3)

New layout - tables of 6

Draw for 2 free lunch tickets every month
Book swap

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

All welcome—everyone, all ages!
4th February, 4th March

No Fear Duplicate Bridge

Biddenham Village Hall Fridays at 2.30pm (intermediate),
Sundays at 6.00pm.

Contact Bernard Henry 07866 456759 or
bahenry@gmail.com

100 CLUB November draw

The winners were:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| David Watson | 1st Prize |
| Francis Galbraith - | 2nd Prize |
| John Watson | 3rd Prize |



December draw

The winners were:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Stephen Chadwick | 1st Prize |
| Francis Galbraith | 2nd Prize |
| Michael Litchfield | 3rd Prize |

Drawn by John Gardner



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

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

Quilting & Sewing Group



Biddenham Village Hall
10.30 a.m.

Last Friday of each month

Pop in and see what goes on



Hall Booking Details

Biddenham Village Hall

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

Church Barn

Contact Booking Officers:

Email: stjamesbarnbiddenham@gmail.com (preferred
contact method)

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Jane Knight | 07831 172320 |
| Rebecca Balmbro | 07769 944727 |

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.

You can check availability and book on the website
www.biddenhampavilion.co.uk. Contact details for regular
events are also there.

Great Denham Community Hall

www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

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

Regular Events in Biddenham halls
For contact details see the Hall websites

www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk

www.biddenhampavilion.co.uk

www.stjamesbiddenham.com

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Monday | | |
| Cha Char Chimps | 10.00am | Village Hall |
| Yoga | 10.00am-11.30am | Pavilion |
| Gentle Yoga | 2.00pm-3.00pm | Pavilion |
| Storm Martial Arts | 7.00pm-8.00pm | Pavilion |
| Guides | 7.15pm Termtime | Village Hall |
| Tuesday | | |
| Over 50s fitness | 10.00am-12noon | Pavilion |
| Café B | 10.30am-12noon (3 rd in month) | Village Hall |
| Mums & Movers Yoga | 10.45am | Village Hall |
| Mum & Baby Yoga | 12.15pm | |
| Peter's Picturehouse | 7.00 for 7.30pm (1 st in month) | Village Hall |
| HIT Fitness | 7.00pm-7.30pm | Pavilion |
| Country Dancing | 8.00pm (2 nd & 4 th in month) | Village Hall |
| Zumba | 8.00pm-9.00pm | Pavilion |
| Wednesday | | |
| Ballet | 9.30am-11.30am | Pavilion |
| Baby College | 10.00am, 11.00am & noon Termtime | Village Hall |
| Handbell Ringer practice | 2.00pm | Church Barn |
| U3a Table Tennis | 2.00pm-4.00pm | Pavilion |
| Thursday | | |
| Under 5's | 9.30am-11.30am Termtime | Village Hall |
| Line dancing | 9.30am-11.30am | Pavilion |
| U3A Handbell Ringer Practice | 2.00pm | Church Barn |
| Dance classes | 4.00pm-7.00pm | Pavilion |
| Whist | 7.30pm (2 nd & 4 th in month) | Village Hall |
| Friday | | |
| Pilates | 8.30am & 9.30am | Village Hall |
| Jo Jingles | 9.30am-12.30pm | Pavilion |
| First Friday Lunch | 12.30pm (1 st of the month) | Village Hall |
| Quilting & sewing | 10.30am-2.30pm (last of the month) | Village Hall |
| Brushstrokes Art Group | 2.15pm-4.25pm | Pavilion |
| No Fear Bridge (intermediates) | 2.30pm | Village Hall |
| Choir practice | 7.00pm | Church Barn |
| Storm Martial Arts | 7.00pm-8.00pm | Pavilion |
| Saturday | | |
| Pregnancy Yoga | 9.15am | Village Hall |
| Sunday | | |
| Tai-Kwon Do | 12noon-4.00pm Occasional | Pavilion |
| No Fear Bridge | 6.00pm-9.00pm | Village Hall |

For details of events at Great Denham Community Hall please visit
www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

January

Sun 30 Jan 6.00pm Sung Evensong at St James's see p3

February

Tue 1 Feb Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p11
 Fri 4 Feb First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p14
 Sun 6 Feb 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints
 9.30am All Age Service followed by said Holy Communion at St James's
 Sun 13 Feb 9.30am Morning worship at St James's
 10.00am Holy Communion Service at All Saints
 6.30pm Service of Evening Prayer at St James's
 Sun 13 Feb Volunteer Open Day at Wrest Park, 11.00am-1.00pm, see p4
 Tue 15 Feb Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p12
 Tue 15 Feb National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.15pm, see p6
 Tue 15 Feb Biddenham Gardeners Association, Zoom, 7.30pm, see p13
 Tue 15 Feb Biddenham Parish Council, Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p6
 Sun 20 Feb 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints
 9.30am Holy Communion service at St James's
 7.00pm Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship at St James's Church Barn, see p6
 Fri 25 Feb Quilting & Sewing Group, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p14
 Sat 26 Feb Big Blunham Book Sale, Blunham Parish church, 10am-3.00pm, see p11
 Sun 27 Feb 9.30am Morning worship at St James's
 10.00am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

March

Tue 1 Mar Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p11
 Fri 4 Mar First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.30pm, see p14
 Tue 15 Mar Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p12

Zoom Church Services every Monday & Wednesday

Every Monday at 9.00am Morning Prayer via Zoom.
 Every Wednesday at 6.00pm Virtch, online Zoom service.
 To access Zoom church services enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.

For regular events at the Church Barn, Pavilion and Biddenham Village Hall see page 15

The Loop

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
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 or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to 3 Queen's Close
 (cj.sugars@talktalk.net) by
Wednesday 16th February please.



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

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