

The Loop

April 2022

£1.00



Biddenham Conservation volunteers

The group is up and running with several projects completed and many more to come! For an update and to see the work programme for April please see page 4.



'The Scrub Gang' in Cowslip Meadow

Going plastic free

Do you ever look at your shopping and despair at the amount of plastic packaging? Read how the Fox family have brought their plastic purchasing under control on page 8.

Changes to regular events in Biddenham

Some events at the Village Hall and the Pavilion have changed. Please see the updated list on page 19 for details. Contact details for all the events can be found on the Halls' websites.

The schedule of regular church services at St James's and All Saints is also changing so please check the What's On section on the back page.



Ukrainian flag flies in Biddenham

The Parish Council has raised the Ukrainian flag at the War Memorial to demonstrate support for the Ukrainian people in their defence against the Russian invasion. For more news from the Parish council see page 6.



Biddenham Show is back!

Sunday 11th September at St James' School

All being well, the Show will be back this year so please save the date!

'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

I had not thought that somebody could make a joke about Ukraine, but a friend did tell me this today. Not hilarious but hopeful and perceptive. Vladimir Putin died and went to hell. It was tough there so, after a couple of years, the devil gave Putin a couple of days off. So Putin decided to spend that time back in Moscow. He found a coffee shop and went inside to order an Americana. He spoke to the barista while he was making the coffee and asked; 'How have things changed? Are we still in Belarus?'

The barista nodded, 'Yes, we are still in Belarus!'

He asked the barista another question, 'Are our people still in Crimea?'

The barista nodded, 'Yes, we are still in Crimea?' The barista finished making the coffee and said, 'That will be five euros please.'

It is hard telling a joke about the appalling situation in Ukraine though there is a word that we have adopted to describe our relationship to the people there. The word is solidarity, and Vladimir Putin would recognise the word instantly.

Solidarity was the name of a trade union that existed in the 1980s at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, Poland. Solidarity became the first independent trade union in any Warsaw Pact country, under Lech Wałęsa, who later won the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in the liberation of Poland from communism. The word solidarity, therefore, is one that Putin would not relish.

Solidarity means 'substantially together with, or of the same substance' and by saying that we are in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, we are saying that we stand completely with them in their appalling suffering and in their opposition to Putin's terrible crimes against their country.

Of course, there is a limit to our solidarity. We can provide the Ukrainian people with resources, we can support, as much as we can, their displaced population, and we can even institute significant sanctions against Russia. Equally, however, our politicians must try and contain the conflict and not allow it to become an even more catastrophic nuclear conflict between the superpowers.

One man, in all of this, has been proved a hero and a



dangerous one at that. Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, towers in stature above Putin because he has genuinely stood in solidarity with his people, while Putin hides away in the safety of his Kremlin, while sending young men to die on his behalf. To understand the magnitude of this, it is probably worth noting that at the point of writing this, approximately 7,000 Russian combatants have died in this war over three weeks, while 7,000 is the total number of British combatants that have been killed in all conflicts since 1945. The evil of a man who murders civilians and squanders his own people in the process!

Forgive me for labouring these points, but for me this is the perfect illustration of what Good Friday and Easter is about.

All the time, people who suffer raise with me the question of the silence of God; where is God when people experience pain, and where is he when so many people are suffering in this crisis in Ukraine?

I find the cross of Jesus Christ on Good Friday tells me that Jesus Christ suffers in solidarity with us and with the people of Ukraine. When Jesus says on the cross, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' He enters into solidarity with all others who cry out with that level of despair.

Equally, however, Easter gives us and these people a profound message of hope. As we celebrate Easter Sunday, the story of Christ's resurrection tells us even death cannot defeat us in the end, and that in Jesus Christ there is hope for the future.

Do not despair, because God is with you, and promises you that he has a future for you whatever your circumstances.

God bless and have a lovely Easter.

Eric



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

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax	Tel: 328452
	rev.ejlomax@gmail.com	
Readers	Christopher Dawe	Tel 363890
	Paul Fricker	Tel 342843
	Sue Richards	
Churchwardens	Laurie Hurn	Tel 364251
	Lois Nash	Tel 961826
Verger	Hilary Hurn	Tel 364251
Secretary	Jacqui Piper	Tel 356993
Treasurer	Michael Hurford	Tel 271746
Organist/Choirmaster	Graham Weeks	Tel 07552 052840
	www.stjamesbiddenham.com	

Alleluia
He is
Risen!

11th-17th
April



EASTER

Holy Week

Monday: 7pm Evening Prayer
(All Saints)

Tuesday: 7pm Evening
Prayer (St James)

Wednesday: 7pm Evening
Prayer (All Saints)

Thursday: 7.30pm Holy
Communion (St James)

Good Friday

10am Children's Event
(St James)

12pm & 2pm Reflection
(All Saints)

1pm & 3pm Reflection
(St James)

Easter Sunday

8am Service of Light (St James)

9am Service of Light (All Saints)

10am Holy Communion
(both churches)

Everyone
Welcome!

New chef at the Three Tuns

A new chef has arrived at the Three Tuns bringing a welcome re-opening of the restaurant after several months of closure.

Meals are currently being served in the rear bar area, but diners are welcome to eat in the restaurant if they prefer.



David, the new chef, said: "After speaking to regulars they said they preferred traditional pub food cooked well." So, the new menu comprises 'pub grub' staples such as fish and chips, a selection of homemade pies, gammon, homemade lasagna, and burgers.

"All meat is sourced from local butchers," he added.

He confirmed that "all vegetarian options are suitable for vegans". There is also a choice of starters and puddings including apple crumble and sticky toffee pudding, as well as a children's menu to accommodate families.

The main restaurant is also open for traditional Sunday lunch with roast chicken or beef, and vegetarian/vegan options.

The restaurant is closed on Mondays.

Janet Field

St James's Church Electoral Roll and Annual Meetings

Notice is given that the Church Electoral Roll of St James Biddenham will be revised by the Parochial Church Council from Wednesday 30th March to Tuesday 12th April. After such revision, a copy of the Roll will be exhibited at the back of the Church for not less than 14 days for inspection.

Forms of application for enrolment can be obtained by calling Jacqui on 0778 6886 710 or emailing stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.

If you would like to join the Electoral Roll, completed forms should be returned on or before Tuesday 12th April.

The Electoral Roll is akin to a membership list for the church. Being on the roll enables you to take part in the proceedings of the Annual Meetings, which will be held on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Church Barn.

Please contact the PCC Secretary on the above contact details if you have any queries.

Jean Metcalf

We are sorry to report the death of Jean Metcalf of Darlow Drive. Jean did not want any fuss and we are very happy to publish this message from her husband, George:

George Metcalf and his family would like to thank all of their Biddenham friends for the many kind messages of condolence following the passing of Jean on the 1st February 2022. The numerous thoughtful offers of assistance at this difficult time are also very much appreciated.

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ST JAMES'S CHURCH BIDDENHAM

SPRING TEAS





Plant Sale Cream Teas Tea Towel Display

Sunday 8th May
2.30pm - 5.30pm
St James's Churchyard/Barn

PLANT CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME TO JANE (359014) OR PAM (327035) OR DELIVER TO 49 CHURCH END

ALL PROCEEDS TO ST JAMES'S CHURCH



Biddenham Conservation Volunteers

The Biddenham Conservation Volunteers continue to make progress and during this month have cleared scrub and crown lifted trees in Cowslip Meadow. This is to let light in towards the remnant hedge which we hope to replant parts of in the future. Light will also suppress all the ivy and possibly allow some other plants to show themselves and flourish. We are also trying to prevent the edges of the meadow moving forwards by stealth and tree suckers.

The clearing was followed up by community tree planting when BCV planted a number of new trees some as edge types such as hawthorn and spindle, others as specimen trees such as Sweet Chestnut and Elm - *Ulmus Hollandica vegeta* grown from cuttings saved from an expired tree in Fosterhill Cemetery.

Thanks to all those who have joined us so far and those who help organise the group.

We hope to have a programme announced soon to take us forward to early summer. Dates in April are given below.

Please contact Gilly Cowan if you would like to register with BCV: gillycowan@btinternet.com

Chris Jones

Task No	Date	Location	Nature of Task	Start time	Approx. end time	Leader	Tools to bring
11	Tues 5 April	Cowslip Meadow	Scrub clearance	10:00	14:00	Gilly	Gloves, loppers, bow saw, pruning saw
12	Thurs 7th April	Cowslip Meadow	Scrub clearance, redirect path, create pond, tree clearing	11:00	15:00	Geoff	Gloves, pruning saw, secateurs, loppers, shears



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*Prices as at January 2022. Subject to change



ST JAMES'S CHURCH BIDDENHAM

MUSIC FOR MAY

A concert by the Ouse Valley Singers
with soloist Philippa Jones

Saturday 21st May
Biddenham Pavilion, Deep Spinney
7.30pm

Tickets £10 (light refreshments included)
For tickets, contact:
Anne 214805 or Sue 342373

All proceeds to St James's Church



Biddenham History Society

The Diamond Jubilee, June 2012

In March, I shared some memories of the Golden Jubilee in June 2002 with you. We will now go forward ten years to the Diamond Jubilee in June 2012.

Once again, Biddenham prepared to celebrate, but this time the weather was not so kind for the outdoor celebrations as it had been in 2002. The celebrations began on Friday 1st June when the First Friday lunch team, led by Liz Watson and Judith O'Quinn, organised a special lunch in the Village Hall. This lunch was a splendid occasion, the hall was decorated with bunting, the helpers who served home made soup, delicious sandwiches and a wonderful array of puddings were dressed in red, white and blue, and guests were greeted with a glass of sparkling wine to toast the Queen. The Village Hall was full, and there was a convivial, festive atmosphere. At 2.00pm, Richard O'Quinn, the Village Hall Committee Secretary, and Graham Bates, the Chairman of Biddenham Parish Council went out to unveil the weather vane on the Village Hall that had been installed to commemorate the Jubilee. Some of the staff and pupils of St James' School had been invited to come across to see the unveiling. Graham Bates, who had been a Governor of the School since 2003, gave a short address to the children who, I am sure, would remember this event.

Several activities had been planned for Sunday 3rd June, notably a Big Lunch on the Pavilion field. The weather was unseasonably cold and wet, so the Big Lunch was not possible. Nevertheless, many residents still enjoyed their picnics with friends and families in each others' homes! Some of the children's activities were moved to the Village Hall. Kate Jones, Val Fitzhugh and Chris Gleave had the difficult task of picking the winner for the children's 'Design a Crown' competition. However, the 'Rolling Stones' part of the live music that had been scheduled for the Pavilion field went ahead, despite the weather, with 'Mick' strutting about the stage and the audiences sheltering under umbrellas outside the Pavilion!

The Thanksgiving Service had to move into the shelter of the church instead of being held in the churchyard as originally planned. The Bedford Concert Brass Band played inside the church and the service was well attended. Part of the Diamond Jubilee Exhibition of memorabilia organised by Jane George, Kathy Fricker, Hugh Clifton and Peter Squire was staged at the back of the church. Visitors could look at this and have the opportunity to buy the Diamond Jubilee recipe book containing recipes from the village collected by Fran Moxon and Rosemary Harris.

On Monday 4th June and Tuesday 5th June teas were served in the Church Barn. The rest of the exhibition was staged there and we could all shelter from the rain and chat. Chris Jones had parked his 1950s Land Rover and his cycles near the Church Barn. In the Barn, there were pictures from the children at St James' School and models they had made, as well as an interesting display of mugs,



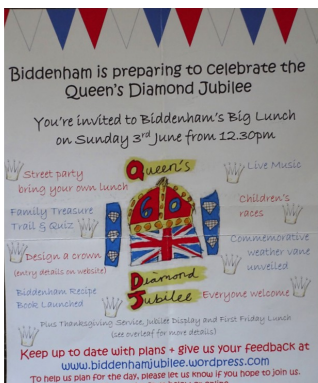
plates, magazines, photographs and stamps from 1952 and 1953 and a reminder that there was still rationing then.

Hugh Clifton had the imaginative idea of collecting 'tweets' – short memories of what Biddenham's Over 60s were doing on the day of the

Queen's Coronation on 2nd June, 1953. May Davis, who lived in Biddenham in 1953, remembered that 'In Biddenham there was a parade through the village and tea in the Hall. There was a Sports Day in the field opposite Day's Lane. In the evening, there was a dance and a slim ankle competition.' I did not live in Biddenham in 1952 or 1953, but I remembered that 'I was only two and a half at the time of the Coronation. My aunt in Wales made me a complete Welsh costume, which I wore to a party for children in the village hall of the village where I lived.'

Despite the rain, the Jubilee weekend was enjoyed and gave residents the chance to get together, chat and reminisce. We hope that we will be luckier for the Platinum Jubilee because, as we saw for the Golden Jubilee, some sunshine does help to put everyone in a celebratory mood!

Kathy Fricker



Displays in the Church Barn by pupils of St James' school

The Biddenham History Society will be meeting on Monday 25th April at 2.30pm in the Church Barn. Peter Applewhite will be giving a presentation – 'Biddenham: Two things you may have wondered about and the search for answers.' Please note that we will be putting out and spacing the chairs from 2.30 – 2.45pm and the presentation will start at 2.45pm.

Kempston Mill Bridge re-opens after long closure

Kempston Mill Bridge re-opened recently after 14 months of closure. The bridge closed in December 2020 after a safety inspection uncovered rotted planks and decking.



Kempston Mayor Cllr Carl Meader, joined Cllr James Valentine for the official opening on 9th February.

Works were initially delayed due to uncertainty over who owned the bridge.

Cllr Valentine, who pressed for the bridge to be re-opened, said: "It had to be brought into

James Valentine and Carl Meader at the official opening

Borough Council ownership before repairs could take place."

Temporary mesh fencing has been installed to prevent vehicles from crossing the bridge, pending the installation of a lockable bollard.

Cllr Valentine added that he is "now pressing for improvements to the 'back channel' bridge that leads to Great Denham to make it more friendly for buggies and those with mobility issues."

A new landing stage has also been built by The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust adjacent to the bridge for pleasure craft. Additional works, including new paving and a ramp, will complete the new landing stage by early summer.

David Fowler of the Waterway Trust and Chair of the Bedford Association of Tour Guides said: "It is the aim for this new landing stage to eventually be used as a stop off point for the John Bunyan Boat. We would like to see the bridge raised or replaced by a new higher bridge so that the John Bunyan Boat can pass underneath. The river is currently too narrow for the John Bunyan Boat to turn around at the bridge."

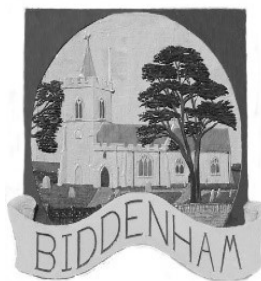
"In the longer term, the plan is to join up the River Great Ouse in Bedford with the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes," he added.

Janet Field



The back channel bridge

Biddenham Parish Council



The Parish Council met on Tuesday 15th March at the Pavilion. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Harry Fowler, Irina Madan-Sau, Krzys Osuch, Francia Slade, the Clerk, David Brough and myself. Apologies were received from Peter Chase, Karen Cotton and Chris Gee.

I was pleased colleagues had been supportive of a Parish Councillor's request that the Parish Council show support for the Ukrainians, who are suffering dreadfully from the Russian invasion, by buying and flying a Ukrainian flag on the flagpole by the war memorial. It is great to see the flag is now flying. On the subject of the war memorial, I am pleased that the cleaning of the memorial the Parish arranged has started. It is important to preserve these important monuments.

One of the really satisfying elements of being on the Parish Council is to be able to support local groups within the village. At this meeting we received a grant request from the Friends of the Village Pond for the purchase of a new mower. I am pleased to say that there was unanimous support to approve the grant request.



New trees at Deep Spinney

Many of you may have noticed the new trees the Parish Council purchased as part of the 'Trees for Streets' initiative have now been planted. They already make a difference and I'm sure decades from now they will be an established and much loved part of the beautiful environment that is part of our village. At the time buying 40 trees seemed a

lot but, with them now planted, I can see many more locations that would benefit from a tree. Let's hope the initiative is repeated, and, if it isn't, perhaps the Parish should consider doing something similar itself.

Next month will be the Annual Parish meeting. The Annual Parish or Town Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting. It is a meeting of the Parish electors and provides an opportunity for Electors to contribute to the Agenda, celebrate local activities and/or debate current issues in the community. The normal Parish Council meeting will follow on from this.

In recent years we have invited local clubs, societies and other voluntary organisations to provide an exhibition and/or a representative to speak about the work of their group. To vary the format this year we are asking residents to attend the Annual meeting if they can and let us know issues that are affecting them so we can try to help (clerk@biddenham.org.uk). Alternatively, maybe electors just want to share their experience of something in the parish others would benefit from knowing about. Please do come along and encourage others if you can.

Date of the next meeting

I'd like to give you all advanced notice the date for the June meeting has been moved to Tuesday 14th June 2022.

Our next meeting will be the Annual Parish meeting on Tuesday 19th April at 7.00pm followed by our usual Parish Council meeting. Both events will be held at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney and all are welcome.

Stewart Briggs
Chair

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Overall, this winter has not been very wet and although spring has started dry, the pond is in a very satisfactory condition with crystal clear water. Sadly, this will inevitably change as the flora and fauna which can cloud the water get going. Thankfully, Storm Eunice did very little damage down at the pond, only blowing off our compost bin lids, which have now been replaced.



This year we hope to chemically test the water, something that has not been done for a few years, to see if the lack of agricultural activity in the adjoining field over the past five years has reduced any fertiliser run-off. If this is the case, we hope to see less in the way of eutrophication of the water, (eutrophication is the process by which a body of water become enriched with minerals and nutrients which causes oxygen depletion and deterioration in water quality). The regulations are quite comprehensive on farmland adjoining water courses but don't cover small field ponds like ours. The results of this will be interesting.

So, if you haven't been down to the pond recently, you really should go – it is looking lovely! Spring has definitely “sprung,” and Chris has already been down and dipped his net in. It is teeming with life and he caught an abundance of small invertebrates, including the larvae of dragonflies, damselflies, and mayflies and lesser ramshorn snails. Please remember if you have dogs with you when you visit to keep them on a lead when you are in the pond area, and don't allow them into the water because they will disturb our nesting birds.

Unfortunately, the deadline for submissions to this edition of The Loop closed just before our spring work

morning and frog foray took place, so we will report on these activities in the May Loop, but we are hoping that this year the frogs won't be shy.

The mowing rota started in the last week of March and will continue until the end of September, and we thank all our wonderful volunteers for their hard work. 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.

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's Church along the ancient Coffin Path that takes you across the fields and back to the village.



The Pond Team

Contact Details

Chris Jones	chrishj49@gmail.com
Cathy Eckett-Brown	ceckett@gmail.com
Jane Knight	jane@80kltd.co.uk
Sophie Applewhite-Rees	dansop1@googlemail.com
Jonathan Field	jfield21st@mail.com

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Going zero plastic on your weekly shop

The Fox family have recently been actively trying to reduce plastic use in their household. We asked about what they've learnt as they try to reduce the plastic in their weekly shop.

What made you start thinking about reducing your plastic?

We started watching the 'Shop Well for the Planet' series on BBC with my girls and we got really interested in the swaps they were trying out. There were lots of great ideas in each episode, so we started by ordering a few easy things on Amazon to try out – Sisal washing up sponges, a laundry egg and block shower gel and shampoo.

Things just grew from there; once I had tried one swap making another seemed an obvious next step. That was October 2021 and I am now close to 100% plastic free in my weekly shop. Of course, we wanted to make the changes to reduce our impact on the environment as a family, but there have been lots of other benefits I wasn't expecting too.

What did you change first?

The first change I tackled was cling film. It's also been one of the easiest to drop. I invested in some beeswax wraps and just use plates and Tupperware now to cover and wrap food. Since then I've reduced my foil, kitchen roll and eliminated greaseproof paper as silicon baking mats, Weetabix wrappers and butter papers do the job just as well.

My next target was milk bottles, as it was such a lot of single use plastic. I asked some neighbours if they knew a local milkman and also if there was a refill shop in Bedford - there is! I use Milk and More for our milk, cream, yogurt and fruit juice now, all in glass – they make it easy as there is a whole lifestyle section which has all the plastic free alternatives. They deliver Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays by 7.00am in Biddenham.



The Store in Bedford (in St Cuthbert's Arcade opposite Rice Thai) was a total revelation - my girls LOVE going. It's like a family outing; they love the weighing and measuring and using all the dispensers, and they like that they are making a difference too.

You take your own containers and the team really help you when you are unsure the first few times. I've switched to buying my rice, pasta, oil, honey, face cream and lots more already and they freshly grind coffee too. The Store has been there for many years. It is run by Rosanna who spent years planning it and all the stock is really carefully managed to ensure it is fresh and spotlessly clean, so I've been completely confident shopping there. See the website: shop.thestoreuk.co.uk

I used to shop mainly in Aldi and top up at Sainsburys, like many people do now. I did a price comparison, and many things are more expensive, but we figured it was worth it, particularly for all the items where the only alternative was that crunchy non-recyclable plastic like you get for pasta, and because we could buy local produce, but that definitely wasn't the end of the story on cost.

What does a weekly shop feel like for you now?

The weekly shop is now always on a Saturday. I pack my shopping trolley, a bag with all my containers and my list. I still drive to shop as it is too heavy otherwise. I park at Lurke St car park (2 hours free on a Saturday) on an odd-numbered floor, so the lift is on the right level! I head to the market first to choose my fruit and veg. I choose English grown wherever I can, both stalls offer paper bags.

Then I head to Joan's eggs and to one of the many



The weekly shop

places in town to treat ourselves to fresh bread. Sometimes I head up into the main market by Beales to Paula's Bakery for some fresh croissants or Danish pastries too.

Once I've done the market, I head back to the car park, drop off my trolley and pick up my containers. It's an easy walk from there to Lingers Butchers, GCH Fishmongers, Cibo for fresh pasta, and finally The Store. For cheese and cold meats I go to Stagsden Farm shop; the Aroma café next to The Store does a decent selection too and Bestpol by Lurke Street car park has a fantastic range of cold meat. Everyone has been surprisingly cool with me providing my own containers – I'm not the only one doing this apparently.

I get a few things online, especially white vinegar for cleaning, and other recyclable alternatives such as amber glass bottles and I pop into Asda in Bletchley when I'm over there to stock up on refills for cereals, tea and dry roasted peanuts. I still go to Sainsbury's sometimes, but usually only with a basket for butter, tins, sauces in glass bottles and for recycled loo roll in paper packaging.

What have the benefits been?

Many! My mum jokes I shop like the 1950s now, and I think that analogy is fine, we wasted a lot less then. Firstly, I really enjoy shopping now. It's a pleasure to walk around town, choose my food and chat to the market stall holders. I am loving exploring all our independent shops. Castle Road has an awesome cake shop, The Bakery, and great antipasti next door at Bottega. The Gallery does amazing sourdough wholemeal bread and I can pop into the library for a book whilst in town too.

We've made a huge impact on the single use and recyclable plastics coming into our house, but it has also had a wider impact. We are now eating much higher quality food, less meat and more seasonally. As much more is locally produced, we have also significantly reduced our food miles.

Cooking is also more fun, I batch bake some cakes or biscuits every weekend with my youngest daughter and it's definitely made me experiment with some new recipes and work out which things are quick swaps like Tom Kerridge's baked falafels, vegan meringues and homemade granola.

Finally, and probably the question you all probably



Baking at home

want to know the answer to - it's got to be more expensive, isn't it? The answer amazingly is no. It is actually significantly cheaper! Everything you buy will be more expensive this way, the veg, milk, meat, dry goods, but my total weekly shop has come down from approximately £120 a week to £90-£100 for a family of four. I couldn't quite do the maths on it either until I worked out I just wasn't buying any manufactured food anymore, just raw ingredients.

Are there any downsides?

Yes, honestly it hasn't all been a walk in the park and I've made some swaps that haven't lasted. Bar shampoo and conditioner didn't last for three ladies in our house with long hair, but bar soap has. Loose leaf tea also has been a failed experiment in our house; way too messy, so we've compromised for now and buy Yorkshire tea bags from Asda refill. Non-dairy milks weren't popular either, but I don't mind cooking with them. Yogurt is an ongoing challenge. I've tried making my own in my slow cooker, sometimes it has worked and other times not. For now I'm buying some in glass from the milkman, but Greek yogurt I can still only get in plastic.

Timewise, in total it takes about an hour longer shopping than going to the two supermarkets used to, but I also spend about another hour or two at home making a loaf of bread and baking for the week ahead. I also have to shop when the market is open now, so you have to be a bit more organised and plan ahead. And it rains sometimes of course - but the rest of the time you shop in the fresh air and sunshine!

Some things have also been hard to source, so you have to make a choice to either not eat them or eat them only as a treat. Soft cheeses like mozzarella and cream cheese, frozen peas, biscuits and cheese crackers are almost impossible to buy plastic free. Pizza, for instance, we now just treat ourselves to Santaniello's in a cardboard box when we want a lazy tea and instead of a takeaway it is just easiest to go back to eating in the restaurant.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to try it?

Honestly, I'd say watch an episode of Shop Well for the Planet on iPlayer or look up zero waste ideas on the internet and just pick something to try. Start small, try a few swaps and see which ones work for your family. There's a great challenge called #justonebottle which is all about just trying out a refill once to reduce your plastic impact. It's a great place to start. Be open-minded too; some things will mean you need to modify a little, like switching from a dishwasher tablet to powder or trying a different hand cream, but they are small changes.

My top tips: meal plan and organise your list by the shop. If you cook from scratch most of the time as I did already, this approach to shopping really isn't a massive shift. We choose to eat our meat and fish now at weekends when it's fresh and mainly vegetarian during the week. Having a bread maker is pretty much essential. I've experimented with making bagels, muffins and always slice a loaf to put in the freezer. Your freezer is definitely your friend. I batch cook main meals, soup, cake and snacks for the kids. You'll probably be like me and need to invest in some decent storage jars and larger reusable plastic Tupperware for meat and fish. B&M and Wilko both have 1L Kilner-style jars for less than £2 each, so it's worth shopping around.

The thing I get asked the most though, is 'doesn't the fruit and veg from the market go off in a few days?'. My answer would be the same as for the supermarkets actually - yes if you put your tomatoes at the bottom of the bag they'll get bruised. Eat your soft fruit first and your apples and oranges at the end of the week. It's all about planning what you eat when and not overbuying, sometimes that is easier in the market as you can just take two satsumas and an apple if that's all you want.

What's next for you?

I want to go more organic. I usually run a big veg patch so that's important to me, and I'm going to try

supplementing with a Riverford Organic UK veg box too (or try Abel & Cole, Milk & More or Oddbox). For yogurt I may make the decision to invest in a yogurt maker still. I'm also looking at bigger changes we can make now, switching to a smaller electric car in October and possibly solar panels. We aren't close to zero waste yet either. That's a much tougher challenge, but one I'll keep working on.

Would you go back?

No, honestly it's been such a revelation. I feel so much better about the food my family are eating and my impact on the planet. It's been a really easy decision to stick to. When I walk round the supermarket these days I find it really hard seeing all the plastic we are putting into the environment. And until the UK supermarkets catch up with Spain and France, who are already legislating for plastic free veg and 20% refill areas, and can match the quality and local sourcing, they aren't going to tempt me back.

Bees and fleas

Bees and Fleas are like we people
Some are good and some are bad.
Bees work to make their honey nectar
Whilst Fleas are simply a distractor.

Bees work hard collecting pollen;
What is it that Fleas do?
Bees work together for their Queen
Whilst Fleas are biting, not easily seen.

Bees are a productive source for good
But Fleas just irritate and do annoy.
Whilst Bees get on with busy lives
Producing honey for their hives.

But Fleas are parasites who live on us
And animals and cause us much distress.
It's easy praising all the kinds of Bees
But what, really, is the point of Fleas?

Robin Salter

Café B... 

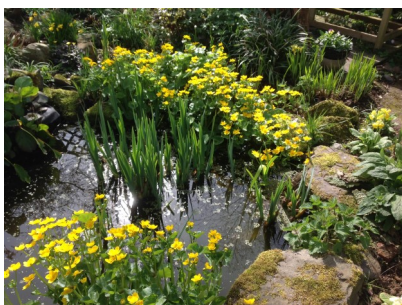
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Biddenham Village Hall
10.15 am - 11.45am*

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

Next café 17th May

This month in the garden

The feature in my garden which provides me with most joy at this time of the year is my pond. It was excavated, constructed and landscaped by my son in 1989. That summer the extension to our house had just been completed and the garden had taken a hit. So we agreed that our son could make his pond. He was thirteen and for a number of years this had been his ambition. Cue lots of research in garden magazines and books, visits to pond specialists and garden centres with aquatics; all good as reading had never been Giles' passion and now he was reading and researching with enthusiasm. The finished pond is a kidney shape 5 metres long, 1.8 metres at its widest point and just over 1 metre in depth. It might have been much bigger. Fortunately I looked out of the bedroom window as Giles was laying out the rope on the lawn to get the shape before cutting the turf. What he was proposing would have taken over half the garden. However, after heavy banging on the window from me and frantic gesturing to make it smaller plus a rational discussion with his father we reached a compromise. Phew!



As I look out of the window on a grey March day the rain is splish-splashing into the pond but, better still, the water level is being topped up by water gushing from a small pipe. This runs from the house gutters into two water butts which overflow via the pipe into the pond.

Originally we had fish, Koi Carp, which were protected from the heron by an invisible fishing line which ran around the whole pond to prevent the herons from walking in to catch their prey. This worked well for a number of years but over time the fishing line broke or the heron worked out a strategy and the fish were taken. So now it is a wildlife pond. Although deep in the middle there are tiered shelves for marginal plants and at each end a shallow bog garden so that any creatures coming for a drink can scramble out easily. Low growing plants and grasses on the edge provide cover for froglets and toadlets that will be exiting the pond later in the year.

The pond is netted each Autumn as the leaves start to fall and removed around Christmas time well before the birds start to delve into the mud for nest making. As I sit here it is a hive of bird activity with much bathing and foraging. The brightness of the marsh marigolds is a treat when the sun shines. I enjoy the yellow flag iris as well but I wouldn't recommend them as they are too invasive. However, they do provide nice spears for dragonfly and damselfly larvae to climb up and out of the water so that they can break free from their larval case and take to the air as winged adults. Sadly, I no longer have many frogs in the pond. I have been told that the midwife toad tadpoles, of which there are many, predate the frog tadpoles.

I cannot recommend highly enough even a small amount of water in a garden. It provides such an attraction for all kinds of insects, birds and amphibians, and our beleaguered wildlife friends need all the help they can get. In return they help us gardeners by predated some of the creatures that eat our crops. On this note I saw, last year, a blackbird hammering a snail shell to reach the juicy inside - I had thought that only thrushes used this anvil technique.

Please say no to slug pellets. They are far too dangerous for birds and animals. In fact I read in the press this week that the RHS says that slugs should no longer be called pests but referred to as garden visitors as they play a key role in ecosystems.

I seem to have spent the last few weeks deadheading pot grown hyacinths and planting them out into the garden

where they naturalise quite successfully. I always plant lots of shallow terracotta pots with dwarf iris (Iris Reticulata). They are a native of Turkey and the Caucasian Mountains. They come on well in the plant house and then I can transfer them to the patio or the conservatory when they are just starting to show their buds. As well as the deep blue purples of Blue Note, Fabiola, Harmony and Pauline, this year I have also grown Frozen Planet, mainly white with ice blue tips - I just love it and will certainly grow it again next year. Potting compost needs to be mixed 50/50 with horticultural grit and a top dressing of grit to set off the pots. When the iris had finished flowering I used to leave them in their pots to rest up for the summer and hope that they would come again the following year but they never seemed to. Last year I tried an experiment with one pot. I just put the bulbs and compost directly into the ground after flowering and hey presto all 25 bulbs flowered beautifully this spring. I will certainly be doing it with all the pots this year.



My conservatory has been a mass of amaryllis (Hippeastrum) this year. As I write this they are a riot of colour, but by April they will be over. I have to say that I am not good at getting them to flower in subsequent years. I

understand the technique is to snip off the flowers as they fade and cut the stem short to within an inch of the bulb. The long strappy leaves which will have appeared will provide the energy for next year's flowers. Now is the time that the plant needs good light and keep it in the house until all danger of frost has passed. The plant can then be moved outside for the summer. It needs a sunny position, but protected from really scorching sun. The bulb should stay dry and the soil barely moist. Fertilise it once or twice a month so that the leaves stay green. In late summer cease watering and move to a dry location away from bright light. The leaves will gradually whither and the bulb will go into a period of dormancy - do not water at this time. After three or four months repot with fresh compost and water sparingly to start the bulb into regrowth. Good luck!

In the plant house the auriculas are starting to bud. It would be lovely to display them in an auricular theatre - their vibrant colours contrast so well against the black, matt background. I always admire these when I visit horticultural shows. My collection of sempervivums went into the plant house in the autumn and I have just started to water them again. I like to have them on a low table on the patio throughout the summer. I first became interested in them when, many years ago, I visited Beth Chatto's garden near Colchester. Her collection of sempervivums were arranged on different levels on tree stumps and chimney pots and looked so good. What a wonderful plantswoman she was and even though she was in her late 80s she was kneeling down and weeding a border on the day that I visited. She died in 2018 at the age of 94. Gardening keeps you young and fit! The garden is well worth a visit if you are in that part of the country and they have a lovely nursery and mail order business. Beth's mantra was "The right plant in the right place" and I do try to abide by that and aim to work with my garden, soil and weather conditions rather than against them - not always succeeding I have to say.

Speaking of garden visiting I went to the walled garden in Moggerhanger Park this week. The restoration of this garden started in 2016 and it is now well under way. The volunteers work there on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they are always on the look-out for more people to join them. It was a pleasure to see it looking so good and an excellent place to visit, especially as one can take in the snowdrops,

narcissus and bluebells in the woods alongside it as they each come into their own as the months progress.

So on with the work in our own gardens. Buddleia can be cut back hard now - they flower on new wood and will attract butterflies. Every garden should have one, in a sunny spot. Look out for the dwarf Buzz Series, these can be grown in pots if space is limited and can be kept at less than 1.5 metres in height and spread. I have Buzz Sky Blue, Magenta and Ivory.

I am also contemplating cutting back my hydrangeas - I did it too early last year and was caught out by the frost so it is as well to keep an eye on weather forecasts. Remove the dead, dry flower heads and cut back the stem to a strong, healthy pair of buds. Lavender bushes can be trimmed but do not cut into old wood, if you do the plants will surely die, as I know from experience when I was over enthusiastic with the secateurs. If sweet peas are getting leggy pinch out the tips as this encourages the side shoots.

Narcissi will be going over towards the end of the month. Resist the temptation to tidy up and cut off their leaves but do deadhead the flowers. Spring bulbs need to recharge their batteries at this time of the year. The leaves take in the sunlight and turn it into starch reserves stored in the bulb for a good show of flowers next year. I will be feeding mine with blood, fish and bone or chicken pellets to help them on their way.

April is a good month for sowing seeds - summer cabbage, Brussels sprouts, leeks, raddish, lettuce. The list is endless, whatever you fancy. Towards the end of the month I will be sowing tomato seed for planting outside in early June. I always grow Sungold, a very sweet, golden, cherry tomato as I find it does very well in a sunny spot outdoors and is very prolific. But there are so many good varieties in different colours, really nice in summer salads especially with basil.

Aside from work, always make time to stop and stare. I have so enjoyed walking through the village and admiring the beautiful tree blossom - it's really uplifting. No wonder visitors flock to Japan for the ancient tradition of Hanami or "flower viewing" during the cherry blossom season. The odd bee has been in the garden collecting nectar from the ever-increasing numbers of flowers and yesterday I watched a pair of great tits battling with a pair of blue tits for possession of the bird box outside my kitchen window. In these troubled times nature and wildlife carry on.

Linda Truscott

More photographs to accompany this article are available on the Biddenham Gardeners Association website www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

St Joseph's & St Gregory's Primary School

World Book Day

Staff and children at St Joseph's and St Gregory's celebrated World Book Day recently. All were invited to come dressed in mufti or as a book character and there was an array of bright and beautiful costumes to be seen. Children were off timetable and were engaged in a plethora of brilliant activities throughout the day.



Street names for Gold Lane development

Street names have been announced for the housing development at Gold Lane. Following a suggestion from Peter Applewhite, supported by the Parish Council, the streets will commemorate some of the significant names in Biddenham's history.

So, for example, the main spine road is to be called Lavender Lane, and there will be a Dovecote Drive, Boteler Reach, Manning Mews and Wheelwright Way.

You can see the full list and a plan on the Bedfordshire Archives website. <https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/SearchOurCatalogues.aspx>

Search in the catalogue for reference BorBPC25/4/18.

Jean Gambold

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Pilates for all at Biddenham Village Hall

Every Friday, groups of exercisers head to the Village Hall with Pilates mats clutched under their arms, leaving an hour later with a spring in their step.

We caught up with Pilates Instructor, Jane Butcher, pictured below, who runs classes in Biddenham, to find out more.

Tell me about yourself

I was born in Sheffield but moved to Bedford at the age of one. I've been in the fitness industry since leaving university. I started off working in a disabled sports centre and went on to gain various fitness qualifications including personal training, nutrition and sports therapy.



What first interested you in Pilates?

It was fairly new when I started. I was interested in the medical side, particularly how it benefits your back. At the time, I had a bad back and did remedial Pilates. The exercises Physios recommend - bridges, twisting, holding one leg - are all beginner level Pilates.

Who can do Pilates?

Anyone - there's really no limit age wise, gender wise or disability wise.

I have people in my classes in their 80s who are very flexible. It depends how easily you can get up and down from the floor. I've taught people with knee replacements, hip replacements, and Parkinson's. It's important to listen to your own body and try not to force it.

If someone struggled with floor exercises, I'd be happy to give them exercises they can do in a chair instead of on the floor. I also run chair Yoga for people with cancer, and chair Pilates at daycare centres.

What is the difference between Pilates and Yoga?

The main difference is that traditional Pilates is primarily done on the floor, while Yoga involves more standing exercises. Yoga is also more focused on breathing and meditation as well as strength and flexibility, whereas Pilates focuses on the core, neutral spine and engaging the pelvic floor muscles. There are breathing elements too, though I tend not to emphasise these in my classes as it can over complicate things.

What are the health benefits of Pilates?

As Pilates involves the mind and body, it's good for lowering blood pressure and stress levels. It also helps to strengthen your core, tummy and back, as well as developing posture awareness. These health benefits then translate into everyday life. There's also the social aspect and sense of community.

What equipment do you need for Pilates?

You just need an exercise mat and clothes you can move in. You don't need trainers. Mats vary in thickness. I recommend 10-15 mm, but not too spongy as that makes balance exercises harder. In Biddenham, it's a hard floor so a comfortable mat helps.

Some people use little cushions which help neck and spine alignment and make breathing easier. But not everyone needs one.

Sometimes, we use weights to vary the routine. I recommend 1-2kg weights, though men sometimes prefer 2-5kg weights.

There's lots of other Pilates equipment which I don't use in my classes, though I'm thinking of introducing bands which increase resistance.

You can also make the exercises harder just by doing them more slowly and controlled.

What advice would you give people who have never tried Pilates before?

I'd first provide information about the pelvic floor, neutral spine, and the positions, and suggest watching one of my YouTube videos. I'd then suggest a one-to-one session to assess mobility and ability to perform basic moves, before recommending which class to join.

If you are interested in Pilates, contact Jane for details

0789 1879 571

jn.butcher@ntlworld.com

www.fitforyourlife.co.uk

St James's churchyard closure

As Parishioners may be aware the Churchyard extension at the rear of the Church has been in use for some time now. In respect of the existing Churchyard, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) has decided that, whilst continuing burials/committal of ashes may be allowed for any member of a family of a person or persons previously buried in the Churchyard, it is logical to seek approval from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to declare the formal closure of this Churchyard. This will assist the PCC in that the future maintenance of the Churchyard will be undertaken by the Borough Council. Below this article is the formal notice as prescribed by the MoJ. A copy of this notice is being placed in all the local Parish noticeboards. Any Parishioners who still have concerns about this process can contact Laurie Hurn (Churchwarden) for further information and support.

Statutory Notice

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF St James Churchyard, Biddenham, Bedford

Notice is hereby given that it is the intention of the Secretary of State for Justice, acting on an application by the incumbent and churchwardens, to apply to the Privy Council for an Order requiring the discontinuance of burials in the above churchyard.

Provision would be made for the following exceptions:-

a. in any vault or walled grave in the churchyard, burial may be allowed but every coffin in such vault or grave must be separately enclosed by stonework or brick work properly cemented;

b. in any existing earthen grave in the churchyard, the burial may be allowed of the body of any member of the family of the person or persons previously buried in that grave, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave; and

c. in any grave space in which no interment has previously taken place, the burial may be allowed of any person for whom, or any member of the family for which that grave space has been reserved and appropriated, with the exclusive right of burial there, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.

Any representations about the proposed closure should be sent to the Coroners and Burials Team, Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ (quoting reference CC/MAR/22/032) within 21 days of this publication.

11.03.2022

Biddenham Cricket Club



As the daylight lengthens there is the promise of the usual cricket activity on the Pavilion field soon. Some will have already noticed cutting and rolling taking place and there are likely to be other changes in the next few weeks. The most observant will have noticed that David Watson is no longer carrying out this work and is now enjoying a well-earned break after 20 or so years.

The tasks that David carried out so efficiently will have to be carried out by others. The cutting of the field is the Cricket Club's responsibility from April and we are looking to have a small team of volunteers ready and willing to help with this task.

We hope to achieve this from within the club membership, but would welcome offers of assistance from anyone who might enjoy around 90 minutes sitting on the large Ransomes mower cutting the field.

Also on the ground, working with the Parish Council, the club have organised replacement protective netting to be installed in front of the children's playground. Plans are also in place to tidy up the cricket nets that always look rather sad in the winter months – although surprisingly seem to be used on a regular basis even on the coldest days. Hopefully the start of May will see most of this work completed.

As highlighted last month, if anyone feels that they would like to become involved in helping with the junior section of the club, please contact me or Chris Spurgeon. A separate DBS certificate from the England and Wales Cricket Board will be required to be obtained by anyone wishing to become involved. This is now a much-improved online process and details can be provided on how to access this.

Details of the first month's home fixtures will appear in the May Loop together with more details about how to join the junior and senior sections of the club. The club website will be updated with plans for the new season and information of how to join the club is available there.

Richard Fone

Club news, fixtures and results appear on the website at:
<http://biddenham.play-cricket.com/home>

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

Contact numbers:

Chairman	Glenn Taylor	07778 479479
Junior Chairman	Chris Spurgeon	07707 771606
Cricket Secretary	Richard Fone	07818 678697
Club Welfare Officer	Joe Derilo	07468 431304

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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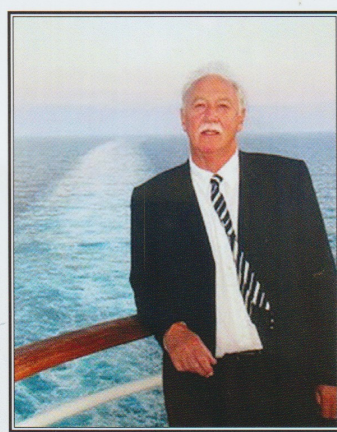
Contact Ryan on
TEL: 07980 209587
or EMAIL



John Wagstaff

We are sorry to report the death of John Wagstaff of Main Road, Biddenham on 20th February. We are grateful to Liz for providing us with this story of his life.

John was born in Bedford on 13th August 1948, to Horace and Irene Wagstaff. He was the youngest of three children and the much-loved brother of Susan and Joan.



Steam trains were a passion since childhood, and he would meticulously record the numbers of the engines he saw. A favourite spot was over at Sandy where John fondly recalled family picnics with Joan and Sue assisting him in noting numbers while their parents relaxed in the sunshine. As a teenager John loved nothing more than accompanying his father up north on business trips and being dropped off at the nearest station for a few hours. Family holidays as a child were usually to the east and south coast and John's father would let John plan the route to their destination. On one occasion after he had mapped out the planned journey his father asked why he had chosen a route that would take longer to get to their destination, to which John replied 'By going his way there were four more railway crossings and so more opportunities to see trains.'

Having two older sisters who liked playing schools paid dividends for John who was able to read and write by the time he started school. After passing the 11+ he joined Bedford School and was a pupil from 1959 to 1966. Whilst at Bedford School, John met David Smith and Michael Watt. They became lifelong friends. From Bedford School he moved to Sheffield to study architecture at the University of Sheffield where he obtained a First-Class degree. John was a colourful character; he loved the music of the 1960s and 70s and even went as far as making his own clothes at university so that he could have purple velvet trousers and balloon sleeved shirts. A smelly Afghan coat completed the ensemble and had to be sneaked from the wardrobe in recent years because the odour was just too much!

Whilst at university he met Julie and, after they married, they lived in Leicestershire with their three Border Collies - Ormonde, Amadis and Trigo. At an opening ceremony for a housing estate that John had designed it was noticed that two of the street names, Amadis Road and Trigo Close, appeared to be named after John's dogs. When questioned John quickly corrected this to say that the roads were not named after the dogs, his dogs were named after steam trains, his great passion in life.

Following his divorce, John moved back to Bedford and worked briefly at Luton Borough Council before moving to McCarthy & Stone in Bedford. Here John was able to enjoy another great passion, sailing. John joined the Bedford Offshore Club. He took part in the annual construction industry sailing regatta in the Solent organised by McCarthy & Stone and proudly came third out of a fleet of 24. For a number of years, he enjoyed boys' jollies - chartering yachts for weekends with groups of friends and sailing across the Channel, around the Isle of Wight and along the South Coast. John was usually navigator where his aptitude for figures and precision seemed to come in handy. Whilst he loved the sailing, being a sociable person, he also loved the socialising and banter. His stories of sailing were high up there in his repertoire!

John settled in Biddenham, buying a derelict cowshed which he designed and built himself, and he lived at Hidden Land Barn until shortly before his death. His home was very aptly named, as many delivery men will attest to.

John went on to set up his own architectural practice,

John Wagstaff Associates, and went on to win several design awards for his work. He was an active member of the Bedford Association of Architects for many years and enjoyed the company of local architects many of whom he considered as friends rather than just fellow professionals.

John was a cricket fan from a young age. When he first moved to Biddenham he enquired in the pub about cricket and was told that the village club no longer existed, so along with a few significant others who were propping up the bar he decided it was time to change that. John was so pleased that the resurrected club took off and has continued to thrive over the years, thanks to hardworking members who have provided coaching and support for many budding young cricketers.

When his cricket playing days were over John avidly watched test matches on TV. He particularly enjoyed viewing at Liz's parents where he could enjoy a G&T and/or ice cream with Claire, Liz's mum, and look out of the window at the view over the harbour if rain stopped play.

John's last big adventure was a trip to the Isles of Scilly in the summer of 2020 accompanied by Bernard and Dickson. The plan had been to be driven to Exeter airport and then fly over to the Isles of Scilly, but on arrival at the airport the flight was cancelled. The three of them had to find a hotel in Exeter, stay overnight and then arrange an early morning taxi to take them to Penzance and finally a trip on the steamer across to St Mary's. When Liz met them on the harbour side Dickson and Bernard, after two days of travelling, were exhausted but John had had a wonderful time, enjoying the travelling and especially the boat journey. To John it wasn't just about getting to your destination but also the experiences on the journey you had to get there. He even woke up his trusty travelling companions to point out Stonehenge!

We've mentioned cricket and sailing but shouldn't forget rugby - another life-long passion - both playing at school and going along to watch matches, especially Leicester Tigers and, more latterly, Bedford Blues. Leicester Tigers matches were particularly associated with Boxing Day - a day which John loved to spend with his sister Sue, brother-in-law Roger and their family, Alan, Angie and Ian, in Leicester. The match tended to be followed by a not-so-swift half and John was always to blame for getting back very late for lunch and incurring the wrath of his big sister. He always told the story with a chuckle, knowing that he got away with murder where either of his sisters was concerned. In more recent years the Tigers match was replaced by a trip to the Pumping Station at Leicester where engines were fired up on Boxing Day or to one of the local steam railways where John loved to meet up with Ian and his son Harry and any other family members who could be persuaded to brave it in the cold weather! He may not have told them how much they meant to him, but they were all loved in equal measure.

John's love of sailing has been mentioned. He'd always wanted to sail to the Isles of Scilly, but the winds had never been favourable. He eventually did make it there numerous times though as he spent the latter half of his life with Liz who originates from the islands. John and Liz met in Biddenham when she lived across the road with her baby son, Sam. A friendship blossomed into a relationship of over 25 years and John was a loving partner to Liz and an adoring and supportive 'stepdad' to Sam.

John loved taking on the responsibility of taking Sam to primary school each morning which should have been relatively easy as Hidden Land Barn is only a couple of hundred metres from the school. Phone calls at a few minutes to nine almost always occurred though and what should have been a leisurely walk to school was always a last-minute dash to arrive, never late, but in the nick of time.

John was the most patient, kind, caring almost-dad any boy could wish for and he and Sam shared a special relationship. John spent countless hours at the cricket nets, on the side-lines at rugby matches, pushing Sam up and

down as he learned to ride his bike and going to the golf range. Sam has fondly reminisced about golfing matches at the course at Clapham - always starting with high anticipation but invariably ending in John cricking his back, much slicing which resulted in miles walked in neighbouring fields searching for lost balls and thorough dejection, coupled with total mental and physical exhaustion! John enjoyed travelling to spectate at water polo matches, as far as Wales on occasion, he was so proud of achievements, no matter how big or small. He was always there for him with words of wisdom and reassurance.

A favourite pastime when on holiday on the Isles of Scilly with Liz's family was to stroll down to the quay to watch the boats going in and out. His love of talking often resulted in long stories, all told with a twinkle in his eye. This proved to be useful when telling bedtime stories - Sam and his cousins loved John's bedtime stories when they were little and much preferred the made up, convoluted stories about Thomas The Tank Engine and friends to the shorter books.

John loved this country and travelling within in. He had an innate sense of direction and enjoyed driving - to Wales in the early days with Julie and in more recent years up to Northumberland, across to Norfolk and Suffolk or to the West Country. It was a pleasure to share his enthusiasm for the countryside and the coast. Invariably there were stops off at steam railways. The Severn Valley Railways was his absolute favourite and he delighted in introducing Sam to the various trains and stations from a very early age - even on occasion with Sam dressed in pyjamas so that he could see the trains at night and then go straight to bed. John's last trip to the Severn Valley was with his nephew Al who chauffeured him when he was too unwell to drive. Simply being there and taking it all in would have worked its calming magic on John, as it had done all his life. Angie took John across to the Nene Valley Railway when longer trips became too difficult. Such outings meant the world to him.

Joan recalled taking John for a little drive towards Oakley, Harrold and Pavenham even more recently. His memory may have been failing and John probably wouldn't have remembered his way home, but she smiled as she recounted how he'd directed his big sister left and right in order to reach his destination!

From John's family - a huge thank you to all those who cared for John when he became ill - to Martin, Paula and Sarah, to Jenny and June, to Bernard and Nicolette but especially to Dickson who lived with John for nearly two years, during which time they built a very special bond.

John will be sadly missed by all those lucky enough to have known him.

John's funeral was held on Monday 14th March and David Smith gave a short account of his friendship with John that dated back to when they were school friends some 60 years ago.

David said 'Probably our biggest adventure together was our trip to America in 1968. Back in those days, package holidays to the continent - which usually meant Spain or Italy - were becoming common but flying across the Atlantic was prohibitive. Luckily for us, the British Universities North America Club had recently been set up. They chartered transatlantic flights for UK university students with Freddy Laker Airways and also arranged for working visas in the USA under the Exchange Visitor Program. So, the three of us scraped together the £59 return airfare needed and flew off to America for two months. This was before the days of credit cards or mobile phones, but I had my super-8 cine camera with me - and that was when we made the famous film of our trip to the states. John loved watching the film in his last few years and would happily sing along to the soundtrack as we remembered the good old days together. John was a good friend. I miss him.'


Peter's Picturehouse

On Tuesday 5th April Peter's Picturehouse is showing the 2015 film 'The Intern' (Certificate 12) which stars Anne Hathaway and Robert de Niro. Robert de Niro plays a retiree who decides that retirement is not all it could be and he therefore leaps at the chance to become a senior intern for a recently set up business which is doing well in online fashion retail. Anne Hathaway plays the busy career woman and boss of the company. Reviews describe the film as telling a really good story and an easy-going romantic comedy, which sounds just what we might need!

As usual, doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start with tickets priced £5 on the door. All are very welcome; do come along and enjoy the film and perhaps an ice cream, hot drink, beer, glass of wine to go with it.

We show our films on the first Tuesday of each month at Biddenham Village Hall. May and June's films will be advertised on the village noticeboards and in next month's Loop.

Rose Houghton




Peter's Picturehouse

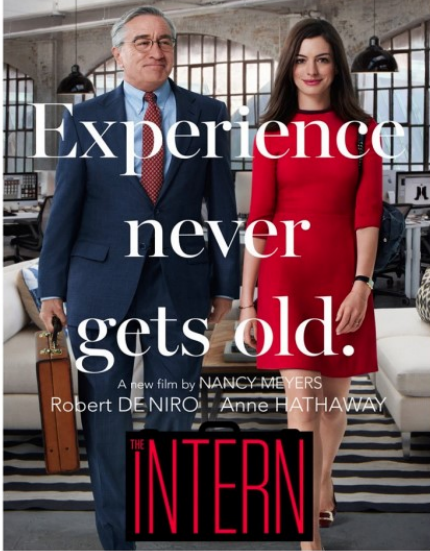
In April

Date: Tuesday 5th April 2022

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

Location: Biddenham Village Hall





Tickets available on the door, price: £5

Certificate: 12

For further information contact

Marihelen

07710288933

marihelen@btinternet.com

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Coming soon...

Tuesday 3rd May TBC

Tuesday 7th June



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The Ganges - not the river, the ship

Last year my website *When the Welsh came to Bedford* received an enquiry to which I replied rapidly, thank you, yes please! John Lambert had received his Great Uncle Rees' album of photographs taken during the Great War, including his time in Bedford, and wondered if I would like copies for the website.

Rees served with the 1st Welsh (Howitzer) Brigade, 53rd (Welsh) Division, was in Bedford from May to November 1915, going then to France and in February 1916 to the Middle East. John kindly sent photos and other material, and Rees became the subject of a post on the website.

Of Welsh parentage Rees was born in 1895 in Mylor, Cornwall, where his father, a Royal Marine, was serving on HMS Ganges, then a training ship for boys and the fourth ship of that name, the previous three having been armed East India Company ships. I couldn't resist later a quick peep at the Ganges to see if anything of interest might pop up. It did!



HMS Ganges, with thanks to the Mylor Local History Group (mylorhistory.org.uk)

until 1899. She was taken out of service in 1923, and eventually broken up in 1930. But her name and some of her parts live on.

There's a village called Ganges in British Columbia, on Salt Spring Island about an 80km ferry ride from Vancouver. Its harbour, originally called Admiralty Bay, was renamed Ganges Harbour after our ship in 1859 by Captain George Richards, and from that the now popular seaside village, the largest on the island, took its name. A number of areas and roads are named after the ship and members of her crew. The transom board of one of HMS Ganges' boats has pride of place in the village's Centennial Park, and the ship's badge with its distinctive elephant has been adopted by the Saltspring Island Sailing Club. Captain Richards, a navy hydrographer on the coast of British Columbia from 1857 to 1862, was responsible for the designation of dozens of place names along its coast.



*The Guildford Cross, under construction and in place
Courtesy of Guildford Cathedral Archives*



Ganges was an 84-gun ship of the line of the Royal Navy built from teak in Bombay in 1821. She was the last sailing ship of the Navy to serve as a flagship and the last sailing line-of-battle ship in foreign service. She saw action in the Mediterranean and served in the Pacific before returning to England and beginning her time as a training ship in 1865 at Mylor harbour, staying there

until 1899. She was taken out of service in 1923, and eventually broken up in 1930. But her name and some of her parts live on.

The Captain's cabin from the late Ganges was incorporated into a suite in the exclusive Art Deco Burgh Island Hotel in Devon. And in 1933 teak timbers from the ship were used to construct a large cross placed on Stag Hill, Guildford, Surrey, to mark the site where the new Cathedral was to be built: it still stands outside the eastern end.

With space on board for 500 boys it's estimated some 14,000 passed through the Ganges to the Fleet during its time in Mylor. The ship's company was 87, with 10 more on the training tender. As well as ratings teaching practical seamanship, there was a head teacher and eight school masters, with all boys learning to read and write while on board. There were gunners and quartermasters, a band master and two musicians: the boys gave concerts on board and ashore, and took part in local regattas. Also on board were two tailors, two shoemakers, a blacksmith, a cooper and a barber.

The ship's time in Cornwall didn't start well with the first Captain and his First Lieutenant both dismissed for ill-treatment. Even after that, discipline and efficiency would seem to have been rigorously enforced. As training in any of the ships was designed to emphasise uniformity, the experience recorded by a boy seaman on another training ship is likely to be comparable to that of boys on Ganges.



Seamanship instruction on board on knotting and splicing, thanks to Mylor Local History Group

'The day started at 05.30 with deck scrubbing, a meagre breakfast was followed by sail drill, parade, alternating spells of seamanship and gunnery, witnessing punishment of any miscreants, then lunch.

Two afternoons each week were dedicated to maths and English.

The last meal of the day was tea at 15.30 before recreation at 16.00 either games or entertainments on board in the candle-lit ship, or football or route marches ashore depending on the light and weather. A communal bath was taken once a week, with clothes washed after all the boys in the same water. Learning to swim was compulsory, tough and effective as the only alternatives were swim or sink.'

The Ganges memorial in the churchyard has the names of more than 50 boys, with an average age of 16, who died during the ship's time in Mylor. Most died from what today would not be fatal illnesses, principally flu.

The author Beatrix Potter visiting the area in 1893 observed: 'The boys, mostly between 15 and 17, were sent to the ship when first recruited to learn the rudiments of drill and discipline. They were noisy and high-spirited but always in the charge of an officer on shore, where their healthiness and clean merry faces make them a pleasure to look at.'

Civic leaders in the Falmouth area, hearing Ganges was to leave Cornwall, petitioned for her to stay, citing the area's sheltered waters and salubrious climate. The Admiralty's response expressed the difficulty often experienced in landing the boys for recreation and medical treatment, with the latter possibly contributing to the ship's health record being worse than other training ships. It was felt the considerable investment in a new training establishment, complete with a proper hospital, would be better made elsewhere.

Happily, from 1905, the name HMS Ganges lived again, attached to a new training establishment built at Shotley, near Ipswich, which remained in service until October 1976. There are plans now to redevelop the site for housing and it is hoped some features of the former establishment including its Grade II Listed 142-foot training mast, climbed in 1967 by John Noakes for BBC's Blue Peter, may be restored.

Peter Applewhite

Footnote: John Lambert is putting together his own website telling the story and remembering the men of the 1st Welsh (Howitzer) Brigade (1st-welsh-hwtzrs.co.uk) including, of course, Great Uncle Rees.

Biddenham Gardeners Association

Ferns - fifty shades of green

On Tuesday 15th March there was a buzz of excitement in the Village Hall. After two years we were back! We had an excellent turnout of members and visitors - we welcomed familiar faces and new people. Colin Ward from Swines Meadow Farm Nursery joined us to talk about ferns. He specialises in shade and woodland plants and his nursery is one of the UK's leading growers of exotic and rare plants.

Colin started his talk by illustrating the part that ferns have played in history and world culture. As the fern emerges into growth we recognise the crozier. It is the staff with the curved top - the crozier that is the symbol of the Good Shepherd and is carried by bishops in the Roman Catholic, Anglican and some European Lutheran churches as an insignia of their ecclesiastical office. Ferns are native to New Zealand and the All Blacks Rugby team logo features a leaf from a silver fern. The silver fern was also a symbol of bravery, sacrifice and allegiance when the New Zealand Army wore it during the Boer War at the turn of the century. The fern is engraved on the tombstones of those New Zealanders who fell during both World Wars. Maori tattoos often depict ferns and a fully unfolded fern frond means life and tranquility and is a symbol of Maori pride.

We learnt about fern propagation techniques, all of which are practised by Colin, and he provided photographs to illustrate the various ways in which ferns can be increased. Growing ferns from spores may take many years so patience is needed. As the spores, which are found on the underside of the leaves, ripen they change colour and it is at the green stage when they should be captured, if they have reached their brown stage that is too late. Colin grows them in a sterilised, very wet peat compost. Some ferns propagate through bulbils. These are nodules on the leaf that grow into a new plant but this will take many months. Ferns produce either rhizomes or crowns and so can be propagated by division and the best time to do this is in the spring.

Colin continued his talk by outlining the attributes of the very many different types of fern - too numerous to mention in this report but there is clearly something for everyone. Deciduous or evergreen, shade loving or those which will tolerate some sun, indoors, or outdoors, from huge tree ferns to the tiny *Asplenium trichomanes*, the maidenhair spleenwort, growing in wall crevasses. An interesting observation was made about ferneries. Colin suggested that ferns should not necessarily be grown on their own but should be mixed with other plants, for example hostas or aspidistras, as this will give a mix of foliage which will enhance the overall look of a fernery. Colin concluded his talk by supporting the use of mycorrhizal fungi when planting ferns, feeding with a seaweed based fertiliser, using crushed volcanic rock mixed with compost or as a top dressing and the use of a garlic solution to deter slugs and snails.

Many thanks to Colin for a very comprehensive talk and for bringing a collection of beautiful, healthy ferns and others plants for our members to purchase.

Please join us next month on Tuesday 19th April when Dr Twigs Way will be outlining the history of women in the garden. Her talk is entitled "Virgins, Weeders and Queens". Details can be found on our website. The meeting will be open to all members, new members and visitors.

Linda Truscott

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

www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

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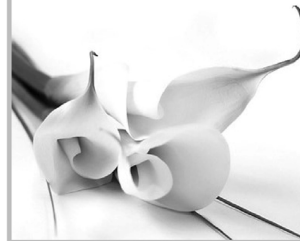
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First Friday Lunch



Soup, sandwich or baked potato,
pudding and a drink,
on the first Friday of every month
in Biddenham Village Hall
from 12.15pm

£8.00

New layout - tables of 6

Draw for 2 free lunch tickets every month
Book swap

Booking essential:
email firstfridaylunch@outlook.com
or text/leave a message on **07412 559584**

1st April, 6th May

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 February draw

The winners were:

1st	Trevor Nielson	141
2nd	Ghada Latif	74
3rd	David Watson	506

Drawn by Derek Bradbury



CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT NETWORK

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



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

Membership
Treasurer

Peter Leverkus
Paul Fricker

Tel: 353662
Tel: 342843

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	10.00-11.30am	Pavilion
Gentle Yoga	2.00-3.00pm	Pavilion
Storm Martial Arts	7.00-8.00pm	Pavilion
Guides	7.15pm Termtime	Village Hall
Tuesday		
Over 50s fitness	10.00-11.00am	Pavilion
Café B	10.30am-12noon (3 rd in month)	Village Hall
Peter's Picturehouse	7.00 for 7.30pm (1 st in month)	Village Hall
HIT Fitness	7.00-7.30pm	Pavilion
Biddenham Gardeners Association	7.30pm (3 rd in month)	
Country Dancing	8.00pm (2 nd & 4 th in month)	Village Hall
Zumba	8.00-9.00pm	Pavilion
Wednesday		
Kensington Ballet	10.00-11.00am	Pavilion
Baby College	10.00am, 11.00am & noon Termtime	Village Hall
Handbell Ringer practice	2.00pm	Church Barn
Table Tennis	2.00-4.00pm	Pavilion
HIT Fitness	6.30-7.30pm	Pavilion
Adult Yoga	7.00-8.00pm	Village Hall
Thursday		
Under 5's	9.30-11.30am Termtime	Village Hall
Line dancing	9.30-11.30am	Pavilion
Mum & Baby Movers	1.00pm	Village Hall
U3A Handbell Ringer Practice	2.00pm	Church Barn
Fetch Puppy Club	7.30-8.30pm	Pavilion
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	2.15-4.15pm	Pavilion
No Fear Bridge (intermediates)	2.30pm	Village Hall
Choir practice	7.00pm	Church Barn
Storm Martial Arts	7.00-8.00pm	Pavilion
Saturday		
Pregnancy Yoga	9.15am	Village Hall
Oakley Football	9.00am-12.30pm	Pavilion Field
Socatots	9.45-11.15am	Pavilion
Lucy Hunt School of Dance	2.00-3.30pm	Pavilion
Sunday		
No Fear Bridge	6.00-9.00pm	Village Hall

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

April

- Fri 1 Apr First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
 Sun 3 Apr **All Age Worship, St James's, 10.00am**
All Age Worship, All Saints, 10.00am
Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.15am
Bell Ringers Dedication Service, All Saints, 4.00pm
 Tue 5 Apr Biddenham Conservation Volunteers, scrub clearance, Cowslip Meadow, 10.00am-2.00pm, see p4
 Tue 5 Apr Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p15
 Thu 7 Apr Biddenham Conservation Volunteers, scrub clearance, etc., Cowslip Meadow, 11.00am-3.00pm, see p4
 Sun 10 Apr **Palm Sunday**
Said Holy Communion, All Saints, 9.00am
Holy Communion, St James's, 10am
Evening Prayer, St James's, 6.00pm
 Mon 11 Apr **Evening Prayer, All Saints, 7.00pm, see p2**
 Tue 12 Apr **Evening Prayer, St James's, 7.00pm, see p2**
 Wed 13 Apr **Evening Prayer, All Saints, 7.00pm, see p2**
 Thu 14 Apr **Holy Communion, St James's, 7.30pm, see p2**
 Fri 15 Apr **Good Friday**
Children's Easter Events, St James's, 10.00am, see p2
Reflection, All Saints, 12noon, see p2
Reflection, St James's, 1.00pm, see p2
Reflection, All Saints, 2.00pm, see p2
Reflection, St James's, 3.00pm, see p2
 Sun 17 Apr **Easter Day**
Service of Light, St James's, 8.00am, see p2
Service of Light, All Saints, 9.00am, see p2
Holy Communion, St James's, 10am, see p2
Holy Communion, All Saints, 10am, see p2
 Tue 19 Apr Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p9
 Tue 19 Apr Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, see p17
 Tue 19 Apr Biddenham Parish Council, Annual Meeting & Parish Council Meeting, Pavilion, 7.00pm, see p6
 Sun 24 Apr **Said Holy Communion, All Saints, 9.00am**
Holy Communion, St James's, 10.00am
 Mon 25 Apr Biddenham History Society, Church Barn, 2.30pm, see p5
 Wed 27 Apr St James's Church Annual Meetings, Church Barn, 7.30pm, see p3
 Fri 29 Apr Quilting & Sewing, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p18

May

- Tue 3 May Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p15
 Fri 6 May First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
 Sun 8 May Spring Teas, St James's churchyard and Church Barn, 2-30-5.30pm, see p3
 Tue 17 May Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p9
 Sat 21 May Music for May, Biddenham Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p4

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 19

The Loop

Editor	Jean Gambold	Tel 349849
Reporter & Proof Reader	Janet Field	
Advertising	Clare Sugars	Tel 637281
Subscriptions	Richard Harris	Tel 210434
Distribution	Rosemary Harris	Tel 210434

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 or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to 3 Queen's Close
 (cj.sugars@talktalk.net) by
Wednesday 20th April 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.