

The Loop

February
2023

£1.50

Carols in the churchyard 2022

The Christmas Eve Carol Service in St James's churchyard was as usual very well attended. Fortunately, the rain stayed away and the well wrapped up congregation enjoyed the traditional introduction to Christmas. Thanks to Carol Leverkus for the photographs below.



Christmas lights raise funds for charity

Every year, Cliff and Mikala Jones decorate the exterior of their home in Deep Spinney with thousands of Christmas lights and host a community get together to switch on the lights and sell hot drinks and homemade cakes to raise funds for charity.

They have been hosting this event every year since they moved to Biddenham 11 years ago, selecting a different charity to support each year.

At their last Christmas lights display on 3rd December they raised an impressive £408.25 for Scotty's Little Soldiers, a British charity which supports bereaved children and young people whose parents have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the armed forces. The charity was set up by Nikki Scott, wife of Corporal Lee 'Scotty' Scott, who was killed in Afghanistan while serving with the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment.



Each year they include in the display a scene that reflects the charity, so the lights included soldiers and a tank.

"We chose this charity because I'm ex-army," said Cliff who served with the Queen's Royal Lancers. "We pick a different charity to support each year. Next Christmas we will be raising funds for Cancer Research UK."

For more information about Scotty's Little Soldiers: www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk

Janet Field

**Red Cross Open
Gardens returning for
2023**

Red Cross Open Gardens Sunday 4th June
Gardens large and small wanted.
If you would like to open your garden for this
good cause please contact Liz Watson on
liz4watson@aol.com

"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 was given a beautiful book for Christmas by a member of my congregation. It is called 'The Mindful Photographer,' by Sophie Howarth, and it is really about how we look at the world. We are surrounded by a complex and chaotic world, but an artist or a photographer has only a frame in which he/she can interpret or make sense of what is around. Poetry is the same; you have to distil language and a plethora of meaning into a few short sentences. For me poetry and photography are very similar. With both poetry and photography it is not enough to see; one has to be able to interpret and subvert in order to properly express and give meaning.

The book I mentioned has a beautiful chapter on what it calls the 'beginners eye.' In a slightly irritating sort of vegan, new age way, it draws on the language of popularist Zen Buddhism, and talks about a particular principle called Shoshim. Shoshim is best understood as the beginners eye, or the child's eye. It is really about how we look at things. Naturally we get bored with familiarity. A foggy day is just a foggy day, a puddle is just muddy water after a rain shower, and a face is just a face. Shoshim is really about looking at a puddle as if I had never seen one before. Instead of just seeing a miserable foggy day, we look at how the fog creates layers of light between water and the branches of the trees, and obscures distant distractions such as buildings or lamp posts. One has to look to see what is really different about the scene.

So many things can become the dynamic subject of an image if we look at it with a beginners eye. A landscape, the cracks on a frozen pond, the human face if eyes are left to wander, and lips are given the freedom to express, but the artist, the poet, or the photographer has to first close his or her eyes to what he/she already knows, and open them again to the world as if they have never seen before.



Jesus' disciples were experienced in the principles of religion. They had been well versed in all the prejudices of faith, and had their own assumptions of what was acceptable and unacceptable. We see it not only with the disciples, but with the religious people that Jesus encountered on every page of the Gospels. Pharisees objected to Jesus not carrying out ritual washing or healing on the Sabbath, priests and Levites crossed the road to avoid coming into contact with somebody who had been robbed and beaten up, a woman was threatened with being stoned to death for committing adultery, and a Samaritan woman with a remarkable gift of communication was at risk of being ignored and marginalised, had it not been for an encounter between herself and Jesus at deep water well. The new Testament is filled with religious boundary markers that prevent the active grace and healing of a God who reaches out to everybody.

In the modern church things are no different, and let us not forget that it is not necessarily the evangelical Christians who are the most open and accepting. If we think, for example, of how it has taken so long for the Anglican Church to engage fully with the questions of sexuality and gender. Perhaps if we looked at these issues with a beginners eye, we would realise that in God's eyes these things were not a question at all. Interestingly, I read an article recently about Jesus' healing of the centurion's servant, in which it was highlighted that the relationship between a first century Roman centurion and his servant almost always had a less than platonic element to it. When Jesus healed the servant at the request of the centurion, he did not even ask the question. Perhaps this is true, I do not know, but it does draw us deeper into looking at things in a new way.

In Mark chapter 10, some children come to greet Jesus. You can imagine their noise, their chaos and their giddiness. The disciples with their arrogance and clear boundary markers sought to expel the children without a question. Jesus, however, drew in these children with their wild simplistic vision, and declared: "Let the children, the beginners, come to me, because the promise of the Kingdom belongs to these." If we are to truly invite a new vision of God's Kingdom on earth, we must be prepared to bury our prejudices and look at what is possible in a new, creative and exciting way.

God bless.

Eric

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/>



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

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax	Tel: 328452
	rev.ejlomax@gmail.com	
Reader	Sue Richards	
Churchwardens		
	Laurie Hurn	Tel 364251
	Lois Nash	Tel 961826
Verger	Hilary Hurn	Tel 364251
Treasurer	Michael Hurford	Tel 271746
Organist/Choirmaster	Adam Wright	
	www.stjamesbiddenham.com	



New Ukraine flag

A new Ukraine flag was hoisted on 17th January following the mysterious disappearance of the previous flag from the war memorial flagpole on Main Road on New Year's Eve.

The blue and yellow flag, hoisted as a symbol of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Biddenham thanks to local sponsors under the 'Homes for

Ukraine' programme, has been proudly flying in Biddenham since shortly after Ukraine was invaded.

Councillor Jon Gambold, who hoisted the new flag, said: "The halyard [rope] was damaged and the carabiners [clips] were missing and these have now been replaced together with a new flag. The new flag is bigger than the old one at 3.2m versus 1.6m."

Janet Field



Biddenham Conservation Volunteers

BCV have been busy as usual with a break for Christmas. We have worked on Rights of Way (ROW) in Great Denham and at Biddenham Pond and have been waymarking in Great Denham to ensure all footpaths are marked and walkable clearly across the old golf course and its margins.



In the winter period there is a good opportunity to carry out coppicing. This provides us with poles and sticks for future work, such as a proposed dead hedge project in Cowslip Meadow, and using shorter lengths to build wood piles as grass snake cover in the churchyard extension.

We will continue to post activities as time moves on towards Easter.

We have some hedging and trees to plant on the fringes of Cowslip Meadow and some other ROW clearing and waymarking is planned.

In the longer term, we will keep exploring opportunities on other sites around the community with the cooperation of landowners.

We thank all our team of volunteers and hope others will be able to join us. Don't worry if you are new or less physically active. There is always something to do and we provide all the tools.

Keep an eye on our task list which is on our page on the Biddenham Village website.

If you would like to join and want to get out in the fresh air please contact me or Gilly.

Chris Jones chrishj49@gmail.com

Gilly Cowan gillycowan@btinternet.com



Dee Dite

We are sorry to report the death of Dee Dite. She died suddenly at home on 28th December at the age of 82. The funeral was held at St James's church on 26th January. Dee lived in Biddenham for many years, though she lived latterly in Bromham, and she was a regular attendee at village events such as the First Friday Lunch and Café B.

We extend our sympathy to her children Louise and Alistair and their families. We hope to carry an obituary next month.

REMINDER 2023 Loop subscriptions now due

Your annual subscription to The Loop is now due.

Regrettably, it is necessary to raise the subscription price this year. The price has been £10 since 2017 but increasing print costs mean that we cannot maintain this any longer.

The price for the ten issues in 2023 will be £15 (minimum) and this will enable us to continue to cover the wide range of topics of community interest, including special colour supplements for events such as the Biddenham Show and Open Gardens where black and white photographs really don't do the participants justice.

Any profits go to the church funds, so if you can manage to donate more, please do.

You can pay by bank transfer to:

Account Name Biddenham PCC

Sort Code: 60-02-13

Account Number: 51317745

Reference: 1st line of your address

Please also send an email to loopsubs@gmail.com headed 'Loop subscription paid by bank transfer' and include your name and full address. Please state whether you prefer to receive The Loop by email (colour) or have the magazine delivered through your letterbox (black & white).

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 state 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.



*Tuesday 21st February
Biddenham Village Hall
10.15 am - 11.45am*

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

Next café 21st March

The Big Blunham Book Sale

The book sale will be held on Saturday 25th February, 10.00am to 3.00pm in Blunham Parish Church, MK44 3NQ,

There will be an enormous selection of nearly new books - specialist and fiction sorted into categories.

Home made soup, home made cakes, hot dogs, teas and coffees served all day. All profits to Blunham Church Fabric Fund. For further details please ring Sue and Peter Holden
01767 640572

Local doctor publishes second book

In the December issue we interviewed Dr Barry Monk on his award-winning debut book, 'Lifeline,' which explores the present state of the NHS and what can (and does) go wrong.

His second book, 'The Man Who Turned Blue,' takes a lighter look at his long career. Each of the 20 chapters explores different medical cases he has handled, including the titular patient who turned blue. The cases have been anonymised in the interests of patient confidentiality.

Dr Monk said: "Some of the stories are funny and some are a bit sad. Others are about medical conditions that we thought were consigned to history.

"It's an easy read and any doctor reading it will realise why they became a doctor, as it will remind them of all the good things. And anyone who's been a patient will get an insight into how a doctor's brain works and what makes them tick.

"The book is quite funny. Sometimes the most banal case can reveal all sorts of strange and wonderful things, which is why the profession is endlessly fascinating. We don't always get things right, which is part of the story."

Dr Monk would be happy to sign copies of his books for Biddenham residents and give talks to local book clubs and writing groups about the inspiration behind his stories and the process of writing. Anyone interested can contact him through: loopreporter@gmail.com.

Janet Field



Need some help
with your
trees?

STS
Simply Tree Services

- All aspects of tree maintenance to BS3998
- All hedge work undertaken
- Tree removal and stump grinding

☎ **01234 765 000**

☎ **07866 554 673**

enquiries@simplytreeservices.co.uk
www.simplytreeservices.co.uk

Fully NPTC qualified staff and all work is covered by comprehensive public liability insurance

Bedford National Trust Association

Meeting on 21st February at 2.15pm at the Addison Centre, Kempston, Bedford. MK42 8PN

Speaker - Mr Alan Gray

Talk - "You Cannot Be Serious".

Tales of a Wimbledon Umpire 1988 - 2012

Everyone welcome. There will be a small admission fee.
There is plenty of parking

Nick Sleep
Proprietor

N.A.Sleep Plumbing & Heating

7 Ison Close
Biddenham,
Beds MK40 4BH

Tel: 01234 959472

Mob: 07990 598154

Email: nicksleep@live.co.uk





As we enter 2023, the news from the pond is about slumber and recovery – the pond is currently resting and will hopefully come back to life in the Spring. In the meantime, with all the rain that we have recently endured, the water level is slowly increasing.

The various animals that breed in the pond had a rough deal last summer, as they did in many places, as we were out of water before many breeding cycles were complete. Shallow water allows our resident ducks and moorhens to scoop up ‘beak-fulls’ of these creatures for food, but last year this source of food was not available in our pond.

Water level is a constant problem for our pond as is the associated weed growth when we have no water. We hope that the recent heavy rainfall will be enough to get us through this summer and we constantly look to improve the amount of grey water that we get from the Manor Hospital roof.

We are most grateful for the donation of £500 from the Biddenham Show Committee and will be using these funds to improve the information board and pond signage by the Church.

The Conservation Group have been doing some coppicing and crown lifting on the pond site. This helps to maintain the landscape view as you come down the path and uses our hazel trees to provide a cycle of useful poles and timber. There has been some new tree planting in the adjoining field (to the north side) organised by dandara, the Gold Lane developers, and this and other work in the field will add to its value as an adjunct to our pond reserve, allowing animals to spread out and use the fields. For example, there may be patrolling dragonflies looking for insect food in the autumn and newts looking for suitable cover outside of the breeding season.

St James’ Primary School has expressed an interest in working in the field (next to the pond) on future conservation projects covering invertebrate and amphibian habitats, so we hope to develop this alongside the usual conservation work happening at the pond. We are also providing support to Biddenham International School as they develop their own wildlife pond.

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.

Please put a note in your diary to join us for our spring work morning on Saturday March 11th from 10am to noon.

The Pond Team

Contact Details

Chris Jones chrishj49@gmail.com
Cathy Eckett-Brown ceckett@gmail.com
Jane Knight jane@80kLtd.co.uk
Jonathan Field jfield21st@mail.com
Kris Hope kristenhopebee@gmail.com
www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond

Events at Great Denham Community Hall

3rd February - Monthly Children’s Cinema – no need to book in advance, you can just turn up on the day. All movies are PG rated, but follow our Facebook page for clues. Doors open at 3.30pm with the film starting at 3.45pm. Only £1.50 per child – entry includes a drink and popcorn (under 2’s accompanying an older child are free).

4th March – Comedy Club. Milton Jones will be headlining this month’s show along with an array of other talented artists – 7.30pm – 10.00pm. Tickets are selling out quickly and can be purchased via [Great Denham Comedy Club](http://www.chuckl.co.uk/great-denham-march) (www.chuckl.co.uk/great-denham-march)

25th March – Pawsome Afternoon Tea. Bookings at 1.30pm and 3.00pm. Booking details to follow soon. See www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Monday 6th February at 7.30pm at the Community Hall
Monday 6th March at 7.30pm at the Community Hall

From Our Village Agent

Our Village Agent, Teresa Moon, is here to help people in Bedford Borough villages to access the services and support they might need. She can also help with money issues. Her services are confidential and free and she can visit you at home. Just call Freephone 0800 039 1234.



Help With Energy Costs

There are a number of payments available to help you with rising costs of energy, which you can check on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>. If you’re eligible for any of the payments, you’ll be paid automatically. If you are contacted and asked to apply – beware! There are many scammers trying to trap the unwary. (If you are unable to use a computer, do contact me for help.)

Energy Saving Tips – Windows and Doors

Windows

By closing all your curtains and blinds at night, in every room, you can help stop warm air escaping through windows and reduce heating costs, especially if you have radiators situated below your windows.

- Draw your curtains at dusk to shut out the night and keep in the heat; and open your curtains during the day to let the sun in.
- Make sure you don’t drape your curtains over radiators – let radiator heat circulate into the room.
- Don’t put your wet laundry on your radiators. Use a clothes airer and leave your radiators to do the job they were intended to do.

Blinds for Extra Insulation

- Install blinds behind your curtains, so that you have a double layer of insulation.
- Honeycomb (or cellular) blinds offer extra insulation. Honeycomb blinds are made from two layers of material that form pockets throughout the blind. Air is trapped within these cells which dramatically improves insulation. (Honeycomb blinds are available from IKEA and most online blind companies.)

Drafts

- Hold a lighted candle near your external doors and windows. If the flame reveals a draught, this means you are losing heat. Draught-proofing strips will fill the gap between the window or door and the frame. There are two types:
 - Self-adhesive foam strips – these are cheap and easy to install, but may not last long.
 - Metal or plastic strips with brushes or wipers attached, which are long-lasting, but cost a little more. Make sure the strip is the right size to fill the gap.
- If the draft is coming through the gap at the bottom of your door, you could buy or make a ‘draft snake’ or door stopper, or you could even hang a thick curtain onto the back of the door.
- For windows that don’t open, use a silicone sealant.
- If you’re thinking of replacing your windows, consider installing energy efficient windows.
- Keyhole drafts – buy a purpose-made cover that drops a metal disc over the keyhole.
- Letterbox – use a letterbox flap or brush, but remember to measure your letterbox before you buy.
- Remember that internal doors may need draught-proofing if they lead to a room you don’t heat.

Do You Need Help Filling in Forms? I can visit you at home if you need help applying for a Blue Badge, Bus Pass, Attendance Allowance etc. I am happy to answer other queries or worries you might have - just call me.

Contact your Village Agent on Freephone 0800 039 1234

(This is an answerphone service, so please be ready to leave your name, address & telephone number, and I will aim to call you back within 48 hours.)



Planting trees

At school we are always trying to think about how to improve our environment and protect the planet.

On 12th January every child in Key Stage Two planted a tree as part of the Government's 'Trees for Climate Project'. Over 500 trees are now waiting to grow into a beautiful woodland on our school field. This will be of huge benefit to teaching and learning at school, as well as providing a wonderful habitat for local wildlife. We cannot wait to see the trees bloom!



Drama in St James's church

A lively service on Sunday 15th January was made even better by a performance from a hastily arranged group of thespians from the congregation. Well there might have been some budding ones.

As part of the celebration of Epiphany comes the baptism of Christ and I was pleased to be chosen to play the part of John the Baptist. I see him as the original hippy which I tried to be in the 1960s.

However, unlike John I have not so far come to a sticky end like he did or contributed in such a monumental way to the Christian faith. John was a man sent from God and he heralded Christ and then baptised him. We were all moved by Sue, the lay minister's words and the little bit of play acting added to the drama and message.

Do come and join our lively church any Sunday. Service details in are in The Loop or on the church website.

Chris Jones



Biddenham Parish Council



The Parish Council met on Tuesday 17th January at the Pavilion. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Peter Chase, Karen Cotton, Chris Gee, Irina Madan-Sau, Krzys Osuch and Francia Slade. Apologies were received from Harry Fowler. Also present were the Clerk, David Brough, myself and our Borough Councillors, Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby.

The principal decision to be made at our January meeting was to agree the annual budget for the 2023/24 financial year which sets the Parish Precept. This is administered by Bedford Borough Council, being levied as part of the Annual Council Tax. This levy is applied to all properties within Biddenham Parish. This year the Parish agreed that the increase for a Band D property should be 1.49%, equivalent to an additional £0.48 per annum.

Another exceptional source of additional income is that of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is a charge which can be levied by Local Authorities on new developments in their area. Where the development is within the area of a Parish Council, the charging Authority, Bedford Borough, must pass a proportion to the Parish Council, which in our case is 15% of the total CIL applied to the development. The money received must be spent on *'the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area'* and it must be spent within five years of its receipt.

As the Parish Council expects to receive a significant sum, relative to its budget, Councillors debated a draft policy to ensure that projects considered for CIL expenditure can be assessed, reviewed and ranked to ensure they meet the CIL objectives. After a useful discussion it was agreed some further work was needed before the Policy could be adopted and I hope this work will be concluded in time for our February meeting. Once approved we can then start the work of capturing and assessing those projects which qualify for CIL expenditure.

So far, I'm sure you'd agree, my report has been rather dull. So, on a more interesting note, I am pleased to report that the next 'batch' of trees purchased under the 'Trees for Streets' programme are due to be planted in the next few weeks. Let's hope the summer isn't as fierce as last year's so that the young trees have a chance to become established. The Parish Council have also arranged for a 'memorial' tree to be planted on Kings Corner to remember our dear colleague, Graham Bates, who sadly passed away recently.

Work to improve the Pavilion environs continues and we have recently seen the installation of several CCTV cameras to provide a better level of security to the building.

Finally, it was disappointing to see the Ukrainian flag was recently removed by persons unknown. This is a very antisocial act and I hope those responsible feel some shame. A replacement has been installed!

Date of the next meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 7.30pm at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney and all are welcome.

Stewart Briggs
Chair

Heart & Music

On Saturday 3rd December, the Heart and Music choir came with their band to give an inspiring concert at St James's Church. They had a varied programme with songs from musicals such as *He Lives in You*, *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat*, *Come Follow the Band* and *From Now On*, and others relating more to the situation in Ukraine such as *Bring Him Home*, *Safe Place to Land*, *The Power of Kindness* and *Blowing in the Wind*. We had an audience of 60 and everyone very much enjoyed the concert and was impressed with the standard of singing.

Heart and Music came together as a choir in 2010, partly because of their love of music and singing (hence their name Heart and Music) and partly to raise money for charities. It is amazing that, through their 70 concerts, they have raised £35,000. At our concert, they were kindly raising money for the Friends of St James's and for the St James's Ukraine Support fund. The village of Biddenham has done much to support Ukrainians during the past few months by giving hospitality and it was very special to raise money for this cause. Taking expenses into consideration, we raised £442.



I have heard the choir perform before, but I had the pleasure of attending the two rehearsals for this concert. I have always been very impressed by the standard of their singing. When they sing more reflective songs, the sound is beautiful - very harmonious and sensitive. When they sing more uplifting songs, their singing is inspiring. The choir were so engaging through their movements and dancing. In fact, there were times in the concert when I felt that they should be on a London show stage as they were so well coordinated! It takes hours of practice to learn the songs and the different movements that go with them. Most of the choir come from Milton Keynes and they are fortunate to have Nuala Clarkson who takes them for rehearsals. For concerts, Malcolm Crane conducts the choir and band, and introduces most of the pieces. He has done some wonderful compositions and arrangements for the choir. I had the pleasure of introducing the choir and Diana Shooter gave the vote of thanks and presented gifts to Malcolm, Nuala and to the choir.

What was also special about the choir is that everyone is given the opportunity to sing a solo or lead the singing. They work so well as a choir and clearly enjoy singing together. At the concert, they were supported by some wonderful accompanists on the piano, guitar, flute and drums. Their contribution was invaluable.

In the interval, we had some excellent refreshments of mulled wine with sandwiches, cake and mince pies organised by Jane Reddy. This was a good opportunity for people to meet up with each other and have an opportunity to talk with the choir.

The Friends of St James were so fortunate to have the Heart and Music choir for their concert. We were very grateful for the help of Fiona Mitchell who has links with both St James's Church and the Heart and Music choir. We were pleased that through the concert we could make a generous donation to the Friends of St James and to the St James's Ukrainian Support Fund.

Paul Fricker

In support of THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES

QUIZ NIGHT

Includes FISH & CHIPS + GLASS OF WINE!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

TICKETS **£15**
On The Door
(£12 for members)

SATURDAY 18TH MARCH

7:30pm | Biddenham Church Barn MK40 4AR

Please book by Mar 11 so we can order your fish & chips! email FOSJquiz@mail.com or call Peter Leverkus on 01234 353662

A L & G ABBOTT
Funeral Directors
~ Established 1832 ~

WITH YOU WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

A small and independently owned funeral directors who are proud to have served the local community for over 180 years and will continue to do so with the highest standards of care, respect and dignity. We now offer a Bereavement Listening service to our families.

A L & G Abbott is run with family values at the very heart of the business.

- 24 Hour Personal Service
- Private Chapels of Rest
- Funeral Plans
- Home Arrangements

T: 01234 843222

150 Bedford Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire, MK42 8BH
www.abbott-funerals.co.uk support@abbott-funerals.co.uk

TRADING STANDARDS APPROVED Bedfordshire county council
National Association of Funeral Directors

The Black February Flood

Henry Plantagenet Somerset's travels and adventures didn't end by the Nive River in flood, where we met him in December's The Loop heading towards the Biddenham station on his six month journey selling Cressbrook bulls.

In 1875, on his return from that epic journey, he was appointed manager of David McConnell's newly acquired Mount Marlow station in Western Queensland. Three years later he returned to the McConnell's Cressbrook station, and proposed to David's eldest daughter, Katherine Rose McConnell, on the top of Mount Coot-tha.

Following their engagement, Henry returned to England to visit his family, and it was decided that he and Katherine should be married in Switzerland where her mother was then living because of ill health. They married in the British Legation in Berne in July 1879, with a wedding cake Henry had brought from England decorated with kangaroos, emus, possums and kookaburras. Such a shame



Katherine and Henry Somerset (Public domain)

we couldn't find a photograph of that spectacular cake!

The couple returned to Australia in 1880 for the birth of their first daughter, Mary Georgiana, in June. Thereafter, Henry managed a number of pastoral stations in New South Wales before returning to Queensland permanently in 1888.

After first living with his wife and four children at Mount Stanley, he built in 1889/90 a house at Caboonbah, his Caboonbah Homestead. Henry named Caboonbah after the aboriginal words meaning 'big rock', describing the steep 120 foot river bank on which the house was built, where it occupied a unique position commanding a view of the Brisbane and Stanley rivers.

Which turns out to be quite important because of ...

... the Black February Flood, aka the Great Flood of 1893, which was actually three separate floods caused by three cyclones that hit South East Queensland during February that year.

Although subsequent research has thrown doubt on some of the detail of the story below, written down some years after the events took place, the main thrust remains that following the first cyclone Henry saw a wall of water crashing past his Caboonbah Homestead heading towards Brisbane, realised the people downriver were in great danger, and sent a man to Esk to telegraph Brisbane of the danger. The telegraph read: *'Please warn inhabitants of Brisbane, Goodna, Ipswich, Lowood, other centres, be warned of tremendous flood, eighteen ninety level already exceeded several feet, Stanley River only, Brisbane to follow.'*

Unfortunately, the message was said not to have been taken seriously because of Brisbane's fine weather at the time and the first flood was one of Brisbane's worst three

floods of all time, with lives lost and infrastructure destroyed.

After a second smaller flood, heavy rains brought the third flood, some two weeks after the first. Henry heard roaring waters coming down the river again, and with telegraph lines from Esk to Ipswich down from the first flood it was impossible to wire a warning. Henry rowed talented horseman Billy Mateer and two horses, Oracle and Lunatic, across the Brisbane River. But Oracle broke loose and swam back, leaving Billy on his own to ride Lunatic on a long and treacherous journey through cyclonic conditions, flooded creeks and over the D'Aguilar Range to North Pine where the telegraph line to Brisbane was still up to wire a message to warn the people of Brisbane - which was again said to have been ignored.

The third cyclone and flood was almost as devastating as the first. The three floods together claimed 35 lives, destroyed many buildings, bridges and railway lines, submerged almost two-thirds of Brisbane's business district and many hectares of land around, and caused enormous social problems with destitution, hunger, homelessness and unemployment. The cost of damage was estimated then at around £2 million.



*Humour in the face of adversity: Queen St Brokers floating the new loan
(With thanks to Peter Marquis-Kyle)*

After those awful floods and the heroic efforts of Henry and his riders, the authorities recognised the need for a comprehensive river observation and warning network. Brisbane's first official monitoring and flood warning station was set up at the Caboonbah Homestead with a telegraph line to Esk. Henry and his family learnt morse code and how to operate the equipment, continuing its operation for 12 years until the telephone was introduced.

Henry served as a member of the State Legislative Assembly from 1904 to 1920 and amongst other good works advocated the Stanley Gorge as an effective catchment area for a dam. Henry died in 1936 and the dam was finally opened in 1953. In Henry's honour it was named the Somerset Dam, as was Lake Somerset, Somerset Village and the area around it known as the Somerset Region.

A film in 1999 *'Deluge: the true story of the Great Brisbane Flood of 1893'* tells the story of Henry, Billy and their heroic attempts to warn of the impending floods.

Henry's former home, the Caboonbah Homestead, eventually became the headquarters of the Brisbane Valley Historical Society and was meticulously restored to its original condition, opening to the public in 1989. It was added to the Queensland Heritage Register in 1996.

Sadly, on 11th May 2009 it was completely destroyed by a fire started by an electrical fault.

Peter Applewhite

Pilates teacher climbs Aconcagua

Biddenham Pilates Instructor, Jane Butcher recently climbed Aconcagua in Argentina, close to the Chilean border. It's the highest peak in South America with a summit of 6,962m. Despite having trekked up Mont Blanc, Kilimanjaro, and Everest Base Camp, it was a gruelling challenge.



After Kilimanjaro, one of her group, Paul Fuller, Chief of Bedford Fire Services, died of cancer. He had suggested climbing Aconcagua as it's "the highest mountain you can climb without mountaineering experience." Despite fearing it was out of her league, Jane decided to make the expedition for Cancer Research UK in memory of Paul and to support her father who is battling bladder cancer.

The 23-day expedition took place over Christmas to take advantage of Argentina's mild summer weather, where temperatures ranged from 30° C at base camp to -20° C at the highest point.

Jane said: "We had a glass of champagne on Christmas Eve, then the following morning we were up early for a four hour climb carrying heavy equipment up to Camp 1. We then returned to Base Camp to acclimatise for a couple of days before returning to Camp 1 to carry everything up to Camp 2. We then went back down to Base Camp for a couple of rest days, before climbing back up to Camp 1. After acclimatising we climbed back up to Camp 2 and acclimatised for a few days before climbing up to Camp 3."

One of the biggest challenges was the extreme cold. Jane said: "I suffer from Raynaud's, which is poor circulation. So I had insulated trousers, a summit jacket, hand warmers and double insulated boots. At one point, my hands were so cold it was agony and I had to put my hands in the armpits of one my team members."

The other major challenge was altitude sickness. Whilst Jane didn't suffer as much as the others, she found breathing extremely difficult.

"As you climb higher, progress becomes slower because it becomes harder to breathe. You have to take a breath, then take a step, so progress was extremely slow," she said.

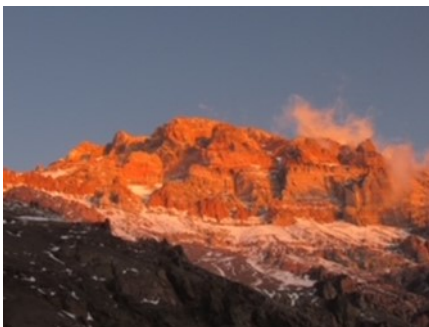
But nobody could predict the ultimate challenge which came in the form of a once in 10 years snow storm which created hazardous conditions and meant they were unable to summit due to the risk of an avalanche and frost bite.

"Some of the group were disappointed not to summit, but I felt I'd reached my limit. I just couldn't breathe. By then I also had severe blisters from the replacement boots they provided after my luggage went missing."

If anyone would like to support Jane, her Just Giving page is:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/janes-giving-page-2045>

Janet Field



FROM JUST £7.50 PER MONTH*
*Based on 5 annual treatments with a 10% rise up to 40% when paying by Direct Debit

HELP YOUR LAWN TO THRIVE, NOT JUST SURVIVE

Over the last 35 years our love for lawns has continued to grow. Our ground-breaking Lawn Treatment Programmes keep your grass looking its best all year round, ensuring your lawn receives the love and attention it deserves.

START YOUR LAWN CARE JOURNEY TODAY

- Get an instant free quote at greenthumb.co.uk/measure
- Contact us today to discuss our innovative Lawn Treatment Programmes

Join our nation of Lawn Lovers

Email: bedford@greenthumb.co.uk
 Call: 01234 709345
 Visit: greenthumb.co.uk

GreenThumb
LAWN TREATMENT SERVICE

Andrew Charles

HAIRDRESSING LTD

We have moved to -
 6 Ison Close, Biddenham, Bedford
 01234 325938

R J GASCOYNE THE PLUMBING, HEATING AND GAS COMPANY

Boiler changes, system upgrades,
bathrooms, fault finding, servicing,
maintenance, gas safety & landlord
certificates, repairs, all heating,
plumbing, drainage and gas work
undertaken.

All from a friendly, reliable, trustworthy
and professional engineer.

Contact Ryan on
TEL: 07980 209587
or EMAIL
ryangascoynephg@gmail.com



70th Anniversary

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (Beds RCC) is the leading community development agency working across Bedfordshire, with a proven track record built over 70 years. 2023 is the 70th Anniversary of Beds RCC, and it is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the charity's achievements during this time.

Beds RCC have a wide range of projects and services that benefit local communities across Bedfordshire. The work is carried out in four main areas: Supporting Communities; Rural Development; Community and Wellbeing; and Community Transport. The charity also owns three non-profit businesses: The Barn – Cardington, Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre and Tea Room, and Warden Abbey Community Vineyard.

Over the past 70 years, both past and current staff and volunteers at Beds RCC have been an integral part of improving the lives of those living in Bedfordshire.

Beds RCC was originally set up in 1953 as part of the Rural Community Councils established across the United Kingdom. During the first three years, they became associated with many social aspects of rural life – such as playgrounds and playing fields, clubs and services for the elderly, village halls and Parish Councils - which promoted improvements to their local communities. Much of this work still continues today, alongside new projects and services which have evolved over the years.

Chief Executive Tracy Cowan said: "I am incredibly proud of our wonderful staff and volunteer teams – both past and present - for all their hard work over the past 70 years. The fact that we can celebrate the year as the SME Awards 'Community Business of the Year' makes the achievement even greater and I'm looking forward to celebrating the year!"

2023 will be a busy year for the charity as they celebrate their anniversary. Plans include a ball, staff celebration, 70th Anniversary AGM and more commemorative events. Keep an eye out on Beds RCC's social media for more information on these.

If you'd like to find out more about Beds RCC, please contact us:

The Old School, Cardington, Bedford MK44 3SX (registered office).

Tel: 01234 838771 / Email info@bedsrcc.org.uk

www.bedsrcc.org.uk

Follow us on social media:

Facebook: @bedsrcc

Twitter: @bedsrcc

Instagram: @bedsrcc

LinkedIn: Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

W&H PEACOCK AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS



Auction Sales & Valuations

Valuation, collection and auction service
of individual items through to complete
property and commercial clearances.

Call for a free no obligation quote or
email info@peacockauction.co.uk

SALE ENTRIES NOW INVITED

www.peacockauction.co.uk

Eastcotts Park,
Wallis Way,
Bedford, MK42 0PE

01234 266366



FARM SHOP

Manor Farm, High Street, Stagsden, Beds
(01234) 822330
www.brownsfstagsden.co.uk

HOME REARED & LOCALLY PRODUCED
MEAT, POULTRY, GAME, SEASONAL VEGETABLES, EGGS & MILK.
HOMEMADE PREMIUM QUALITY BURGERS & SAUSAGES
REGIONAL CHEESES, HAM, PIES, JAMS, SAUCES, OILS & MORE
Tuesday - Thursday 9am – 5pm, Fri 9am – 6pm and Sat 9am -4pm

This month in the garden

As my thoughts turn to writing this column, in the middle of January, I look out of my window to see the sun shining brightly and it is so mild. I am sure many of you, like me, will have been out in your garden surveying the fat buds on the rhododendrons and camellias, wondering at the many bulbs surfacing - the old friends and the newly planted - all forgotten over the excitement and bustle of Christmas and now bringing such joy. And all so early - snowdrops and aconites in full colour and what are muscari doing flowering in mid January? Even if it is too wet to step onto the beds or lawn, it is so uplifting to see the promise of everything to come.



Resist the temptation to start tidying the garden. Leave the faded stems and seed heads for a bit longer - they are providing food and habitat for wildlife. I noted with pleasure a few days ago a thrush foraging in the borders and when walking round the back of the plant house there were

the smashed snail shells. The thrush and I are helping each other. The frost and snow before Christmas decimated all the violas I planted in tubs - these will have to be removed but peeping through are the bulbs I planted underneath to replace them when their time was up - phew!

Thank goodness for the hellebores - what stalwarts - never failing year after year, whether in pots or in the ground. I looked up the meaning of the word 'stalwart' - loyal, reliable and hard working. Exactly what we would want from plants - and the people around us!

Back in my conservatory the heady scent of the many pots of hyacinths and early Paper White narcissus fill me with delight. I have been potting up the newly boxed Christmas present amaryllis - I know they will do well and produce the most spectacular blooms. I am not so sure, however, about the many amaryllis bulbs I saved so carefully from last year. I will pot them up and hope for the best. In my plant house the windows are kept open throughout the winter in order to provide the conditions the auriculas like and to prevent botrytis on the over wintering geraniums and other plants. I am afraid the sharp drop in temperature before Christmas has killed a number of the cactus which had survived the transfer from my conservatory last year.

Now is the time to get ahead. Start 'chitting' early potatoes - encourage them to sprout before you plant them in the garden; this way they get a head start. Stand each one in an egg box compartment in a light, warm place to encourage the new shoots. Cover rhubarb plants with a large pot to enjoy the young sweet pink rhubarb early in the season. Sow sweet peas if you didn't do so in the autumn. Pop them into root trainers or the cardboard inners of toilet rolls. Sweet peas need a good long root run and prefer not to have their roots disturbed when planted out. Sow early vegetables under cover. Broad beans can be planted out in 4-6 weeks time. Give clematis a good layer of mulch when the soil is wet to conserve the water for the months ahead. If you are planting a new clematis, plant it deeply and mulch - they need a cool root run and avoid placing stones on top of the soil as this encourages slugs and snails who will munch on the new shoots. The clematis in my garden are the Viticella variety - they flower after July. At present they are a mass of tangled last year's growth. In February they can be pruned hard to within a few inches of the ground. The new shoots will grow vigorously and the plant will produce a mass of flowers in mid to late summer. February is also the month for pruning wisteria. Cut back all the side shoots to 2-3 buds.

If the weather is miserable outside enjoy a cup or glass of something inside and savour the delights of the many

seed catalogues popping through the letterbox. Indulge yourself - there will be sunny days when it is good to be outside either gardening or garden visiting. There is much inspiration to be found in the winter walks in the Cambridge Botanic Garden or Anglesey Abbey.

Linda Truscott

St James's Church Flower Fund

We are very grateful for the donation from the Biddenham Show towards the cost of flowers in the Church. We provide a pedestal at the altar every week, except in Lent and Advent, and this is arranged by one of our group of volunteers who usually fund the cost of the flowers themselves.



We have three major festivals: Christmas; Easter; and Harvest and then we fill the church with flowers and the cost of this comes out of the Flower Fund as well as the ongoing purchase of Oasis, tape etc. Flowers have become much more expensive over recent years which is why we are so grateful to the Biddenham Show.

We are always looking for new members for the weekly arrangements. If you are interested in joining us, no special expertise necessary, we would be delighted.

Kate Jones

St James's Church Barn

Church End,
Biddenham, MK40 4AS



Available for parties, small events and classes

Capacity for up to 50 people

Comprises a main hall, kitchen, two toilets,
ramp access, baby changing & disabled facilities



Contact us for further details
(email preferred contact method)

Email: stjamesbarnbiddenham@gmail.com

Tel: Jane - 07831 172320 OR Rebecca - 07769 944727

Carers

When we are old, or ill in hospital or dying,
To allay our fears, we need the care
Of those on whom we are relying
The Doctors, Nurses and the Carers.

We respect the Doctors, Nurses and supporters
So why don't we attach the same respect,
The same importance to our Carers
Like a mother bird of her new hatch?

All ills need diagnosis, repair and after-care
Especially when we get quite old,
When help and kindness are a must
For those infirm, now not so bold.

It's often left to relatives or spouses,
Untrained, but doing what they can.
For them, the loving volunteers,
Support is needed – they've taken no exam.

For those volunteers their lives at home go on
Washing dishes, clothes, and helping with distress.
The shopping, weekly plus household chores
Whilst cleaning up their loved one's mess.

For those requiring special care
The NHS's not wanting, it's not bad.
But the right loving Carers are hard to find -
For the Patient many changes make them sad.

For those removed to so called 'Care Homes',
Care should be very well provided
By experts soothing many tears;
And keeping quality of life preserved.

The job of caring can be very trying
When dealing with Alzheimers,
And those forgetful, needing pills and slow, so slow,
And wilful patients causing rumours.

Who else are Carers looking after?
There are, of course, the grateful for their care
The disabled, ill, the old and angry
And those whose lives don't want to share.

Letter to the Editor: Roger Gwynne Jones

A short obituary was published in December to the late Roger Gwynne Jones. This mentioned his time as a local councillor. I remember him in this role at Biddenham Parish Council meetings representing his constituents.

On a lighter note, he and his late wife were great dancers and he was also part of the team working with the late Ann Hadfield on Kempston Summer School; something my and other local children benefited from.

He often also reminded me of his Welsh Connections near Swansea, like mine. His grandfather was station master at Gorseinon LNWR station so I look fondly in Roger's direction when I pass the old signal arm from Gorseinon that resides in our garden.

Chris Jones

Some are irascible and bloody-minded
Seeking independence for their minds
And those whose minds have gone away
And those who've given up – don't mind.

Whilst some are active, bright, in spite
Of vicissitudes of daily life
Who never complain; accept their lot,
Are cheerful though their life's all strife.

There are those un-cooperative
Who won't do what they're told.
But Carers usually know what's best,
But some have independent minds, especially when old!

For Carers patience is a must,
Though very hard at times,
They can only think when they are old
They'll co-operate, not use experienced minds.

Caring for the ill, infirm and old
Requires a trial of patience not all can give
But is a must, inbuilt by some,
Giving kindness, care for those who live.

No matter what the ill or age
The dignity of life should be a first;
It's hard when normal dignity has gone
But the Carer has to deal with anything that's burst.

Clearing-up the sick, the puddles, leaks and poo
Is not a natural choice of job for some
But those exceptional people that do care
Should be rewarded with a generous sum.

The NHS needs quite a re-think of its duties
For Doctors, Nurses and our Carers
With joined-up thinking: Sick, Repair and After-care,
The three departments serving life through years.

Why do we leave, some say 'the dirty-work',
To foreigners or those who'll work for less?
It's when you're sick, disabled, infirm or dying
You rely upon the Carer to relieve distress.

Robin Salter

Biddenham History Society

The Biddenham History Society will be meeting on Monday 20th March from 2.30–4.30pm in the Church Barn. This will be a Memories session. I hope that you have been using the winter months to do some sorting out!

If you have found any interesting objects or photos relating to Biddenham's history that you would be prepared to talk about and show everyone, please bring them along. In addition, King Charles III's Coronation will be on 6th May so if you have any memorabilia relating to Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953 please bring these things to the meeting, and we can look at them and discuss them. They may be things relating to Biddenham, but if you or your family were living elsewhere in 1953 and you have any memorabilia relating to that place, please bring it along.

I hope we will have an interesting selection of things to look at and talk about.

Kathy Fricker

Food etc.

Julie Clay is director of Food etc, a Community Interest Company which provides cookery workshops to disadvantaged people across Bedfordshire. Its growing team of volunteers uses cheap and nutritious food to show people how to prepare and enjoy healthier meals.

She told us about the company.

Why did you set up Food etc?

Initially to help address the obesity crisis which is particularly concerning amongst children. However, since we started working with a variety of groups it's clear that cooking and eating together brings wide ranging benefits including physical and mental health improvements and a sense of community and belonging. Knowing how to use food better can cut costs as well providing an enjoyable and productive activity for disadvantaged families and others.

What have been the challenges in getting a new social enterprise up and running?

We were due to launch in April 2020 and with a large part of what we are doing being about getting people together this wasn't possible during the height of Covid. We kept going to some degree virtually, but we have been limited with what we could do with families in schools until the bubbles were finally lifted in September 2022.

Tell us about some of the highlights

Seeing children and their parents having fun cooking together and then eating with others, sharing stories and generally just having a good time is very rewarding.



Making sweet potato wedges

Being awarded funding, meaning that people with much more experience than us can see the value in what we're trying to do has been really encouraging. Getting some lovely emails from schools, parents, and others about the benefits our cookery workshops bring is really gratifying too.

What would be your top tips for someone planning to set up a charitable organisation in Bedford?

Talk to people to see how you can work together. Regardless of how good your idea is, it's unlikely you can make it work without partnering with existing successful charities and other organisations.

Take advantage of the support that exists. For example, the advisors at CVS have been invaluable and are also extremely well connected to other organisations.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Companies and others are often only too pleased to help good causes.

If you were starting again, what would you do differently?

Not start at the beginning of a global pandemic! Other than that, not a lot as we are really enjoying our journey and the setbacks have been ways to gain more knowledge, which has made us stronger going forward. Even if that's not what we said at the time!

If someone wanted to volunteer for Food etc what skills and attributes would they need to have?

An interest in food and some basic cooking skills that you'd enjoy passing on are the main things we are looking for. You don't need qualifications or experience, but a sunny disposition and a bit of resilience for when things don't quite go to plan are needed.

We can guarantee you'll meet some interesting people, join a great group of volunteers and will be helping families and others to improve their health and wellbeing.

If you'd like to find out more take a look at Food etc Bedford on Facebook or Instagram and if you'd like to see whether becoming a Food etc volunteer is for you call Julie Clay on 07970 115181 or email juliec@foodetc.org.uk for an initial chat.

What's happening at the Church Barn?

We have been lucky to start 2023 with some improvements at the Barn.



Firstly, we have been able to purchase new children's tables to replace our old ones with the support of the Biddenham Show. The new tables are a welcome addition as they can be packed away when not in use and are much lighter than the old ones.



Secondly, we have been lucky to obtain funding support from Biddenham Parish Council to purchase new curtains for the main hall. Our old curtains were beautifully made by members of the congregation from curtains donated by Sharnbrook House (as we understand it). The new curtains bring a refreshed feel to the Barn with the added benefit of extra insulation and black out lining for children's parties when disco lights are in use.

We would like to thank both the Biddenham Show Committee and Biddenham Parish Council for their funding support of the Barn; the new tables and curtains are a much-appreciated change for all our hirers.

We hope you all will enjoy the changes at the Barn next time you visit and, in the meantime, if you would like to hire the Barn or find out more about the facilities it offers, or just share some stories with us at the Barn, please do contact us at stjamesbarnbiddenham@gmail.com

Jane and Rebecca



Life of a Ukrainian in Biddenham

When Russia invaded Ukraine on 24th February 2022, millions of Ukrainians were forced to flee, resulting in Europe's biggest refugee crisis since World War II.

Iryna Belyaeva (38) fled her home in the capital, Kyiv, with her daughter Angelina (6) and her parents and came to Biddenham in May 2022. This is her story.

What part of Ukraine are you from?

I'm originally from Luhansk in the Donbas region in the southeast of Ukraine. But after Russia attacked in 2014, my family fled to Kyiv.



Iryna with Angelina & her mother

At what point did you realise you needed to leave Kyiv?

On the day the bombing started. We were at home and the previous day was just a normal day. I took my little girl to kindergarten, then went to work. The fighting started at around 4.00am and we woke to the sound of bombs exploding. So we packed our bags and within an hour and a half we left with just two suitcases.

First, we went to Vinnytsia [southwest of Kyiv] to stay with my brother, but it soon became too dangerous there too. So, we moved to a small town near the Moldova border where we stayed with an elderly lady we found on

the internet. There were seven of us in a tiny house and we stayed there for two months. Then I found out about the UK's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme and applied. We went back to my brother's place while we waited for the visas to be processed.

Why did you choose the UK?

There were so many opportunities for Ukrainians to go to any country. But as I could speak some English and couldn't speak any other European languages, I decided on an English-speaking country. Canada, the USA and Australia were too far, so I chose the UK.

How long did it take to process the visas?

It was very quick. I applied online for visas for me, my daughter and my parents. As there were four of us, I wanted to find a place where we could stay together in our own place, not with the sponsor's family. So, there were only five options. I emailed them all and Chris and Pam Murphy [Biddenham residents] responded. After two days they processed the application for us, and we got the visas in about 10 days.

We had to take a train to Poland because all the flights from Ukraine were cancelled. Then we took a plane to Luton.

How are you finding life in the UK?

At least it's safe. Biddenham is a lovely area, so quiet and at first when we didn't know anyone people would greet us on the street, which was nice. So many people want to support Ukrainians in various ways. Even before I arrived, Chris had already offered me a job at his company, Dunster House, so I started work there about a month after we arrived. I'm working in the purchasing department and liaise with the company's factories in Europe.

What were you doing back in Ukraine?

My job was similar as I was a supply manager, but my speciality is Mandarin so I used to work with Chinese suppliers. My Mandarin is better than my English because I lived in China for 13 years, including Beijing and Guangzhou.

How are your parents finding life in the UK?

They're ok. They are helping me with my daughter. They go to English language classes, and they attend the Ukrainian coffee mornings at St James's Barn every Wednesday.

How is your daughter settling in?

She's ok. She initially went to St Joseph's & St Gregory's School, and then moved to St James' School. She has so many friends there. There used to be two girls and a boy from Ukraine in different classes, but the two girls have now gone back to Ukraine.

She also attends Ukrainian Saturday school in Biddenham. The Polish community has Polish school at St Joseph's & Gregory's on Saturday mornings, and in the afternoons volunteer Ukrainian speaking teachers hold classes for Ukrainians for about five hours. It's free and about 40 kids from Bedford and other villages attend.

They held a big St Nicholas Day party on 19th December, which Polish people also celebrate. That's when St Nicholas, who looks like Santa Claus, brings presents for the kids. There was a concert with children singing and dancing and lots of Ukrainian and Polish food. About 300 people attended, including my parents.

Did you attend the Ukrainian celebration on 6th January at St James's Church?

Yes, I went with my daughter and my parents. This is Ukrainian Christmas Eve [Gregorian calendar]. We sang Christmas carols in Ukrainian, and people brought traditional Ukrainian Christmas dishes, including a kind of porridge with dried fruit, as well as meat salads with mayonnaise.

We also celebrate New Year's Eve. Instead of a Christmas tree we have a New Year tree, which looks the same as a Christmas tree. People usually have a big family dinner and Father Frost leaves presents for the children under the New Year tree.

Are you able to buy Ukrainian food in Bedford?

Not really, but if we go to Polish supermarkets the food is similar.

What do you miss most about Ukraine?

I miss my brother and his daughter. At first my daughter would talk about the toys she had to leave behind. She now has a lot of toys, but she still remembers the toys she left in Ukraine.

What are your hopes for the future?

We only hope that this war will end. We don't make plans anymore. We had to leave our home in Luhansk, then we had to leave Kyiv. There is no point making plans because whenever we plan the situation changes. My parents want to go back to Ukraine one day. As for me, I'm not sure.

Janet Field



Pam & Chris Murphy with Angelina

NB
NEW BOMBAY
01234 218 218
ORDER ONLINE AT
www.newbombay.co.uk

A second 'stitch in time'

For the longest period of its existence Biddenham was a self-contained rural farming community where villagers both lived and worked. Today though there are no farms left in the village and very little and steadily diminishing agricultural land.

But as we were able to reveal in last May's The Loop, the village's longstanding agricultural and farming heritage is being remembered and celebrated now in the road names agreed for dandara's housing development off Gold Lane.

The names of the roads in the first phase of the development were also revealed that month, albeit a change to one of them was later announced in September, when (farmer) Lavender became (farmer) Peacock of now Peacock Lane.

The names for the roads in the second phase of the development have now also been agreed:

Howard Way: Charles Howard was a village farmer (1847-1895) at Manor Farm and was of international renown as a sheep breeder, particularly for his Oxford Down rams and flock. In searching for any Biddenhams elsewhere in the world, I came across many references to him in Australian newspapers, and also to the agricultural machinery manufactured by his two brothers, James and Frederick, at their Britannia Iron Works in Bedford. When he died some 600 people attended his funeral in the village church, many having to stand in the churchyard;

Shepherd Lane and Carpenter Close: remembering occupations that supported the village's farmers;

Rawlins Reach: Fred Rawlins farmed for many decades of the 1900s at Honeyhill Farm and later Church Farm which then included Manor, Honeyhill and Grove farms, some

1,000 acres in total. Fred was Captain of the Biddenham Home Guard during the Second World War;

Campion Road and King Lane: Campion was Charles Howard's shepherd, and Harry King was carpenter for the Biddenham Estate and was in charge of the work undertaken in 1932 to restore the now late lamented dovecote.

Peter Applewhite



Campion outside his cottage in Duck End Lane. From Graham Bean's memorabilia.



Foreman King by the dovecote door. He lived in Rose Cottage, Main Road. Courtesy of Bedfordshire Archives.



Bedford's Leading Cruise Specialists
Select Travel Holidays
Home of Cruise Select
 24A Mill Street, Bedford



Looking to set sail in 2023?

Make Select Travel Holidays,

Home of Cruise Select, your Port of Call!



We are your local award-winning leading cruise specialists - experts in cruise for over 20 years!

Come to us for friendly, personalised service & impartial advice - all at no extra cost, and we can even help you save money on your cruise too. We work with a huge variety of cruise lines, including P&O, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Fred. Olsen, and more - including river, expedition, and luxury cruise lines too - if it floats, we can help find your perfect holiday!

Pop into our shop on Mill Street, Bedford, or contact us today.

Contact us today!
 01234 326778
 sales@selecttravelholidays.co.uk

www.selecttravelholidays.co.uk



BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE
 ABTA & ATOL protected



Winter Wellbeing

The winter months can be a difficult time for everyone, so it's important to look after our wellbeing, as well as looking out for those around us.

Many of our projects, services, and volunteering opportunities help people care for their wellbeing, so if you or someone else you know needs help then have a look at our website (www.bedsrcc.org.uk) or call us on 01234 838771.

We've put together six top tips to help you look after yourself this winter:

1. **Be kind to yourself.** Find small things to do that make your day special, such as watching the sun rise, reading your favourite book, or calling on a friend. Even if things don't go exactly to plan, it's good to find joy in the every day.
2. **Find a way to give back.** Giving back and making others smile can really make someone's day. Surprise a friend or family member with a present, donate some items to a charity shop or look into volunteering opportunities. Find out more about our volunteering opportunities at our community vineyard, walks, digital projects, and more: www.bedsrcc.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/
3. **Get outside for some sunlight and exercise.** Motivation to exercise during the shorter, colder days can be a struggle. To make things easier, choose the warmest, sunniest part of the day to get out. If you're able, take a brisk walk to keep yourself moving and warm.
4. **Keep to a daily routine.** We usually feel better if we're up and dressed, eating at regular mealtimes and going to bed at the same time. If you prefer to be awake in the lighter hours, try getting up and going to sleep earlier during the winter months.
5. **Get some quality, uninterrupted sleep.** A good night's sleep can have a huge impact on your wellbeing and happiness. Avoid screens an hour before bed and keep to regular sleep patterns to improve your quality of sleep.
6. **Ask for help.** If you're struggling, it's ok to ask for help - there's always someone you can talk to. Keep these numbers in your phone or write them down so they're easily available if you need them:
Samaritans - 116 123
Mind BLMK - 0300 330 0648
Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line

If you'd like to find out more about our services, visit www.bedsrcc.org.uk, email info@bedsrcc.org.uk or call us on 01234 838771.



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

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

Peter's Picturehouse

We are delighted that our films in December and January brought bumper audiences and that the popularity of our film evenings on the first Tuesday of the month in the village hall is continuing to increase.

On Tuesday 7th February our film is 'Mrs Harris Goes to Paris', which received six nominations and won three awards in 2022. Lesley Manville stars in the film as a widowed cleaning lady who is desperate to own a particular couture Dior dress. Set in the 1950s and made in cooperation with House of Dior, the film is described by critics as 'feel great', as the rather fantastical adventures of Mrs Harris are told.

Doors of the village hall open at 7.00pm and the film will start at 7.30pm. We have an interval and hot and cold drinks and ice creams on sale. Tickets are on sale for £5 on the door. We look forward to seeing you.

And in March we are showing the action-adventure film also released in 2022, 'Top Gun: Maverick'. If you would like to be on our mailing list to be reminded of films coming up in the future, please do send an email to peterspicturehouse@gmail.com.

Tues 7th Feb Mrs Harris Goes to Paris (PG)
Tues 7th March Top Gun: Maverick (12A)

Rose Houghton



Peter's Picturehouse In February

Date: **Tuesday 7th February 2023**
Time: **Doors open 7:00pm, Film starts 7:30pm**
Location: **Biddenham Village Hall**



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

Certificate: **PG**

To join our mailing list, or for further information, send an email to
peterspicturehouse@gmail.com

Coming soon...
Tues 7th March 2023

Top Gun: Maverick (12A)

Biddenham Gardeners Association

My Garden

There was a good turn out of members and visitors to our January meeting. This month, when we invite people who live in Biddenham to talk about their gardens, is always very popular. We were pleased also to welcome some new members and we hope you enjoy the series of talks we have planned for 2023.

The first garden we visited was that of Marysia and Vince. They have a medium sized garden with three very large, long established ash trees. To begin with these had to be pruned and shaped and once conifers had been removed from their garden they were left with a blank canvas, rectangular in shape. Marysia said that she read Alan Titchmarsh's book on 'How to Design a Garden', made a long list of plants she would like to feature and then just got on with it. She and Vince restored a bench round one of the ash trees, installed a new greenhouse and then started work on a stumpery in one area of the garden. Twenty seven tons of top soil were delivered as the garden is predominantly clay and impossible to dig and the whole garden is interspersed with the roots of the trees. Ash trees are late to come into leaf so there is sunshine for a good part of the year, but once the leaf canopy is flourishing the whole garden is in shade.

Marysia's idea was to have as many perennial plants as possible plus self-seeding annuals. She grows poppies as filler plants. Many of the borders were originally very narrow and these have now been widened and filled with 43 different varieties of ferns, 52 different varieties of tulips and 72 different varieties of iris. The rectangular plot has been transformed into a really lovely garden with an abundance of cosmos, roses, salvias and dahlias.

Next up were Kathryn and Norman. They have lived in their house for seven years and for the last four/five years have been rescuing their garden from the ravages of building work. Norman had to hire a digger to hack through the clay and gravel. The garden, which is east facing, was levelled and turf was laid. A series of beds were created, each having a different mood. There is a prairie-like area with miscanthus, stipa tenuissima, perovskia, echinacea, verbena and sedums. There is a clematis hedge and a wild flower area where the compost bins are housed. During the summer the pink and white cosmos were a great delight and poppies abounded as the soil was turned over. Kathryn has created mood boards of favourite plants and moved potted plants around the borders until the right placement was found. There are lots of 'hot' coloured plants in the garden with Bishop of Oxford dahlia being one of the favourites. The garden is wildlife and bee friendly. Norman said that they had taken as their inspiration Christopher Lloyd's garden at Great Dixter and Beth Chatto's dry garden. Beth Chatto's motto was, of course, "the right plant in the right place." Kathryn and Norman have used drought tolerant plants to good effect and the east facing aspect has provided an excellent situation for the passion flower which is now romping away over the garden wall.

Both of these gardens have presented challenges for their owners - not least the heavy clay, the tree roots, the shade and being situated in the dry eastern part of the country. These difficulties have been overcome by the owners through trial and error and "finding the right plant for the right place." Many thanks to our speakers for their excellent presentations which were much enjoyed.

Please join us next month on Tuesday 21st February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall when Paul Fricker will be sharing with us some "Inspiring Gardens". The meeting will be open to all members, new members and visitors. We look forward to seeing you then.

Linda Truscott

Biddenham Show helps BGA

The Biddenham Gardeners Association would like to thank the Biddenham Show Committee for their very kind donation of £300 from the proceeds of the 2022 Village Show. This money will go towards the cost of providing high quality speakers for our regular monthly meetings in the Village Hall.

During the last year members and visitors enjoyed a variety of excellent speakers who are well regarded in the world of horticulture - many of whom are Gold Medal winners at prestigious Royal Horticultural Shows. We were fortunate also, last year, that Nick Bailey who regularly appears on BBC 2's 'Gardeners' World' was able to join us for our 30th Anniversary (two years late due to the pandemic!). Our speakers often comment on the beauty of Biddenham village and the warmth of the reception they receive from our members.

First Friday lunch - date change for April

It's Good Friday on 7th April when the First Friday lunch would usually occur. The lunch has been moved to Friday 31st March.



A new way to retire

Renting in retirement? Now there's an idea.



Now is the time to give yourself the all important freedom and flexibility in retirement and live life your way at Elderswell in Bedfordshire.

Make the most of all of our facilities on your doorstep. And now, Elderswell offers a choice of 1 and 2-bedroom homes to rent as well as buy. It's the new way to retire.

If you'd like to find out more about our rental options, call us on 01234 817 753 or visit www.elderswell.co.uk

 **Elderswell**
Inspired in Bedfordshire



SCAN ME

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

Draw for 2 free lunch tickets every month
Book swap

Numbers limited - booking essential:

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

3rd February, 3rd March, 31st March

100 CLUB November draw



The winners were:

1st	Jennie Moore	89
2nd	Jon Gambold	1
3rd	Richard Ebbs	16

Drawn by Betty Simpson

December draw

The winners were:

1st	Ruksana Iqbal	69
2nd	Billy Gill	128
3rd	Chris Bradbury	150

Drawn by John Gardner

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

No Fear Duplicate Bridge

Biddenham Village Hall
Fridays at 2.30pm (intermediate)
Sundays at 6.00pm.
Contact Bernard Henry 07866 456769 or
bahenry0309@gmail.com

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

The Church Barn is available for parties, small events and classes, with a capacity for up to 50 people. Comprising a main hall, full kitchen use, two toilets, ramp access, baby changing and disabled facilities. To check availability contact our Booking Officers via email on stjamesbarnbiddenham@gmail.com (preferred contact) or

Jane 07831 172320
Rebecca 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

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
Mum & Baby Yoga	10.30am Termtime (except 3 rd in the month)	Village Hall
Café B	10.15am-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)	Village Hall
Country Dancing	8.00pm (2 nd & 4 th in month)	Village Hall
Zumba	8.00-9.00pm	Pavilion
Wednesday		
Ukrainian Community Coffee morning	10.00am-12noon	Church Barn
Kensington Ballet	10.00-11.00am	Pavilion
Baby College	10.00am, 11.00am & noon Termtime	Village Hall
Handbell Ringer Practice	2.30-4.30pm	Church Barn
Table Tennis	2.00-4.00pm	Pavilion
HIT Fitness	6.30-7.30pm	Pavilion
Adult Yoga (Beginners/Improvers)	7.00-8.00pm	Village Hall
Thursday		
Under 5's	9.30-11.30am	Village Hall
Line dancing	9.30-11.30am	Pavilion
Oasis	9.00am-12noon (1 st & 3 rd in month)	Church Barn
U3A Handbell Ringers	2.00-3.30pm	Church Barn
Cook Stars Juniors	4.00-5.15pm	Church Barn
Pregnancy Yoga	7.00-8.30pm	Village Hall
BDCPS Sing for Wellbeing	7.15-8.15pm (2 nd & 4 th in month)	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
Fit Flamingo Yoga	10.00-11.30am	Church Barn
First Friday Lunch	12.15pm (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
St James's Choir Practice	7.00-8.30pm	Church Barn
Storm Martial Arts	7.00-8.00pm	Pavilion
Saturday		
Pregnancy Yoga	9.30am	Village Hall
Bedford Ballet	9.30-11.40am	Church Barn
Oakley Football	9.00am-12.30pm	Pavilion Field
Socotots	9.45-11.15am	Pavilion
Lucy Hunt School of Dance	2.00-3.30pm	Pavilion
Toddler Sense	2.00-3.00pm (last of the month)	Church Barn
Sunday		
St James's Explorers	10.00-11.00am	Church Barn
St James's coffees	11.00am-12noon	Church Barn
Taekwondo	11.30am	Village Hall
No Fear Bridge	5.30-8.30pm	Village Hall
Revive	7.00-8.00pm (3 rd in month)	Church Barn

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

February

- Fri 3 Feb First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
 Fri 3 Feb Children's Cinema, Great Denham Community Hall, 3.30pm, see p5
 Sat 4 Mar Comedy Club, Great Denham Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p5
Sun 5 Feb All Age Worship at All Saints, 10.00am
All Age Worship at St James's, 10.00am
Holy Communion at All Saints, 11.15am
 Mon 6 Feb Great Denham Parish Council, Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p5
 Tues 7 Feb Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p16
Sun 12 Feb Said Holy Communion at All Saints, 9.00am
Holy Communion at St James's, 10.00am
Evening Prayer at St James's, 6.00pm
Sun 19 Feb Holy Communion at All Saints, 10.00am
Morning Worship at St James's, 10.00am
Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship, Church Barn, 7.00pm
 Tue 21 Feb Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p3
 Tue 21 Feb Bedford National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.15pm, see p4
 Tue 21 Feb Biddenham Parish Council, Biddenham Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p6
 Tue 21 Feb Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm, see p17
 Fri 24 Feb Quilting & Sewing Group, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p18
 Sat 25 Feb Big Blunham Book Sale, Blunham Parish Church, 10.00am-3.00pm, see p4
Sun 26 Feb Said Holy Communion at All Saints, 9.00am
Holy Communion at St James's, 10.00am
Explorers, Church Barn, 10.00am

March

- Fri 3 Mar First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
Sun 5 Mar All Age Worship at All Saints, 10.00am
All Age Worship at St James's, 10.00am
Holy Communion at All Saints, 11.15am
 Mon 6 Mar Great Denham Parish Council, Community Hall, 7.30pm, see p5
 Tues 7 Mar Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p16
 Sat 11 Mar Biddenham Pond Work Morning, 10.00am-12.00noon, see p5
 Sat 18 Mar Quiz Night, Church Barn, 7.30pm, see p7
 Mon 20 Mar Biddenham History Society, Church Barn, 2.30pm, see p12
 Fri 31 Mar First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p17

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	loopeditor@gmail.com	Tel 349849
Reporter & Proof Reader	Janet Field	loopreporter@gmail.com	
Advertising	Clare Sugars	loopadverts@gmail.com	Tel 637281
Subscriptions & distribution	Rosemary & Richard Harris	loopsubs@gmail.com	Tel 210434
Church liaison	Laurie Hurn		

All **March 2023** articles, preferably by e-mail in Word format, to loopeditor@gmail.com or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to loopadverts@gmail.com by **Wednesday 22nd 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.