

The Loop

November
2022

£1.00

Snakes in Biddenham

Having lived in Asia for many years, I'm used to the presence of snakes, though sometimes they showed up in unusual places. One day my colleague rushed home from work when his wife called to say there was a large snake asleep in the base of their baby's pushchair. The local snake catcher was called and calmly informed them it was a Cobra.

But I didn't expect to find snakes in Biddenham. I don't think we would have noticed them at all if it weren't for our dog, Cassie, who enjoys nothing better than playing with autumn leaves. On a recent walk along Coffin Path, she suddenly stood stock still by a pile of leaves she was nosing through. We took a closer look and were surprised to spot a black striped snake with a yellow banded neck coiled up. As we quietly observed it, we noticed a second snake slithering rapidly away.

Timid & harmless

Thankfully, they were harmless grass snakes which are non-venomous and pose no threat to humans. They are usually found near or in water as they feed on amphibians, especially frogs, but also toads, newts, and fish. Being timid, they will either play dead or move off rapidly if they are disturbed. Occasionally, if they feel threatened, they will also emit a foul-smelling secretion to ward off potential predators.

Several residents have reported seeing them, and

occasionally they've been spotted swimming in the pond. But it's unusual to see them in October as that's when they go into hibernation. Just before they hibernate, they like to bask in the sun's rays, so perhaps it's not surprising that we spotted them on a bright sunny morning. They will emerge from hibernation in March or April, depending on the weather.

So don't be afraid if you see them. We are fortunate to have them in our midst as part of Biddenham's rich biodiversity.

Janet Field



Remembrance Day in Biddenham

The service at Biddenham War Memorial will start at 10.50am on Sunday 13th November.

Main Road will be closed between 10.45am and 11.15am.



Details on page 3

'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

The Lord speaks, but we perceive his silence.

I have just come back from a conference which was held on the subject of wisdom. The focus was on wisdom in ministry and it was related to a particular category of Biblical material known as Wisdom Literature. The sources of biblical material is not as simple as many of us like to think. While much of the material has its origin in the historical formation of the faith of Israel, there is a significant corpus of other material that comes out of the movement of people and the syncretism of other communities and cultures. Israel's faith and understanding did not land as it is, but rather developed through the movement of time, ideas and practices. I would interpret that as the voice of God speaking through the centuries, and it is a profound mistake of modern Christians not to believe that this voice of the most high is never silent, always speaking, always subverting, always challenging.

Wisdom literature, embodied in biblical books like Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and the Book of Job, seems to speak from the mindset of Ancient Greek Sophia (Wisdom), and present us with an idea that there is a fundamental truth to the Universe that has been and will be for all time. In the Old Testament this seems in some later literature to undermine some of the fixed aspects of the Torah (the Jewish law) and add the very fluid idea that God has spoken Wisdom since the beginning of creation, and that wisdom has been his music that has reverberated through time. Sophia is a feminine term, but in John's Gospel we seem to find a development of this thought process with the use of the word 'Logos' (also a term relating to Sophia, but masculine) being spoken from the beginning of creation and then dwelling with us in the physical flesh of Jesus.

God spoke at the beginning; God spoke to us in the presence of Jesus and God speaks to us through his Spirit who dwells with us. I am not one for hearing voices, but



before Christmas I can say with certainty (and probably a degree of madness) that I felt a tangible sense of his call, his voice. Again, after Christmas, on February 24th, to be precise, at 7.30am, in the midst of a storm on a beach in Northumberland, I heard or sensed (who knows?), the call of God to respond to the humanitarian crisis that was about to happen as a consequence of the blinding stupid and pointless Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the moment I heard God's voice, missiles were reigning down on key locations all over that country. I had to do something because that is what, in my perception, the voice of the most high commanded. People say: "Why this and not respond to the terrible situation relating to the plight of women in Afghanistan or Iran, or Yemen, Syria, and all the countless other terrible conflicts around the world." Well, I guess the answer lies with whether or not we believe that God speaks or commands, and how we choose to interpret that command. If you do believe that, then I ask you, what is he saying to you, what is he calling you to. You are not called to analyse God's call to me, but rather what is he saying to you. If good people respond to the things that are happening in our world by doing nothing, then evil prevails.

I speak as one who struggles with this. I have a strong sense of theodicy. Theodicy is the question that I believe every Christian, or indeed every religious person, should engage with. It is the question of the silence of God when we are confronted by so much suffering and evil in the world. Very helpfully, this morning a wonderful Ukrainian friend sent me an unsolicited link to the 1993 film 'Shadowlands' which is the story of CS Lewis, and his relationship with the Jewish American poet, Joy Davidman. Following her tragic death from cancer, Lewis wrote a book called 'A Grief Observed,' in which he wrote: "But go to Him (God) when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence."

It feels to me that in this doubt, and despair of CS Lewis, receiving this link this morning, I have again experienced what I perceive as the voice of God. The fact that this link questions the power of God seems almost paradoxical, but this is indeed his voice.

Over the last year, as a minister, I have felt like I have been walking constantly the tightrope between faith and doubt and it has at times been a lonely journey. I wonder what would happen if eventually I fall from the tightrope to my left side into the darkness of unbelief. What would I find there?

I think the key to this is in one of the Wisdom books that we have not looked at this week, the Book of Job. He was a man, who like CS Lewis, had everything he wanted and then, in a moment, had everything stripped away. He then found himself in the chaos and the darkness, wondering what on earth God was doing. Finally, out of the storm, God spoke to him. Then Job was able to say with certainty: "I know that my redeemer lives." I believe that in the darkness, in despair, in fear, in loneliness, we find the Logos (Sophia) of God, speaking to us through his word (call it Logos or Sophia), Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God. Listen to his voice because he speaks in the darkness.

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	
Readers	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	

All Souls Remembrance Service

This is to be held on Sunday 6th November 2022 at 6.00pm in St James's Church. It is an opportunity to remember and celebrate the lives of relatives and friends who have passed on.

Tea and coffee will be served in Church at the end of the Service.

2022 Christmas Tree Festival at St Paul's

Over five days, the Festival will welcome 1000s of visitors to hear local choirs and musical groups perform and to explore the display of more than 60 Christmas trees which light up the beautiful St Paul's Church, with their vibrancy and twinkling lights. The trees are decorated by local community groups, schools and firms and this year's theme for the decorations is 'Musicals'.

Entry to the Festival is £3 and free for children under 16. This year, the money raised will go towards funding equipment for Bedford Hospital and supporting projects including the Primrose Car Service taking patients to and from Addenbrookes Hospital for radiotherapy.

The annual Festival Concert on Friday 2nd December at 7.30pm features the 'Minerva Piano Trio' performing pieces by Mendelssohn and Beethoven in addition to Christmas favourites. Tickets £17.50 include a glass of wine from www.peoplesfundraising.com/concert-tickets or phone: 01234 783181.

Despite the restrictions of COVID, the 2021 Bedford Christmas Tree Festival attracted over 4,000 visitors, raising £13,411 shared by the two charities: the Bedford Hospital Charity & Friends and St Paul's Church. A separate dedicated Paediatric A&E unit at Bedford Hospital was one of the projects supported by the 2021 Festival and we were delighted to see it open earlier this year. It costs over £500 daily to keep the historic church of St Paul's open so the Festival is a crucial annual fundraiser.

The Bedford Pipe Band will lead visitors to the opening of the Festival by Sue Lousada, our new Lord Lieutenant, at 10.30 am on Wednesday 30th November.

Once again the Festival has been sponsored by Jayne Beard Associates, Jayne having been a former Chair of the Bedford Hospital Charity.

To find out more about getting involved with the Festival, including how to volunteer at this event, please email: treefestival@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk

Festival opening hours:
Wednesday-Saturday 10am-5pm with a Christingle service at 4pm.

Sunday 12noon-4pm

Coffee/Tea and cake served daily.

Visit: facebook.com/bedfordchristmastreefestival to find out more. Tel: 01234 340163.



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Entry **£10 each** (members of the Friends £8; children under 16 free)

Pay on the door. Drinks and light refreshments in the interval

Any queries? Just email peterleverkus@outlook.com

In aid of The Friends of St James, Biddenham
- the charity which preserves and enhances the historic church buildings for future generations

- **and St James' Church Ukraine Support** 



Annual General Meeting
Thursday 3rd November 2022
8pm
Biddenham Village Hall
www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk

The AGM will be taking place as normal in the Village Hall.

We are pleased to say that this year has seen the return to full opening and the return of many of our regular users along with some new events. The Committee would welcome hearing ideas about ways to improve the Hall. The Village Hall "belongs" to you, the residents of Biddenham, and the short AGM gives you a chance to hear about the management of the Hall and give your views. Please come along. If you can't make the meeting but have some bright ideas please contact any of the Committee or leave a message on the website.

We look forward to seeing you on 3rd November.

Biddenham Village Hall Management Committee

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Graham Bates OBE, JP, Honorary Alderman



We are very grateful to Graham's son Robert for this obituary.

Graham passed away suddenly last month, the day before the Queen's funeral. He was 85 and still very active until the end, heavily involved for over six decades in community volunteer work for local schools, councils, charities, clubs and others, for which he earned an OBE.

He was born in Queens Park, Bedford in 1937 to Cyril and Barbara Bates, the middle of three children, with his elder brother Ian and younger sister Eileen. The family had run drapery shops in Bedford going back at least two generations and the shop was later renamed Cyril Bates Ltd and became well known to many Bedfordians for the supply of school uniform.

His early years were growing up through the Second World war, when his father was posted to Belgium with the RAF and everyone was issued gas masks, and into the post war period of rationing of food and petrol, when the milkman called every day with a horse and cart and there were no refrigerators. But like any child this was his normality.

As a ten-year-old he would have heard the Queen's now-famous 21st birthday speech pledging a life of duty and service, and we can only speculate its impact, but young Graham certainly seemed to have taken inspiration from it, for his life echoed that with over 60 years of civic service.

He initially went to school at the Convent School on Bromham Road (which became St Bede's), then to Rushmoor until the age of 10 and finally to Bedford Modern School, which then was in the centre of town. He decided rather than pursuing further education, to take up a retail apprenticeship in Blundell's in Luton, before joining the family business.



Whilst at Bedford Modern, there was a Speech Day talk from an old boy and then Mayor of Bedford who declared that maybe one of the boys present might become the Mayor, a challenge that he found inspiring and one which he himself fulfilled in 1973.

He joined the Scouts and would tell the story of a scout camp on the Gower Peninsular in Wales when he and a couple of others cycled all the way there, aged just 14. The others chose the train for the return journey, so he cycled back alone, perhaps an indicator of the tenacity that he showed his whole life. He received the Queen's Scout Award just before his 18th birthday and had become an Assistant Scout Master at Bunyan Meeting when he was called up for National Service and posted to Malaya (as was) in 1955. So, he became Cub leader of the 13th Kuala Lumpur Cub pack, travelling and camping around the country.

That beginning as a teenage Assistant Scout Leader was the start of his life of continuous public service which only finished on his passing. He stayed in the Scouts movement all his life, being a Scout Master at Bunyan Meeting for 10 years and eventually a County Vice President.

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When he was 21 and he returned from Malaya, the family moved to Biddenham after Cyril bought some land and had a house built in Day's Lane. Later that year, he was introduced by friends to Betty Blacker, a 29 year old teacher, at a Young Conservatives Valentine Dance. He was immediately smitten and, although she was eight years his senior, asked her to marry him only three or four months later. Betty was finally persuaded much later in the autumn and they were married in August 1960 and moved into the newly built Elger Close where he then lived for the rest of his life. Sons Andrew and Robert arrived in 1962 and 1964, but the same week Robert was born, the family shop which Graham's grandfather had bought on Midland Road was burnt to the ground, and they decided to move the business to Foster Hill Road where most people now remember it.

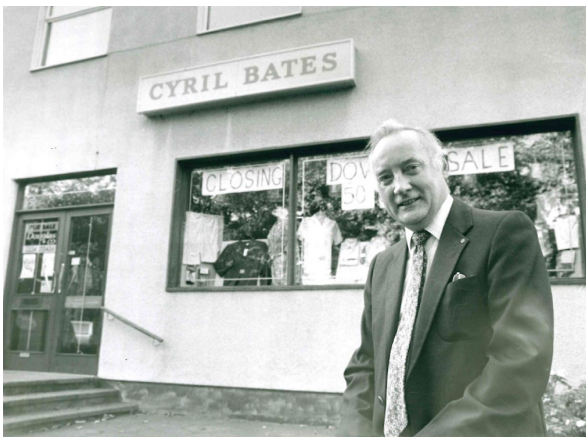
When he was just 22, he was asked to join the Board of Management of the Chamber of Trade and served for 16 years, becoming its President in 1969. This was the start of him becoming much more involved in Bedford's civil community, which then moved into politics. Graham and Betty had become stalwart members of the Young Conservatives and he began helping out politically, finally standing and being elected a Borough Councillor for Queens Park in December 1965.

By 1973, aged still only 36, he had been on the Council for just over seven years and had been Chairman of the Highways Committee for four years when he was elected Mayor of Bedford, fulfilling the Alderman's challenge. With a young family, a business and the Mayoralty, life was hectic and he noted that he had over 500 engagements that year. And it was a bittersweet year as, on the day he and Betty had been invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, they returned to find that youngest son Robert, aged nine, had been hit by a car whilst out for the day with his Grannies and was in hospital with life threatening injuries. Luckily, he made a full recovery but was in hospital for over two weeks and had lost a lot of weight.

Graham served as a Borough Councillor for 35 years, having been a member and Chair of numerous committees until 2000 when he was made an Honorary Alderman. He was asked to become a Magistrate in 1975 and continued until 2007, chairing both adult and youth courts at different times and ending as overall Chairman of all the youth courts. He also supported two charities, the council's Municipal Charities and St. John's Hospital Trust, since the early 1970s and was still chairing both of these until he died.

Through his council work he was asked in 1966 to become a school governor for Queens Park school, and later for Bedford Modern, the High School, Rushmoor School, St Andrew's and St. James' schools.

Graham was persuaded by Betty to retire at the age of 60, as she was then 68 and concerned that they might not have that



Outside the shop on retirement in 1994.

many years left to relax together, so the business was sold and they went on some of the holidays that had never been possible previously, such as New Zealand and the Galapagos. But he continued with many of his voluntary efforts.

Only three years after retirement, he had serious heart problems and in 2000 needed a triple heart bypass, which he survived and started walking daily to improve his fitness. But a year later, when the family were still concerned for him, Betty blacked out driving home from choir practice and never recovered, passing away some 10 days later in hospital at the still young age of 72. He was only 64, retired and alone and threw himself back into volunteer work, joining and chairing Biddenham Parish Council until 2015, becoming a St James', Biddenham school governor and, most significantly, deepening his commitment as Chair of Rushmoor School.

He loved being closely involved at Rushmoor, even helping out in cookery classes, and in 2013 he oversaw the merger with St Andrew's girls' school, becoming what is now Bedford Greenacre Independent School and he drove the physical merger of the two schools into what will be a new purpose-built site on Clapham Road. He stood down only this year as the plans were finalised and the success inevitable, but he would have loved to have seen the new school when it opens. The school kindly made him Honorary President in recognition of his considerable efforts.

Outside of his voluntary efforts, he was a member of the Rotary club for over 50 years, as well as Probus and Forum 71, having been President or Chair of all three, and this was where many of his longstanding friendships were based. There wasn't much time for other pastimes, and he had no interest in modern music or sport, unlike his sons, but he enjoyed classical musical and attended the Philharmonia concerts in Bedford loyally.



Graham regularly attended the Biddenham Show over the years and enjoyed participating in it, even winning prizes for his baking. He encouraged his children to enter the competitions, with some success, and later provided a cup for the family competition. Biddenham residents may well have seen him at this year's event in his suit, bowler hat and medals when he attended following the Proclamation in Bedford town centre for the new King.

When youngest son, Robert, got married nine years ago, he bought the house at the end of Graham's garden so that they could support him in his own home as he got older and, when their three girls were born, it seemed he had a new lease of life. He and the girls had a wonderful last six years; they were lucky to be able to go and play in his garden and see him whenever they wanted. He was so proud of all his five grandchildren and would tell anyone about them. He got to see them grow up and see the youngest girls go to St James' School this autumn. They miss him immensely, but celebrate his life and their precious time together.

Thanks to Bedfordshire Archives for the pictures of Graham in his mayor's robes and outside the family shop.

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Biddenham Parish Council



The Parish Council met on Tuesday 18th October 2022 at the Pavilion. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors, Peter Chase, Karen Cotton and Krzys Osuch. Apologies were received from Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Irina Madan-Sau and Francia Slade. Also present were the Clerk, David Brough, myself and Jon Gambold, one of our Borough Councillors. Councillor Rigby had sent his apologies.

The meeting opened with a one-minute silence in respect of the late Parish Councillor, Graham Bates, who sadly passed away in September. Graham had been a central figure of the village for more years than I care to remember and no words can do justice to his unstinting commitment to the Parish. While others will more eloquently articulate his achievements, I can say I am proud to have known him over the decades and he will be sorely missed by the Parish Council.

The meeting opened for normal business with a request from the Tennis Club to assist with some major items of expenditure to keep the courts in a good condition. We asked for further clarification from the Club to help us understand the extent of local community involvement in its membership and organisation, the sums being sought and what other avenues of funding had been pursued. This information will help inform our views. Clearly, with the increased size of the Parish, they will be an important facility. As a Parish we are keen to help support local groups and clubs so I have outlined here the issues we will consider when we receive requests for financial help as it may be helpful to other groups and/or clubs in our community who may (or may not) have thought about approaching us.

This leads me onto one of the main issues we, as a Parish Council, need to consider over the next year or so. As a consequence of the new house building within the Parish, the Parish Council will be the recipient of a significant (for us) capital sum. This will be a one-off sum which will have a 'limited' shelf life. By this I mean, if we do not spend the sum within a set period, it will need to be returned. The capital sum can be used to make improvements to infrastructure or used to help local groups/clubs with capital items they may struggle to finance themselves (but which are central to helping them operate). Initially, the Parish Council agreed it would set up a Working Group. This Working Group will develop a framework for assessing projects and, once agreed, evaluate suggestions put forward against the framework. What is really important is that the money is spent wisely and for the benefit of the Parish. As the debate matures, the Parish will examine how to have a wider conversation involving our community before it commits to a major project.

Another issue of note was a debate on the 'Trees for Streets' proposals put forward by residents to provide additional trees to those previously planted earlier this year. In all, the Parish received over 40 requests for new tree planting, which was a great response to our request for suggestions. At this meeting, we had the benefit of feedback from the Borough's Tree Officer on which locations would be suitable for the scheme. Due to various factors, such as the presence of utilities in verges and the close proximity of other trees, the Borough's Tree Officer indicated 26 of the 40 suggestions put forward would be suitable, so we have proceeded on this basis. The Clerk will post the final agreed locations on the Parish website in the next few weeks.

Date of the next meeting

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

Stewart Briggs

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Behind the scenes of Emmaus Village Carlton Christmas Shop

Carlton resident, Anne Geerts, volunteers for local homelessness charity Emmaus Village Carlton. For the past three years, she's been preparing all the donated items for the charity's popular Christmas Shop, which sells preloved decorations, festive clothing and gifts.

Emmaus Village Carlton supports people who have experienced homelessness to rebuild their lives, raising funds through its three shops and bistro. Their Christmas Shop opens every year from mid-October, inside the charity's Home Store.

Preparing for the Christmas Shop is a huge task, Anne explains: "It takes me all year – it doesn't stop! At the moment I'm volunteering four days every week, just to keep on top of all the Christmassy things that are coming in. We normally get a rush of donations at the start of December each year, as everyone unpacks their decorations, decides to change their colour scheme and give their old stuff to charity!"

Anne works behind the scenes on-site; there are multiple storage rooms, a workshop and a pricing room, just for the Christmas Shop preparation: "I start by unpacking and sorting the donations. All the ornaments are stored on shelves, and I have massive boxes for each type of item. We get thousands of baubles every year, which I colour-match along with all the tinsel. I collect together all the Christmas hats, stockings, nativity sets etc. Every set of fairy lights is tested to check it is working. Then I price everything up, ready for it all to be put out on sale. We bring out fresh stock most days, as things sell really quickly.

"I've noticed there are trends each year: last year we hardly sold any tinsel, but this year it's disappearing as fast as we put it out on the shop floor!

"I love what I do here. I like thinking about Christmas all year because I love Christmas, but mostly it's nice to know all my hard work is helping to raise money for such a wonderful local charity."

The Emmaus Village Carlton Christmas Shop (School Lane, Carlton MK43 7LQ) is open every year from mid-October until Christmas: Wednesday to Saturday 9.30am – 4.30pm and Sunday 10am – 4pm.

Find out more about Emmaus Village Carlton: www.emmaus.org.uk/village-carlton



Anne Geerts
Copyright Phonebox Magazine

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.)

How Much Energy Do Your Appliances Use? (Prices October 2022)

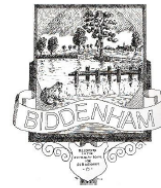
APPLIANCE	kWh	COST PER HOUR
Tumble dryer (3,000 watts)	3	£1.56
Oven (2,000W)	2	£1.04
Kettle (1,800W)	1.8	93p
Electric hob (1,700W)	1.7	88p
Vacuum cleaner (1,400W)	1.4	73p
Microwave (1,200W)	1.2	62p
Toaster (1,200W)	1.2	62p
Dishwasher (1,200W)	1.2	62p
Air fryer (1,000W)	1	59p
Iron (1,100W)	1.1	57p
Washing machine (700W)	0.7	36p
Slow cooker (225W)	0.225	12p
Sky Q box (45W)	0.045	2.34p
TV (30W)	0.03	1.56p
Fridge (28W)	0.028	1.45p
Light bulb (10W)	0.01	0.52p
Phone charger (5W)	0.005	0.26p

This chart, compiled by Money-Saving Expert.com, uses standard appliances and the recent price cap increase. These are ballpark figures, which will give you a rough idea of costs.

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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.)



The Biddenham Society

57th Annual Lunch and AGM

Sunday 6 November 2022

12.00 for 12.30 pm in the Village Hall

Admission: Adults £10 - Children free

Places must be booked and paid for by 31 October

Cheques payable to 'The Biddenham Society'. All bookings to Garry Fitzhugh, 69 Church End, Biddenham MK40 4AS (tel: 07778 004749).

PLEASE NOTE THAT TICKETS WILL NOT BE ISSUED. Receipt of your booking and cheque secures a place.

Enjoy a free glass of wine or soft drink on arrival followed by the Society's excellent Ploughman's Lunch. This annual event is a friendly and informal occasion which is always well supported by residents. All welcome, especially our newer residents.

* Find out about recent planning applications, decisions and appeals in and around Biddenham.

* Receive an up-to-date briefing on any developments, the Borough's plans for Biddenham, and any threats to the village.

* Hear about the changing remit of the Association and its proposed revised objectives.

To help catering arrangements, please book early. Thank you.

Celebrating and preserving Biddenham's beauty and heritage

Henry Missing: a man of many parts (Part 3)

After disposing of his interest in the Biddenham run he had claimed and named in 1863 after our Biddenham, Henry's next move in Queensland 'was to the coast where he spent some time on the Telamon station in the Logan district.'

And after a spell in tin mining, Henry returned to the land: *Throughout his life, Mr Missing was engaged in pastoral pursuits, chiefly horse and cattle breeding, and of late years had given some attention to Angora goats*: he sent samples of the mohair to England.

Henry took a keen interest in all sports, being an enthusiastic cricketer, and had the reputation of being the best amateur boxer in Queensland. *The sport of kings did not fail to win his attention*, and in 1868 he won the Brisbane Cup with 'an aged bay gelding called Sydney' and *Numerous other races went to his account.* It was also told how Henry himself rode in races, on one occasion the bridle falling off his horse in the middle of a race: Henry dismounted, rebridled the horse, set off in hot pursuit and won the race!

One obituary in 1910 observed that *Racing in those days, compared with what it is today, was a different institution. It was a sport supported and patronised by sportsmen most of whom trained a horse on his station and brought it to Brisbane to race.* ... *Mr Missing had Roanoke racing. He was purchased by Mr. R. S. Lord, and went to Gympie, where he raced.* Mr Lord was later to own the Biddenham station for some years from 1920, and we can only speculate if he knew that Henry Missing was the man who had claimed the land and named the station Biddenham.

As well as his pastoral pursuits and time in tin mining, Henry was involved in timber-getting, a sort of itinerant forestry, and owned a sugar cane plantation. The newspapers recounted too that he took a lively interest in the development of Queensland, and a keen and active interest in local government. He was noted for his scholarly attainments: a man of good literary tastes, there was probably no better read man in the district, and his skill as a chess player was notable.

As well as from his obituaries in the newspapers we learn more of Henry's life in Australia from his daughter, Ethel Violet, in her article in the book published in 1959 on Queensland's centenary by the Queensland Women's Historical Association.

She also said that Henry Missing, having spent some time at Biddenham, *then moved nearer the coast, where he took up Telamon Station on the Logan, in partnership with Mr Cresswell Crump. Mr Maddock Hughes learnt colonial experience with them.*

And she adds some details not related in the earlier newspaper reports: *Rosa Campbell Praed in her book "My Australian Childhood", refers to them as "the three young Englishmen from Telamon, who came to tea.."* At this time, Ipswich was the gay town of Queensland, consequently the three young Englishmen were in great request at balls and gatherings.

'After selling out of Telamon, Henry Missing had every intention of returning to England for a visit, but, instead, adopted an offer to manage Milton Station in the Port Curtis District. Later in 1874/75 he purchased Gootchie Station.' So, sadly, Henry never ventured again along the paths of our Biddenham, the place where his father was once Curate, where remain today the memorials to his father and two of his siblings, and where he may have drawn his first breath in the Rectory.

Ethel also mentioned Captain Whish who *'often wrote in his Diary of the happy times he spent with Mr. and Mrs. Missing at Gootchie'*, the 'high old time' visitors enjoyed there with Henry and Elizabeth *'as jolly as ever, the kind hostess is always bright and cheery, and most hospitable, and thoroughly unselfish'*.

There's more to tell another time about the Lord family, Rosa Campbell Praed and Captain Whish.

In 1902, after substantial floods, Henry sold Gootchie and took up two other cattle properties, including Tallega near Tiaro, but was still known as *'the grand old man of Gootchie'*.

Henry was one of the pioneer pastoralists of the district and was widely known and respected. The lyrical opening paragraphs of his obituary in The Queenslandier recalled the life and times of the pioneers: *'The pioneers, as a body, have entered the last phase – have run their race; have fought the fight – hence almost every issue of the "Queenslander" contains references to one or more of these old Romans, to whom the "sunset and evening star" have appeared; who have heard the "one clear call" and put out to sea upon the longer journey that comes in its own good time at last. But they have cut their cake, and can't complain. They lived in the "good old days," and that was a great privilege if all we hear is true. There was a fascination about those days, which these days lack. The age of Romance is gone, like the age of chivalry.*

Mr Henry Missing is the last to depart from among the pioneers to cross the Great Divide.'

We know much more now about Henry, his life and times. He certainly had an adventurous and pioneering spirit, travelling on long, potentially hazardous journeys by sailing ship, first to America to travel on to Canada, returning home to England to travel on afar again this time though to Australia. Not content then to rest on his laurels he became a pioneer, exploring unclaimed territories in the outback of Queensland. He certainly left his mark there which we have been delighted to find some 160 years later, another Biddenham, a very different Biddenham, but named after our Biddenham by Henry Missing, a man of many parts.

Peter Applewhite

With thanks to Trove for Australian newspaper extracts, and to the National Library of Australia for the article by Henry's daughter, Ethel



*Henry and Elizabeth's resting place in Maryborough Cemetery
(With thanks to the Maryborough Family History Society)*

NB

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Trophies showing signs of age!

Biddenham Show has a long history and many of the trophies awarded have been going for many years. Some have had to be retired because space for engraving has run out, others have been damaged beyond repair, and others have been repurposed to accommodate new classes in the modern era.

One, the Bertha Simmonds Bowl Award, had to be withdrawn at the last minute this year when it became apparent, having been returned, that it was held together with adhesive tack and definitely wouldn't survive another presentation and engraving.

Peacock Spade winner Dhushy Vedavanam would have taken home the Bowl, had it been awarded, as her small flower arrangement took 1st Prize in the category, contributing to her overall triumph.

The Show Committee will be reviewing the cups and trophies. They have to rationalise the number and see how they can reflect the current interests and skills of the village.



Dhushy's arrangement



SHOW COMMITTEE



SHOW COMMITTEE

Reminder from the Biddenham Show Committee

The deadline to submit a request for funds from the Biddenham Show Committee is Friday 11th November, so if you are a village organisation or group and you would like some monetary help, please send an email to jane@80kitd.co.uk. Please provide a small amount of detail as to the amount you need and what the money will be used for.

Thank you

Bedford National Trust Association

Tuesday 15th November at 2.15pm
HS2 Aerial Photography

Drone pictures by Richard Clifford.

Richard and his drone take wonderful pictures of the construction.

Tuesday 17th January 2023 at 2.15pm
Dabs and DNA Detect Criminals
Chris Truran

Chris says he examined over 25,000 crime scenes.

Everyone welcome. No need to book.

There will be a small entry fee.

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For further information please contact Betty Thomas
on 01480 860 421

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Biddenham Conservation Volunteers

Cowslip Meadow, just west of St James's church, is a wonderful place to relax and appreciate nature in Biddenham. The Biddenham Conservation Volunteers have undertaken a flora survey in the meadow this year, identifying 112 species of plants and trees in the meadow field or perimeter. This represents a rich biodiversity and, in turn, many animal habitats are supported.

As the name suggests, cowslips are very common here. They flower early and are best seen in early spring. Other commonly occurring flowers include lady's bedstraw, red clover, and various grasses. The meadow also boasts some orchids and has a marsh area where sedge and horsetail are found. Recently, the Council arranged for the meadow to be mowed; an important task in maintaining meadow biodiversity.

Of more than 1,110 trees we counted, the commonest are ash and field maple, with 31 different tree species observed.

A meadow needs managing to stop scrub and bramble encroaching into the field area and the woodland surround needs managing to preserve and maintain animal habitats. Are you interested in getting involved with maintenance tasks? If so, please contact Gilly Cowan on gilylcowan@btinternet.com

Nigel Orton



The scrub clearers

The group have continued to be active and mostly working in Cowslip Meadow this month with a start to autumn work. This involves some scrub clearing to prevent the meadow getting smaller and to balance scrub and open tree cover. Shortly we will start coppicing and making animal safe habitat out of branches and brush cleared from our labours.

The focus also moves to the pond site with some proposed coppicing and clearing of hazel trees that are getting too big. Our new tools are now in use, so no need to bring your own. We hope to extend our activities into footpath way marking and more path cutting back and clearing.

The grass in the churchyard extension has been cut and partly cleared, so more effort may be needed there.

In the bottom of Cowslip Meadow, look out for the area of longer grass left as vole cover, so please try to keep dogs out of the relatively small patch. We will cut it again after another year and then probably move to another area of longer grass. This prevents brush wood taking over from grasses and sedges by moving the area about.

Please check the BCV page on the Biddenham Parish Council website for updated details of forthcoming projects or contact me on: chrishj49@gmail.com or Gilly on gilylcowan@btinternet.com.

Chris Jones

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This month in the garden

What a wonderful time of the year. We are so lucky to live in a country where the seasons are so defined. The autumn colours really come into their own in November. The

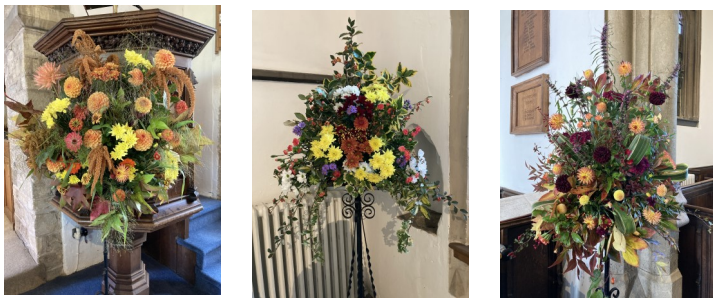


Gleditsia

gleditsia tree in my garden is such a delight in the autumn. My late husband and I planted it soon after we moved to our house in Biddenham in 1982. I cannot recommend it highly enough for small gardens. In the spring, the leaves are a vibrant lime green; in the summer the bees just flock to the flowers and at this time of the year its autumnal orange foliage is a joy to behold. As I look out of my office window I am blown away by the colours of the Norwegian Maple which stands at the end of my Close. It was planted in the late 1980s (I forget the

actual date) by John Congdon who was the tree warden in Biddenham at the time. I applied to John for a tree for our road. John planted the small sapling and my children and I watered it copiously every few days to ensure its survival through the summer months and here it now stands in fully grown magnificence - I always think of John when I look out at it. I understand that John also planted the oak tree on King's Corner. I do hope the trees planted in Biddenham this year will survive.

Talking of autumn colours, were you able to see the flowers for Harvest Festival in St James' Church? Some wonderful flowers were brought from people's gardens and allotments and the talented team set to work to create a beautiful, vibrant display in the church. I have attached photos of a small number of the arrangements, but there will be more on the BGA website. At the 10.00am service, the first hymn was "We plough the fields and scatter....." How good to sing that hymn - such memories of childhood - mine of St Nicholas Church in Kenilworth and for many other people memories of churches and schools in other parts of the country. It's what we still do in our gardens isn't it - turning the soil and scattering seed?



I have started planting my bulbs for spring colour; a small task compared to those gardeners from the Bedford Parks Department on The Embankment earlier this week. A huge team of people and thousands of bulbs. The Department is to be congratulated on the tremendous display which adorns The Embankment and other parks in Bedford each year. A general rule when planting bulbs is to plant them at a depth 2-3 times the height of the bulb. For example, if a bulb is 5cm from the pointed end to the basal plate, then plant between 10 and 15cm deep. For naturalising in a lawn or woodland area, just scatter handfuls of bulbs across the area and dig a hole wherever they fall - don't be tempted to adjust their position if you want a naturalistic look. I have also been planting out the

many primroses I dug out of my daughter's lawn in the Spring. They seed themselves everywhere in her garden. They were so tiny then, but have been nurtured all summer and are now big enough to survive the winter under my birch trees along with the snowdrops and hellebores. Everything in that part of the garden is currently dark and gloomy, but once the birch leaves have been shed and the dappled sunlight gets through, it will be a brilliant mass of flowers in the spring.

As the season progresses and we start to spend less time in our garden and more time indoors, house plants take on a greater significance. I spend a lot of time in my conservatory, but perhaps more so in the winter. I adopt a different watering regime as some plants benefit from a winter rest period - most notably cacti. I stop watering them completely after October and don't resume again until March. They thrive well on this winter neglect. They were never mine - they are just the ones I cleared out of my son's bedroom when he went off to university. Some are now enormous - last year I relegated some of them to the plant house where the windows are open all winter to provide a flow of air for the auriculas. Our winters now seem to be so mild that they have survived thus far. Other plants are also on a restricted watering regime - I tend to lift up the pot and if it feels light I give it an overnight soak and then drain off totally and leave off watering for a week or more. With orchids it is easy to see when they need watering. Orchids are epiphytes, and grow by attaching themselves to a tree trunk or other plant. They are not parasitic as they absorb their water and nutrients from rain, air and other debris. In the wild their roots are exposed to sunlight and when grown indoors the roots of an orchid should always be accessible to the light, which is why they are presented for sale in transparent pots. If the roots are green no need to water; if the roots are grey drip some water onto the base of the plant and potting bark and then drain thoroughly.

This month tender plants will need protecting from frosts and gales. Roses that have grown quite tall can be cut back a little to prevent wind rock, and now is an ideal time to plant bare root roses and deciduous hedging. For those with fruit trees putting grease bands around the trunks, about 18ins above soil level, at this time of the year is a good method for reducing the number of winter moth caterpillars on fruit trees in the spring. The greasy bands trap the wingless females and prevent them from climbing up tree trunks and laying their eggs. The winter moth caterpillars feed on developing fruit buds. On ornamental trees the damage should be tolerated if possible as it will not affect the long term health of the plant. These caterpillars are an important part of the biodiversity trees support, including as a food source for nesting birds in the spring. Plant tulip bulbs at the end of November and start taking some of the leaves off hellebores to make way for the flowers. Rake up fallen leaves off lawns before they block out light and moisture from the grass. Put out bird food to encourage winter birds into the garden. So, heaps to do this month, but whatever you are about in the garden, enjoy this season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.

Linda Truscott

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Biddenham's secret Cold War bunker

'Forewarned is forearmed'

In the 1990's my late father-in-law, Andrew Field, took my husband and I on a tour of a large green bunker tucked back from the road on the corner of Day's Lane. It was locked up and there wasn't much to see but, as we strolled around, he started to talk about his past as an enemy aircraft spotter in the Observer Corps during World War II, and his subsequent role during the Cold War with the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) at Bedford No.7 Group Headquarters in Biddenham.



ROC No.7 HQ, Biddenham

Sadly, I remember little of what he said, and now his stories have gone with him. The bunker was demolished in 1999 to make way for new houses on Observer Close, named in a nod to its past, and today the only evidence of the ROC's existence is a commemorative plaque dedicated to the volunteers. So, when I was invited to meet some of the former volunteers at their recent reunion, I jumped at the chance.

Nuclear fallout monitoring

The ROC was an organisation of uniformed volunteers who manned a network of underground observation posts across Britain during the Cold War (1947-1991). Their role was to monitor radioactive fallout and warn the nation in the event of a nuclear attack.

It began life as the Observer Corps in 1925 to report and track enemy aircraft from rooftops and high points across the UK, acting as the '*Eyes and Ears of the RAF*'. The Corps played a key role in the Battle of Britain and, in recognition of its service, in 1941 it was granted 'Royal' status. A new rank structure was introduced, and women could join for the first time. It was stood down in 1945, when Germany capitulated.

Two years later, with growing tensions between the US and the Soviet Union and the heightened threat of a nuclear attack, the ROC was remobilised with a new role to monitor and report nuclear fallout. Its motto: '*Forewarned is Forearmed*'.

1,563 underground monitoring posts, including 25 group headquarters, were constructed across Britain situated 8-10 miles apart, fitted out with specialist monitoring equipment.

Ordinary citizens doing extraordinary jobs

Biddenham resident, Bob McIntosh, was a teenager when he attended an ROC open evening at No.7 HQ in 1981. He wanted to join the RAF but, due to hay fever, wasn't eligible and the ROC "seemed the next best thing".

Whilst the ROC was not part of the RAF, and aircraft tracking was no longer part of its remit, an interest in aircraft continued amongst volunteers throughout its lifespan.

Some, like John Shere, were ex-RAF. "I was a radar technician in the RAF. I joined the ROC because I went to an open day at RAF Wyton where the ROC had a display. I knew who they were because they held the Master Test



Bob McIntosh, Pamela Austin

[annual test for ROC volunteers] there every year," he said. Given his background, they suggested he join a group control rather than a post. So, he joined in 1982 and was one of the last to leave in December 1995.

Most volunteers were ordinary civilians from all walks of life. "You didn't need any special qualifications,"

explained Bob. "There were standard procedures for each task and volunteers rotated on different jobs to ensure everyone could perform every role in case they ended up on the final crew in the event of an Attack Warning Red."

Anyone aged 16-55, male or female, could volunteer provided they could commit for a minimum of three years and signed the Official Secrets Act. "Volunteers had to declare that, in the event of a nuclear attack, they would be prepared to leave their family and go into a bunker which would be sealed, and you may or may not come back," said Bruce Bonham who volunteered at Riseley post.

Edwina Holden MBE joined No.7 HQ in 1961 and stayed for 30 years. "Everybody thought that if a nuclear bomb hit this country, we'd all be finished. But we wouldn't because it was very much dependent on wind speed, wind direction and how wide the plume [fall-out] was. There would be safe areas outside that plume."

Nuclear training

Volunteers met weekly inside the bunker on a three-crew rota for training. Training sessions aimed to simulate an actual nuclear attack, using manual instruments designed to be simple to operate and robust enough to withstand a fallout. The Ground Zero Indicator (GZI) recorded the angle and elevation of a blast to pinpoint where a bomb had gone off, while the Bomb Power Indicator (BPI) measured the blast wave, and the Fixed Survey Meter measured radiation.

"The first thing you learnt was how to be a post display plotter," explained John. "You would be in contact with six posts who sent fallout information through to you [at HQ]." Volunteers recorded the data on perspex display boards, writing backwards so that Home Office scientists on the other side of the boards could read the data and combine it with weather reports to plot the plumes. The triangulation team, using information received from the various posts, would then plot the bomb's location on a large display table.

"We'd plot a red symbol for a ground burst and a green symbol for an air burst," explained Edwina. "The triangulation table had all the posts in the area marked on it. Once you had first fallout readings from three posts, you could triangulate the position of the bomb."

These readings were then passed to the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation (UKWMO) who used the information to predict where the fallout was heading, enabling them to forewarn people in the path of a fallout and alert the armed forces.

Bedford's monitoring posts

Several posts dotted around Bedford reported their fallout readings to HQ in Biddenham.

Whilst HQs were insulated and equipped with large ops rooms, decontamination chambers and dormitories, posts were small, cold, and cramped, with rudimentary facilities. They operated with three crews of three who donned 'Hairy Marys' (flannel uniforms) and heavy naval issue duffel coats to keep warm.

Bruce volunteered from 1973 to 1991 at No.37 post in Riseley with his wife. Subsequently their two sons also volunteered. "In summer, meetings took place bi-weekly inside the post and in an adjoining shed with a pot-bellied

stove, but in winter meetings were held at the Royal Oak, followed by a game of skittles,” he said.

Bruce became Group Officer overseeing five posts called ‘Central Cluster,’ situated in a ring around Bedford. Riseley, Turvey and Olney were the ‘Foxtrot Cluster,’ and Amphill and Sandy were the ‘Hotel Cluster.’

Working hard, playing hard

As well as regular training sessions, ad hoc 24-hour continuous manning exercises were held over weekends, with crew handovers every few hours. Emergency call out exercises were held without warning. “The officer in charge would receive a call early on a Sunday and cascade that information to the crew who would then make their way to HQ. Post crews would also be called out,” said Edwina. “We had a script that we would run through as if it was a real situation,” explained Bruce.

Every summer, week-long training camps were held at different RAF bases. Here the crews met volunteers from other posts across the country and lifelong friendships, and some marriages, were formed. Whilst the training was taken very seriously, socials were also an integral part of the camps.

“Like any bunch of people away from home, drinking and partying went on,” said Alison Coombes who was one of the youngest volunteers. “They used to inspect the barracks to make sure ladies hadn’t infiltrated the men’s barracks and vice versa. I’d only been married six months, so I joined my husband and his friends for drinks in their barracks. When somebody outside yelled ‘inspection!’ I first hid in a wardrobe and then bolted out of a window.”

Equality & fraternity

Crews comprised equal numbers of men and women, though some had slightly more women. “I think it was because we had a female Officer,” said Edwina, who went on to become an Officer herself.

“One thing I liked about the ROC was that it was the first time I’d come across equal opportunities. There was no distinction between the roles of men and women,” said Alison who joined No.7 HQ with her former husband in 1981.

The UK’s highest ranking ROC officer, Joyce Shrubbs, who was based at Biddenham, actively promoted women’s welfare. “Joyce joined the ROC during the war as a 16 year old after her brother was killed in action. She was too young to join the women’s air force, and there was a shortage of men to man the ROC, so it was opened to women,” explained Bruce. “She rose through the ranks to become Assistant Commandant of the whole ROC.”

Standdown

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the ROC was stood down on 30th September 1991. It came as a shock to the volunteers for whom the ROC had become a huge part of their lives with strong friendships formed.

“The ROC was like one enormous national family,” explained Bob. “Observers used to sign up for the same summer training camp each year so they could meet up with friends from other posts.”

“Our Tuesday crew was very close,” said Edwina. “We all knew everybody’s background and we were all supportive of each other. That as much as anything was why we all stayed.”



Keith Arnold and John Shere demonstrate ROC instruments

“When you joined, you never thought you’d stay very long because you didn’t really know what was involved,” said Bruce. “The more you got into it, the more you became interested.”

After standdown, all ROC posts were closed, but the Ministry of Defense retained the Nuclear Reporting Cell (NRC) element of the ROC to continue providing a nuclear, biological and chemical service to the armed forces.

Edwina, John, and Bob all transferred to NRCs at RAF Bentley Priory, RAF Northwood, and RAF Brampton respectively. The NRCs were ultimately stood down on 31st December 1995.

Legacy

It’s now over 30 years since the ROC was stood down. Through the ROC Association former volunteers continue to meet regularly at reunions, lunches, and annual cenotaph parades.

Some, like Bob, are involved in restoring former ROC posts, including a group sector HQ in Dundee. Several restored posts run tours for the public.

Edwina and John are senior members of the National Heritage Organisation and give ROC talks and host displays at RAF open days where they demonstrate ROC equipment. At one air show, a German visitor asked: “Can you tell me how you won the war using that instrument?”

Janet Field



ROC reunion, RAFA Club, Bedford

Photo credits: Bob McIntosh & Edwina Holden

**For more information about the ROC visit:
www.roc-heritage.co.uk and www.roctwentytwelve.com.**

Café B... 

*Tuesday 15th November
Biddenham Village Hall
10.15 am – 11.45am*

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

Next café 20th December



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One Body, Many Parts (Corinthians 12)




Sadly, the pond needs rain and lots of it! It is completely dry and not looking at all pond-like, but we must wait for nature to take its course. In the meantime, the earth at the bottom of the pond has started to soften, so we plan to start removing some of the reeds and weeds in the pond before the water returns.

Visit by Biddenham International School

Recently, a group of young geographers and biologists from Biddenham International School came to visit the pond as part of their studies on ponds and their place in the community. The visit was hosted by Chris, and he welcomed their enthusiasm and critical thinking on all matters to do with ponds and conservation. The students were digging for water and to see how deep the mud was. They also took a sample of mud to add to some water to see what creatures come to life. We are also aware that the school is looking to re-wild their own pond, which was neglected during the various lockdowns, and we are very pleased to be able to provide help and advice if needed.



Autumn Work Morning

On Saturday 12th November, we will hold our autumn work morning, meeting at the Pond at 10.00am and aiming to finish about noon so please do put the date in your diary and come and help us if you can. For more details, please see our poster below left. There is much to do to tidy around the pond and make the area ready for the winter. The more volunteers we have, the more we achieve in our two hours.


We've also noticed increased litter, particularly in front of and around the bench near the sheds, especially discarded drink bottles. It is of course a great shame that this pretty, quiet space – cherished by so many visitors – is being despoiled. It is an ongoing battle, but we appreciate everyone's help in keeping it as tidy as possible.

The Pond can be found behind the Manor Hospital and the footpath that will take you to it is at the junction of Main Road and Gold Lane, where there is a signpost with a kingfisher. Alternatively, it can be reached from the footpath behind St James'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
Jonathan Field	jfield21st@mail.com
Kris Burchill	kristenhopebee@gmail.com
www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com	
www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond	

Quiz Night

Saturday 5th November at 7.15p.m.

Teams of 6 / 8


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Two course supper

Bar for wines, beer and soft drinks

Tickets £15 from Liz Watson

liz4watson@aol.com or 345028



Proceeds to Willen Hospice



The Biddenham Village Pond Autumn Work Morning

Saturday 12th November

10am to 12 noon

All welcome – Meet at the Pond
(children must be over the age of 14 and accompanied by an adult responsible for their activity)

You will need stout footwear, gardening gloves and useful tools such as secateurs and loppers if you have them.

Please come and enjoy a morning in the fresh air and contribute to maintaining the unspoilt beauty of our pond.

Remembrance

I do not want your kiss
you are too close!
I can feel your chilling breath,
and I can taste your bitter scent.
The stillness of your voice,
that recalls the sound of death,
you belong in far off fields,
in former days and distant lands.
Do not make me see your eyes,
or touch your fragile hands.

So safe for me
to glance at poppy fields,
and ordered rows of
white and chiselled stones,
markers of the fallen and the lost,
fixed so firm and fast,
that stand in mournful regiments,
on trimmed and even grass,
but you?
Move your countenance from me,
and stand more distant, more alone,
for your beauty is as piercing as splintered wood,
Or shattered glass.

How can I not see?
You are the whimpering of a child
clinging to the darkness of a bombed out room
you are flinching at the tapping rain,
beneath the cold and heartless moon,
you are the raped, the beaten, the tortured,
the woman who longs for stillness and rest
from the soldier's reckless rage,
where men, no longer men, now are so much less,
as they quell the song of innocence,
and break the heart within your shattered breast.

Do not hold on to me so fast,
or breathe your disquieting words,
for in your voice I hear the grief
beneath the sirens and the blasts,
the tears you stem,
so deep,
there is the fear that you may drown.
My sight is now lowered to ground,
for that dark and cavernous space behind your eyes,
is filled with echoes of your silent prayers,
my fortress heart cannot perceive,
I do not want your kiss
You are too close to me

Eric Lomax

Community Transport in Bedfordshire

A service at the heart of Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity is Community Transport. It aims to deliver a safe, accessible alternative for those who cannot use ordinary public transport due to temporary or permanent disability.

The Driver and Passenger Support Assistant team work hard to make sure people are able to travel safely, and without costing them too much money. They have also shown resilience by adapting their services during the pandemic, for example by delivering food parcels and helping people get to Covid-19 vaccination appointments. In 2020-21, the team completed over 1,300 shopping trips and 367 vaccination trips – a real achievement indeed.

Driver, Lisa King, shared what makes her proud to be a part of the transport team:

“[I had] taken a lovely, partially sighted lady to Sainsbury's and then picked her up and dropped her back home. It was her first time travelling with us as she usually gets lifts from family and a neighbour, but they're all away at present. Naturally she was quite anxious as it was her first time doing the shopping on her own, but I set her mind at rest helped her on and off the bus and took her to the door at Sainsbury's.

“I got her to call me when she'd finished so that she didn't have to wait until her booked collection time, swooped in to pick her up and then got her and her shopping safely home. She said how at ease she felt with me and what a wonderful service we provide.”

If you live in Bedford Borough or Northern Bedfordshire and would like to access any of our road transport services, call 01234 834933 or email us on communitytransport@bedsrcc.org.uk

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



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Peter's Picturehouse In November

Date: **Tuesday 1st November 2022**

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

Location: **Biddenham Village Hall**



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

Certificate: **12A**

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

Coming soon...
Tues 6th Dec

It's a Wonderful Life

Peter's Picturehouse

The Duke (12A) is a moving true story that celebrates a man who was determined to live a meaningful life. It is set in 1961 and stars Jim Broadbent and Helen Mirren. First shown in February this year in the UK, the film follows the story of a 60 year old taxi driver who stole Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London in a campaign to gain more investment from the government in helping the elderly.

We will open the doors of Biddenham Village Hall at 7.00pm on Tuesday 1st November so that you can buy a ticket, priced £5, choose a seat and perhaps buy a glass of wine or beer, a soft drink or cup of tea. The film showing starts at 7.30pm and we have an interval when ice creams and drinks are on sale.

We look forward to welcoming you to the warmth and companionship of the Village Hall on the first Tuesday of each month for Peter's Picturehouse. Watch out for our schedule of films in 2023 in next month's Loop, or register for email updates by emailing

peterspicturehouse@gmail.com.

And on Tuesday 6th December, come along for a mince pie and start the festive season with a familiar favourite film:

Tues 6th December **It's a Wonderful Life** (U)

Rose Houghton



Did you know?

The original refurbishment of the Barn to a Hall was a real community effort.

Fundraising events were held that included a Barn Dance that raised £40, as well as a Buffet and Dance held in the village hall that raised £131.95. We also found reference in The Loop archives to a donation of £150 from the Biddenham Show.

Many items were donated and there is reference in the archives to a sewage interceptor, polythene sheeting, a cooker, and a water heater. Some 2,000 bricks were recovered from some derelict farm buildings in an adjacent field and transported back to the Barn by a team of church volunteers.

The Barn remains an asset run on behalf of the church by volunteers and made available to the community. If you would like to hire the Barn, 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



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Biddenham Gardeners Association

365 days of colour in your garden

Tuesday 18th October was an evening to remember. The village hall was packed with members and visitors all eager to see and hear Nick Bailey, a regular contributor on BBC 2's Gardeners' World. This programme is, for many keen gardeners, a must on a Friday evening; there is always something to be learnt. This meeting was no exception as we learnt loads!

Nick is a garden designer who, in 2016, won a silver gilt medal for his design on Main Avenue at Chelsea Flower Show. He is also a former head gardener of the Chelsea Physic Garden. Nick took as his theme 365 Days of Colour in Your Garden, the title of his latest book. He illustrated his talk with outstanding photographs taken from the book. Nick explained that he would be talking about the science and art of working with colour, horticultural techniques, plants and doing less work to get more colour into our gardens. The last had considerable appeal for the audience.

Nick posed the question of what we mean by colour, painting onto a green canvas in our gardens, and discussed the subtle tones and hues used in nature. He explored the art and science of colour and how plants have evolved in different ways to attract insects through the way in which they sparkle and glisten and direct the pollinators to the nectar source by the way their petals are coloured. Colour affects human beings as well, both emotionally and physically. For example, cooler colours lead to a drop in heart rate and orange environments trigger more activity. Colours affect each other and Nick illustrated this with the colour wheel. He discussed simultaneous contrast, complementary colours and triadic colour combinations and illustrated these phenomena with plants. We can all appreciate the joy of vivid orange crocosmia when allied with brilliant blue agapanthus; the effect is stunning. Nick discussed extracting elements of a key plant and repeating this for effect. He spoke about the importance of white to highlight and add sparkle.

Nick went on to talk about gardening techniques and extending seasonality. He discussed dead heading and the 'Chelsea Chop' - a pruning technique whereby herbaceous plants are cut down by half around the time of Chelsea Flower Show in order to increase the amount of flowers on a shorter stem later in the year.

Nick spoke about successional sowing. He suggested sowing a central circle with seed, then a couple of weeks later another ring of sowing and two weeks on another sowing so that, as the flowers faded from the first sowing, they would be overtaken and masked by the second and subsequent sowings to provide interest over a longer period. He suggested pruning *Viticella clematis* and dogwood *Midwinter Fire* every two years instead of the recommended one in order to produce more flowers on the clematis and longer coloured stems on the dogwood, thereby enhancing the colour in the garden.

There were suggestions for plants which produced flowers for many months like *Erysimum Bowles Mauve*, *Geranium Rozanne* and *Geum Totally Tangerine* amongst others. Nick particularly recommended *Rosa Chinensis Bengal Crimson* which produces flowers all year round. Nick is a great advocate of successional planting and particularly planting things which go on, under, through and over other plants so that when one plant's flowers fade something else is there to take its place.

There were lots of questions from the audience which Nick answered very effectively and with good humour, including the identification of a specimen in a plastic bag. He signed copies of his new book which was purchased by lots of people.

We very much enjoyed Nick's presence at this our special meeting to celebrate 30 years plus two of Biddenham Gardeners Association and a special thank you as well to our many visitors. We hope you will join us again. And a final thank you to everyone who provided a cake; they all looked so delicious, and to the many helpers who served teas and washed up!

Please join us next month on Tuesday 22nd November when Joe Sharman will be talking about the 'Autumn Flowers of the Peloponnese'. The meeting will be open to all members, new members and visitors. We look forward to seeing you then

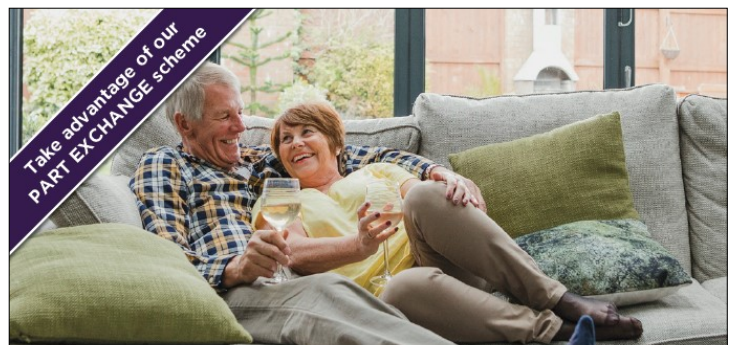
Linda Truscott

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

New menu at The Three Tuns

The Three Tuns in Biddenham has just introduced a new menu. You can find it together with booking details at www.threetunsbiddenham.com.

Details of their Christmas programme and special events, including their Friday night soul music events, are also on there.



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*Terms and conditions apply. This offer is on selected units and until 30th November 2022.

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**

4th November, 2nd December

Quilting & Sewing Group



Biddenham Village Hall
10.30 a.m.

Last Friday of each month
Pop in and see what goes on



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

100 CLUB September draw

The winners were:

1st	Manoj Viegas	115
2nd	Chris Spurgeon	106
3rd	Rosemary Harris	98

Drawn by Pauline Hull



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

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

**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
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

November

- Tue 1 Nov Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p16
 Thu 3 Nov Biddenham Village Hall AGM, 8.00pm, see p3
 Fri 4 Nov First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
 Sat 5 Nov Village Quiz, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.15pm, see p14
Sun 6 Nov All Age Worship at All Saints, 10.00am
All Age Worship at St James's, 10.00am
Holy Communion at All Saints, 11.15am
All Souls Remembrance Service, St James's, 6.00pm, see p2
 Sun 6 Nov Biddenham Society AGM, Biddenham Village Hall, 12 noon, see p7
 Sat 12 Nov Pond Work Morning, 10.00am, see p14
Sun 13 Nov Said Holy Communion at All Saints, 9.00am
Holy Communion at St James's, 10.00am
Remembrance service at Biddenham War Memorial, 10.50-11.15am, see p1
Evening Prayer at St James's, 6.00pm
 Tue 15 Nov Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p13
 Tue 15 Nov Bedford National Trust Association, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.15pm, see p9
 Tue 15 Nov Biddenham Parish Council, Biddenham Pavilion, 7.30pm, see p6
 Tue 15 Nov Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm, see p17
Sun 20 Nov Holy Communion at All Saints, 10.00am
Morning Worship at St James's, 10.00am
Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship, Church Barn, 7.00pm
 Fri 25 Nov Quilting & sewing Group, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p18
Sun 27 Nov Said Holy Communion at All Saints, 9.00am
Holy Communion at St James's, 10.00am
Explorers, Church Barn, 10.00am
 Wed 30 Nov-4 Dec Christmas tree Festival at St Paul's, see pp1&3

December

- Fri 2 Dec First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p18
 Sat 3 Dec Heart & Music, St James's Church, 3.00pm, see p3
 Sun 4 Dec Christmas Sale, Church Barn, 10.45am-12.00noon, see p3
 Tues 6 Dec Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p16

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

Contributors please note that the next edition will cover both December and January.

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 December/January 2022/23 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 16th November 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.