

The Loop

December/
January
2023/24

£1.50

An Appeal

For a thousand years our Church, St James's, has been a Christian presence in the community. Not only do we provide regular weekly worship for Christians, but we have always provided, and continue to provide support at the key moments of your life. We are there for you, whatever your faith, at births, in sickness, in marriage and in bereavement. Whenever you need us we will continue to reach out for you.

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Sadly, rising costs and diminishing resources place this important work at risk. We are asking for the commitment of financial support, now and for the future. Please help because we want to continue to help you.

In anticipation,

Revd Eric Lomax



One of Biddenham's Christmas trees



*A very happy Christmas
to all our readers.*

For details of Christmas services at St
James's see page 14

2024 Loop subscriptions now due

Your annual subscription to The Loop is now due.

The price for the ten issues in 2024 remains at £15 (minimum).

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

You can pay by bank transfer to:

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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.

Please pay by 31st January.

'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, which may be edited, from residents and friends via email to loopeditor@gmail.com



Letter from the Vicar

Dear All

I have a special attachment to my old church in Colsterworth. I was the priest in charge there for seven years, and it was the childhood church of Sir Isaac Newton. He was baptised in the font there in 1642, close to my birthday. I know this because I took a photograph of his

baptism certificate, and my photograph now hangs on the wall of Woolsthorpe Manor, just a few hundred metres away from the church. Woolsthorpe Manor was Newton's birthplace, and in the garden is an ancient, twisted apple tree. According to Newton, he discovered the force of gravity as a consequence of watching an apple fall from that tree. A descendant of that tree has been grown and nurtured outside Newton's college, Trinity, in Cambridge, and a 10cm fragment of the tree was taken up into space on the Shuttle Atlantis in 2010. Ironically it was taken from its box and released into zero gravity

The universe is not zero gravity, and neither is the Judeo-Christian family of faiths. Of course we are talking about two different things, but still the God of the bible is painted as one who draws all things together into one intimate, coherent order.

The ancient creation story found in Genesis begins with a representation of chaos. In the absence of global awareness the boundaries of the ocean, with hissing, snaking tides, were the boundaries of order and chaos. This order was beautifully illustrated, almost theatrically, with a portrayal of Eden. Here we find a harmonious representation of man united with creation and God walking intimately with his people in his domain. I talk about man, because in the text we find the phrase; "It is not good for man to be alone," so God creates 'woman'. We need community, we hunger for intimacy between ourselves, with God and creation. God made us that way.

The story then focuses on God creating his boundaries with creation. Humanity disobeys God by eating prohibited fruit from the tree of knowledge. The story tells how divided the couple have become. He blames the woman for tempting him and the couple are sent away from God and away from Eden into the wilderness.

Extended narratives are also seen with the stories of Noah and the great flood, in which chaos is again allowed to cover the earth, and the story of Babel, in which the languages of humanity are divided because of human arrogance and power.

I was involved for some time with a group of chaplains

which saw its role as establishing principles of justice within the context of industry. It drew on many of the ideals of socialism and an interpretation of scripture which sought to understand the Kingdom of God as rebuilding the intimate relationships between humanity, between humanity and creation, and finally between humanity and God; the intimacy of Eden reborn.

Archaeologists reveal evidence of the distant pantheon of gods ruling their communities with rods of iron, distant, powerful figures who exercised their dominion over communities. Even Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, was completely beyond us and unreachable.

In the New Testament Gospels we find something entirely new. Using Greek ideas of Wisdom, God speaks and his words become a human being (the Word became flesh and lived amongst us). Just like in Eden, God is present amongst us in Jesus Christ, but the relationship is much deeper and more intimate than that. We find God in Jesus, not only walking amongst us, but he is portrayed as a fragile human child, utterly dependent on the breast of a human mother. This truly is a new and powerful image of Eden. God with us as child, utterly at the mercy of his creation.

Maybe this is the most powerful understanding of the Christmas story that we have. As we are drawn together in the depths of winter we discover our need for one another, our vulnerability in the face of our loved ones and the intimate relationship that we can now share through Jesus Christ, with God our creator. All things brought together in the force of sacred gravity.

Have a beautiful Christmas in the company of one another and the presence of God who lives amongst us.

God bless.

Eric

Church services

For December and January morning worship will adopt the general pattern of 9.30am services at St James's and 11.00am services at All Saints, though not every week. There will also be one evening service at each church during each month.

There are, of course, special services for Christmas at St James's and these are listed on page 14.

The calendar is detailed on the back page so please check before you go out.



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

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax	Tel: 328452
	rev.ejlomax@gmail.com	
Churchwardens	Laurie Hurn	Tel 364251
	Lois Nash	Tel 961826
Verger	Hilary Hurn	Tel 364251
Treasurer	Simon King	treasurer@stjamesbiddenham.com
Organist/Choirmaster	Adam Wright	
	www.stjamesbiddenham.com	

Biddenham Handbell Ringers

Biddenham Handbell Ringers will be making a guest appearance at Christmas with Opus 18 at Priory Methodist Church on Saturday 16th December.

For details see page 8.

Chris Perry

We are sorry to report the death of Chris Perry, formerly of Duck End Lane, Biddenham.

We hope to carry an obituary in the next edition of The Loop.



Remembrance Day Service 2023



Unusually Remembrance Sunday in Biddenham was rather wet and umbrellas were a major feature. However, there was a good turn out for the service led by Eric Lomax and Paul Fricker.

The wreaths were laid by Parish Council Chairman, Stewart Briggs, Ralph Harding and Borough Councillor, Jon Gambold. The bugler was Tom Syson.

The new flagpole was managed by Parish Clerk, David Brough.

Jean Gambold

Christmas Lights in Deep Spinney

Mikala and Cliff Jones will once again be switching on the Christmas lights at their home at 64 Deep Spinney in December. Anyone who has seen their displays will know that they cover their entire house in Christmas lights and serve hot drinks, biscuits and cakes to raise money for charity.

Last year, they raised £333.25 for Scotty's Little Soldiers which provides support to bereaved British Forces children and young people.

This year, their chosen charity is Cancer Research UK. They have yet to confirm the date, but will be posting full details on Biddenham Residents Facebook page shortly. Do come along and help them to raise funds for this important cause.

Janet Field

Midwife Toad Survey

Dr Steven Allain is very keen to learn more about our local population of Midwife Toads. As one of the few places that these toads are found, the community in Biddenham has the rare opportunity to help contribute towards this research.

Steve says: "We've just put a short questionnaire together (10 questions) trying to gauge people's thoughts and perceptions of midwife toads.

"The link is: <https://forms.office.com/e/LwW5Myc5XN>
I'd really appreciate it if you could complete it and share it with your neighbours."

Simon Edgar

Christmas Memories

We all have someone who cannot be with us - especially at Christmas.

Christmas is a time for remembering; family, friends and those who are no longer with us.

The Christmas tree in St James's this year will be rather special in that it will be possible to purchase a suitably labelled bauble to hang on the tree. To support Church Funds it has been decided to charge £1 for each name on a bauble.

The baubles will remain on the Christmas tree throughout the Christmas period. This will remind us all of the people we are thinking of at this special time.

The Christmas tree will be in Church from the 2nd December. I will be available during the coffee break after church on each Sunday morning or you can contact me on 01234 364251.

Hilary Hurn



THE ARTS SOCIETY NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE ZOOM LECTURE

TUESDAY, 12th DECEMBER 2023

19:30 - 20:30

Cost - £10 per person

A SPECIAL ZOOM EVENT WITH ART HISTORIAN JACKY KLEIN

Fundraising event in aid of Young Arts and
The Ukrainian School in Biddenham

Jacky will talk about **Self-portraiture**, 'Me, myself and I' with a focus on young artists, all trying to make a name for themselves.

The art of self-portraiture has created some of the most memorable and moving images in history. From autobiography and fiction to masks and mirrors, Jacky will look at this most personal and revealing of artistic genres. How have artists expressed the very different facets that make up identity - from the physical to the cerebral, the familial to the national? The lecture comes right up to date to explore what it means to make self-portraits today, in our image-saturated age of smartphones and selfies.

HOW TO BOOK THIS EVENT: To register for this event, please contact our Secretary at: northbedsdfas@gmail.com



Jacky Klein is an art historian, publisher, writer and broadcaster, specialising in modern and contemporary art. After studying at Oxford University and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, she worked as a curator at a number of leading galleries: Tate, the Barbican, the Courtauld and the Hayward.

[https://](https://www.jackyklein.co.uk/talks)

www.jackyklein.co.uk/talks



We held our autumn work morning on 11th November. A glorious morning, cold but not a cloud in the sky, and we thank the volunteers who turned up to help the Committee, including two people from Great Denham who enjoy walking past our pond. Sadly, there were not enough of us to do everything that was on the list, but the hedge was trimmed, the grass was cut (even though it was very wet), most of the reeds taken out of the pond by TCV in October were barrowed or dragged to the compost bins, and we started clearing the growth on the front bank of the pond, but didn't complete.



Being Armistice Day, we all paused for a two-minute silence to remember our war dead and the plight of those currently living with the horrors of conflict.

The work carried out by TCV to remove reeds and weeds has dramatically improved the amount of clear water in the pond, but there is still more to be done. At the time of writing, we hope that TCV will be able to come back in November for one more day to continue their good work and remove more of the reeds at the back of the pond. The significant amount of rainfall that we have experienced recently has improved the water level and covered over many of the weeds still at the base of the pond, making the whole pond area look so much more attractive.

We already have one pipe feeding water off the outbuilding roof of the Manor Hospital to the pond, but we have been keen to harvest more of their rainwater to help with the pond water level, and have been in discussion about this. Having received the appropriate permissions, the Manor Hospital started work to divert rainwater from the roof of their operating theatre to the pond, which involved laying a pipe underground. The ground by the pond has been disturbed by the digger and may need re-seeding, but the grass should recover by the spring. The exit pipe will be shortened so that it will eventually be obscured by vegetation, but we need to ensure that it does not get clogged up. We are extremely grateful to the Manor



for this much needed and ongoing boost to the water level in the pond.



Our interpretation board at the pond has suffered from the weather and although it has taken a while, we have now replaced the artwork and cover with money we received last year from the Biddenham Show, for which we are very grateful. It is certainly a major improvement.

We have received a quote to crown lift three of the trees in the triangle and to coppice six others. It is always difficult to contemplate removing trees or parts of them and we rarely do this, but it is necessary to let light into the triangle to encourage diversity of plant growth, improve access along the path from Gold Lane and to manage the two large horse chestnuts that overhang the pond to keep more of their decaying leaves out of the pond. Before any work can start, permission will be required as the triangle of land is in the village conservation area, but in the meantime, we are looking for ways to help fund this, because it is expensive. We are also keen to maintain the landscape view from the pond towards the church, so next spring we are planning to lower the height of the hedge on the western side of the pond.

If you can and would like to support us financially to help us with the work that we do in maintaining the pond, please consider becoming a Friend by emailing jane@80kLtd.co.uk and asking for a subscription form. All we ask is a minimum subscription of £5 per year.

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

We encourage everyone to visit, but please remember if you have dogs with you to keep them on a lead when near the pond and not to allow them into the water.

Enjoy your December walks.

The Pond Team

Contact Details

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Jonathan Field	jfield21st@mail.com
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www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com	
www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond	

Pictures Jonathan Field



Biddenham Parish Council

The parish council met on Tuesday 14th November. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Peter Chase, Caroline Cross, Harry Fowler, Chris Gee and Laura Simmonds. Apologies were received from Aaron Melvin and Francia Slade. Also present were the Clerk, David Brough, myself, and Borough Councillor Jon Gambold.

I'll start with saying a big thank you to all those who braved the rain on Remembrance Sunday morning to pay tribute to those who have fallen in service and to all at St James's Church who led us in the service. The Union Flag looked resplendent as we paid our respects. At this time, I am always moved by the poem by Laurence Binyon 'For The Fallen' – also sometimes known as 'Ode To Remember' – which was first published in September 1914 and continues to strike a chord even today; especially the line: "At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them." It was a privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of the parish council and also I would like to thank Councillor Jon Gambold for laying a wreath on behalf of the Borough Council and to Ralph Harding for laying a wreath as a former soldier.



In a similar vein it was great to see that the new flag pole now allows the Parish Council to fly two flags. Currently the St George's flag and the Ukrainian flag are flying.

These will be changed to recognise national events such as the King's birthday, Coronation Day and other occasions. I think the flags look very good and it sends a great message of support to our Ukrainian friends.

The plans for the refurbishment of the play area by our appointed contractor, Proludic, remain

on track and notices will be put up shortly around the Pavilion and entrances to let our users know of the planned start date in January. Once completed it would be great to receive some feedback.

I was hoping to update readers on our discussions with the Borough to address our highway concerns but, as we hadn't received their proposals in time for the meeting, it now looks like it will be the January meeting when we will be in a position to have a meaningful discussion.

There will be no meeting in December, but during this period we will be preparing for next year's budget.

With the festive season approaching I hope that residents enjoy the two Christmas trees installed by the Parish. I think they look splendid. I'll also take this early opportunity to wish all of our residents a safe, happy and relaxing time over the Christmas and New Year period.

Date of the next meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7.30pm at the St James's Barn, Church End and all are welcome.

Stewart Briggs
Chair



First Friday Recipes

Some time ago it was suggested that recipes for some of the soups and puddings that have proved popular at First Friday Lunches should be published. The Loop is very happy to oblige. Here is one soup that went down well at the November lunch.



Celery and stilton soup

Serves 6

Celery, one large head chopped

50g butter

Potato, one large, peeled and diced

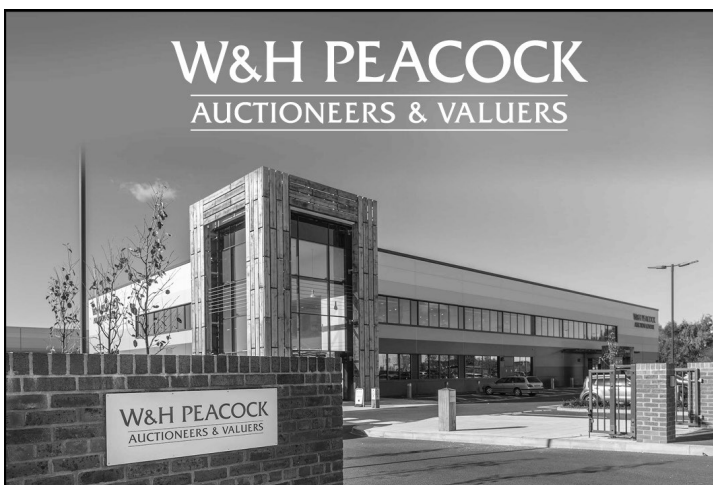
Vegetable stock 1 pint

Onion, one chopped

150ml single cream

150g stilton

Melt butter, add onion, potato and celery and allow to sweat for 10 mins. Add stock and simmer for 30 mins. Add cream and cheese and liquidise.



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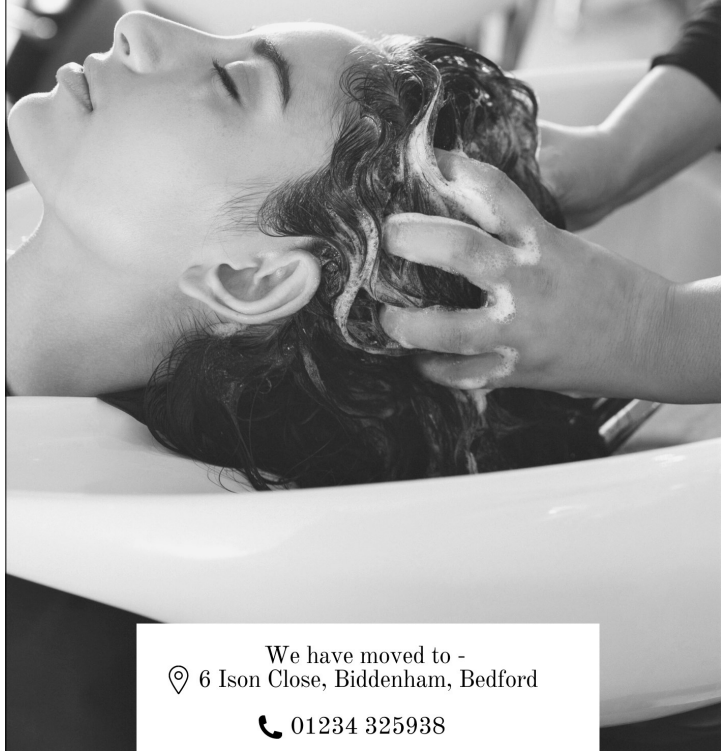
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Andrew Charles



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We have moved to -
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☎ 01234 325938

Bedford National Trust Association

Next meeting

Tuesday 16th January 2.15-3.15pm

Talk by Chris Hilliard of Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust about the John Bunyan Community Boat.

Refreshments available beforehand.

In the Addison Centre, Kempston
MK42 8PN.

Plenty of parking available.

Everyone welcome. No need to book.

Small charge payable.

For further information please ring Betty

Thomas on

01480 860 421

Mobile Library

Due to technical issues, the dates for the Mobile Library in December and January were not available when we went to print. The Borough Council website should be updated by Friday 1st December so please check there:
<https://virtual-library.culturalservices.net/>



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Prickly plants, poetry and other things that popped up along the way

Whilst seeking other Biddenhams in the world, finding the Biddenham down under, and its Missing link with our Biddenham, up popped.....

Stone me

In July 1840, Reverend John Missing, Biddenham's Curate, preferred a charge at the Bedford Petty Sessions against a young man named Gobbee for flinging stones at his son William Paschal and friends when, rowing on the river, they were passing under town bridge 'one of which struck him on the head and cut a severe wound.' Gobbee, who it was said had 'an extraordinary propensity for pelting people', had the misfortune to be recognised by one of the justices as the person who had thrown stones at him whilst rowing on the river a fortnight earlier. Gobbee was fined 20s and costs.

Name that shrub

It was Henry Missing, son of Reverend John, who named as Biddenham the land he claimed in Queensland in 1863, and it's been suggested that the commonly known name 'Dead Finish' for the prickly shrub native to Queensland, *Archidendropsis basaltica*, could also be attributed to him.

Recalling the expedition west in search of new land to farm during which Henry made his claim, the Historical Society of Queensland heard in April 1945 that 'It was on this trip that "Dead Finish" received its unusual name, for, after forcing his way for some time through a dense scrub of that particular bush, Mr Missing, hot and tired, sat down, angrily declaring it to be "the dead finish." Will Henry's declaration ever receive official acceptance; who knows?

In May 2023 Guy Newell, Biddenham station's present owner, followed in Henry's footsteps down the Nive River and took photos of a patch 2 kms north of the station where the scrub has developed into mature trees now. But the sharp spikes on the then dense scrub would have made it very difficult for Henry to negotiate.



As Guy said: "Wouldn't it be mind boggling if this was the very patch Henry struggled to get through?"

A week with two Sundays

Early in a Mr Dunn's time at Biddenham, after it's said he acquired the station from Henry, visitors in the early 1860s arrived one Saturday at 'The lowest camp' which 'was Biddenham, which Mr Dunn had stocked with sheep.' As The Queenslander in July 1885 recalled, they found all hands labouring under the delusion it was Sunday, and 'in bush fashion were keeping the holy day by washing and mending.' Mr Dunn 'when convinced of his mistake, seemed rather perplexed as to his moral obligation to

observe the next day also, or, as he put it, "to lose it"; however, his sense of orthodoxy prevailed, and he concluded that for this occasion only two Sundays should be kept in the same week.'

James and the Giant Peach Sponge Cake

Henry met and proposed to his future wife, Elizabeth Uhr, when she was holidaying with the Barkers at their Tamrookum station. Daughter Ethel wrote later that 'Elizabeth was very young and pretty, and full of confidence; she volunteered to make a sponge cake, which turned out a complete failure.' and continued 'Brunton Stevens, who was then tutor to the Barker children, was so amused at her efforts, that he wrote this parody, on Elizabeth's favourite song, 'The Bridge':

I thought on that cake at midnight,
As the clock was striking the hour -
And the moon rose o'er Tamrookum -
And sleep was beyond my power.

My heart was hot and restless!
And my head began to ache -
And I'm sure that spongy arrangement
Was the heaviest she could bake!

How vainly, oh! how vainly,
To Morpheus did I pray -
To lift that weight from off my chest,
But Morpheus still said Nay!

And Never, Ah! No, Never!
As long as the bread's not sour,
As long as there's wholesome damper,
As long as there's decent flour!

If left to my own reflections -
Will I venture on cake again,
Unless a bit of Bride cake,
Washed down with dry champagne!

The Brunton Stevens Ethel mentions was James Brunton Stephens, poet, novelist, critic, schoolteacher and public servant, who by the late 19th century was considered to be Australia's greatest living poet.

Spot the Difference?

On the board inside St James's Church listing our vicars you'll find ... 1808 Thomas Grimshaw M.A. ... Vicar of Biddenham from 1808 to 1850, one curate during that time being John Missing, our Henry's father. On memorial plaques inside and outside the church, you'll also find the Reverend Thomas Grimshawe. Spot the difference?

Thomas was born Grimshaw in Preston in 1777 and married as Grimshaw in 1810 in Bedford. At some early point in Biddenham, Thomas began to sign the Parish Registers as Grimshawe, it's not easy to decipher quite when, and his children were baptised Grimshawe, the first in 1812. Whilst we know approximately when that 'e' first appeared, we don't know why: you might speculate, we couldn't possibly comment!

Peter Applewhite

{With thanks to the National Library of Australia for the article by Henry's daughter, to Trove, [espace.library.uq](http://espace.library.uq.edu.au) and [textqueensland](http://textqueensland.com.au) for Australian newspaper and other extracts and for the British extracts to The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk). Copyright The British Library. All rights reserved.}



Voluntary community opportunity

We are looking for a volunteer to support the development of the Biddenham Show website in 2024. This is an excellent opportunity for someone wanting to work on a new website, shaping the design and content for their own portfolio. Knowledge of Wordpress is desirable but not essential, as training is available.

This would be appropriate for a student looking to develop their CV. Hours are flexible and to suit your schedule. Much of the work is transferring existing content onto a new site and adding new content in the lead up to the Show.

If you are interested, please email Maddy Anderson: maddy@cartersullivan.co.uk for more information.



Biddenham Show update

We received 10 requests for funding, and we are delighted to announce that after retaining some money to purchase additional chairs, traffic cones, some half size tables and a smaller marquee, we can distribute £2,800 to the following local schools and groups.

2023 Donations	£
St James' VA school	600.00
Biddenham International School	400.00
Friends of Biddenham Village Pond	600.00
St James's Choir	60.00
Biddenham Handbell Ringers	150.00
Biddenham Gardeners Association	300.00
Biddenham Under 5's	150.00
The Loop	100.00
St James's Flower Fund	200.00
Biddenham Conservation Volunteers	240.00
	2,800.00

We thank all the people who came to the Show and all the volunteers who helped us stage it, since without you, we would not be able to help these groups with their running costs or fund new projects in our village. We will be asking the recipients of our donations to send us some photos showing how the money was spent, and we will publish these in later editions of The Loop.

We also wish to record our thanks to Liz and Emma who resigned from the committee after this year's Show, for all their hard work and organisational ability, and we are pleased that both will be back as volunteers at the next Show.

The Committee will now be taking a well-deserved break before thinking about the 2024 Show. If you would like to help us organise this, please email jane@80kLtd.co.uk

The 2023 Show Committee



CHRISTMAS WITH OPUS 18

Sat 16th December 2.30pm

At Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue Bedford

Tickets £10 (£5 children under 10)

Refreshments. Raffle.

Guests: Biddenham Handbell Ringers

In aid of

King's Arms Project Winter Night Shelter and

Bedford Hospital's Blossom Project

Donations for interval cakes to Free Cakes for Kids

Reservations recommended, contact

Evelyn Sutherland 07974 742552 or

evsutherlandmusic@hotmail.co.uk

Tickets also available on the door.



www.opus18communitychoir.org.uk

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Biddenham History Society

We were delighted to have Jean Fullerton to come to talk to us on Monday 6th November. Jean has written 22 books, which have required meticulous research, including her autobiography 'A Child of the East End'. Some of us had read Jean's autobiography in our Biddenham Book Club and it had generated a lively discussion. Jean is also a lecturer on cruise ships, so many people were looking forward to meeting her and to hearing her talk.

Jean kept us enthralled with her lively account of the measures that were taken for Civil Defence during World War Two. She accompanied her talk with well-chosen illustrations and brought back some vivid memories for some members of the audience.

Jean pointed out that people in Britain in the late 1930s knew that trouble was coming as they heard about the devastation in the Spanish Civil War for instance. Many had lived through the First World War and Zeppelin bombing. They were aware that another war would be total war and measures would have to be taken to try to deal with its impact on civilians. It was not comical like Dad's Army. It was a response to a difficult situation.

On 1st March 1938 Home Defence was started with preparations being made for war. The Air Raid Wardens who were recruited were ordinary people, often volunteers, from amongst retired people or those who were too young to join the army. At first, they only had a badge. Rosemary Harris still has her grandfather's badge.

Other measures soon followed, notably the black out, covering windows with criss-cross tape to protect against shattered glass and the issuing of gas masks. Jean said that gas attack was one of the greatest fears. Jane George and Betty Simpson still remember the 'Mickey Mouse' gas masks that they were issued with as children. There were also memories of air raid shelters – the Morrison and Anderson shelters – and other sources of shelter from bombing such as the underground in London and the caves in Chislehurst. Pat Applewhite remembered her mother sheltering in these caves!

The precautions against air raids involved a great deal of effort and coordination. In a pre-digital age, communication depended on the telephone, pencil and paper and the radio. Young boys would act as messengers to cycle to the nearest control centre to report on where a bomb might have been dropped. Their job could be dangerous and Jean showed a photograph of a boy who was killed in Bristol. There were memories of the air raid warning sirens and the alarm that the sound gave to people even years after the war if they heard a siren go off.

Jean showed the complexity of the system that had to be set up to warn about possible raids and invasion and to deal with the aftermath. She discussed the ARP Wardens, the Auxiliary Fire Fighters, the Ambulance Service, the heavy and light rescue from bombed buildings, the police, the Home Guard, the barrage balloons and the role of the WVS: the ladies collected salvage, exchanged clothes and made jam, all to help. She had some interesting comments about the ladies in the Auxiliary Fire Service, who started the war wearing skirts and stockings (not nylon) and soon moved to wearing trousers! She had a wonderful picture of a Rolls Royce that was a converted into an ambulance and a horse box that became a mobile dressing centre. We were all fascinated by the complexity of the Civil Defence measures and the detail Jean had collected. Very movingly, she ended by saying that about 2,500 people involved in the ARP were killed in the war and about 5,000 were seriously injured. It was a remarkable and selfless effort where whole communities pulled together for the sake of the country.

Jean kept us enthralled and gave us plenty to think about and to discuss afterwards.

Kathy Fricker

Local councillors join call to end 'unfair' freehold management charges

Local Councillors Jon Gambold and Jim Weir joined Richard Fuller MP to deliver a petition to 10 Downing Street

calling on the Government to ensure that reform of freehold management charges was announced in the King's Speech to Parliament on 7th November.

Jon and Jim have seen first hand some of the difficulties which residents have been experiencing with unfair and unreasonable management charges on new build properties in Biddenham and Great Denham.

The petition called on the Government to:

- a) ensure reform of freehold management charges in the following ways:
 1. the right to fair and reasonable charges and services of a reasonable standard;
 2. the right to challenge the reasonableness of the charges;
 3. the right to bring a case to the First-tier (Property Chamber) Tribunal to appoint a new management company;
 4. the introduction of a Right to Manage;
 5. the creation of a redress scheme for property management companies, with powers of sanction;
- b) ensure that the new regime applies equally to existing freehold management charges.

The petition was successful in that the King announced measures to change the law in his speech.





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Bedford Deanery Synod Youth action on climate issues and support wanted

Once business had concluded at the recent Bedford Deanery Synod meeting we were treated to a presentation by a group of young people from the youth club of Transfiguration Church, Kempston on climate change.

Using slides they reminded us of the destruction going on and some pointers to do something about it before it's too late. The presentation covered many aspects of the climate crisis we have become familiar with, but then went on to tell us what action they are taking locally in their community and church.

As a team they are supporting Kempston Climate Change Group and have registered as an eco church project. Details of both below:

- they have sorted out the church recycling policy and carried out litter picks in the church grounds. In addition they have planted a community garden for all to use;
- they hope to inspire other churches to get their young people mobilised to care more for the climate and take local action. They are available for inspirational presentations and can be contacted via the church:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

kempstonclimatechange.org.uk

Support for those homeless and in need

The support we were asked to give is helping St Paul's Church in Bedford town centre to run a 'warm spaces' project this winter. Last year there was support from Bedford Borough Council but not this year, so the church is hoping to fund raise and sign up volunteers to help. This might entail supervising or helping to serve refreshments.

Details below. Please contact the church if you would like to offer to help.

<https://www.stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk/>

Great Denham's Winter Festival

Saturday 2nd December 2023

2pm-6pm

Stall Applications Now Open!

Contact us on
events@greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk if you're
interested in having a stall at our festive event!

- Craft & Gift Stalls
- Santa's Grotto
- Children's Fair Rides
- Refreshments
- Fete Games
- Carol Singing

Biddenham Gardeners' Association

Programme of Meetings 2023

19 th September	Flowers through my Viewfinder By Hemant Jariwala
17 th October	History of Suburban Gardens By Twigs Way
21 st November	The 12 Plants of Christmas By Timothy Walker
19 th December	The 2023 Christmas Party! All Welcome!

7:30pm
Biddenham Village Hall
Visitors are very welcome*
(Includes raffle and refreshments)
*£5 per person on the door

www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

This month in the garden

As I write, the autumn foliage has reached its peak. When the days grow shorter and the temperature drops trees prepare for winter by withdrawing nutrients from their leaves, leaving us with a spectacular display of autumn colour. However, by the time this article is published the trees will be bare and we will have been busy clearing leaves from our lawns and paths. Walking around Biddenham has been a great joy and has been especially enhanced by the wonderful holly berries which seem to be better than ever this year.

My pond restoration is complete - returned to how it was when my son made it for us in 1988. It was such an exciting project and the team worked really hard. On the bank are two well established acers, acer palmatum dissectum atropurpureum which is magenta in colour and



an orange acer (well orange at this time of the year and in the spring lime green) - an unknown variety. Both have looked outstanding now that I can see them more clearly. The overgrown foliage from the edge of the pond has been cleared which has given me the opportunity to plant camassia, fritillaria and miniature narcissus. I have also planted sambucus, skimmia, pesicaria and imperata 'Red Baron' Blood grass. The candelabra primula have been ordered for the boggy areas. None of the snowdrops, cowslips and celandines on the bank have been disturbed so by January/February there will be plenty of winter interest. I look forward to late spring when I will be able to sit near the pond with a cup of tea or a glass of wine and listen to the sound of the water fall, something I used to do in the evening when I returned from work - many moons ago.

As we begin to settle into the winter season most of us will tend to spend less time in the garden, but one of the tasks we can undertake at this time of the year is planting bare root, i.e unpotted, roses. The main rose growers tend to send them out for delivery at this time of the year. There is a greater choice of varieties with bare root roses, they are usually cheaper and tend to establish better than those in pots. Once they arrive get them into water straight away and if you are delayed in their planting heel them in by digging a hole or trench in which to place the rose and cover the roots with soil, just to keep the roots moist until you are able to plant properly. I also shake a dusting of mycorrhizal fungi powder over the roots when I plant them as this increases the absorptive area of the plant and acts as an extension of its root system. When planting the root stock should be below the surface of the soil, firm in gently and water well. It is also recommended to prune hard after planting.

I have been extending my cutting pots by planting more narcissus. Avalanche, Bridal Crown and Cheerfulness are all double narcissus. I put the pots at the back of the garden behind my plant house and then I pick the flowers for the house during the spring as I can't bring myself to pick the narcissus from elsewhere in the garden. There are not very many crops that can be planted now except broad beans. There is just about time to get them in the ground. They will germinate and grow a little and then have a rest period until later in the spring. Aquadulce is the variety that does best in cold weather.

Hard wood cuttings can be taken at this time of the year,

for example buddleia. Take a length of twig, several cuttings can be made from this by cutting just below each leaf joint. They can be put into a pot of gritty compost or just put straight out into the ground. Monty Don had a useful tip to ensure that they were planted the right way up - if you cut the bottom of the cutting straight across and the top of the cutting on the slant then it is easy to see which way up it should go. It is a good idea, as with all cuttings, to take off most of the leaves as this helps to reduce transpiration.

It has been so wet recently and not good for walking on lawns or flower beds; better to stay indoors and enjoy leafing through the plant and seed catalogues that will be popping through our letter boxes.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year! When the festive season is over I will be writing my next article ready for the February edition of The Loop and marvelling at my snowdrops - I hope. There is always something to look forward to when you are a gardener.

Linda Truscott

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Meet the Frickers

Kathy and Paul Fricker have lived in Biddenham for over 30 years and are well known in the community. But this is about to change as they will soon be leaving to be closer to their daughter, Charlotte, in Somerset.

Both were teachers at Bedford High School until retirement, Kathy as Head of History and Staff Governor during the merger with Dame Alice, and Paul as Head of Theology and Lay Chaplain, having previously taught at Norwich School and St Stephen's College, Hong Kong.

Since retirement, they have taken on a huge variety of voluntary roles in Biddenham and Bedford. We caught up with them to find out what they have enjoyed in Biddenham, how it has changed, and what they will miss.

What brought you to Biddenham?

Kathy: We came to Biddenham in 1991. We were living in Norfolk, then Paul got the head of department job at Bedford High School.

Paul: I'd done my teaching practice at Bedford Boys School so I knew Bedford. But Kathy was initially teaching at St Albans Boys School and had to commute. We wanted to be in the countryside and when we came here it was very much a country village. Great Denham and Deep Spinney didn't exist.

Kathy: There was no bypass, and you could still hear the sound of farm machinery. It was totally different. Charlotte and I used to walk back from the High School and as we came into Biddenham Turn it was like entering a different world – a peaceful, relaxed sort of world.

Chair of the Biddenham History Society

Kathy: The History Society came about from the book. Mary McKeown and Diana Toyn had started to write '*The Village of Biddenham Through the Ages*'. They realised there was so much work to do and after I retired they asked if I would like to help.

Dorothy Richards had written a very good book, '*Biddenham: A Parish History and Guide*', in 1991 which had got a bit out of date and didn't include things like the effects of the wars. After her death in 2007, her family said we could use her book as a basis, which gave us as good head start. We finished the book in 2012. Then Peter Culverwell suggested we carry on, so Mary, Diana and I formed the History Society in 2014.

We have done talks, walks around the village, and archaeological digs. This summer we did a dig at Parsonage Cottage on Church End. The finds are still being analysed. You tend to find bits of old pottery, iron work and clay pipes as there was no refuse collection in the past. At one dig we found a nylon stocking and we hesitate to guess that it came from a GI during the war. There were quite a few GI brides when you look through the Parish Registers.

What's so nice is having a dedicated group of people who like history. It seems like a small community, but a lot has happened. It's a sort of microcosm of the wider area.

Bedford High School archives

Kathy: I help to look after the archives, along with Susan Clermont, who lives in the village, and Ann Jackson. We help with enquiries and assist the Development Manager. People like to trace great aunts or great grandmothers who were at the school. Dame Alice and the High School are very old schools and have strong traditions, and there are many old photographs and some interesting old girls.

Treasurer of The Friends of St James

Paul: I've been Treasurer for about 10 years. Our main church is St Peters, so it's been lovely having a link with St James's as its part of our community and it's a way of meeting people. It seemed so important, not only to raise money for the church, but also having a wide range of activities which bring people together. I help organise the Church End Open Gardens and the Heart and Music concerts.

I'm a Lay Minister and for the past 10 years I've taken

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Kathy and Paul at the Remembrance Day Service

Evensong at St James's and occasionally preached at the morning service, which I've enjoyed. And I've taken funeral services, sometimes for families I know very well. It has enabled me to get to know the families better as I try to keep in contact. I've also taken Remembrance Services at the war memorial, including this year's service with Revd Eric Lomax.

St James' School

Paul: I was Governor at St James' for four years and took Assembly (now Collective Worship) before Covid, which I really enjoyed. I also helped Kathy with PowerPoints when she gave talks.

Kathy: I gave talks to Years 5 and 6 about local history. One boy was very knowledgeable. When we showed a photo of one of the digs he said: "There's my grandpa." He was Peter Applewhite's grandson and I realised then why he was so knowledgeable.

St Peters

Paul: We go to St Peters because we used to live on the other side of Bedford and we've been going there for a long time. It has a very friendly, welcoming atmosphere and I really enjoy my role as Lay Reader. Kathy and I are in the choir and they made a recording of a song I wrote called 'Nothing without Love'. I also organise the Family Praise Service once a month and usually write a play on the biblical reading. I'm working on one for Advent on the theme of Joseph. Sometimes I play the organ, piano or guitar as well.

Music4Memory

Paul: I've been part of Music4Memory for four or five years. I take my folk guitar and I'm part of the 'Elastic Band' as it's called – whoever comes plays. It's part of Tibbs Dementia and it's remarkable how music can transform people. They perk up and remember the words. Biddenham Handbell Ringers also play there. When I used to take our dog, Biggles, to Manton Heights Care Home, the manageress said: "Three things help people with dementia - children, dogs and music".

Biddenham Handbell Ringers

Paul: I taught Religious Studies and was Director of Music at St Stephen's in Hong Kong. We met Emily Li, a former student, who runs the Hong Kong Handbell Academy, and I was fascinated by her ability and skills.

When we came here, Anthea Slark asked me to introduce items to a handbell concert so she could focus on conducting. I went to a practise and decided I'd like to play. I played for two or three years and, as I'd written and

conducted a couple of pieces, I was asked if I would take over as conductor when Anthea stepped down.

What I enjoyed most was the enthusiasm of the ringers. We've done many concerts in and around Bedford and we were invited to play at Exeter University for the 50th Anniversary Concert of the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain. We also play at the Bedford Christmas Tree Festival every year.

As well as Tibbs, we've played in care homes and it's so good to see the positive response of the residents. We also played for the Ukrainian coffee morning in the Church Barn, and it was emotional for all of us when we played the Ukrainian national anthem.

Biddenham Gardeners Association (BGA)

Paul: I've very much enjoyed being chairman of BGA because gardening is very creative and can have such a positive impact on one's life. We both felt that. The monthly talks were very helpful and during Covid we had talks via Zoom. So many people said they found gardening helpful during lockdown.

One of my favourite speakers was Nick Bailey on '365 Days of Colour in the Garden'. He was very engaging. I also enjoyed giving a talk on 'Inspiring Gardens' about gardens in Bedfordshire, the West Country, Florida, and Hong Kong.

As chairman, I was very keen that there should be a warm atmosphere at meetings. I tried to greet everyone and ensure they met people over tea afterwards. I also looked after the judges at the Biddenham Show because most exhibits for the competitions were to do with plants and vegetables.

What else have you enjoyed about Biddenham?

Kathy: I've really enjoyed going to Café B and the First Friday Lunches because they are a lovely way of meeting people. We both respect all the hard work and effort and the lovely atmosphere. Before Covid, I also enjoyed barn@2, the women's group run by Val Fitzhugh and her team, which was a very good way of meeting people. Sadly, that's now stopped - it's very difficult to get helpers. In a way, the lunches and the History Society have helped fill that gap.

What will you miss most about Biddenham?

Both: The people, the friends we've made, the social life, and all the activities we've been involved in. We've made some very good friends here, so we will come back to visit.

Janet Field



**1st December 2023 to 1st January 2024
4.00pm to 8.30pm**

Christmas at Wrest Park is a brand new, interactive light trail for 2023 set to bring colour, lights and play to Bedfordshire this December! Brought to you by our event partner Kilimanjaro Live in association with English Heritage

For more details and to book go to <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/whats-on/wrest-park-christmas-at-wrest-park/> or search Wrest Park.



Photo by [Dan Kiefer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Christmas Services at St James's

10th December	Christingle Service	9.30am
15th December	St James' School service	10.00am
17th December	Children's Nativity	9.30am
	Nine Lessons & Carols	6.00pm
24th December	Carols in the Churchyard	4.00pm
	Midnight Communion	11.30pm
Christmas Day	All Age Service	10.00am



Biddenham Village Hall AGM

I'm very pleased to report we are continuing to receive a good level of bookings from the residents of Biddenham and the surrounding area. Our regular hirers are providing a range of activities that will appeal to a wide variety of people from yoga and Pilates, gardening, country dancing, Taekwondo and Guides to Baby College, under 5s, and monthly coffee, lunch and film evenings. Our hall is therefore used and appreciated by many locally and provides a warm, welcoming venue for learning, socialising and celebrating.

There have been a few changes to the volunteer committee this year. Richard Harris stepped down after a very long stint of 17 years, most recently as Assistant Secretary, and we pass on our heartfelt thanks for his dedication to the smooth running of the hall. Richard did a great job, and we are very happy to welcome back another Richard, Richard O'Quinn, who is taking on the challenge of filling his predecessor's shoes.

We were also sorry to see the departure of our two most recent trustees. Karen Cotton, representing Biddenham Parish Council, has moved away and Maria Soulsby, representing St James' School, has left the school.

We managed to weather the storm of inflation and energy price hikes and our income pretty well matched our outgoings. So, with our strong reserves we are in a financially sound position moving forwards.

It's been a pretty busy year, with a review of all our policies and our founding Constitution. The Charity Commission hold a copy of the Constitution and the latest version is available on the BVH website. The five-year review of fire risks was completed. As a result, a fire wall was installed between two of the garages belonging to the hall and the main hall curtains were re-fireproofed following cleaning. With a building this age, there is always a need for ongoing repairs and the pointing on the main south facing wall, the annexe roof and drains were all repaired. Looking forward, when we receive advice from the council planning office, we will be replacing the annexe roof. The Annual Maintenance Morning was held in August; many thanks to those who were able to support.

We received an EPC rating of 'E' and commissioned a report from an independent energy consultant to advise on how to improve and heat the hall if gas heating is no longer viable. The report is being considered and we are expecting advice from Bedford planning regarding acceptability of solar panels in the conservation area. As this could be a very expensive project, consideration is also being given to possible sources of external funding.

I'd like to thank all the committee who continue to make the hall a first-rate venue to support ongoing activities of the community of Biddenham and surrounding areas. There remain, as always, opportunities for residents and non-residents to book the hall for parties and the occasional fund-raising event and often newcomers give positive feedback about how easy it has been to use the hall which they find well equipped.

Philip Inness
Biddenham Village Hall

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Cleaners needed at St James's Church

St. James's Church has a very faithful group of cleaners, some of whom have been doing the job for 30 years or more!

Understandably, some people are stepping down from this role. This means that the people who are still on the rota are being asked to do more than they normally would.

It was suggested at our last PCC that we look into employing someone to clean the church on a regular basis. Unfortunately, St. James's is trying to manage with less contributions at the moment and we cannot afford to pay anyone to do this (or anything else) at the moment.

If anyone reading this feels they could help out, even two or three times a year for an hour or two at a time, please let me know.

All the equipment is kept at the church, so you wouldn't need to bring anything.

We are so grateful to all our cleaners. A few more would make such a difference to the team and help to keep St. James's looking beautiful and inviting.

Please contact Lois Nash on 01234 961826.

Thank you.

New warehouse for Bedford Foodbank



Bedford foodbank has opened a new warehouse at 71 Murdock Road MK41 7PL. The warehouse is open for donations on weekdays between 9.30am and 12noon.

You can also donate goods within the following stores but the goods must be bought there: Morrisons; Tesco; Sainsbury's; Waitrose; and Lidl.

Urgently needed items they are short of at present are child-friendly boxes of cereal, 200g tins of meat, tinned sweetcorn, microwave packs/500g bags of rice, Cup-A-Soup, long-life fruit juice, long-life sponge puddings, tinned rice pudding, tinned custard, jars of jam, packs of 40 teabags, and biscuits.

If you want to donate toiletries, current needs are: toothbrushes; toilet rolls; disposable razors; shaving foam/gel; sanitary wear; household cleaning sprays; and washing up liquid.

They have plenty of pasta, porridge, conditioner and bubble bath.



A typical food parcel contains supplies for three days

For more details see bedfordfoodbank.org.uk

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With full use of the kitchen, crockery, glasses & cutlery. Chairs & tables for 48 adults as well as 15 children along with children's foam floor mats (covering 7x7m)



For more details contact stjamesbarnbiddenham@gmail.com OR
Jane – 07831 172320 /
Rebecca – 07769 944727



St James's Barn - what is happening?

If you don't already know, St James's Barn is an attractive old barn conveniently located next to St James's Church. The Barn is a community space available to hire for parties, small events, and classes with a capacity for up to 50 people. It comprises a main hall (which measures 12.4m x 5.3m), kitchen, two toilets, ramp access, baby changing and disabled facilities.

This month we wanted to share some information about one of our regulars that started running sessions at the Barn in 2022, Cook Stars. Set up by Liz Ewang, who was introduced to Cook Stars through attending classes with her little boy, Elijah (who was 2 at the time), the sessions made a lasting impression, not just on her son but on her as well.

She noticed Elijah becoming more interested in what was happening each time she was in the kitchen, wanting to help with measuring, mixing, and chopping, and engaging in discussions about where their food came from. It stuck with her how much enjoyment they both got from the sessions each week, and when the opportunity came along to share this experience with others, she jumped at the chance!

Liz is a qualified primary school teacher with over 10 years' experience working with young children of different ages, not just in schools, but also as a taekwondo assistant instructor. She enjoys working with children and is very excited to share the fun of cooking whilst teaching valuable skills that she believes will stay with them.



www.cookstars.co.uk | @cookstarsbedfordnorthandrushden | @cook_stars_bnr

Kids Christmas Workshop at:

St James's Barn, Church End, Biddenham
Thursday 21st December
10am - 12pm

Decorate a Christmas Snow globe

Make, bake and decorate a chocolate yule log!

Make a decorative Christmas cracker

Gingerbread man bake-at-home kit + cookie cutter

Free drink & snack for all children & helpers.

Call Liz: 07576 419075
Email: liz@cookstars.co.uk

Book online: <https://cook-stars-bedford-north-and-rushden.class4kids.co.uk>

Cook Stars run their classes at the Barn from 4.00-5.15pm every Thursday during term time, along with running regular one-off themed workshops around the year, all designed for children from 2-11 years. If you would like to find out more about the classes held at the Barn, please check out Cook Stars' website <https://www.cookstars.co.uk/cooking-classes/bedford-north-and-rushden>

If you would like to hire the Barn for any type of small event 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

Kings & Queens will decorate over 60 trees

Bedford Christmas Tree Festival

6th–10th December 2023

St Paul's Church, Bedford

Don't miss this annual event across five days in Bedford's historic town centre church, the perfect way to start the countdown to Christmas. The Festival now welcomes thousands of visitors to enjoy music and performances by local groups and schools against the backdrop of over 60 trees decorated by schools, community groups and businesses. This year's theme is 'Kings and Queens'.

There are also competitions for children and the chance to vote for your favourite tree.

Refreshments and a raffle will be available. The High Sheriff, Russell Beard, will open the Festival at 10.30am on the 6th. All are welcome.

Fizz at the Festival Wednesday 6th December 6.00-8.00pm. Enjoy fizz and canapés with friends and colleagues at this private evening viewing, open to everyone, with tickets in advance @ £8.00.

Tel 01234 783181 or email

treefestival@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk

The Festival concert Friday 8th December 7.30pm with the popular 'Woburn Piano Trio', including members of the world-class Philharmonia Orchestra. This is a truly memorable evening for concert goers to enjoy the beautiful trees at night in the majestic setting of St Paul's. Tickets @ £20 from www.peoplesfundraising.com/concert-tickets or Tel 01234 783181.

Our sponsors

We are very grateful to all our sponsors and supporters including Jayne Beard Associates in memory of Jayne Beard, a former Chair of the Bedford Hospital Charity.

Get involved

To find out more about volunteering at this year's Festival, please email:

treefestival@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk

All money raised from the Festival goes towards funding much needed equipment for Bedford Hospital and towards the upkeep of St Paul's Church, a Grade 1 listed building, and its continued support to Bedford and the wider community. Last year, over £20,000 was raised.

Entry to the Festival is £3.00 and free for children under 16.

Follow our Facebook page: facebook.com/bedfordchristmastreefestival and like and share our posts. And please tell your friends about this event.

Ann Collett-White



BEDFORD CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2023

Over 60 trees decorated in the theme of...

KINGS & QUEENS

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Wed 6 Dec to Sat 9 Dec - 10am till 5pm
Sun 10 Dec - 12 noon till 4pm

Venue:
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Admission:
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Find out more:
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Festival Concert
7.30pm
Friday 8th
December

In aid of:





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Biddenham Conservation Volunteers

The recent heavy rain has turned several public footpaths in the village into mud and puddles. Fortunately, Geoff Lill succeeded in persuading Bedford Borough Council to deliver a pile of bark chips at the south end of FP5, otherwise known as 'the muddy path'. Geoff had requested a pile of stone chips



the task successfully, a well-deserved break was enjoyed sheltering from the rain.



Further similar tasks are planned for 29th November, 6th and 14th December. Anyone who would like to join any of these tasks should contact Gilly Cowan for more details. Training in the various techniques used will be provided.

For more information about BCV, please contact me at gillycowan@btinternet.com or Chris Jones at chrishj49@gmail.com.

Gilly Cowan.

but there were some complications over the delivery, so on 26th October BCV volunteers spread the bark chippings over the worst puddles on the footpath. Unfortunately, the material ran out before we reached the red gate in Main Road. This temporary repair will have to last until more resilient material becomes available.

We have also started the process of legitimising the footpath running from Branston Way behind Church End Road along the north edge of the old golf course to join the footpath FP6 at the end of the concrete road. At the moment, this path is not officially a public right of way, and to make it official we need several witness statements from people who have used the path for more than 20 years (the golf course opened in 1999). If you are one of those people and are happy to complete a statement, please contact: Geoff at lill.geoff@gmail.com.

More vegetation management work has been carried out in Cowslip Meadow this month. Encroaching blackthorn and cherry were removed by volunteers who were then rewarded with the satisfaction of building yet another hibernaculum in the wetland area. A robin was seen entering by a side door to feast on the juicy insects and worms already resident in the hibernaculum.

BCV planned to plant more trees in the meadow in the hope that they would eventually grow into a barrier to the traffic noise on a north west section of the meadow. We decided to plant our own-grown trees so volunteers have been nurturing various trees that have grown in their gardens following random planting by squirrels. One volunteer grew a Rowan tree from seed. Bedford Borough Council kindly provided recycled tree guards and stakes for us, however the ground was waterlogged and deemed unsuitable for the types of trees we had grown. We intend to find another part of the meadow to plant our trees which include, in addition to the rowan, hazel, oak, walnut, horse chestnut and plum. The gap in the north west will hopefully be planted with willow and alder once we locate sources of them.

Thanks to our team of task leaders and volunteers, vegetation management will continue, where appropriate, until spring, with the brush that is produced being used for more dead hedging in the meadow. The most recent task of this type took place on 14th November. After completing



The hibernaculum in construction and complete.



Peter's Picturehouse

Last month's film (Barbie) was well received by an audience many of whom entered into the spirit of things in a pink kind of way!

In December we are showing 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry' (12A) on Tuesday 5th December, starring Jim Broadbent, Earl Cave and Penelope Wilton. The film tells the story of an ordinary man who makes an unusual decision, in a moment, on his walk to the post box and then walks the length of the country to see a former work colleague. The film was released in April 2023 and is adapted from the best selling novel by Rachel Joyce.

January's film, 'A Haunting in Venice' (12A), is set in post-World War II Venice and stars Kenneth Branagh, Jamie Dornan, Kelly Reilly and Michelle Yeoh. It was also released in 2023. We meet Hercule Poirot again, now retired, as he attends a Halloween party and finds himself needing to solve a crime.

And in February we are showing 'The Great Escaper' (12A), another very recently released film set in 2014 and starring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson.

We are pleased to have been able to book such exciting new films to take us through the winter season of Peter's Picturehouse. You will be sure of a warm welcome in Biddenham Village Hall on the first Tuesday of each month. Doors open at 7.00pm for each film showing to start at 7.30pm. Tickets still priced £5, payable by cash or card on the door. Unreserved tickets will be available on the door.

To reserve tickets (please give name and contact number with number of tickets that you require):
Phone/text/email : **07818 878491**

or peterspicturehouse@gmail.com.

Tues 5th December

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (12A)

Tues 2nd January 2024

A Haunting in Venice (12A)

Tues 6th February 2024

The Great Escaper (12A)

Rose Houghton

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH*

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY CINEMA

*TERM TIME ONLY - DATE MAY CHANGE IN JULY/SEPTEMBER/DECEMBER

**DOORS OPEN 3.30PM -
FILM STARTS AT 3.45PM**

**ONLY £1.50 PER CHILD (UNDER 2'S FREE IF
ACCOMPANYING AN OLDER SIBLING)**

**A DRINK & POPCORN
INCLUDED IN ENTRY
PRICE**

FOLLOW US FOR MOVIE CLUES
 **GREATDENHAMCOMMUNITYHALL**

**GREAT DENHAM COMMUNITY HALL - 86-88 SAXON WAY
MK40 4GP**



Peter's Picturehouse at Biddenham Village Hall

Date: Tuesday 5th Dec 2023
Time: Doors open 7:00pm, Film starts 7:30pm



BASED ON THE BESTSELLING NOVEL BY RACHEL JOYCE
Jim BROADBENT Penelope WILTON



Certificate: 12A

**Reserve your seat: Call/text 07818 878491 or
Email: peterspicturehouse@gmail.com,
Ticket price £5, remaining unreserved seats available on
the door**

**Coming soon...
Tues 2nd Jan A Haunting in Venice (12A)**

Peter's Picturehouse at Biddenham Village Hall

Date: Tuesday 2nd January 2024
Time: Doors open 7:00pm, Film starts 7:30pm



A HAUNTING IN VENICE



Certificate: 12A

**Reserve your seat: Call/text 07818 878491 or
Email: peterspicturehouse@gmail.com,
Ticket price £5, remaining unreserved seats available on
the door**

**Coming soon...
Tues 6th Feb The Great Escaper(12A)**

Biddenham Gardeners Association

The twelve plants of Christmas

Timothy Walker started his excellent talk on 21st November by discussing plant blindness – caused by the fact that we are so used to seeing plants, they are so ubiquitous that we do not notice them. For instance, he referred to notices outside National Trust property saying ‘Don’t damage trees or plants’ which ignores the fact that trees are plants. Constable’s picture of The Hay Wain includes numbers of elm trees, which are plants. The picture of lions in a tree is generally thought of as a picture of lions, and the tree is overlooked.

Plants are fascinating. The *Catharanthus roseus*, or Madagascar periwinkle, is a source of the drugs vincristine and vinblastine, used to treat various types of cancers.

Christmas cards, he said, have one plant, 23 birds and 66 mammals, but Christmas should be about plants. Neither the apple tree nor the pear tree are mentioned in the bible, but there are many references to **almonds** which are the main constituent of marzipan, so much used in Christmas cakes. Wild almonds are toxic and the edible sweet ones came from a genetic mutation thousands of years ago. The Mediterranean climate encourages mixed orchards of figs (which existed over 13,000 years ago) and almonds.

Figs have their flowers in the fleshy part and are pollinated by different wasps for the various type of fig. The female wasp penetrates through a hole in the fig, pollinates the fig and then dies. A male wasp then mates with another female wasp and the male then dies; the female wasp then emerges from the fig and the cycle continues. Nowadays, enormous numbers of figs and almonds are grown in California (unsustainably because of the amount of water required).

Chocolate is widely grown in East Africa. The flowers are tiny and pollinated by tiny midges. The chocolate bean has to be harvested very carefully and is then left to ferment, the seeds are spread out to dry and are then roasted and ground to make chocolate.

Brazil nuts are grown in tropical woodland and are pollinated by bees which require orchids to enable them to live and procreate. They obtain wax from the orchids for feeding their larvae. The growing of brazil nut trees is a sustainable activity

The Christmas cactus is pollinated by humming birds.

Euphorbia are mostly succulents, but the main one at Christmas is the poinsettia, named after Joel Poinsett who was the United States Minister to Mexico in the early 19th century. The plant has become associated with Christmas.

Dried examples of **Mistletoe** last for centuries. The female and male mistletoe are separate plants. They are used in the treatment of epilepsy. Forty per cent of mistletoe is found in gardens, which are the reservoir of wildlife. The seeds of the mistletoe are distributed by the mistle thrush, a large thrush; they are also distributed by blackcaps from southern Europe, which overwinter in the UK; and by the German blackcap. These smaller birds peck at the fruit, the seed sticks to the beak, and they rub the seeds on the bark of a tree. Mistletoe is spreading to the north of England with climate change, but has yet to reach Scotland.

Holly is a very widespread tree, with very hard wood used by the cotton industry. Harry Potter’s wand was made out of it. Male and female flowers are on different plants. The Californian holly is widespread in the hills above Los Angeles which is where the name Hollywood originates.

Ivy is a wonderful plant in October as it continues to flourish and keeps bees alive.

Christmas trees are grown on a huge scale and the growing of them is said to combat climate change, but in reality so much carbon dioxide is produced there is not

enough land to produce sufficient numbers of trees to remove the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and after Christmas the trees are disposed of and immediately release the carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. Red squirrels love living in them, and these squirrels are increasing in number.

Frankincense comes from resin from the *Boswellia* tree in the Horn of Africa; **Myrrh** also from the Horn of Africa from a tree that produces wax, possibly to cool the tree by evaporating the oils in the wax.

Christmas cake: Timothy produced his family recipe for Christmas cake which included half a litre of whiskey for soaking the fruit.

We will be welcoming Timothy back to give another talk, but not until 2025.

The next meeting is the Christmas Party on 19th December.

Charles Duchenne

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

www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

The Children’s Society

A very big thank you to all the Society’s box holders. This year the sum of £542.10 was raised from your boxes for this very good cause. Please continue to give your support. If anyone else would like to help by becoming a box holder, please ring me on 01234 356497.

Many thanks again.

Eloise Carter



The Biddenham Society

58th Annual AGM and lunch

Sunday 28 January 2024

12.00 for 12.30 pm in the Village Hall

Admission: Adults £10 - Children free

Places must be booked and paid for by 15 January

Payments can now be made by Bank Transfer - Biddenham Society, Sort Code: 60-02-13, Account No: 51317761. Please use Surname as reference on payment; or 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

North Bedfordshire Ramblers

Join us for a walk

We walk every Saturday afternoon approximately 6 miles and Saturdays twice a month in the morning for approximately 12 miles

December Walks

2nd pm Sundon Hill 6 miles
 9th am Woburn 14 miles.
 9th pm Clapham Park 6,5 miles
 16th pm Blunham Church Mince Pie walk 4.5 miles
 23rd am Clapham Park 9.5 miles
 23rd pm Elstow 6 miles
 30th pm Hail Weston 6.5 miles

January Walks

6th pm Milton Keynes 7.5 miles
 13th am Rowney Warren, Shefford 12 miles
 13th pm Harrold Country Park 6 miles
 20th pm Milton Keynes 6 miles
 27th Figure of Eight am Riseley 5.5 miles, pm Riseley 5.8 miles or walk all day 13.3 miles

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729
 Facebook; North Beds Ramblers
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/north-bedfordshire>



Café B

Tuesday 19th December
Biddenham Village Hall
 10.15 am - 11.45am

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

Next cafés 16th January, 20th February

Activity Programme



Monday

9.15-1:35pm Baby Ballet Sessions*
 2-3pm Tai Chi
 5-6pm Rainbows*
 6-7.15pm Brownies*
 6.15-7pm- Legs, Bums and Tums
 7.30 – 9.30pm Kendo Kai Martial Arts
 7.30-9.30pm Parish Council
 Community Meeting 1st Monday of the month
 7.30-8.30 Zumba

Tuesday

11.30-1.30pm Pink Penguin Poppets Sessions*
 5-5.45pm Donatella's Contemporary School of Dance (DCSD) – Juniors*
 5.50-6.35pm DCSD – young adults*
 6-7pm ((Bounce))
 6.45-7.45 Pure Core Pilates
 7.30-8.30pm Zumba
 8.15-9.15pm B Ascending Yoga

Wednesday

9am-2.30pm Baby Sensory Sessions
 9.45-11.45am Restoration Pilates
 5.50-6.40pm Donatella's CSD – Adults*
 6.50-7.50pm Pure Core Pilates
 7-8pm Zumba Step
 8-10pm- Swingsters Dance Sessions

Thursday

9.00-11.30 Baby Ballet sessions*
 09:30-10:30am Happy Body Project Zest
 10.30-11.30am Mum & Baby Fitness *
 10-12pm Community Tea & Talk
 6.15-6.45 St Hilaire Fitness
 7-8pm Fit Steps
 7-8 Tai Chi
 8.15-9.15pm Belly Dancing
 8.30-10.00 pm Kendo Kai Martial Arts

Friday

9.30-11.30am Restoration Pilates
 12.30-2.30 Friday Prayers
 3.30-5pm Family Film Friday* 1st Friday of the Month
 6.15-7pm UKTI Martial Arts – Children
 6.30-11pm The Great Swan Pub
 7.15-8pm UKTI Martial Arts - Adults

Saturday

8.30-11.15am Rugby Tots Sessions*
 8.45-11am Brennan School of Dance Sessions*
 11.15-1pm Kids Boxercise Sessions*

Sunday

9am-12.30pm Woodside Church Congregation
 1-4pm Eagles Tent Gospel Ministries
 7.30pm-10pm Havana Salsa Sessions

All bookings marked * usually only operate during the school term. Visit www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk for full class details and booking arrangements

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**

1st December, 5th January, 2nd
February

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

100 CLUB October draw

The winners were:

1st	Paula Edwards	56
2nd	Melissa Smart	80
3rd	Tariq Nazar Hussain	68

Drawn by Mike Chappell



No Fear Duplicate Bridge

Biddenham Village Hall
Fridays at 2.30pm
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



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

Membership
Treasurer

Peter Leverkus
Paul Fricker

Tel: 353662
Tel: 342843

Regular Events in Biddenham Halls

For contact details see the Hall websites

www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk www.biddenhampavilion.co.uk www.stjamesbiddenham.com

For details of regular events at Great Denham Community Hall see page 17

Monday		
Cha Char Chimps	10.00am	Village Hall
Angie Pearl Yoga	10.00-11.00am	Pavilion
Ukranian Clothing Evening	5.30-7.30pm (1 st 3 rd 5 th in month)	Church Barn
Storm Martial Arts	7.00-8.00pm	Pavilion
Guides	7.15pm Termtime	Village Hall
Tuesday		
Over 50s fitness	10.00-11.00am	Pavilion
Street Dance	5.15-6.45pm	Pavilion
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 (1 st , 3 rd & 5 th in month)	Church Barn
Kensington Ballet	9.30-11.00am	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
This Girl Can Fitness	6.30-7.15pm	Pavilion
Boxercise	7.30-8.15pm	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 (term time)	Church Barn
Baby Ballet	5.00-6.00pm	Pavilion
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	10.05-11.00am	Church Barn
Disco Duck	2.15-3.00pm (term time)	Church Barn
Brushstrokes Art Group	2.15-4.15pm	Pavilion
St James's Choir Practice	7.00-8.30pm	Church Barn
Storm Martial Arts	6.30-8.00pm	Pavilion
Saturday		
Bedford Ballet	9.30-11.40am	Church Barn
Oakley Football	9.00am-12.30pm	Pavilion Field
Socatots	9.45-11.15am	Pavilion
Family Crafts, Little Dinosaur Studio	2.30-3.30pm (last of the month)	Church Barn
Lucy Hunt School of Dance	1.00-3.00pm	Pavilion
Toddler Sense	2.00-3.00pm (1 st or 2 nd of the month)	Church Barn
Sunday		
St James's church service coffees	11.00am-12noon	Church Barn
Taekwondo	11.30am-1.30pm	Village Hall
No Fear Bridge	5.30-8.30pm	Village Hall
St James's Revive	7.00-8.00pm (3 rd in month)	Church Barn

December

- Fri 1 Dec First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p22
 Fri 1 Dec Children's Community Cinema, Great Denham Community Hall, 3.30pm, see p19
 Sat 2 Dec Winter Festival, Great Denham Community Hall, 2.00-6.00pm, see p10
Sun 3 Dec All Age Worship at St James's, 9.30am
Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.00am
 Mon 4 Dec Great Denham Parish Council, Community Hall, 7.30pm
 Tue 5 Dec Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p19
 6-10 Dec Christmas Tree Festival, St Paul's Church, Bedford, see p17
Sun 10 Dec Christingle Service, St James's, 9.30am
All Age Worship, All Saints, 11.00am
Christingle, Transfiguration, 4.00pm
Nine Lessons & Carols, All Saints, 6.00pm
 Sun 10 Dec Christmas Sale, Church Barn, 10.45-12.00am, see p12
 Tue 12 Dec Zoom lecture by Jacky Klein, 7.30-8.30pm, see p3
Fri 15 Dec St James' School service, St James's, 10.00am
 Sat 16 Dec Christmas with Opus 18, Priory Methodist Church, 2.30pm, see p8
Sun 17 Dec Children's Nativity, St James's, 9.30am
Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.00am
Nine Lessons & Carols, St James's, 6.00pm
 Tue 19 Dec Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p21
 Tue 19 Dec Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm, see pp10 & 20
 Thu 21 Dec Kids Christmas Workshop, Cook Stars, Church Barn, 10.00am-12noon, see p16
Sun 24 Dec Christmas communion, All Saints, 3.00pm
Carols in the Churchyard, St James's, 4.00pm
Midnight Communion, St James's, 11.30pm
Christmas Day All Age Service, St James's, 10.00am
 Fri 29 Dec Quilting & Sewing Group, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p22
Sun 31 Dec Holy Communion, St James's, 9.30am

For regular events at the Church Barn, Pavilion, Biddenham Village Hall and Great Denham Community Hall see pages 21 and 23

January

- Tue 2 Jan Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p19
 Fri 5 Jan First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p22
Sun 7 Jan All Age Worship, St James's, 9.30am
Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.00am
 Tue 9 Jan Biddenham Parish Council, Church Barn, 7.30pm, see p5
Sun 14 Jan Holy Communion, St James's, 9.30am
All Age worship, All Saints, 11.00am
Evening Prayer, St James's, 6.00pm
 Tue 16 Jan Café B, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.15-11.45am, see p21
 Tue 16 Jan Bedford National Trust, Addison Centre, Kempston, 2.15-3.15pm, see p6
 Tue 16 Jan Biddenham Gardeners Association, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.30pm
Sun 21 Jan Holy Communion, St James's, 9.30am
Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.00am
Evensong, All Saints, 5.00pm
 Fri 26 Jan Quilting & Sewing Group, Biddenham Village Hall, 10.30am, see p22
Sun 28 Jan Holy Communion, All Saints, 11.00am
 Sun 28 Jan Biddenham Society AGM, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.00noon, see p20

For North Beds Ramblers Walks see page 21

February

- Fri 2 Feb First Friday lunch, Biddenham Village Hall, 12.15pm, see p22
 Tue 6 Feb Peter's Picture House, Biddenham Village Hall, 7.00pm, see p19

The Loop

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All **February** 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 17th 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. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions to fit editorial style.