

GRASS

THE NEWSLETTER AT THE ROOTS OF THE GRAND UNION BENEFICE OF BLISWORTH AND STOKE BRUERNE/ SHUTLANGER, WITH GRAFTON REGIS, ALDERTON AND MILTON MALSOR

Due to the current emergency, this is a very curtailed version of GRASS; we are not printing out any hard copies this month due to the logistical problems of delivering them, but will send round to our emailing list. We have asked a representative from each village to circulate the fact that if anybody would like to be added to the emailing list, they should email: linda@dards.net and we will add you to the list. Alternatively, you can view this edition, together with all the old editions over the years on www.grassnews.co.uk. They make interesting reading. If there is anybody near you who is unable to receive GRASS by any of these methods, could you please print out a copy and hand it to them? We hope to be back to full production before too long. In the meantime, our good wishes go out to all our readers.

Paul, Joy and Linda

Rector's Letter

My dear friends,

We are living in a very rapidly changing world; the landscape of our society is changing daily. In this time of instability, the one certain and unchanging rock is the love of Christ. We can clearly see glimpses of this in the acts of kindness that everyone is offering to their families, neighbours and communities. In these dark times, we gather around the light and love of Christ.

At this present time, the ever-changing situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic (also known as the coronavirus) has had and will continue to have an impact on our daily lives, including aspects of our sacramental lives. For the foreseeable future our church buildings will be closed. Just because the buildings are closed this does not mean the Church is closed; each one of us, even if we feel isolated in our own homes, are the church the body of Christ in our communities. The world is in need of our prayers more than ever.

Pete Heffron (our Ordinand) and I are working closely to make sure we can still offer pastoral care across the benefice. If you need any practical support, or spiritual guidance, please contact one of us. If you would like to receive regular information and want to keep in touch then please let me have your email address – send to grandunionbenefice@gmail.com. Please do not send normal emails to this address.

Even though we are not meeting together, we can still walk with Our Lord and His disciples on their (and our) journey. There will be many opportunities to watch church services and be part of their worship on the television. There are also some prayer apps you can use, like Time to Pray and Pray as You Go. I know that for most of us, this is not what we truly want nor how we expected to celebrate the main Christian festival of the liturgical year. However, this would be a good opportunity to spend more time in prayer and contemplating Holy Scripture. We could start on Palm Sunday by reflecting on the gospel of Mark, chapter 14 through to chapter 15 verse 47. Reading it slowly during the week, take time to place yourself in the story. On Easter Sunday, move to John chapter 20, verse 1 to 18, which is a good passage to reflect upon.

As Christians, we are people of hope and we know that our Lord Jesus Christ is with each of us at this time. We all live in small communities; our discipleship calls us to look out for our neighbour. Over the last six months, I have been taken aback by the love and generosity that lies at the heart of all our communities and how we look out for each other on a daily basis. If you know of people who are alone and self-isolating and you can't visit them, a good way to keep in touch is by telephone. Regular calls can go a long way in letting people know that others are there for them.

You're all in my prayers and please don't hesitate to let me know if you need any help. May our Lord continue to bless you and keep you safe and please be assured that He dwells within your heart and we are never alone. Blessings and peace. Richard

Streetchurch Sunday 8 March 2020

Well, it was rather an eventful duty day this time round. En route to Mount Pleasant, my car was shunted up the rear and as a result, we were late arriving. We are so grateful to Pat Luxton for getting things started. My car had the soup and quite a lot of the food in it, but Pat and the ladies of Mount Pleasant had got the tea and coffee going and food from the Blisworth/Stoke Bruerne end of the Benefice. The ladies of the church and the counsellors all pitched in and the clients jumped to it and carried all the bags in from the cars when we arrived – a real team effort. It was a record day for numbers and there were nearer to 100 than the normal 60-70 or so. There was plenty of food to go round, thanks to the generosity of the people of the Benefice.

My thanks to the team of Pat, Linda, Maureen and Joy, who worked so hard and so well with such good humour after our trials and tribulations!!!

Thank you everyone who sent food/clothing and also to the people who send cash donations to help 'oil the wheels' of Streetchurch. Doris



Update on Streetchurch

We have received the following information regarding Streetchurch

'Just to update you that following government guidance issued recently regarding the corona virus, we took the necessary but sad decision to close Streetchurch for the next four Sundays, after which we will review the situation.

We are aware that this is a difficult time for people, and as a steering group we want to protect anyone who is involved with Streetchurch - guests, volunteers, caterers and our Mount Pleasant hosts. We are sure that you will all be praying at this time for our guests, for each other and for our government - as we join together, let us pray for protection, peace and wisdom. We will keep you updated once we have reviewed in a few weeks.

With thanks for your understanding, support and prayer, Jacqui, on behalf of Streetchurch Steering Group'.

Useful Telephone Numbers for the United Benefice of Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne with Grafton Regis, Alderton and Milton Malsor

Rector: Canon Rev'd Richard Stainer, The Rectory, 37 High Street, Blisworth NN7 3B, tel 01604 857619

Churchwardens of Blisworth: Mrs Fiona McKenzie, tel 01604 859541 and Mrs Angela Cheesbrough, tel 01604 858059.

Churchwardens of Stoke Bruerne: Mrs Christine Frost, tel 01604 862561.

Churchwardens of Grafton Regis: Mrs Jean Glanville, tel 01908 543463 and Lord Charles Fitzroy, tel 01908 542908

Churchwardens of Alderton: Mrs Amanda Selvey, tel 01327 811380.

Churchwardens of Milton Malsor: Mrs Jane Treharne, tel 01604 858323 and Mrs Sue Bell, tel 01327 351043

The Julian Group for Silent Prayer

As with most groups, our Julian Meeting for silent prayer in Blisworth has ceased for the duration of the present need to 'self isolate'. We will resume as soon as possible and keep in touch by phone and possibly by online means. If you are interested in joining in with online meditations you can find out more by going to www.thejulianmeetings.net or by contacting Sue Cutts on: s.j.cutts47@gmail.com if you would prefer to join in with a local group.

VILLAGE NEWS

VE Day Concert

Please note that, due to the coronavirus epidemic, the proposed charitable VE Day concert which was to have been held at Milton Malsor on 8 May 2020 to benefit the Alderton knight fund is cancelled. Many thanks to Milton for proposing to hold the concert and we look forward to another attempt at a future date. Stay safe everyone.

Margaret Hall-T



STOKE BRUERNE

Freda Gardner RIP

It was with sadness we heard of the passing of Freda. Freda was very much part of the community; she worked on the village hall management committee for many years and was a very hard worker and a friend to all of us. We have had happy times with lots of laughs and chats of times gone by. She would be there at all the events we held, making cups of teas or being behind a stall. We will miss Freda's cheery ways and send our deepest sympathy to Steven, Linda and family.

Stoke Bruerne Village Hall Management

Committee.



A New Baby

We are delighted to announce the birth of our baby girl Anna Neve D'Ambrosio on Sunday 16 February. She is a calm and cheerful baby and Jake (her older brother, now 2 and half years old) absolutely adores her. We are all doing well, and love the joy our daughter has brought to our family.



GRAFTON REGIS

St Mary, Grafton Regis – HLF Tower Repair Project

Nearly there but not quite; the scaffolding is down and we can see the new shutters and the glazed lancet windows in the tower. The local birds are even more annoyed now as there is no scaffolding for them to sit on and enjoy the view, and all access into the tower has been blocked up.

The new bell ringing floor is in but glazing, electrics, decorating and stairs still to finish. The bell ringers will have a great view into the church from their new elevated position. The vestry is in a similar state of progress, Diana and I spent a few hours chipping the old plaster off the bottom half of the wall and we now have excellent muscles in our arms.

The PCC has started its planning for the new heritage display in the church and we are sourcing new equipment. Hopefully by the time it is completed the coronavirus will be long gone and we can have an opening day.

Churchyard

The snowdrops have finished flowering and we should be looking at spreading some of the bulbs around the churchyard; some are getting very crowded and need to be thinned out. However the primroses and violets are following on and the hedge blossom is appearing. Grass cutting will start very soon.

Village Hall lunches

We are very sorry not to be able to provide the March monthly lunch but it seemed a sensible decision with the uncertainty of how virulent the coronavirus will be.

Jean Glanville



SHUTLANGER

 **SHUTLANGER COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP**

**Here to support my community.
I can help.**

5 things you can do to make a positive difference in your community

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Think of others, consider your actions, & be kind | Connect and reach out to your neighbours | Make the most of local online groups | Support vulnerable or isolated people | Share accurate information and advice |

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19, we can help with:

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up urgent prescriptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent Supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Eggs |

Just call or text either Laura or Heidi and we will do our best to help!

Laura Manning: Tel: 07368 402 675 on Thursday's 9-11am

Heidi Willington: Tel: 0743 654 4084 on Tuesday's 1-3pm

NB: We will pop around to collect cash before we go shopping



BLISWORTH Funding

In the absence of any commercial income St. John the Baptist Church in Blisworth is very dependent on the generosity of its congregation, for which we are very grateful, and we are aware that in the current climate people may be less inclined to attend our services. If you are able, please consider giving more than usual when you visit so that we can continue to serve our community. Thank you.



ALDERTON Churchyard Rota

1-4 April
19 April – 2 May

John Adams
Tom & Julie

Current Emergency

I'm coordinating the Alderton Village Community Group.

Jackie will still be sending emails to the village however we felt it important to have a more 'instant' form of communication too. I have therefore set up a village WhatsApp & Facebook group. The WhatsApp group will be used for 'assistance' messages regarding help/advice on a daily basis. Hopefully it will enable us to look after our most vulnerable residents at this difficult time. The Facebook group will be a forum for local posts & light-hearted humour.

If you would like to be included on either/both of these, please contact me on katieswain1@googlemail.com and I will add you.

There is also a community effort for groceries & consumables to be made available in the village. This is still in the early stages of being organised; however, I will update the village as soon as I have more information.

Stay safe and please contact me if any assistance if required. Best wishes, Katie Steel



MILTON MALSOR

Helping Hands Across the Community.

Arising from discussions at the Women's Institute, a WhatsApp group of over 30 men and women in the village have volunteered to run errands or anything else that can help people especially as self-isolation is now necessary. Please phone or message any one of the following if you need help in any way: Nicola James 07989 307670, Jacqui Jones 07728 027507, Katie Marshall 07792 842358.

Updates

Both Milton Malsor Historical Society and the Milton Malsor Film Club have cancelled meetings until further notice. The village hall has suspended all activities. See websites: miltonmalsorhistory.org.uk, and for village hall, www.miltonmalsor.info.

The Milton & Collingtree WI have cancelled their planned meetings scheduled for 9 April and 14 May and cancelled the trip to Chatsworth House on 11 July. The school has also closed upon government orders. The bell ringers have suspended activities but hope that when things are improved anyone wishing to join them will be welcome at St. John's Church, Blisworth on Monday evenings at 7.30 p m to find out more and to give it a go. The Baptist Church has cancelled all services until further notice. The usual Maundy Thursday meal and prayer breakfasts have been cancelled. Contact Dianne Turner 01604 858243 for any further information.

All services at Holy Cross Church have been cancelled on advice from the Diocese. See the Rector's pastoral letter for details. Richard and Peter are available as much as possible if you need them: Rev'd Canon Richard Stainer 01604 857619, Peter Heffron 01604 858021, Church Wardens: Jane Treharne 01604 858323 and Sue Bell 01327 351043.

Other News

It was a well-filled Holy Cross Church for the funeral of Edith Sharp on 9 March. Aged 96, Edith was one of the oldest residents born in the village; she was much loved and respected. The funeral of one of Edith's contemporaries, Leonard Paul, was also conducted at the crematorium on 25 February. He was also 96 years of age and, like Edith, attended the village school.

Mothering Sunday services did not happen on 22 March but across the country and including the village candles were placed in the windows of houses at 7.00 p m to remind us in a time of great uncertainty our dependence upon our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds. The candles were a visible symbol of the light of Christ in the world.

Scouts

1st Collingtree & Milton Malsor Scout Group is celebrating its half century. Scouting in our parishes has been enriching the lives of our young people for 50 years - not just tying knots but having all sorts of adventures and experiences - camping, cooking on open fires, sailing, archery, international trips and being at the heart of the local community to name just a few. To mark this momentous 50 year milestone, in October this year, 1st Collingtree & Milton Malsor Scout Group is organising a special camp for 70 of our young people to Brownsea Island, where Lord Baden-Powell laid the foundations for the worldwide Scouting movement.

Starting out with just a handful of children in 1970, the group now boasts more than 70 Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer members, ranging in age from six to 18-years, with many more on the waiting list. Where else can young people gain skills for life, such as confidence building, leadership and citizenship, while also enjoying activities like scuba diving, sailing, rock climbing – and, of course, camp fire food? It's a testament to the hard work of all the leaders and volunteers over the years that this pack has continued to thrive.

Cub Scout leader Tim says "Success for me is sending the Cubs home at the end of a Cub camp dirty, smelling of the camp fire with a huge smile on their faces." The only limit to the fun we can have in Scouting is the need for leaders; so any adults out there that have a little time on your hands and want to make a difference, come and give Scouting a try.

To celebrate 50 years the group is also running an overnight camp for ex-Scouts, so if you used to be a Scout or a leader with the group, please do contact us.

During its 50-year history, the pack has also seen girls join its ranks. Long-term member, Hannah Fraser, who has been in Scouting since the age of eight, has now become a leader and also gained a Queen's Scout Award – the highest award in Scouting. She is our Beaver leader.

The group has been working hard to raise funds to make the adventure to Brownsea Island possible. As well as raising money for the trip, the group is also hoping to secure funds for minibus travel and essential scouting equipment, as well as the creation of a commemorative neckerchief for the birthday event. Owing to the coronavirus outbreak, the trip and ex-Scouts camp will be delayed until 2021 but that will still be within our 50th year!

Holy Cross Church at Milton had kindly offered to host their coffee morning in May in aid of the group's fundraising but unfortunately, because of the current situation, this has been postponed BUT you can still donate to the group's 10K appeal at www.gofundme.com/f/50-years-of-doing-our-best. For more about the group go to Twitter and Facebook: @CMMSscouts or you can email Baloo (Tim) at baloo.1cmm@gmail.com or Mike at m.ladd187@btinternet.com.

GENERAL NEWS

Notes from a Local Farmer

Hi everyone,

As I write this on 16 March, the whole world seems to be in turmoil, but out round the farm, nothing has changed.

Although we continue to have wet and changeable weather, it has been mild throughout. The grass has continued to grow, particularly on my lawn, which has had its second mowing this year.

We have grazed our breeding flock on stubble turnips all winter, which has saved the pastures and rested them. Now the lambs are going out on grass which is two inches long, and nice and fresh. Lambing has gone well with only 35 left to lamb. The kind weather at turn out has helped lamb survival rates.

On the arable side, we are at a standstill because of the rain. We have a lot of cultivating to do with spring wheat and barley to be drilled. As long as it is drilled by mid-April, we should be OK. I am comforted by the fact that with long hours and big equipment, it is within our capacity to get things done quickly.

Coming back to the current situation, it is interesting to watch the dash for food at the supermarkets, and the emptying shelves. It was suggested two weeks ago by some official that farming in this country is questionable, as places like Singapore import all their food. It must be remembered that lack of food would bring a government down, resulting in riots on the streets. In this country, we have one of the best supply chains in the world and despite overwhelming demand, shelves are being refilled.

Perhaps farming will be more appreciated.

Talk to you again soon.

Robert Davy

News from The Old Mail

For events and happenings in the nearby villages: Cosgrove, Potterspurpy and Yardley Gobion, see the newsletter, The Old Mail, is available online at various websites: www.cosgrovevillage.co.uk; www.potterspurpy.org.uk; www.yardleygobionpc.wordpress.com

Fitness Classes in Paulerspury Village Hall

Due to coronavirus, there will be no classes until further notice. For those who have paid for classes, we are looking at the possibility of providing online classes.

For pilates, contact Elizabeth 07547 618987 for more information.

For yoga, contact Sue: 01327 811596 or fitnessgroup@paulerspuryparish.org.uk or Iris: yogatownchester@gmail.com or 07542 351 642

Theatre Group

At the time of composing this article, Milton Keynes Theatre has closed, but in the hope that that it will be re-opening at a later date, the reservations for shows will remain. For those who have purchased tickets for cancelled shows I will be trying to get refunds.

Please see: <http://paulerspuryparish.org.uk/local-groups/theatre-group/> then click the link new shows.

Contact Sue, via the web site or phone, 01327 811596 to reserve seats.

Towcester HeartBeats

Towcester HeartBeats heart support group meetings have been cancelled until further notice.

A Poem for our Time

It was March 2020...

The streets were empty, stores closed, people couldn't go out anymore.
But spring didn't know, and the flowers began to bloom, the sun was shining, the birds were singing, swallows were coming soon, the sky was blue. Morning was coming earlier.

It was March 2020...

Young people had to study online, and find jobs at home, people couldn't shop anymore, or go to the hairdresser. Soon there would be no room in hospitals, and people continued to get sick.

But spring didn't know, time to go to the garden was coming, the grass was growing.

It was March 2020...

People have been put on lockdown - to protect grandparents, families and children. No more reunion, meal or family party. Fear has become real and the days looked alike.

But spring didn't know, apple trees, cherry trees and others grew, the leaves grew.

People started reading, playing with family, learning a language, singing on the balcony; by inviting neighbours to do the same, they learned a new language, to be supportive and focused on other values.

People realised the importance of health, the suffering, of this world that had stopped, of the economy that fell down.

But spring didn't know. The flowers left their place for fruits, the birds made their nest, swallows had arrived.

Then release day came, people found out on TV, the virus had lost, people went down the street, sang, crying, kissing their neighbours, without masks or gloves.

And that's when summer came, because spring didn't know. He continued to be there despite everything, despite the virus, fear and death.

Because spring didn't know; it taught people the power of life.

Everything will be alright, stay home, protect yourself, and you will enjoy life.

How to Contact the Police

999 – for a crime or incident in progress

101 – you will be asked with which police station you would like to be connected

03000 111 222 – direct dial Northamptonshire police

Email for Towcester: SCT-SouthNorthantsTowcester@northants.pnn.police.uk

Your local officers are as follows:

Alderton: PCSO 7018, Peter Firth, tel 101 ext 343971

Stoke Bruerne: PCSO 7018, Peter Firth, tel 101 ext 343971

Shutlanger: PCSO 7018, Peter Firth, tel 101 ext 343971

For more local SCT information, visit the local policing pages www.northants.police.uk.

Grafton Regis: PCSO 7018, Peter Firth, tel 101 ext 343971

Blisworth: PCSO 7012 Tara Cooksammy

Milton Malsor: PCSO 7012 Tara Cooksammy



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PDC

Computer Solutions



Windows 7 has reached end of life, and it will no longer receive security updates; it is time to change.

I can upgrade it to Windows 10, but still keep the look of Windows 7; all your documents, pictures and programs will transfer as well.

Looking for a laptop? I have a number of refurbished laptops, prices starting from £150.

I repair laptops down to component level; ask for a free quote.

Contact Paul Dards on 07540 000844 or 01327 811265 or paul@dards.co.uk

PDC, Moorend, Spring Lane
Alderton, NN12 7LW
www.dards.co.uk

I am still working despite these difficult times,

COVID-19 (CORONA VIRUS) - LOCAL SUPPORT IF YOU NEED IT

Dear Neighbour,

The David Blagrove Community Trust (DBCT) serves the village of Stoke Bruerne and is offering to coordinate help to those who are following the latest Government guidelines in self isolating.

Whilst you may be self-sufficient or have support from family and friends the DBCT can provide an extra level of help with the following:

- Collection of prescriptions
- Shopping
- Urgent errands

Whilst we will observe the Government guidelines ourselves we just want to be able to help the residents in our village, if we can.

We have a dedicated mobile phone number and will happily add you to our DBCT WhatsApp group or you can email us for email updates.

If you supply your mobile phone and / or your email address then you are giving us permission to include you in any important updates or offers of help. Your data will NOT be used for any other purpose.

You can text your number, name and address to **07951958076**.

Or email your number, name and address to **admin@dbct.org.uk**

Regards

The team at DBCT

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Email: bobtreesurgeon@hotmail.co.uk



SNIPPETS:

If you talk, you are only repeating what you already know but if you listen, you may learn something new.

The best antique is an old friend.

The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed. (Ghandi)

You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 20 April 2020

If you can get any copy to us earlier than that it would be very much appreciated

Please send any copy to: Linda Dards, Moorend, Spring Lane, Alderton NN12 7LW tel 01327 811265, e-mail: linda@dards.net. Could you please include your name & phone number with entries in case we have any problems. If you would like to add photographs or drawings to your text these are welcome and can be supplied via email or as photos, and returned after scanning. Contributions by email are most welcome, we can accept most formats; please request a response from us on receipt – so you are sure that we have your submission. Word (any version) is preferred.