

GRASS

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

From our Rector The Coming of the Kingdom

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and He answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17:20-21)

During Lent, which seems a life time ago, we had a meditation evening within the benefice. The plan at the time was to explore starting a group to look into practising meditation which is a simple way of praying that was first practised in the early Church. Before we could put this into action came our time of isolation in our own homes. Stepping aside from our everyday lives for some has been very stressful and for others a blessing. Through the many conversations that I have had on the phone, one recurring theme is prayer. I would just like to take a few moments to speak about this very simple way of prayer that we can all practice that will bring you closer to our Lord. It's a form of prayer that asks us to step aside each day to sit in the presence of Our Lord.

It was John Main, a Benedictine monk, (1926-1982) who, after studying the lives of the desert fathers and in particular the writings of John Cassian (356-435), re-introduced this ancient form of prayer to the wider Church. At the heart of his approach to Christian meditation is the use of a single word, or mantra, to help still the mind so that we can rest in complete stillness in the presence of God. During his lifetime, he saw his teaching on meditation grow from a single group that would meet in the abbey where he lived, to the foundation of the World Community for Christian Meditation and groups now covering over 60 countries.

Personally, I have been meditating now for around 25 years, spending time each day in silence. Meditating is simple; we just sit down: sit still and upright, gently closing our eyes; our posture is relaxed but alert, letting all the stress just dissolve, and we begin to say our single word in the silence of our hearts. The word John Main suggests is an Aramaic word - the language Jesus spoke - 'Maranatha', meaning "Come, Lord Jesus". Saint John draws the book of Revelation to a close with this same word, as does St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians.

Meditation as a Christian practice of seeking the divine presence within our heart transcends Church history and cultures. Meister Eckhart (Germany, 1260-1327) said that if we want to know God we must first come to know ourselves. He went on to say that we can only know ourselves by returning to the human heart. St Augustine (modern Algeria, 354-430) wrote in his Confessions: 'I was outside, and you were within me, and I never found you until I found you within myself'. Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun writing from the USA today reflects: 'In silence, we come to understand ourselves. In silence, we become able to hear the voice of God calling us beyond ourselves always to the better, always to the more'. John Main himself described entering into the silence of meditation as like "stepping into the living stream of love within our own hearts, and into the eternal silence of God".

The world in which we live is always full of noise, both external and internal; our lives are always very busy. I very often hear people make the comment that if only they had 25 hours in the day, they would get everything done. We are taught from an early age that to be busy is to be important, yet we also live in a world where stress - and the problems these bring - is on the increase. I am deeply aware sometimes that our heart is calling out to just 'be' for a while and catch our breath.

Silence - true silence - is when we are able to bring our bodies and minds to complete stillness, placing our minds in our hearts where Christ dwells. Meditating daily is just one of the prayer pillows around which I build my day. I have found that by having a fixed point, I have more time in my day. I have learned through experience of meditation - and persistence even when it takes more effort - that the answer to whatever challenge we face is so frequently within us if we would only take time to discover it in the stillness.

As Christians, we can spend all our time running around looking for a stronger, more fulfilled relationship with God, or even simple answers to the meaning of life, and wear ourselves out trying. Or we can stop and realise that all we

need to do is look within ourselves. It is Saint Luke who reminds us that ‘The kingdom of God is within you.’ The greatest and most rewarding journey is the one to our very centre where Christ dwells deep within our hearts.

The invitation has always been there, in the depths of Christian history and practice, to seek God in the silence of our heart. And the invitation is here for you now. If you would like to embark upon the journey of meditation, or just simply find out more, please let me know (grandunionbenefice@gmail.com).

The Kingdom is within.

Richard

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

Churchwarden 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

VILLAGE NEWS



STOKE BRUERNE

Here is a picture of Alan Ricketts riding a lawn mower; we decided the grass verges around the canal and by the museum were getting too long so we got a team up consisting of Alan, James, Katherine & myself to tidy up and make it look nice in readiness for return to normality.
Phil Minney



Village at War Weekend – 12 and 13 September 2020

In the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and after significant consideration, the Friends of the Canal Museum wish to inform you that there will be a temporary suspension of hostilities in Stoke Bruerne this year and the Village at War Weekend, due to take place on 12 and 13 September has been cancelled.

The decision has not been taken lightly, but uncertainty around how and when this global crisis will be resolved, and the need to keep our volunteers and visitors safe, is paramount to us. We are pleased to say that our entertainers, living history groups and re-enactors will be joining us once again to keep the home fires burning on 11 and 12 September 2021, and we look forward to welcoming you all again then.

Friends of Canal Museum

June Smith RIP

June Smith died peacefully in her nursing home on the morning of 8 May. She and husband Eric had lived in their bungalow, Saxon Rise, on the corner of Church Lane in Stoke Bruerne for almost 60 years. June had two main interests – her dogs and gardening. She could always be found in her garden which she tended with great care and much love. She worked as a gardener for a family in Harpole for many years and she became a true friend of Mrs Church. June was never without a dog and usually 2 – Jack and Jill; Polly and Suki and her last one, Tom.

Her funeral was on 29 May, and as a fitting tribute to her and the time she spent in the village, the cortege came through Stoke on its way to the Counties Crematorium at Milton Malsor.

Brough

John





SHUTLANGER

Mary Brown RIP - A Resume Written by Herself

Mary was born and brought up in Yorkshire. After leaving school, she did nurse training in Hull, then several post-certificate courses in Edinburgh and London, intending to do missionary work with the Universities Mission to Central Africa. However, the mission preferred their workers to be at least twenty-five years of age and advised Mary to gain further general experience and also learn Swahili, then go to Central Africa when she was a little older.



Mary didn't wish to 'hang around' as it were, and decided to join some friends who were going to work in Canada. Off they went and stayed together for several months before going their own ways.

Mary worked in French Canada, then moved to Ontario to take a child study course at Toronto University. Following this she worked for The Ontario Society for Crippled Children, at their Cerebral Palsy Centre and at summer camps for handicapped children (all very interesting and enjoyable). Next came some travelling across Canada and the USA, to rejoin one of her friends and to work in Texas for a while.

Mary returned to England as her father was not well, and worked at Kirby Moorside in North Yorkshire for one and a half years. Then came another visit to America to specialise in rehabilitation work with severely physically handicapped, educable children. Then it was on to Mexico, Hawaii, Fiji and so to New Zealand.

Meeting up with friends and working in Rotorua in the thermal area of North Island was a very interesting, happy experience which Mary could have extended but was keen to get to Australia to meet up with other friends and to gain more experience.

Mary then began to think it was time to get back to the UK and so the globetrotting continued by way of Ceylon, India, Arabia and Egypt and so back to England where it was necessary to get down to regular work and the business of making some money. Mary's original plan on returning had been to work in her native Yorkshire but the desired work was not immediately available there, but was in Northampton. This was to have been a temporary stay but turned out to be much more permanent. For 27 years, Mary was in charge of the John Greenwood Shipman Centre at Dallington, (a home, school and treatment centre, now closed), for severely handicapped educable children. Mary felt this was really what she wanted to do.



She met her future husband, John, at Saint Lawrence's Church in Northampton. In 1969 they bought property in Shutlanger, spent time getting it the way they wanted it and living there part time, but after retiring from work, became full-time residents and spent many happy years in the village becoming involved in many activities such as the church and WI.

Addendum from Jackie Evans:

Mary and husband John were an extremely sociable couple and got involved with anything to do with both Shutlanger and Stoke Bruerne and everything Mary did, she did immaculately. They were both true Christians in every sense of the word, and attended services throughout the Benefice. Fetes in both villages were never a problem and she produced dozens of gifts for the children's tombola and no child went without regardless of their skills. She looked after the church linen and everything was ironed to perfection, neatly wrapped in tissue, inside a poly bag, labelled with an elastic band securing it. Both Mary and John took on the role of looking after St Anne's chapel at Shutlanger after the death of Olive Boffin and again they did it with care, attention to detail and love. Helping with preparation and serving food at those lovely harvest lunches we held in Shutlanger Hall were never a problem for Mary; she seemed to have boundless energy.

Mary was a keen member of the WI and also a regular volunteer at Stoke Bruerne school, either listening to the children read or helping with craft, something she was really good at.

She died aged 96 in a care home in Cottingham, near Hull on 14 May. Her funeral will leave from the top of The Twitch, followed by cremation at Milton at 3.30 p m on Friday, 5 June.



GRAFTON REGIS

Grafton Manor

This is a very nice thank you from Grafton Manor for supplying them with bags of 'treats'. Thank you also to our villagers for supplying the treats.
Jean



ALDERTON

Churchyard Rota

31 May – 13 June
14 – 27 June
28 June – 11 July

Steve & Alessandra
Roy & Dawn Cox
Brian & Maureen Patton

Alderton Art Festival Cancelled

Alderton's annual Art Festival has been cancelled for 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The committee which organises the Festival for the first weekend in September, announced the decision on Saturday 23 May.

"In the light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and after significant consideration, the organising committee of Alderton's annual Art Festival wish to inform you that the Festival planned to take place on September 5 and 6 has been cancelled. The decision has not been taken lightly, but the need to keep our helpers and visitors safe is paramount to us.

Certain moves are still afoot to come up with some alternative ideas for fundraising for the upkeep and development of our beautiful St Margaret's Church, so please watch this space. We very much hope to support our loyal artists in the future".
Charlie Reece

A Story for the Covid Time

Some of the people in the village have asked about the new business that I set up mid lockdown to supply PPE so here's the story:

A certain village NHS super hero, Jayne Skippen, asked if I could help get some protective eyewear for key workers on the front line in the NHS. In about 2 weeks I managed to get 1,000 sets from various sources. This process led me to see that there would be a need for PPE for the general public and companies as we went back to work and about our daily lives. I spoke to a friend who was experienced in online sales and we hit the go button. Just under 4 weeks later, we had built and launched a website and online shop, brought on a major medical supplies business as a partner, set up a warehouse in Brackley, purchased stock and got our first orders.



As I write this, we have been trading for just under 3 weeks and already have repeat customers. Thanks to those from the local area that have placed orders. And today it's another major milestone as we have landed pre orders for a new product we have designed in the UK, which is currently going through a patent application.

It's not been easy, but with a 'can do' attitude and 6 weeks of 12-hour days, we are doing well. For a problem, there's always a solution. Don't let anyone ever tell you something is impossible. www.ukpwarehouse.com.

Can I close by saying a huge thanks to Jayne, Gwynn and all their NHS colleagues for what they do for us every day? Let's not let their efforts be forgotten as the horrors of the last few months start to subside.
Pete Smallwood

GENERAL NEWS

A Recipe for June

I often make these biscuits for church and village events and am often asked for the recipe so here goes. If anybody would like to submit a recipe for next month, I would be very grateful – I meant to ask this last month but omitted to do so, so it has to be one of my recipes. Linda

Anzac Biscuits – makes 30

- 2 level tablespoon golden syrup
- 5 oz (125g) butter
- 4 oz (100 g) caster sugar
- 3 oz (75 g) rolled oats
- 2 oz (50g) desiccated coconut
- 5 oz (125g) plain flour
- 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tablespoon hot water

1. Combine syrup, butter and sugar in saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat, stir in oats, coconut and flour.
2. Dissolve bicarbonate of soda in hot water, add to mixture. Stir well, cool.
3. Roll into 30 balls.

To serve now: place balls on greased baking tray, leaving space to spread.
Bake (325 deg F, 170 deg C, gas no 3 for 20 minutes until evenly golden brown.

Cool on trays, transfer to wire rack.

To freeze: open-freeze balls on tray. When solid remove, pack in plastic bag, seal, label. Use within 3 months.

To serve from freezer: Bake from frozen, as to serve now.

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

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

Blisworth: PCSO 7012 Tara Cooksammy

Milton Malsor: PCSO 7012 Tara Cooksammy

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



The Boat Inn, Stoke Bruerne

We opened our grocery shop at The Boat Inn in 1960, mainly for the benefit of 'new tourists' using the canal system for relaxation and holidays. This is still up and running and due to the Coronavirus situation, we have greatly extended our product list as attached by a link to our website which is updated each day:
http://www.boatinn.co.uk/pdf/groceries_price_list.pdf.

As well as general fruit, vegetables, dairy, dried goods, meat, fish, wines, spirits, tobacco etc, we also have a selection of homemade ready meals, pizzas and cakes to enjoy at home.

We take telephone orders between 9.00 a m and 6.00 p m for collection or delivery to local villages, Towcester, Grange Park and Hunsbury either the same day (between 10.00 a m and 2.00 p m) or the next day. Please ask for any item that is not shown on the product list and we will do our best to obtain it. We are open seven days a week.

Andrew Woodward FIH. Director, The Boat Inn, Stoke Bruerne, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 7SB.

Tel: 01604 862428. Email: enquiries@boatinn.co.uk, web: www.boatinn.co.uk





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Our **new national antibody testing programme** will provide **tens of thousands of tests** a day across the UK from next week

- In England, NHS and care staff will be prioritised for testing
- The test can tell if someone has **already had the virus**
- This will help our ongoing response to the pandemic

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

Department of Health and Social Care - DHSC

We're launching a new antibody testing programme to provide tens of thousands of tests.

Learn more:

► <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-offer-antibody-tests-to-health-and-social-care-staff-and-patients-in-england>

NHS and care home staff in England will be prioritised for tests, while patients and care residents will be eligible at their clinician's request.

Accurate and reliable lab-based antibody tests will improve understanding of COVID-19 and the spread of the virus in different regions across the country.

SNIPPETS:

If someone stays by your side in the worst times, they're the ones who deserve to be with you through your best times.

There are big ships and there are little ships, but the best ships are friendships.

If 2020 is telling us anything, it's telling us to enjoy the moments we have and to never take any day, anything or anyone for granted.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 18 June 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.