

GRASS

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

Rector's Letter

A True Gift

In 1872 Christina Rossetti wrote the poem, "In the Bleak Midwinter" that later became a very well know Christmas carol which is sung each year. Even though its theology is a little shaky at times, we are told that it speaks of the incarnation of Our Lord, along with the simple and humble surroundings that Jesus was born into.

The news that we have been receiving over the last few years has been very bleak; the Chancellor's recent budget paints a picture of dark times ahead for all of us. Over the last weeks, I have had conversations with people who are living in despair of how they going to make ends meet, how are they going to cope. These are very serious and worrying dilemmas, but the Church is the body of Christ, and it is here for everyone.

Recently I've been asked, 'what's the point of Christmas when times are so hard?' We only need to cast our minds back two millennia ago when the people around the world cried out because of similar circumstances. When God heard our cry, He never hesitated to come in person in the form of Jesus and live amongst us. He did not turn His back; He became part of His creation in our likeness. This is the meaning of the incarnation. You might ask why He would do this - we find the answer in John 3:16:

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.'

God loved the world, that is both you and me, unconditionally. Over the last month I've been talking with my siblings about the past, mainly of time with our parents, family, and friends. Never once did material items come into the conversation - only the treasured memories of spending time with those we love; they are worth more than silver or gold. When money is scarce and what little we have we need for the basic needs of life, we should never worry about giving material gifts. The last verse of the hymn gives us guidance:

*'What can I give Him, Poor as I am? —
If I were a Shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part, —
Yet what I can I give Him, — Give my heart.'*

We can all be like the wise men and do our part in helping those less fortunate than ourselves. The greatest gift we can give anyone is our hearts pouring out with love, in the same way Jesus showed as He came amongst us in the form of a baby. True love is being in the present moment with those we care for. Being in the present moment with anyone is a true gift. These make memories that are worth more than silver or gold. The greatest gift that God could ever give to you or to me is Himself. This is your gift from our loving and gracious God, a gift for us to explore in life and enjoy, a gift that will help us through the bleak times.

I hope you have a happy memorable and peaceful Christmas and I look forward to seeing you as we gather to sing carols and worship a loving and gracious God.

Richard

Service Schedule for December 2022

Sunday 4 December, Advent 2

9.30 a m: Family Eucharist, Milton Malsor

11.00 a m: Family Eucharist, Blisworth

Sunday 11 December, Advent 3

9.30 a m: Family Eucharist, Stoke Bruerne

11.00 a m: Family Eucharist, Blisworth

3.30 p m: Carol service, Alderton

4.00 p m, Carol service, Milton Malsor

6.00 p m, Carol service, Grafton Regis

Sunday 18 December, Advent 4

9.30 a m: Family Eucharist, Milton Malsor

11.00 a m: Carol service, Blisworth

Saturday 24 December, Christmas Eve

3.00 p m: Family service, Milton Malsor

4.30 p m: Family Christingle service, Blisworth

7.00 p m: Carol service and Christmas Eucharist, Stoke Bruerne

9.30 p m: Christmas Eucharist, Blisworth

Sunday 25 December, Christmas Day

9.30 a m: Christmas Eucharist, Milton Malsor

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 3BJ, 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 and Mr John Brough, tel 01604 862646/07768 181598

Churchwardens of Grafton Regis: Mrs Jean Glanville, tel 01908 543463 and Mr Nieldre Laubscher, tel 01908 542979.

Churchwardens of Alderton: Mrs Margaret Hall-Townley, tel 01327 811307 and Mrs Linda Dards, tel 01327 811265.

Churchwarden of Milton Malsor: Mrs Sue Bell, tel 01327 351043.

VILLAGE NEWS



STOKE BRUERNE

St Mary the Virgin Church for Stoke Bruerne and Shutlanger Church Coffee Morning

Once again, the church coffee morning held on 12 November was a success. The event was changed from the original date in December to coincide with Remembrance weekend. It gave everyone an opportunity to come together to remember lost loved ones and to pay tribute to the many who lost their lives in conflict. The lilies and poppies filled the church with colour and perfume; many thanks to the ladies for arranging the flowers. A total of £270 was raised for church funds, so thank you to all those who supported the event. Our next coffee morning will be in the spring.



Remembrance Service

At the Remembrance service on Sunday 13 November, we were delighted to welcome two war veterans, Neil and Ben, who shared their experiences over coffee after the service. We learned that Ben and his wife Natasha have recently moved to Mill Lane; we hope they will soon settle into their new home and enjoy life in Stoke Bruerne.

Christmas Eve Carol Service

The Christmas Eve carol service will take place at St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Stoke Bruerne, at 7.00 p.m. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served following the service. This is always a very memorable experience and is a wonderful start to the festivities. We do hope you will join us.



SHUTLANGER

Shutlanger Village Hall

Website: www.shutlangervillagehall.org.uk, phone number: 01327640547, Twitter: @ShutlangerVHall

Facebook: Shutlanger Village Hall, Instagram: shutlangervillagehall

Coffee Morning

Our monthly coffee, cake and chat morning was on Thursday 17 November from 10.00 a.m. until 12.00 noon. It was lovely to see so many people there, enjoying a friendly community time in a warm welcoming environment. We have free wi-fi and contactless payments, local pottery and a display of paintings for you to browse and buy are also in the hall. We serve excellent coffee and delicious homemade cakes. The bacon rolls are very popular.

Our coffee mornings are always on the third Thursday of the month; put a note in your diary so you don't miss it.

Prayer service in St. Anne's Chapel

The coffee morning was preceded by a short Prayer Service in St. Anne's Chapel. We always have lots of support for this charming service with time for quiet reflection. When you get this newsletter, the next Prayer Service, coffee morning and tote draw will be on Thursday 15 December. It would be great to see you there.

Tote Draw

The latest draw was on 17 November at 11.00 a.m.; as usual it was during the coffee morning. The winning numbers were 4 and 12 the prize was £165.00. The tote has raised nearly £2,500 towards keeping our hall as a centre for community and celebration. It's easy to join the tote; it costs just £5 a month; half the money goes to help the village hall and the other half to one lucky prize winner. The odds are much better than the national lottery! There are application forms in the hall; you can call 01327 640547 or email secretary@shutlangervillagehall.org.uk; any of these make it easy for you to join our ever-growing band of supporters.

Events

Hallowe'en Trail:

On 30 October, the village children enjoyed a spooky trail around the village finding different characters and then came back to the hall for hotdogs and crafting fun. I will report on 'the Angels Share' concert and the quiz night in next month's GRASS.

Renovations:

We are very close to being able to give the go-ahead to our contractors to start the roof project. You can donate to the restoration fund through our website www.shutlangervillagehall.org.uk or use the QR code available at all hall events. The 'donation station' in the lobby at the entrance to the hall, lets you put a cash donation in the box or use your phone to scan the QR code. You can also recycle your old ink cartridges in the hall.

Your help matters to us. EVERY penny counts!

Upcoming Events

3 December: 3rd Christmas wreaths and craft evening

17 December: The village Christmas party

23 December: Christmas Carols at the village hall

Put a note in your diary so you don't miss out on these exciting events. Further details and links to buy tickets can be found at www.shutlangervillagehall.org.uk/events

Fundraising

As ever, we continue to raise funds to renovate the excellent facilities within our most important community asset. There are several opportunities to get involved:

For example, direct donations via the website homepage and by using QR codes in the hall and at events. Joining the tote is another way of donating to this worthy cause, you could be the winner of our monthly draw. We are members of JustGiving, Smile and Easyfundraising where you can easily make donations.

There are links on our website www.shutlangervillagehall.org.uk which will guide you through the donation process. To donate through Amazon, choose smile.amazon.co.uk, then Shutlanger village hall and pay for your shopping in the usual way. Sign up for

Easyfundraising, chose Shutlanger village hall, search for retailers; the site will redirect you to the retailer's website, there is a handy donation reminder too. Both sites are free, easy to use, and the hall gets a donation.

Thank you for all your support.

Shutlanger Village Hall Management Committee



GRAFTON REGIS

Grafton Lunch

Another lunch took place on 17 November and, as always, the meal was delicious and we all made pigs of ourselves with the inevitable fighting over who got what chocolate at the end! Thanks to all those who provided the food and cooked it, and to those who set the hall up beforehand and tidy away afterwards. This time one table had been entirely cleared away while we were still chatting and enjoying each others' company at the other one.

The next lunch will be on 15 December and will be a festive one.

Remembrance Sunday

The annual Remembrance service was held in the churchyard on Sunday 13 November. This has become a well-attended annual event and we have to thank Cathy Colgrove for taking on the project to raise the funds for a Tommy figure and give us a meeting point for holding this service.

It was good to see people staying for a coffee and biscuit and socialising with fellow villagers.

Christmas Carols by Candlelight

Our annual carol service this year will be on Sunday 11 December at 6.00 p.m. We will be singing all the favourite Christmas carols so do come along to get your annual dose of carols.

Our lovely bell ringers are coming along to ring the bells - I wonder if they can play a carol tune on the bells? Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the singing.

Christmas Lunch at the Village Hall

The Christmas lunch will be on Thursday 15 December; please let us know if you are coming along so that we can ensure we have sufficient supplies of turkey, Christmas pudding and crackers.

Jean Glanville



BLISWORTH

World Vision - Christmas Party at 2, Towcester Road, Blisworth

All are welcome to come and enjoy some festive food and drink at Hilary's on Wednesday 28 December from 1.00 p.m. onwards. Donations are in aid of World Vision's work with Ukrainian refugees and with famine

relief in Africa Hilary Spurrier

Church Lighting

We are indebted to the generous organisers of the annual Hollowell Steam and Heavy Horse Show and Mike Wreford of Wreford's Transport, who selected St John's as the recipient of a donation towards the refurbishment of our internal lighting in the building. We have been steadily running out of light bulbs over recent years which cannot now be replaced, so a project has been instigated to replace the present fittings with new ones which can accept LED bulbs. This will hopefully improve the quality and longevity of the lights in the building going forward.

A cheque for £2,000 towards the cost of the project was handed over to the church as part of the annual event at Hollowell, held in November for all recipients of donations from the organisers of the rally.

Pictured are Neil Byrd, new chairman of the Hollowell Rally, Mike Wreford of Wreford's Transport and John Smith of St John's Church.



Remembrance Sunday

St John's was full to capacity for the annual Remembrance service which was supported by the attendance of the uniformed organisations in the village.



The first part of the service was held outdoors by Rev'd Richard, with wreaths being laid on behalf of village organisations. A two-minute silence was observed impeccably as part of the outdoor service before the congregation moved indoors at 11.00 a.m.

Children at Blisworth Primary School had each made wooden crosses with personal messages to the late Queen Elizabeth II, and these were laid inside the porch of the church for all to see.



Christmas Bazaar

On Saturday 26 November, the annual Christmas bazaar/coffee morning was held at St. John's, Blisworth. On the previous day, we moved pews and chairs, and allocated spaces. There had been many donations for the stalls – tombola, books, gifts, cakes etc., children's games and books, Christmas goods, guess the cake weight, or the number of 5ps in a dimple bottle. Soon the church looked festive, with lights round the pillars, and stall holders were glad to pause to enjoy tea or coffee with a cake or scone from the refreshment area. There followed a steady stream of visitors, who enjoyed an excellent selection of goods at very reasonable prices, and refreshments for which a donation was invited – there being no set charge. Then the church was rapidly made ready for Sunday service. A good amount was raised, there was a cheerful atmosphere throughout, and thanks must go to all who donated, in so many ways, right across the village, and to all helpers on both days. Fiona McKenzie



Christmas and New Year Services

11 December	11.00 a.m.: Carol service, Blisworth
4 December	4.30 p.m.: Family Christingle celebration, Blisworth
	9.30 p.m.: Christmas Communion, Blisworth
25 December	9.30 a.m.: Benefice Christmas morning service, Milton Malsor
Sunday 1 January	10.00 a.m. Benefice service, Grafton Regis



ALDERTON

Church Cleaning Rota

December Hempenstall family

Churchyard Rota

Leaf clearing if necessary – any volunteers?

Carol Service

We will be holding a candle-lit carol service in church on Sunday 11 December at 3.30 p.m. We have tried to make the service at a time that will enable as many people as possible to come along and there will be traditional well-known carols. Afterwards, mulled wine, mince pies, sausage rolls etc will be served. We do hope you can join us – we really need our church to be used

Church Lighting

Roger Gavan will be lighting up the church for the festive period; obviously this is going to increase the church's electricity bill – would anyone like to make a contribution towards this? The church always looks so special during the time it is lit up, which, this year will be from the beginning of December until 6 January, Twelfth Night. You can post any contributions through the door of Margaret, Linda or Brian. Thank you so much in anticipation of your generosity. Alderton PCC

Alderton's Knight and the November Knight Market

The knight market held in St. Margaret's Church on 19 November was a huge success, bringing us a total of over £400.00. This amazing amount finally brings us past the final amount of £12,170.000 needed for the new tomb chest; it also gives us the money for the extra drawing from Hugh Harrison which was asked for recently by the DAC. We still have to wait for a final plan to be drawn up by Church Architect, Adrian Ringrose, and we still don't know how much he is going to charge us for this so the markets will continue for a while. Our next market will be on 17 December from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and will be in the church again. These events are a lovely way to meet up with everyone and Linda's idea of serving a cup of coffee to our visitors has turned the situation into a lovely social occasion.

We would both like to thank you all for the incredible support you have given us and we look forward to inviting you to a special service and refreshments in due course to celebrate the final resting place of our knight and all the generosity, adventure and friendship it has brought us. Although this has been a long and challenging journey, it has been an incredibly rewarding one. We have been to places that we would not have visited in search of the knight's true identity and we have met wonderful people who would never have crossed our path. Both of us have 'grown' through this journey and for that – thank you.

Linda & Margaret

Tree Dressing

As for the past goodness knows how many years, the tree dressing will take place on 21 December at 6.30 p m at the top of Church Lane. Hopefully the weather will be kind to us, but in any case, we will go ahead. There will be mulled wine, mince pies and other goodies to enjoy, and you will be invited to write on a 'leaf' your thoughts or wishes for the coming year. We will sing a couple of carols to mark the solstice. The tree will have been decorated with nuts and apples so that the birds have something to eat during this lean period. The actual solstice will be at 4.40 p m on that day. If anybody cares to make a contribution towards the peanuts/wine/nibbles, this would be very much appreciated. Everybody is most welcome to come along.



MILTON MALSOR 1st Collingtree and Milton Malsor Scout Group

A great turnout of young people representing 1st Collingtree and Milton Malsor Scout Group for the annual Remembrance service and parade following a day of poppy selling at Riverside Northampton. The group is thriving at present; we have approximately 75 young people in the group with more waiting to join, so if anyone out there would like to join the adventure and help us give these young people an experience to remember, please contact me.



Tesco Community Grants – Please support our Scout Group

We are delighted to let you know that our application to the Tesco Community Grants Scheme has been successful and our project has been put forward to a customer vote in Tesco stores. Voting is in store now (Mereway). Please look out for the voting boxes in store and help us achieve the maximum donation by popping your blue tokens into our slot to cast your vote.

We are looking to fund lots of exciting activities and purchase some more camping equipment to help our young people get out into the great outdoors.

Carol Fraser GSL.1CMM@gmail.com

GENERAL NEWS

Message from the Police

Burglary Prevention Advice

Our aim is to prevent Northamptonshire residents falling prey to criminals. We are taking a more scientific approach to repeat victimisation. Due to the location of recent burglaries, we know that your home is at heightened risk of being burgled. An opportunistic type of criminal is enticed into a situation as a result of an insecurity or easy opportunity. If we simply remove that temptation and make it difficult, then it is estimated that a staggering 90% of crime would be prevented. We have compiled a short home security checklist to help guide you through your security arrangements. Working through this checklist will help you ascertain whether you have any security weaknesses. Please remember to call 101 if you see any suspicious activity or 999 if you see a crime in progress. Alternatively, if you have any information about crime or criminals in your area, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Outside the property:

- Make thieves feel exposed when they approach the front of your property by using low hedges or low fencing. Keep any gates shut when you're out.
- Use garden lighting to deter trespassers. If the property is well overlooked, choose lights which come on automatically at dusk and stay on all night until dawn. Low wattage bulbs can cost less than 1p per night in electricity.
- You can reinforce your boundary by using prickly plants. Use of natural plants is exempt from the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 - because it is natural.
- Don't leave tools and ladders lying around for burglars to use. Remember to keep the shed as secure as possible. Thieves often search for tools nearby to break into properties.
- Where possible, keep bins chained up away from the main house and out of sight. Criminals often use them as climbing aids or ways to transport stolen property.
- Thieves often look for subtle changes in the environment. Open gates, empty driveway, letters left in the mailbox are all invitations to a criminal. *Inside the property:*

- Keep all doors and windows locked - even if you are in the house. If you leave a room, close and lock the doors and windows.
- If you have an alarm, use it! Most alarm systems can be 'zoned', which means parts of the house can be active at night time.
- Always remove the keys from locks to stop someone breaking a small pane of glass and entering using the key. Keep keys out of sight and in a safe place.

• Leave lights on in multiple rooms. Automatic timers can switch on lights and radios. Remember that in the winter it can get dark in the early afternoon.

• Make items traceable. Mark your property with your postcode using a UV pen or consider specialist liquid forensic coded solutions. Following the above measures will make you a less attractive target for thieves. People who are security conscious are less likely to be burgled than those who are not. For more crime prevention advice visit:

www.northants.police.uk/crimeprevention For approved security companies and products, visit Secured by Design - www.securedbydesign.com

Sold Secure - www.soldsecure.com

Security Systems Alarms Inspectors Board - www.ssaib.org

National Security Inspectorate - www.nsi.org.uk

Register your property on www.immobilise.com



Charlotte Morris
Police Community Support Officer PCSO 7029
Neighbourhood Policing Team – Towcester
Northamptonshire Police
Telephone: 101 Ext: 348069
(03000 111222 if outside Northamptonshire)
Mobile: 07557776333
Address: Towcester Police Station Watling Street
Towcester Northamptonshire NN12 6DE

News from The Old Mail

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

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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

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CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

AWARD-WINNING LOCAL DRAUGHT & BOTTLED BEER



St John

St. Lawrence Church
Towcester
7.00 pm

Thursday 8th December 2022
Northampton County Priory Group
for
St John Ambulance, Northamptonshire

Carols by Candlelight Service
with the fabulous
Musica Charity Choir MK

Entrance Free . Donations to St. John Ambulance and St.
Lawrence Church.

Mince pies, Christmas Fayre and Wine afterwards.
All are welcome

SNIPPETS:

*Be careful with your words, once said
they can only be forgiven.*

*Too many people think the grass is
greener elsewhere, but the grass is
green where you water it.*

*Accept what is, let go of what was and
have faith in what will be*

*Start by doing what's necessary, then
do what's possible and suddenly you
are doing the impossible.*

– St Francis of Assisi

This is a short Carol Concert at St. Lawrence Church
Towcester, at 7.00 pm. in aid of St John Ambulance
who have done and do sterling work to support the
NHS. We shall be supported by the fabulous Musica
Charity Choir MK.

United Benefice Calendar for 2022

All groups and organisations within the community are warmly invited to include events here.

December

- 3 Coffee morning, Milton Malsor, 10.00 a m
3 Christmas wreaths and craft evening, Shutlanger village hall
8 WI meeting, celebrating Christmas, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m
9 Towcester Farmers' market, 9.00 a m to 1.00 p m
10 Blisworth & Hunsbury Christmas Concert Saturday 2.30 p m Milton Malsor Church
15 Coffee morning, Shutlanger village hall, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon
15 Christmas lunch, Grafton Regis village hall, 12.30 p m
17 Sale for the knight in Alderton 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon
17 Shutlanger village Christmas party, village hall
21 Tree dressing, Alderton, 6.30 p m top of Church Lane – all welcome
21 Christmas carols, Shutlanger village hall
23 Christmas carols at Shutlanger village hall
28 World Vision Christmas party, 1.00 p m, Blisworth

AWARD-WINNING PANTOMIME

EST. 1956
LEIGHTON BUZZARD
DRAMA
GROUP

Goldilocks AND THE THREE BEARS

A fun family panto!

Directed by
Kim Aguilar

13 - 28 January 2023

LEIGHTON BUZZARD LIBRARY THEATRE

noda
Book online via: lbdg.org.uk

The Leighton Buzzard Drama Group presents a magical, all-singing and dancing pantomime this coming January, full of laughter and hilarious characters.

Goldilocks and her friends race against time to save the Three Bears (and all the other Bears in the Woods) from the wicked Queen Bee...

Will they save the day? Or will she and her bees (not to mention Kevin the Wasp) triumph with her dreaded hypno-honey?

Ben, who played Algernon in 'The Importance of Being Earnest', performed in Alderton in the summer, is playing Daddy Bear.

Book online via: lbdg.org.uk
Tickets from just £10.50

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 15 December 2022

thanks to Jackie Grundon for proof reading

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.