

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

I'd like to start the New Year by thanking everyone who helped in 2022, not only in preparing our beautiful church buildings to celebrate the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also in helping to make sure that these buildings are looked after and are open for divine worship throughout the year where everyone in our communities are welcome.

Rejoice in hope. Romans 12:12

During January, we all look towards the coming year, with hope that it will hold a brighter future, for some a better year than the one we have just left behind. Each one of us will have a different expectation of what we hope it will hold. Jesus tells us in Luke 9:62, that we must always keep our eyes on what lays in front of us (our future). I know for some, they feel the coming year holds very little for them. If we feel that there is only despair in store, then we must remember what Desmond Tutu wrote "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

Being a Christian I am thankful that Jesus came at the first Christmas to show you and me the way forward, to restore our HOPE and understand how special and rich this human life is. I know for some this means nothing, but before you brush it aside, I invite you to join us on a journey this year on discovering who Jesus really is. We will be doing this through Mark's Gospel, a young Evangelist who not only knew St Peter personally, who was a close disciple of Jesus, but he also knew and spent time with St Paul. We will be meeting on a Wednesday evening during March and April in a relaxed and informal way to explore who Jesus is and what He offers us all. I will write more about this next month, but please keep Wednesdays free. For those who have already made their minds up about Jesus, I remind you of that great poem, Judge Softly, by Mary T Lathrap 1895. Well worth a read. Excerpts taken from it:

Just walk a mile in his moccasins
Before you abuse, criticise and accuse.
If just for one hour, you could find a way
To see through his eyes, instead of your own muse.

Remember to walk a mile in his moccasins
And remember the lessons of humanity taught to you by your elders.
We will be known forever by the tracks we leave
In other people's lives, our kindnesses and generosity.
Take the time to walk a mile in his moccasins."

When you make your New Year resolutions, consider going deeper in your faith to see the riches it will bring into your life. I am not talking about monetary riches, but treasure money cannot buy; and join us on this exciting adventure. Happy New you to you all. 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 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.

Service Schedule for January 2023

1 January – Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

10.00 a m: Benefice Service: Family Eucharist, Grafton Regis

8 January – The Epiphany

9.30 a m: Family Eucharist, Stoke Bruerne

9.30 a m: Family Service, Milton Malsor

11.00 a m: Family Eucharist, Blisworth

15 January – The Second Sunday of Epiphany

9.30 a m: Family Eucharist, Milton Malsor

11.00 a m: Family Service, Blisworth

11.00 a m: Family Eucharist, Grafton Regis

22 January – The Third Sunday of Epiphany

9.30 a m: Family Service, Milton Malsor

9.30 a m: Family Service, Stoke Bruerne

11.00 a m: Family Eucharist, Blisworth

29 January – The Presentation (Candlemas)

10.00 a m: Benefice Service, Family Eucharist

VILLAGE NEWS



STOKE BRUERNE

St Mary The Virgin Parish Church for Stoke Bruerne and Shutlanger

Dates For Your Diary:

Church coffee mornings: 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon:

Saturday 18 March – raffle

Saturday 27 May – plant stall

Saturday 12 August – raffle

Saturday 11 November – Remembrance weekend, with a display of lilies in memory of lost loved ones

Churchyard working parties, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon:

25 March, 22 April, 20 May, 24 June, 22 July, 26 August, 23 September and 28 October

Plans for St Mary’s Churchyard in 2023:

When we started work to improve the state of the churchyard, we contacted Lisa Rowley at the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust to ask for an advisory visit. The Trust encourages churchyard conservation and promotes a conservation award scheme. There are three categories: bronze, silver and gold. Each category involves meeting a number of criteria. Thanks to the efforts of our hard-working volunteers, so much has been accomplished in our churchyard since 2021, and we feel we are ready to meet all the requirements to achieve a bronze award in 2023.



Suzanne Dimmock (nee Wheatley), RIP

Suzie died on 27 December 2022 at 4.45 p m. There are no superlatives that can possibly describe Suzanne.

She touched everyone, and if you were an animal, there were no safer hands to tend to your needs; if you were a German Shepherd? She would treat you to the best; there were no limits to Suzi’s friendship. She will be badly missed.

Please, no cards or flowers. If you wish to give a donation to any animal charity, it would make her so happy.

Peter Colak



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 15 December 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 served bacon rolls, tea, coffee and stollen alongside warm mince pies with brandy butter. The bacon rolls are very popular.

Our coffee mornings are always on the third Thursday of the month. The next one will be on Thursday 19 January 2023; 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 19 January 2023. It would be great to see you there.

Tote draw

The latest draw was on 15 December at 11.00 a m; as usual it was during the coffee morning. The winning numbers were: 7 and 12 and the prize was £165.00. The tote has raised over £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

The hall has had a busy time since the last edition of GRASS. The local band, The Angels Share, gave a wonderful performance of Celtic/Irish rock music in the hall on Saturday 19 November and all the proceeds went to continuing the renovation of the hall.



The following weekend saw another of our very successful quiz nights.

Look out for the date of our next one and book early to ensure your place tickets sell fast!



On 3 December, we hosted a craft evening with twenty people creating their own Christmas wreaths and making paper angel tree decorations. The village party was on 17 December. More on that next month.

Renovations

We have given the go-ahead to our contactors to start the roof project and are expecting work to start in the middle of March.

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: 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.

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. You can also recycle your old ink cartridges in the hall. Your help matters to us. EVERY penny counts. Thank you for all your support. Shutlanger Village Hall Management Committee



GRAFTON REGIS

Grafton Lunch

Christmas was celebrated early in the village hall on 15 December when we enjoyed traditional Christmas fayre, beautifully cooked, as always. It was a lovely, friendly occasion, as always, and I don't suppose many people felt the need to eat much later in the day. Jean reminded everyone that help is always welcome, especially in terms of setting up the hall prior to the lunches and also clearing up afterwards. The next lunch will be on 19 January.



BLISWORTH

World Vision

A Christmas party took place at Hilary's home on Wednesday 28 December; a review of this will be in next month's GRASS. Donations were in aid of World Vision's work with Ukrainian refugees and with famine relief in Africa.

Hilary Spurrier

Open the Book

The Open the Book team continue to take Bible stories into school assemblies and were pleased to be able to give all of the children in Blisworth, Stoke Bruerne and Milton Malsor schools booklets telling the Christmas story in terms of 'An Amazing Day'. The children joined in with enthusiasm. A huge thankyou to all of the Open the Book team. If anyone would like to join the team, please contact Hilary Spurrier on 01604 859181.

Blisworth Beavers

A team of volunteers from St John's Church including Maureen Smith, Edith Green and Norma Bull, delivered a nativity-based evening to the Blisworth Beavers pack early in December. There were nativity stencils for the children to complete, and a story board of the scene which was composed by the children as the ladies read out the nativity story. There were 13 Beavers playing their part in the activities which were very well received and enjoyed by all.



ALDERTON

Church Cleaning Rota **Any offers?** We would be very grateful. Service on 29 January

Sale for the Knight

The last sale of 2022 for Alderton's Knight was held in St Margaret's Church on a bitterly cold winter morning. There was a large quantity of beautiful cakes, biscuits and pastries for sale as well as jams, jellies, sweets and pickles; also some lovely jewellery waiting to find a home, and glass that would have graced anyone's Christmas table. We also held a raffle, and coffee or tea was available all morning to add to the welcome.

Brian had arrived early and salted the churchyard paths so by the time visitors started to arrive, they could walk safely into church. We didn't have quite as many visitors as we usually do but many of our friends from other villages made the effort to drive over to buy their Christmas goodies. In spite of the cold, the atmosphere was warm and light hearted and everyone left with a smile and a Christmas greeting. It was a lovely event and added a further £332.27 to our knight fund. Many thanks go to the generosity, all through the year, of our wonderful cooks and donors of goodies and 'stuff' for sale: Jane Treharne (who not only donates and cooks but helps as well), Val Kliene who is responsible for the addictive carrot cakes that fly off the table, Linda who always comes up with delicious cakes, sweets, jams and pickles and others who help at different times through the year. (Margaret must also be included as she also makes wonderful cakes and jams). We have enough money now to pay for the new tomb chest and the additional drawings requested by the DAC, and we are on our way to gaining the funds for the stone floor to go under the tomb. Thank you everyone for your generosity, and very good wishes for a prosperous and happy 2023.



From both Linda and me... Margaret.

Tree Dressing, 21 December 2022

Our tree dressing took place at the top of Church Lane under our tree, which was given to us by Neill Taylor to replace the cherry tree which was blown down by 'Storm 'Doris' some years ago. Our young tree is flourishing in spite of close encounters with the digger when the church drains were put in at the beginning of the year, and an incredibly dry summer. The tree is still quite small so we are grateful to Doris Knights for the loan of an inventive Graham and Brian who build us a frame to go around the tree each year so that we can hang all the bird food, lights and on the evening of the 21st, the 'leaves' that we write with our messages for the coming year.

This year the weather was mild after a period of very unpromising bitter cold, ice and snow. We were grateful for the good weather, and mince pies, cake and mulled wine were consumed as usual under the tree while we gathered, wrote our messages and sung the two carols that we usually sing at this little festival. The solstice this year happened on 21 December at 9.47 p m so we were a little ahead of ourselves. Our vicar, Richard Stainer, told us about the importance of the winter solstice to human beings for thousands of years and told us about the amazing 'New Grange' in Ireland that is over 5,000 years old, predating Stonehenge. Here a stone 'mound' with fascinating drawings both outside and in holds a narrow passageway leading to a small chamber that has a single small opening to the sky. At the winter solstice only, the rising sun sends a shaft of light through the aperture and the light moves round the chamber illuminating only certain of the drawings in the stone. No one knows the real meaning of the drawings; they would probably have been interpreted by the priests of the time. Richard went on to tell us of how early Christians, realizing how important the festival was to our ancestors, adopted it and it gradually became the Christmas time that we celebrate today. He spoke very movingly about the 'light' awakening within each of us at this time and the hope that it offers.



Margaret

Lighting of the Church

Thank you very much to Roger for lighting up the church over the Christmas period; it has looked lovely. Thank you also to those people who gave a donation towards the extra electricity used – it really does help and it's not too late to donate if you feel so inclined. Please pop your donation through Brian Patton's door, or Margaret's door, or mine. Thank you in advance.

Linda

A Welcome to a New Villager

Penelope Debbie Ferguson (to be known as Penny) was born at home in Alderton with a planned water birth on 28 November at 2.26 p m, weighing 6lb 8oz. We look forward to seeing her being wheeled or carried around the village accompanied by family and the lovely Bernie.



Older brother, Joshua with Penny



MILTON MALSOR

Coffee Morning

The December coffee morning on the first Saturday in December was a success at Holy Cross Church, Milton Malsor, with a nativity trail and Christmas decoration making session for the children accompanied by coffee and cake raising money for the upkeep of the church.



We also had a wonderful Christmas Eve service assisted by our Holy Cross children who helped to tell the nativity story. Everyone made a lovely effort. Thank you for the support.

GENERAL NEWS How to Contact 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

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

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

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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

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SNIPPETS:

*If it's not yours, don't take it.
If it's not true or kind, don't speak it.
If it's not right, don't do it.
If you wouldn't want it to be done to you, don't do it to others.
If it makes you unhappy, don't entertain it.
If it's going to open up old wounds, don't engage in it.
If it's not going to make your life better, don't pursue it.
If it's out of your control, don't worry about it.*



YOUR LOCAL HEART SUPPORT GROUP
Affiliated to the British Heart Foundation

Our friendly and informal group is open to anyone living in the Towcester area who has a heart condition, their family members or carers, and for parents of children with a heart condition.

We meet every 3rd Thursday
at the Tove Valley Centre,
Northampton Road, Towcester
NN12 7AH,

7pm - 8:30pm

(Social evenings, speakers, fundraising, activities/trips)



Please check out our Facebook page,

and for any enquiries/support please contact Annie:

07554150870 mrschimchim57@gmail.com

United Benefice Calendar for 2023

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

January 2023

- 7 Coffee morning, Milton Malsor
- 12 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'The wheels on the bus'
- 19 Coffee morning, Shutlanger village hall, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon
- 19 Grafton Regis lunch club, 12.30 p m
- 19 Towcester Heartbeats meeting, Tove Valley Centre, 7.00 pm to 8.30 p m

February

- 9 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'Sole to Soul'

March

- 9 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, AGM and guest speaker
- 18 Coffee morning, St Mary the Virgin Church, Stoke Bruerne, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon (raffle)
- 25 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

April

- 13 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'Kinky Boots'
- 22 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

May

- 11 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, Resolutions and refreshments
- 20 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon
- 27 Coffee morning, St Mary the Virgin Church, Stoke Bruerne, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon (plant stall)

June

- 8 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, Northamptonshire walks – open meeting
- 24 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

July

- 13 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'What Emily did'
- 22 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

August

- 10 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, local trip – watch this space
- 12 Coffee morning, St Mary the Virgin Church, Stoke Bruerne, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon, raffle
- 26 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

September

- 14 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'A taste of the Camino de Santiago'
- 23 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

October

- 12 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'Three in Accord Entertain'
- 28 Stoke Bruerne churchyard working party, 9.30 a m to 12.00 noon

November

- 9 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, 'The Blisworth Tapestry'
- 11 Coffee morning, St Mary the Virgin Church, Stoke Bruerne, 10.00 a m to 12.00 noon, Remembrance weekend

December

- 14 WI meeting, Blisworth village hall, 7.30 p m, - Christmas party

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 20 January 2023

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.