

Together



Parish news for the united benefice of Cranford, Grafton Underwood, Twywell and Slipton

February - March 2021

Dear friends,

A New Year is usually seen by us as a time for a new beginning. Some make New Year Resolutions; they want to make a fresh start in some area of their life - to stop doing some things or to start doing certain things. The words of the General Confession sum up well how we, as believers, should approach the fresh start that a New Year offers: "We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us."

So we want to put all the failings of the past year behind us and make a fresh start! There is a tendency to expect that things will be better in the New Year - at least that's what we want. And certainly that will be paramount in the thoughts of everyone as we hope that in this New Year we will see the Covid pandemic subside and be on its way out as the vaccination campaign gets into top gear.

So we look for and hope for new and better things as 2021 gets on its way. And it's that word 'New' that we home in on because of its promise of better things, but there is also something about a 'Year' as a period of time that sort of excites us. Is it because a 'year' gives us enough time for some of our resolutions or our goals to be achieved? Maybe!

Does God deal in years? Well, yes, and no. God is not trapped in time as we are. You've heard the text that "A thousand years with God is as one day, and one day as a thousand years!" Yet it was God who created time and gave us days and nights, years and seasons. "*The sun and moon were to be signs for the seasons, and for days and years,*" is how it is stated in Genesis 1:14. Yes God planned these periods of time - they didn't just evolve!

So days and years are meaningful to God and He works within them for His purposes and for our good. In a passage from Lamentations we read that:

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end; they are
new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

The hymn writer said it so well: "New every morning is the love, Our waking and uprising prove; Through sleep and darkness safely brought, Restored to life, and power and thought.

New mercies each returning day, Hover around us while we pray; New perils past, new sins forgiven, New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven."

God's goodness and His mercies and His steadfast love never come to an end - they are new every morning, and if they are new every morning then they are new every year. God never runs out of love, or mercy, or goodness, and those blessings that He freely

gives to those who seek Him are "new every morning". God doesn't deal in secondhand goods, He deals in 'newness'. Every blessing that we receive from Him is fresh and new. God doesn't improve us when He gives us His salvation, He makes us anew.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Cor.5:17 put it like this: "if anyone is in Christ, he [or she] is a new creation. The old has passed away ... the new has come. All this is from God."

So, as we go into 2021, God gives us a New Year, not an old year spruced up. The New Year brings with it hopes of new things; new achievements, new landmarks in life and this year, above all, we are longing for new successes in dealing with this dreadful pandemic that has plagued us and all mankind.

Let us, however, not forget that God is still God and He never leaves us or forsakes us. He walks with us through the thick and thin of life, so even though the virus rages, we can look to Him for hope and for strength to take us through.

May this beautiful hymn by Anna L. Waring be a reassuring source of comfort to us as we go into the uncertain future of this New Year, especially the last line: *My Saviour has my treasure, and He will walk with me*".

In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?
Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.
Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure;
My path to life is free;
My Saviour has my treasure,
And He will walk with me.

May God keep us all safe and well,

Vernon Forbes

Cranford PCC



Diocesan News

Lent – more of the same or a time for renewal?

Well, here we are once again on the cusp of Lent – traditionally a season of penitential preparation for the great feast of Easter; 40 days of self-discipline with the promise of a party at the end of it.

Except, of course, that this year is different. This year, we approach Lent having already been subjected to a period of almost unyielding restraint and self-denial. We have been deprived of so much that for so long we took for granted: the freedom to go wherever we wanted whenever we wanted; to enjoy unhesitatingly the company of family and friends; to shake hands, hug, be at ease with one another. As Christian people we have been permitted to “assemble and meet together” (at least after the rigours of the first lockdown were eased), but our offering of worship has been muted by the need to keep safe. We have been socially distanced, separated from one another, masked; no sharing of the peace, no common cup, no after-service fellowship or coffee (who thought we could mourn the church coffee?! and, possibly worst of all, no singing. For all the beautiful music offered by our Cathedral choir and other musicians, Christmas without carols felt (at least to me) an especially harsh deprivation.

And it feels like such a long haul now – indeed we are fast approaching a year of life under Covid, and we are all wearied of it. Like Narnia in CS Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, it feels as if this winter of the soul will never end.

Well, of course, like all things, this will pass. The programme of vaccinations is beginning to pick up pace and maybe by Easter, life will be that bit easier; the “thaw” will be underway, the spring will come and we may begin to breathe again.

In the story of Narnia, it is the return to life of the great Lion, Aslan, after a cruel death, that breaks the power of the White Witch and ushers in the end of Winter. CS Lewis is of course writing an allegory of the Christian story, and the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So as we brace ourselves for Lent, that extraordinary hope stands before us as a guiding light. New life will come – for our Church, for our society, for our world. It may not look like the old normal – and perhaps that’s a good thing – but God’s unconquerable love is offered to us all.

So may we embrace the challenge of this coming Lent, and not see it as an unbearable continuation of what has been but a time to hope, pray and reflect on how, under God, things might be and (by his grace) shall be.

May he richly bless you this Lent.

The Very Revd Christopher Dalliston

Dean of Peterborough

Cranford News

Cranford Church

News of David Andrews's death on 21st November 2020 was received with great sadness by all who knew him. David was born in Hull in 1932 and remained a proud Yorkshireman through and through. After some teenage years in Canada he was called up for national service in the Life Guards and later proudly stood guard by the the body of King George VI as it lay in state.

He and Jean came to live in Duck End, Cranford some 40 years ago. David was widely known through his work and expertise in horticulture, landscaping and tree surgery, often advising and helping with arboreal matters which were his speciality and passion. He was head forester on the Heygate estate in Litchborough.

For years he took pleasure in providing St John’s Church with a splendid Christmas Tree and, to the delight of the flower arrangers, sack loads of wonderful greenery. He insisted on doing this until the very end, such was his generosity and sense of duty.

His great loves were his family and sport – especially cricket. A supporter, naturally, of Yorkshire, he was for many years a player and latterly umpire at Isham CC.

His funeral service in St John's Church on 8th December was taken by the Reverend Dr John Smith, a long-standing family friend. Very well attended (adhering to Covid protocols), it was both moving and uplifting. His beloved grandchildren, Henry, Alexandra and Alicia, unable to come from their homes around the world, sent loving tributes and memories of their earlier lives with him. At Jean's request, plans to decorate the church for Christmas went ahead and Sandra Naylor's meaningful floral tributes to David were exquisite. We send our condolences to Jean and the family.

A generous family had taken on the Andrews’ tradition and this year’s splendid Christmas tree was decorated by Geraldine and Paul Pearson; it doubled as a memory tree enabling people to attach a bow in memory of a loved one and give a donation to Cransley Hospice.

As part of the Village Hall project to Light Up Cranford in December, Julie Auld (Cranford Cedar) generously offered to light a tree in the churchyard. Craig Dobbs supplied the lights and Will Partridge strung them from the top of the 60 ft Norway spruce on the north side of the church to create a wonderful spectacle and certainly the tallest in the area.

In early December we welcomed the Cranford School Key Stage 2 children to the church to video-record their Advent service. More recordings were added back in the School and the final heart-warming product was distributed on YouTube to the families of the performers. We are so glad to have been able to keep up our ties with the School during these difficult times.

We held our services of nine carols and lessons on Sundays 13th and 20th December. Not being able to sing was a bit of a damper, but we were able to hear some inspiring versions of well-known Christmas favourites. Collections were taken for the TearFund

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Christmas Appeal and the local Air Ambulance and we have sent £122 to each charity. Having reluctantly decided to cancel our Sunrise Service on New Year's Day, 2021 started for us on Sunday 3rd January with a service of Matins during which Vernon Forbes gave the address; his thoughtful words were the basis for the *Letter* at the front of this edition. On Sunday 10th January we opened the church for an hour for private prayer, but soon concluded that, with increased anxiety about the spread of the virus, we should close completely until matters improve.

We were sad to hear of the death on 19th December of Barbara Skinner, the wife of our Organist, Alan. Barbara stood down from her job as a hospital nurse to found the charity, Solve it, following the tragic death of her teenage son. With Alan's help, she spent 23 years dedicated to raising awareness of the dangers of VSA (volatile substance abuse) during which time she was awarded the MBE. Her son Paul gave a moving account of Barbara's life and work at the funeral at Kettering crematorium on 15th January. We send our condolences to Alan and the family.

Just before Christmas we received an anonymous donation which, together with all the generous contributions from the parish and others in the last two years or so, allows us to face the future with more confidence. This has meant that by the time you read this, work will have started on the roof to replace the stolen lead with cheaper and less tempting metal. At the same time we are upgrading the alarm system. All being well, the work will be complete before the end of February and with minimal disturbance to the village.

The litter-blitz scheduled for late February has also fallen victim to the virus. It would be helpful if all those hoping to participate could send their telephone numbers and email addresses to malvinak@btinternet.com. We will re-schedule the blitz as soon as we consider it safe to do so.

John Ross — Churchwarden

Cranford WI

Sadly, as with most organisations at the moment, we are unable to meet in the Village Hall.

At Christmas we gave each of our members a present of various seasonal goodies and a Poinsettia. These were really appreciated by our members who then joined in a Zoom Christmas meeting with a quiz and flower demonstration. We all enjoyed this different slant on our usual Christmas Party but really hope we can all meet again as a club next Christmas.

At the moment all our meetings are via Zoom. This January meeting was a most enjoyable games evening organised by Sandra Day and in February we are welcoming back Rachel Dymott, who will once again enthral us with her knowledge of Nature. *Jenny Potter*

The Village Hall

We hope to use this enforced idle time to start the modifications to the porch, which will facilitate access in the future.

Our objective to be active in the village resulted in the Light up Cranford initiative over Christmas, and many expressed their pleasure at the multitude of decorated houses, fences and trees across the village. Thank everyone for contributing. Hopefully next year we will

be able to augment the lights with the sounds of carol singing and no longer the silence of isolation.

The winners were, perhaps expectedly, Percy and Christine Smith of Orchard Fields. Well done!

Your committee will strain every nerve to reinstate our activities as soon as safely possible. *George Potter*

Please contact me with any forthcoming events to be included in the February /March edition before 8th March at The Dial House, Rectory Hill Cranford NN144AH or email jandg.potter@btconnect.com or phone 01536 330696.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Jenny Potter



More Cranford News

At Rest

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| <p>8th December 2020 at Kettering Crematorium and St John's Church, Cranford</p> | <p>David Owen Andrews
died 21st November 2020, aged 88 years.
Please pray for his widow Jean, his daughter Susan, grandchildren Henry, Alexandra, Alicia, Helena and Josh, and great-grandchildren Zara, Junior, Olive and Arlo.</p> |
| <p>15th January 2021 at Kettering Crematorium</p> | <p>Barbara Kathleen Skinner MBE
died 19th December, aged 70 years.
Please pray for her widower, Alan, her sons, Paul and Jason and their families.</p> |

Grafton Underwood News

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year, be it a little late! I guess that a lot of people are wondering whether it will be happy but let's be positive, we have just got through 2020 and all its challenges and if we all keep calm, think before we act and are considerate to others there is no reason why we won't see improvement; even though it will take time. Patience is a virtue that we all need at the moment. We are the luckier ones – we have gardens, countryside and streets that we can walk down reasonably safely, so many people do not have these luxuries. We must be thankful.

On a practical note, whilst the weather is cold if you are looking for something to do and you can sew or knit why not make a few things for the "Shoebboxes". If you need new ideas feel free to phone me (330646).

We will try to continue opening church weekly for our "regulars" at 11am for prayers, unless we are told otherwise by the bishop. However, as things change so rapidly I will email our regular congregation of Fridays to update them. Please confirm with Jenny if you are coming so we can allocate seats. A big thank you to everyone who is helping to make these mornings successful and for all the time and thought that they put in.

For those of you who do not know, Mark Bird was officially made church warden over Zoom a few weeks ago. So welcome to him in this new office although he has been doing a number of the jobs for months now! Sadly Betty Howard ('Aunt Betts' to many) died aged 90 years on 13th November 2020 from cancer. She was cremated on 4th December in Southampton where she had moved to be near her daughter more recently.

2020 didn't only have us isolating from Covid19 and see everyone's chickens shut up because of bird flu but also saw Grafton flooded worse than we have ever seen in our 40 years here. A number of properties on the east of the village were flooded from water pouring down off the already saturated back fields, and the brook overflowed, covering the road and pavements on both sides flooding into some people's front doors and out buildings. This was not helped by continuous tidal waves from cars trying to go through the village, a few of which did break down! We do hope that everyone affected is now back to some normality and, with a bit of luck, it will not happen again for another 40 years. Though maybe those of you affected might want to adopt the Scouting motto and "Be prepared". Following this, a working party spent a good morning clearing out the bottom/south end of the stream. Not only will this hopefully make a difference, but it also meant that some of our newer residents got a chance to meet neighbours something that is quite difficult at the moment.

The Parish Council tell us that they are going to discuss with the local land owner (BEL) what he should be doing and expect him to move the dam of vegetable matter from the watercourse just below the village as a matter of urgency, as well as attending to other drainage issues. The Environment Agency is giving advice and their website is worth reading to understand who is responsible for the brook.

Unfortunately, we have been told that the Parish Council cannot legally close the main street without either the Highways Agency, the NCC or the police. All these agencies were in pretty short supply on the night!

The update from the Village Hall Committee is that the painter and decorator has now completed painting the main body of the hall, the entrance and the toilets, which look beautiful, bright and fresh. He is also helping us with modifications in the kitchen area where we are creating more work surface and under-counter appliances, and a surprise exterior serving hatch for our outdoor events. We had previously said that we hoped to be able to open this April, unfortunately this is extremely doubtful now, but when we do we will have a massive village party. We look forward to welcoming you all again in the future. Take care and keep safe

Jenny Daykin

Tree Warden

One has been informed by the Boughton Estate Forester that the situation of the hazardous trees in the parish is "in hand". Although whether this is procrastination or vacillation we will have to await. One hopes that no one comes to harm.

On my morning walkabout, one still looks at the half dozen semi mature hedgerow elms and wonder if they will dieback or thrive this coming year.

We have had a good oak "mast" (or seed) year this last 12 months and wonder how they will grow this year. But a good crop of seedlings in the garden have been lifted and transplanted into the allotment. Now where to plant them!

One had seen very few grey squirrels this past year and wondered if the pine martin (a natural predator that red squirrels are too agile for) had moved into the Midlands! Then saw a group of greys on my morning walk this morning! Blast!

On the brighter side one saw a Little Egret on the brook yesterday. He should be so lucky! There are no fish in there!

R. D.



Twywell News

“Now comes March, the breezy month,
brazen and zesty as a heedless youth”

This opening stanza of the poem ‘*March*’ by the late poet, Joseph Goodson, uncle of our good friend Revd. Graham Bell, tells us much about what we can expect from Mother Nature in the next few weeks. March winds will undoubtedly blow the cobwebs of the previous year out the windows of our minds and prepare us nicely for the wonders of Spring, which will be starting to show. This cleansing process happily coincides with the 40 days of Lent, which commence on Ash Wednesday, 17th February, and lead us up to the celebration of Easter on Sunday 4th April when, aided by the progress of the national Covid-19 vaccination rollout, we should feel a new beginning really is arriving.

The collection of 125 poems by Joseph Goodson ‘*Where Plovers Fly*’, many set locally in the countryside of East Northamptonshire, is available in paperback from Margaret Ansell, *Greystones*, Lower Street (01832 733144) for £10. A donation from each sale will go to St. Nicholas Church funds.

We have been fortunate to have been able to continue this far with Church services, albeit without Holy Communion or hymns, and the structure of regular services is very welcome. We are grateful to our service leads for supporting us with this. Services continue to be planned for but are subject to change at very short notice. For updated information on the service schedule please contact Sean Flanagan (01832 733569) or Margaret Ansell (01832 733144), or by email enquiry at st.nicholas.twywell@gmail.com

One event which did take place, however, was the hugely successful ‘*Carols by Lantern Light*’ event, where almost 30 residents, separated into their household bubbles, enjoyed an evening of carol singing, meeting at the *Old Friar* Christmas tree, and walking under lantern light to St. Nicholas’ churchyard Christmas tree, via *The Lawns* and the parish Christmas tree on *The Green*.



Equally well attended was our Christmas Day morning service, which was our final Holy Communion service before the commencement of Lockdown v2.0. The congregation was, as always through the winter months, warm and comfortable thanks largely to Marc Furniss (Corvée Property Services Ltd) who services our boiler annually, without charge. Thank you Marc. Despite the absence of our hugely popular in-church carol service and refreshments, a great deal of effort

was made to decorate the church, internally and externally, which lifted spirits enormously. Thank you to all those who contributed to this, along with those who organised or read at services and to Rita Bigley for continuing to provide organ music. The season of goodwill, although different, was a special one.

We must also say thank you to the Parish Council for the parish Christmas tree, which this year was superb and outshone many larger villages and towns in the district!



Our local environment has also benefited enormously in recent weeks from the litter-picking exploits of Ann-Louise Fisher and Patrick Janson-Smith who regularly monitor the village approaches, and Jill Streater who, for nearly a year, has championed litter picking around the Hills & Dales country park with her purple bags campaign. We know there are many others who selflessly carry out litter picking or many, many other community enhancing acts, such as managing the telephone box library, dressing the village wells and flower pots or serving on a committee, and we thank you all. You all make Twywell a very special part of England in which to live.

Sadly, we have to report the untimely passing of Mark Thomas Kirk, who died on 11th December, aged 57 years, after a short illness. Mark lived his childhood in Twywell at the Post Office (now Gardener’s Cottage) and was blessed to have been raised in the time-honoured way; with his extended family (and the guidance they offered) all around him. This clearly left a lasting impression on Mark. He soon joined the village firm of Thomas & Briggs Ltd as an apprentice carpenter, which at the time was partnered by his uncle Phillip (Thomas). Upon the retirement of Phillip and Alan Briggs, Mark and Alan’s eldest son, Wayne, took up the reigns and led the business successfully into a second generation. Quiet, thoughtful and well-mannered, he loved the simple pleasures in life – his family first and foremost, his close friends (especially with a golf club or pint in hand) and a holiday.

The devastating news of his passing has left many in shock, coming a few short years after the passing of his sister, Debbie. We have, yet again, lost one of our own. Our thoughts and prayers are with Heather his wife, his daughters Lauren and Sarah, his mother Cynthia and his brother Tony (& Jayne).

We recently learned of the death of another former Twywellian – Alan Haynes, who for a number of years lived at *Old Normandy House* with his wife Jan. Being a keen and very competent sailor Alan and Jan had moved to Brixham in Devon for its waterside

convenience upon his retirement as Director of Haynes Cannon Ltd, a Wellingborough-based printer. A vacancy has arisen for the role of parish councillor following the recent resignation of Pat Verity. Pat had worked closely with the PCC on event alignment in particular and we thank her for this work, along with her other work for the community. With no Parish Council meetings scheduled for February or March, focus will swiftly be turning to local council elections in May.

The parish council is a very important tier of local government which manages many local services and is often the only statutory 'voice' for the parish. If you would like to apply for the current vacancy, please contact the parish council clerk, Claire Tilley, on 01536 791893 or by email at twywellclerk@gmail.com, for more information.

With no regular clubs or events currently taking place we can only hope that these will start to return as 2021 progresses.

We are all feeling some degree of isolation during the government lockdowns. However, isolation and its potentially negative effects on personal wellbeing exists for some amongst us at all times, not just throughout the pandemic and, if there is nothing else to learn from our recent freedom restrictions, we should long remember how important it is to offer companionship and support to those who live alone and who may need it the most, especially when restrictions are finally lifted and our focus on this could be lost.

The opening verse of another of Joseph Goodson's poems; '*Friends*', identifies the benefits of friendship on our mental health perfectly:

A glass of wine,
The warmth and welcome of friends;
A smile which discards the years,
Clears the sword of life like frost before the sun.

And finally 'A Pause for Thought'
"When fate hands you a lemon – make lemonade".
Dale Carnegie

Keep safe and well- stay at home,

Twywell PCC
st.nicholas.twywell@gmail.com



Slipton News

We managed to gather to sing some favourite carols in the churchyard on Christmas Eve. Although it was chilly and not the usual packed candlelit church, it was a very enjoyable occasion, thank you to all those who attended. Thank you also to Angela for setting up the Christmas tree.

Unfortunately Fr. John Tiernan was unwell and unable to take the Christmas morning service and therefore I asked my sister, who is a local Methodist preacher, if she would help out. We held a short service to welcome the birth of Jesus and to pray for light in the darkness. I would like to send our best wishes to Fr. John Tiernan and would like to thank my sister, Sandra, for stepping in.

Thank you to all those who continue to keep the church looking clean and bright.

There isn't much happening in the village and now that a full lockdown has been declared we are even more restricted. It feels as though we are all hibernating! We are very lucky that we can walk directly from our homes to beautiful countryside.

There has been, or is to be, a few movements in the village: Vicky, Arthur and Mabel Hishin have moved to Slipton Lane, Kate Noakes and her family will be moving in February to Titchmarsh, and Amy Shepherdson has moved to Higham Ferrers. We wish them all well in their new homes.

It is good to hear that some of our villagers have had the vaccine and hopefully by the time this piece is written again things will look a lot brighter for everyone.

Caroline Anstee

All enquiries about Church Services to Churchwardens:

Cranford

Brian Keech ~ 01536 330232

Grafton Underwood

Rog Hatlem ~ 01536 771279

Paul Harris ~ 01536 330567

Twywell

Sean Flanagan ~ 01832 733569

Michael Hurst ~ 01832 733926

Slipton

Tony Fraser ~ 01832 734059
Parish Representative

Together is distributed to every household in the four parishes. If you would like to contribute to the costs, a donation of £5.00 per annum would be much appreciated.

Please send your donations to the Church Treasurer in your village:

Cranford – Jo Fry

Grafton Underwood – Rob Donnelly

Twywell – Cathy Steele

Slipton – Liz Heath

Many Thanks