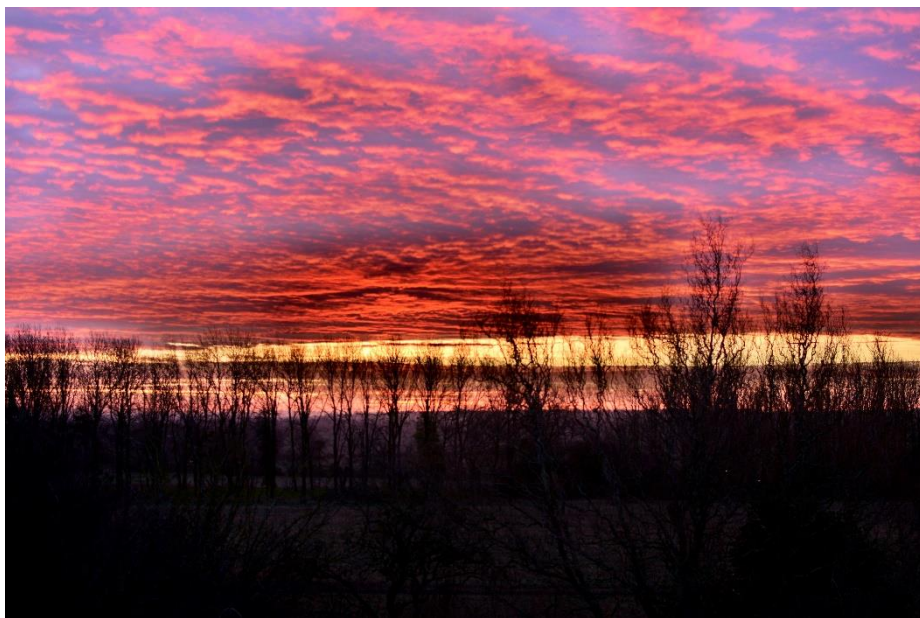


*Kingston Parish & Church  
Magazine*



**January 2021**

## **Village Diary**

While the Village Hall is open – subject, of course, to the Government restrictions – few activities are being scheduled.

Please see details below of the virtual Kingston Quiz which is an important fundraiser for the Village Hall.

## **Wheelie bin collection dates**

Saturday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2021	Blue bin only
Friday, 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Black bin
Thursday, 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Blue and Green bins
Wednesday, 20 <sup>th</sup> January	Black bin
Wednesday, 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Blue bin only

## **Editorial**

Happy New Year! Welcome to a year that isn't 2020!

Remarkably, given the circumstances, Kingston is abuzz with activity. The Christmas Fair (see below) was a huge success (a record-breaker, in fact), as was the Village Carolling Safari. The Virtual Quiz Night is the next big event scheduled. Again, please see the details below. Also in this issue is a rundown of Village Hall arrangements by Paul Wright. He tells me that, while there is no Pub Night scheduled for January, there might well be a pizza evening (details to follow). A big thank you to all those villagers who have organized these recent events in the face of the awful pandemic.

The lovely photo on this month's cover was taken by Greg Toon last January, so it's very fitting that it adorns this January's cover. It was taken looking east from Crane's Lane. The photo wonderfully symbolizes our hopes for a new dawn – and a New Year.

Peter Holly [pjholly45@gmail.com](mailto:pjholly45@gmail.com) 01223 264 556

## Vicar's Letter

For a few days in December, Jupiter and Saturn were lined up, as seen from the Earth, so that they looked to the naked eye like one object in the sky. It's an event that had last happened 800 years ago, and the news media were calling it "The Star of Bethlehem".

Such a conjunction is one of the many astronomical phenomena which people have suggested through the centuries as the original Star which the Wise Men of the Christmas story followed as they searched for the one "born to be king of the Jews".

By the time you read this, Christmas will be over, but writing in the middle of December, the Star is still waiting to be seen, the Baby waiting to be born, the Wise Men still on their way to their meeting which we celebrate fully on January 6th.

The Bible describes the Wise Men as "from the east" which is rather vague, but probably means Babylon, in modern Iraq. The ancient Babylonians were renowned watchers of the stars. They would have been alert for anything new or unusual to be seen and would have interpreted it as a sign of important events on Earth. They were very keen to have some idea of what was going to happen in their future, and hoped that the heavens would tell them.

Although we can now predict conjunctions of planets centuries in advance, we are no less keen to know our personal futures than the Babylonians were.

As I write, the first people are receiving vaccinations against covid-19, the Christmas relaxation of precautions is in the balance, and the negotiations about the UK's relationship with the EU are teetering on the brink of last minute collapse. As you read, some of those questions will be matters of record, and we will have a better idea of how much trouble we're in.

But whatever the problems of the next year, the past hasn't changed: the Baby was born, grew up, died, and rose from the dead so that our ultimate future – the one that really counts when all earthly troubles are over – is secure. My prayer is that whatever present reality looks like, your fears will be overcome, your hopes realised, and your spirits renewed in the Baby of Bethlehem.

***Rev. Steve Day***

## Church opening

The church is open for private prayer on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, from 9.30 to 4pm. Please use the hand sanitiser provided and keep to the social distancing guidelines.

## Church services for January at Kingston

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January**                      **Holy Communion 8.30am**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January**                    **Family Service 10.30am**

**ZOOM Chapel: Mondays to Saturdays Morning Prayer 8.15am**

**Sundays 3<sup>rd</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> January Morning Prayer 10am**

**Sundays 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Evening Prayer 6.00pm**

**Telephone service on Mondays at 5.00pm**

See [www.papworthteamchurches.org](http://www.papworthteamchurches.org) for more details.

*NB* Face masks are required for members of the congregation for services indoors.

## Church cleaning

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday                      Peter and Suzy Stokes

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday                     Donal and Monica O'Donnell

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday                     Peter Reynolds

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday                     Janet Clear

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday                     Linda Rimmer

## Church flowers and brasses

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January                      Miki Ellar

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January                     Henrietta Burbridge

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January                    Joan Reynolds

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January                    Kay Forsythe

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January                     Linda Smith

## **Christmas Safari Carol Service**

Despite the cold and wet weather, the carol safari was a great success. Many thanks to Nigel and all those involved in organising it, to Lee for decorating the porch, Torrie for lighting the church and to Janet for the welcome mulled wine to warm us all up. To date I have received donations amounting to £684, an impressive sum for such an occasion. If anyone wishes to contribute to the collection it is not too late to drop an envelope through my door!

*Linda Rimmer, 15.12.20*

## **General Thanksgiving**

Many thanks to Edward Steel, Peter Stokes and Patrick Thompson, for painting and fixing a new piece of gutter on the west end of the south aisle of the church; and to Edward for repairing the west end of the churchyard wall, following an altercation with a horse (!). Many people have remarked on how well kept our churchyard is, and for this we are indebted to Philip Payne of Willingham. Burying the dead and looking after the graves of our forbears are amongst the most important of the PCC's responsibilities and we are very grateful to the Parish Council for its financial support for the churchyard maintenance. As always and again, we record heartfelt thanks to all those on the church cleaning, opening, and flowers and brasses rotas. Lastly but not least, to Peter Holly for editing the magazine for another year, and to all those who deliver copies round the parish.

*Peter Reynolds*

## **Stay Well This Winter**

The Public Health Team in Cambridgeshire has been working with organizations from across the local health and social system in providing our local Stay Well programme. They have put together the Stay Well this Winter website, which contains a wealth of information for local support, free resources, financial aid and key contacts.

<https://www.bewellcambridgeshire.co.uk/resourcesand-campaigns/stay-well-this-winter-2020>

## Christmas Fair 2020

With the village hall all but closed due to COVID-19, it looked as if there would be no Christmas Fair this year. Until, that is, the online version was conceived. Pat Draper laid out a suggested framework for various virtual stalls, and Suzy and her team got to work. The result was a brilliantly successful online Christmas Fair, held on Saturday 12 December. Customers placed their orders by telephone. Five stallholders - Miki Ellar, Pat Draper, Kay Forsyth, and Peter and Suzy Stokes - did a brisk trade in home-made Christmas goodies, cakes and biscuits, bottles of various brews and beverages, and hand-made items, raising a total of £1128.50, far outstripping the total raised in 2019.

The rain poured down all day, but this didn't stop customers squelching their way to stallholders to collect their goods, and to The Old Post Office to make their contactless payments under a gazebo. With COVID-19 precautions strictly observed, we sincerely hope nobody took home anything other than their purchases! A welcome side-benefit was the social contact (albeit distanced) as villagers encountered each other collecting goods or making payments.

Two items were up for auction: a beautiful gingerbread house made by Tracy Robertson (won by the Campbells) and a lovely textile Advent Calendar with pockets for 'goodies', made by Kay Forsyth (won by Linda Rimmer).

All proceeds have gone to Village Hall funds, which is suffering from much reduced income during the COVID-19 shutdown. Our grateful thanks to Suzy and her team for organising the Fair, and of course to all you generous villagers who supported it with your donations and purchases.

Suzy says: "The Christmas Fair is always well supported, but I particularly feel this year that people have come together in a wonderful way, a real community feeling. Is this 'The Covid Effect'?"

Sarah Wright, Secretary of Kingston Village Hall Management Committee wrote: "A big thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas Fair. What a great idea and what a success! A special 'thank you' to the organisers and stall holders: Suzy, Pat, Miki, Kay and Peter. Suzy tells me that the total raised for the village hall was £1128.50, which breaks all records. The money will be a very welcome addition to the Village Hall funds."

**Peter Stokes**

## Kingston Village Hall: Into 2021

As we move into the 45<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, I wish the committee were in a position to offer you a forecast of what will be happening in the village hall in 2021. All I can say is that we are well prepared for a gradual return to normal, as vaccines take effect.

Our hand-held fogging machine will quickly and safely disinfect the hall between uses until the risk from Covid-19 has gone away. By the time we are back to normal the small hall will be furnished with comfortable chairs, sofas and coffee tables and broadband (35mbs) will be up and running. Sound insulation panels will have been installed in the large hall, similar to those already in the small hall.

We are one of a minority of village halls that have kept open in 2020 and I would like to thank everyone who has found innovative ways of safely serving our community. In this, we have had support and guidance from the local branch of ACRE (Action for Communities in the Rural Environment). They have organised webinars, sent out fact sheets on dealing with Covid and provided templates for our risk assessments. The Easy family has kept us in pizzas and Chris Reid and helpers have kept the pub evening going. Kay and Miki have moved the coffee morning to Zoom, Katherine Stalham has undertaken the daunting task of organising an online village quiz in January and we are helping provide Christmas gifts for the children of the village. A ballet teacher is running a small class.

Chris Reid is busy arranging an important change to our constitution, making us a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is the now the recommended status for village halls as it makes us into something like a limited company; removing the individual liability of committee members in the event of legal action or financial losses.

We have just had the online Christmas Fair, organised by Suzy, Pat, Miki, Kay and Peter. This remarkable initiative has raised £1128.50 for the hall funds, so thank you to them and everyone who donated produce and other items.

Anyway, let's be optimistic that we will be meeting up in the hall for social events in the not too distant future.

Finally, thank you to the hard working committee who have responded so well to the challenges of 2020.

Please note that there will not be a pub evening on the first Saturday of January, but there may be a pizza takeaway later in the month. If so, it will be advertised through the village email.

*Paul Wright (Chair)*

**From In Memoriam** by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.



## LIVING GRAVEYARDS

Last month I wrote how exploring churches is a hobby of mine and with the advent of the smartphone I found I could instantly summon up the story of the lives of people named on gravestones and memorial tablets, revealing some extraordinary and some ordinary lives and events.

I began with Cornwall and this month I am describing three Cambridgeshire memorial tablets.

### Boy soldier from Ellington

Ellington is the first village as you take the A14 westwards past the A1. The church contains a WWI wooden battlefield cross that marked the grave of Private Rupert Grimley of the London Scottish, who died of wounds in August 1918. He was the son of the vicar of Ellington, who repatriated the cross, after the body was moved to the British cemetery at Wimelle, and erected it in the church. If you look at the detail, you will see Rupert's name, battalion and date of death are on the punched aluminium strips that preceded Dymo label tape and used to be available from those red machines at railway stations and seaside piers. Hand-held versions of these machines were also produced and presumably would have been used for this purpose on the Western Front. The cross has grey paint and was reportedly made by his fellow soldiers from a fence post at Ypres. Rupert had been a pupil at St Faiths and was wounded by a shell in 1916, when he was only 16. He recovered and nearly made it to the end of the war, but was fatally wounded at the age of 18.



### A great gardener buried at Fenstanton

In 1767 Lancelot 'Capability' Brown purchased cheaply the Manor of Fenstanton and Hilton from the Earl of Northampton who could not afford to pay the bill for the landscaping of his estate. He paid £13,000, which is around £3 million in today's money. However, he barely stayed there as he was so frequently away on his gardening commissions, but the property gave him the right to vote and the rented farms provided an income.

Brown is buried at St Peter's and St Paul's in Fenstanton. The location of his grave and that of his wife Bridget is unknown, but it is likely that he was buried on the north side of the Church, where a modern headstone may mark the approximate spot.

Inside the Church in the chancel is the family memorial with a dedication to Brown, including the line "*...come from the sylvan scenes his Genius grac'd and offer here your tributary sighs...*"



### Fenstanton soldier killed by Bolsheviks

Inside St Peter's and St Paul's, Fenstanton there is a small memorial high on a wall commemorating a soldier who died in Russia in 1919. Wikipedia provides a remarkable account of the Russian Campaign of 1918 - 1919, of which I previously knew nothing. The aims and events of this multi-national expeditionary force are so complex that I cannot begin to describe them here, but it was originally intended to prevent Germany from capturing war supplies from the collapsing Russian army. British troops were first sent to northern Russia under the 39 year old General 'Tiny' Ironside and later to the Caucasus and Siberia, so that the total number was eventually around 60,000. They began fighting alongside the Bolsheviks but then, through 'mission creep', found themselves supporting White Russians against the Reds. The campaign was a failure and the force was withdrawn in October 1919, having lost nearly 1000 men.

**Paul Wright**

## **KINGSTON VILLAGE QUIZ**

**HURRY AND SIGN UP TO BOOK YOUR SPOT!!!**

**ONLY 5£ PER PERSON TO TAKE PART!!!**

As announced previously, The Kingston Village Quiz will take place on Saturday 23 January 2021. It will be a virtual quiz, online, and will comply with all government advice at the time.

The Village Hall Committee are contemplating whether fish & chips will be part of the quiz, but at the moment think this may not be logistically possible, if we are all in separate houses. This will be looked into closer to the time, taking into account all the government guidance at the time.

As this is a fundraising event, there will be a charge to enter the quiz. Team captains will be asked to put together teams of six and manage all payments. As the event is not in the village hall, there are no restrictions to the number of groups attending the event.

For those concerned about acoustics and hearing, which is usually difficult in the village hall, the online version will include a mixture of verbal and text, so all questions will also be presented in a written format. There will be breakout rooms during the quiz, where the groups can go to discuss their answers, then return to the main event.

The Quiz is an annual fundraising event for the Village Hall and as such we will be charging £5 per person to join. As there will be no bar sales, something the event relies on for raising extra funds during the event, any extra donations will be gratefully received.

If you are interested in fielding a team for the Quiz, or would like to join a team, do please contact Katherine Stalham

## **Big Garden Birdwatch: 29 - 31 January**

Big Garden Birdwatch began in 1979 when the RSPB invited people to count the number of birds in their gardens. Now, over half a million people take part annually and the data is used to establish trends in the populations of various UK bird species.

Spend an hour counting the birds you see in your garden, or in your local park, then report what you see. Sign up at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

## New Parish Clerk

I am pleased to tell you that the Parish Council has made an appointment following my impending retirement. The new Parish Clerk-designate is Mimi Wheeler, who lives in Kingston Wood with her husband Charlie and children Olivia and Will. Mimi has many years of experience in business and administration, and although she does not have direct experience as a parish clerk, we are all confident that she will quickly pick up the skills.

Mimi will formally take up the post on 1 February 2021, at which point I will step down. There will be a period of handover, probably stretching before and after this date.

On a personal level, I (and indeed several other people) have been doing a number of odd repairs and practical jobs in the village, more in the line of 'volunteering' than as part of my role as Parish Clerk. Without volunteers, a parish clerk would need to engage the services of local contractors to do jobs like these. I would like to continue with this sort of work – which I enjoy – for as long as I can.

*Peter Stokes, Parish Clerk*

## Book of the Month

"Days Without End" by Sebastian Barry (Faber and Faber)

I was kindly loaned this book to read by Miki Ellar and, I have to say, it's one of the best books I've read this year. Set in the mid-nineteenth century in America it covers the Indian Wars and the Civil War and is not for the squeamish or faint-hearted. As one reviewer commented, it describes the blood-stained birth of a nation; another said it's a "great American novel which happens to have been written by an Irishman."

The central characters are Thomas McNulty, a recent émigré from Ireland, and John Cale, both of whom are dirt poor. They meet up in Missouri and, to make some money, they end up dancing in a dive dressed up as women - for an audience of local miners. As their boss commented, "men without women can get to pining. It's a sort of sadness gets into their hearts. I aim to get it out and make a few bucks in the process, yes, sir, the great American way." Their next step was to join up for the army and heading west to California to protect settlers from incursions by local tribesmen. Typical of the battles of the so-called Indian Wars featured in this book, no quarter is given by both sides and it's never totally clear who are the aggressors and who are the innocent parties – except that the Native Americans are largely outnumbered and out-gunned. After their first mass-killing, the remaining soldiers return to Missouri through the worst of the winter, ironically saved from starvation

by their foes. Even when agreements are reached between the two sides, they are soon broken and more bloodshed ensues. On one of these occasions, after yet another massacre, some surviving native children are taken back to their base fort and one young girl – named Winona by Thomas because he couldn't pronounce her real name – becomes his servant girl. At this point the brothers-in-arms leave the dragoons and, taking the young girl with them, move to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where their old boss is now running a black-face minstrel show for the local gypsum miners. Now the two men and the girl (who, it turns out, has a nice singing voice) create a skit that goes down well with the locals. They settle down to something resembling family life:

We got a riverside house of four rooms and we got a porch on the street side and it ain't the best part of town and that's where we fit like gloves. Like gloves. No one can best imagine the motley crowd that go to make a American town. First you got the have-nothing know-everything Irish... who will live under leaky steps and count themselves in palaces. Then you got the half-breed Indians mixed with God knows what. Then you got the blacks, maybe they came up from Carolina or them places. Then you got the Chinese and the Spanish families. Where we are is where all these folks come home at night to roost when they've done working, mostly at the gypsum mines...

This passage, written as the rest of the book in the vernacular of the times, works on two levels: it tells the basic story and, allegorically, tells the story of America, in this instance the creation of the "melting pot" of racial groupings.

Their life is next upset by the start of the Civil War with Thomas and John enlisting to fight on the Unionist/Northern side. Their experiences in the war are harrowing to say the least. After being captured by Confederate forces, they are involved in a prisoner exchange and allowed to return to Grand Rapids, where the local economy has collapsed and the music hall closed down. Their next decision is to follow up on an invitation by a fellow trooper to move to Tennessee to help out on his farm. Travelling south with Winona, they meet up and form a new family group. With the war over, their future seems settled, yet you know that their past is about to catch up with them with a vengeance.

Written in the straight-talk of early America, this is a brutal, yet beautiful book that features stunning battle scenes and memorable characters – and an improbable love story. At the time of writing this review, I've heard that a sequel novel "A Thousand Moons" has recently been published. I can't wait to get my hands on a copy.

**Peter Holly**

## **Revealed: Final push for Kingston to receive 18x faster broadband as village earmarked for full-fibre connectivity**

Kingston is on the cusp of reaching the required threshold to kick start construction of a new full-fibre broadband network to receive some of the fastest and most reliable speeds anywhere in the UK.

County Broadband, a specialist rural full-fibre network and broadband provider, has announced 24 villages in South Cambridgeshire are earmarked to receive the new Hyperfast infrastructure in 2021, totalling around 9,400 premises. Speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps will be available – nearly 20 times faster than the UK average.

Of those, eight have already met the required sign-up target with work expected to begin imminently. But the East Anglia-based provider, backed by a £46 million private investment by Aviva Investors, has confirmed that Kingston has yet to reach the required sign-up target required to give the green light to start construction. County Broadband is calling on residents and businesses to rally support in the rural community to help reach the sign-up target

Prime minister Boris Johnson is relying on local providers like County Broadband to achieve his flagship target of UK-wide gigabit-speed connectivity by 2025. It forms part of his “infrastructure revolution” to catch up with the rest of the world and support the Covid-19 economic recovery. The news also follows his fresh advice to work from home during winter.

**Lloyd Felton, chief executive of County Broadband, said:** “The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of our creaking copper infrastructure that is stifling productivity and holding back innovation at such a critical time. Boris Johnson has told the nation to remote work but some of us can’t even have a Zoom call. We need future-ready networks now more than ever.

“That’s why we’re driving our plans to build Hyperfast full-fibre networks in Kingston with great gusto. We want to help restart the economic engine and give Cambridgeshire a huge investment in its infrastructure to support residents and businesses. We urge residents and businesses to rally support in the rural community to help reach the sign-up target”

Full-fibre broadband uses fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) infrastructure in which fibre optic cables are installed directly into the premises, offering download and uploads speeds of 1,000Mbps. It replaces fibre-to-the-cabinet (FTTC) Victorian copper-based infrastructure on which ‘superfast’ is based. The deployment of full-fibre broadband could be worth £5.38bn to the East of England economy over the next five years, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

The UK fell 13 places in global rankings for internet speeds and is now among the slowest in Europe in 47th place, new research by [Cable.co.uk](http://Cable.co.uk) found last month. The nation's 54.2 Mbps average speeds are due to only 12% of premises having access to full-fibre infrastructure – meaning 88% residents and businesses currently rely on Victorian 'superfast' copper-based infrastructure.

Visit [www.countybroadband.co.uk](http://www.countybroadband.co.uk) to see if the service is available in your area and for more details.

**Rose Ling**

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## Papworth Team Ministry (C of E)

The Papworth Team Ministry Team Office:

Lower Pendrill Court  
Ermine Street North  
Papworth Everard  
CB23 3UY

Email: [papworthteamministryoffice@gmail.com](mailto:papworthteamministryoffice@gmail.com)

Web: [www.papworthteamchurches.org](http://www.papworthteamchurches.org)

Our Team Administrator, Chris Westgarth, works in the office normally on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings; serving the parishes of Bourn, Boxworth, Caxton, Conington, Croxton, Elsworth, Eltisley, Graveley with Papworth St Agnes, Kingston, Knapwell, Lolworth, Longstowe, Papworth Everard, Toseland and Yelling.

For enquiries about weddings, baptisms, funerals and general parish matters, please contact Chris (as above), visit the website or speak to one of our clergy...

> The Revd Nigel di Castiglione,  
Team Rector – 07770 697240 -  
01954 267241

> The Revd Stephen Day,  
Team Vicar - 01954 264226

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Enquiries: Sarah Wright (secretary)

01223 263500 or 0787 999 1068

[kingstonvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:kingstonvillagehall@gmail.com)



Dear all

You may like to take part in this petition, organised by the Cambridge Approaches group. Among other things they are campaigning for the 'Northern Route', following the A428. Our MP, Anthony Browne supports this route, and most people in Kingston would probably support it too, as it takes the railway well away from Kingston.

This route was not considered in the initial consultation, which resulted in the choice of 'Option E', a broad swathe within which the eventual railway alignment will lie. One edge of this swathe touches Kingston.

The petition aims to ensure that the 'Northern Route' is brought into the discussion. To take part, see the message below from Cambridge Approaches:

*We have published a new article on [cambridgeapproaches.org](https://cambridgeapproaches.org) :*

*You can view it from this link: <https://cambridgeapproaches.org/?p=545>*

*Best Regards*

*Cambridge Approaches*

*Peter Stokes*

## Monterey Bay Aquarium Live Cams

Be delighted by the antics of the sea otters, the hypnotic drifting of our jellies and all that goes on around a coral reef or kelp forest. With ten live cams to choose from, you can experience the wonder of the ocean no matter where you are.

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>

## Mississippi Flyway cam

<https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/flyway-cam/>

or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHOVmRsj05c>

A chance to find out a bit about American bird life and enjoy the relaxing sounds of the birds. Live footage from a solar powered cam on an island in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge on Lake Onalaska. The cam offers an unparalleled look at migrating birds and river wildlife, including Bald Eagles, American White Pelicans, Sandhill Cranes, Caspian Terns, Cormorants, ducks, gulls, and other waterfowl. More than 325 bird species make the round-trip each year along the Mississippi Flyway, from their breeding grounds in Canada and the northern United States to their wintering grounds along the Gulf of Mexico and in Central and South America, and many of them will pass by this camera.

## Kwirky Korner

My human has been so busy recently (sitting on the sofa during the latest lockdown, glued to the TV watching “The Queen’s Gambit”) that he asked me to fill in for him this month and handle the Kwirky Korner. I was delighted to do this, especially as he gave me free access to the newsfeed on his phone. Predictably, dog stories are what I found.

What about the “naughtiest dog in Britain” who has cost his humans £9,000 in damages. Cooper, a boxer, has chewed his way through 8 sofas, 2 dining tables, 10 remote controls, 6 mobile phones, 8 cuddle chairs, one set of nested oak tables, one set of wooden doors and numerous rugs, shoes, and handbags. As his human commented: “You can’t take your eyes off him for a second – or he’ll be up to no good. We could tell he was going to be mischievous when we got him as a pup, but I was not expecting to have to shell out £9K for new furniture. He didn’t just nibble the cuddle chair, he took it back to the bare framework. One day I came home to find a leg of our dining table ripped off and in his bed. He has cost us an arm and a leg (a chair leg anyway), but I wouldn’t have him any other way. He is my best friend and the most loving dog.”

{So my humans take note: when I scratch at the wooden floor, things could be a lot worse.}

Some sad news: the Queen is down to just one corgi after the death of her beloved Vulcan, leaving Candy the sole survivor. She has owned 30 corgis over the years, all descended from Susan, a gift on her 18th birthday.

In Australia (is that near England?), Speck hitched a ride from her rural outpost to Sydney, some 300 kilometres. Now the matter is being investigated.

In Jersey, a “big goofy” Dalmatian, likes to put her paws on the keyboard of the family’s piano, play notes, and throw her head back and sing. Uproarious!

In California (I know where that is; it’s due west of my birthplace in Texas), a man punched a 350 pound bear that attacked his pet dog, Buddy. The bear had the dog’s head in its mouth. “I just ran down there,” said the man, “plowed into the bear, tackled it and grabbed it by the throat and started hitting it in the face and the eye until it let go.” Buddy is recovering and will always have some scars to remind him of his ordeal. But as the man said, I would do anything for Buddy.

Other incidents in the USA have included a dog called Abby, missing for weeks, walking into a Walmart store in Alabama while her owner was at work there. “I completely lost it,” said her owner; “I have no idea how she knew where I work.” And, meanwhile, in North Dakota, a chocolate lab called Lola was found floating on a

chunk of ice in the middle of a sixty feet-wide river. Thankfully, fire-fighters were able to don wet-suits and undertake a successful rescue.

The most popular names for dogs in 2020 have just been announced. Top five male names: Max, Charlie, Cooper, BUDDY, and Milo; top five female names: Bella, Luna, Lucy, Daisy, and Lola.

Just in time for Christmas, two rescue pups have been reunited after a year apart. In their first photo together, they are holding paws and looking remarkably contented. Jessie and Luther were sold by a breeder in Huddersfield and Luther went to live very happily with a new human in Chesterfield. Unfortunately, Jesse couldn't settle and went through a series of homes, ending up in a dog shelter. In the meantime, Luther's family had an original dog who subsequently died, leaving Luther distraught. So his humans went looking for a rescue dog to keep him company – and found Jesse. Now the two dogs are inseparable and happy as Larry (well, Jesse and Luther anyway).

In a story that is too close for home for me, a puppy was found abandoned on a park bench in Mexico with a hand written note attached to it. With the 7 month old golden retriever mix chained to the bench, the note read:

It hurts a lot to leave my dog here but I made the decision of leaving him because my family used to mistreat him and it would always hurt me to see him in that condition... If you're reading this and your heart wavers, please adopt him and take good care of him. If not, please leave this note in its place. That way others can read it and adopt him. Thank you.

Don't worry, Max (now renamed Boston) has found a new, loving home. I say this story is too close to home for me as my story was somewhat similar. I was found with my lead lodged in a wall down a back alley, but no note accompanied me. Luckily, I didn't need one as I ended up with my loving humans. What else can a dog ask for?

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year (and don't forget to give your dog – or cat - an extra treat),

***Buddy Holly***

## **New Year Plant Hunt**

The tenth Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH) will run from Friday 1 to Monday 4 January 2021. By taking part in the Hunt, you will help to build up a clearer picture of how our wildflowers are responding to changes in autumn and winter weather patterns. Find out how to take part at

<https://bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt>

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## Record Corner

Readers will know that I'm a big fan of music soundtracks, especially when they are attached to high-class films or TV series. Another excellent example has just surfaced: the soundtrack from the first-rate Netflix mini-series, the Queen's Gambit, which has sent everyone scurrying to their cupboards and attics to dig out their dusty chess boards and pieces. This series is a must watch and the soundtrack is a must listen. Set in the mid-'60s, the music is a veritable smorgasbord of British and American pop records of the time, all of them with a slightly quirky, edgy feel to them. British interests are served well by the likes of Donovan, Herman's Hermits, The Kinks (represented here by "Stop Your Sobbing", later a hit for the Pretenders) and the wonderfully sounding Georgie Fame, with his Hammond organ well to the fore on his irrepressible hit "Yeah Yeah". Examples of the American fare are Peggy Lee's incomparable version of "Fever", Laura Nyro's version of "Jimmy Mack", The Association ("Along Came Mary"), The Vogues ("You're the One"), The Monkees ("I'm not your Stepping Stone"), and the Drifters ("Let the Music Play"). Then, because several scenes in the series are set in Europe, there's a slew of Europop tracks, chief amongst them being the highly danceable "Venus" by the Dutch band Shocking Blue and "Tut tut tut tut" by Gillian Hills.

I must admit that I'd never heard of Gillian Hills, so I looked her up. Born of English and Polish stock in Cairo in 1944, she spent her formative years in Nice, where she was discovered aged 14 by Roger Vadim. He saw her as the next Brigitte Bardot and cast her in his next movie, a version of "Les liaisons dangereuses" in 1959. Besides appearing in several typical '60s movies, she began a recording career on the French label Barclay, in 1961 appearing at the Olympia Theatre in Paris on a bill head-lined by Johnny Hallyday. Her big hit during this period was the aforementioned "Tut tut tut tut", a cover of the US track "Busy Signal" by the girl group, The Lollipop. This track is worth the whole soundtrack put together. Typical of French pop songs of the time, it is light, frothy, insouciant, maybe even tongue-in-cheek, and amazingly catchy. It's like a guilty pleasure: I love it but somehow feel that I shouldn't. Listening to her other recordings, she left a legacy of perfectly senseless pop music in her wake, perfectly senseless but perfectly wonderful. At the end of the '60s she gave up singing (on the whole, probably a good move) to concentrate on her movie career, appearing with David Hemmings in "Blow Up".

Another great collection of '60s ephemera, then, and well worth a listen. Whatever you do don't miss the Gillian Hills track. By the way, for the younger audience, the '60s occurred sometime before the 1990s.

**Peter Holly**

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