

Kingston Parish & Church Magazine



December 2025

Village Diary

Sat 6 th December from 6.30pm.	Pub night in the Village Hall
Thurs 11 th December 1 – 1.30pm	Library Van at the crossroads
Tuesdays at 10-11am	Boogie Tuesday at the Village Hall
Wednesdays at 10.30am	Village Hall Coffee Morning
Fridays at 10.00am	Pilates at the Village Hall

Wheeler bin collection dates

Thursday 4 th Dec	Blue and Green bins
Thursday 11 th Dec	Black bin
Thursday 18 th Dec	Blue and Green bins
Monday 22 nd Dec	Black bin
Friday 2 nd January 2026	Blue bin only

Editorial

Made your Christmas cake yet? Me neither. Relax, we'll all get there by the 25th and there's lots to enjoy here in Kingston in the meantime. Christmas 'jingle and mingle' with Santa, carol singing, church carol service and much more. And as I write this at the end of November in a sudden cold snap, we might even get snow.

Do please have a read-through of Paul Wheeler's notes on the two vacancies on your Parish Council. This non-partisan bit of local government is vital if you want to make your voice heard on village matters, mainly future and current planning.

The Wednesday coffee mornings will not be held on Christmas or New Year's eves, the 24th and 31st. But we look forward to seeing you all again on Jan 7th. Come along and beat the January blues with a cuppa and a natter.

And finally, if you are able, please make a food donation to the food bank at this tough time of year for so many. Contact Donal (see his piece within) if you would like to donate.

Miki Ellar miki.ellar7@gmail.com 07568 706106

Cover picture: Kingston's Christmas nativity crib set

Vicar's Letter: The Greatest Gift

The older I get, the faster Christmas seems to come around. It feels like only a few weeks ago that I arrived in the Papworth Team, and already we're trying to work out where we put the Christmas decorations and whether there's still enough wrapping paper left from last year. Christmas is always a busy time, full of planning, preparations, and people to see. Yet even with all the rushing about, I still feel a growing sense of excitement and hope as we draw closer to Christmas.

At this time of year, I notice that although people are busy, they still find time to be generous. It's a time when people check in on one another, send cards, or share a meal or night out with friends, family, and colleagues. These may not seem like grand gestures, but they often mean far more than we realise. They remind us that Christmas isn't really about the presents we give, but about presence itself: being with one another, noticing each other, and sharing the time we have.

The Bible puts it very simply but also very beautifully: 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us' (*John 1:14*). This reminds us that in Jesus, God gives us the most extraordinary gift of all: himself. Not from a distance or in splendour, but here among us, sharing in the ordinary details of human life. That is the heart of Christmas: God choosing to be present with us, to walk alongside us, and to show us what love truly looks like.

As we celebrate across the Papworth Team this Christmas, I would love to invite you to join us for one of our services. Whether it is a Christingle, a carol service, a crib service, or a quieter time of reflection, you will find a warm welcome and a chance to pause and take in the wonder of it all. We would love to celebrate Christmas with you in one of our Papworth Team churches.

My prayer is that this Christmas will bring you peace and joy, and that somewhere among the busyness and celebration, you will glimpse again the beauty of that first and greatest gift: God with us, then and now.

Rev. Matt Phillips

Team Rector, Papworth Team Ministry

matt@papworth.team 01954 604889 07518 377245

Christmas 2025

Everyone – parishioners, friends and visitors – is warmly invited to attend our Christmas services this year.

Kingston Church Services for December

Sunday 21st December CAROL SERVICE 6pm

Wednesday 24th December CHRISTMAS EVE Holy Communion 6.00pm

The church is open every day.

Papworth Team Services (HC=Holy Communion, MP=Morning Prayer, FW Family Worship)

Dec 7th 6.00pm Advent Carol Service at Bourn

Dec 14th 8.30am HC at Bourn 10.30am MP at Caxton 4.00pm Carol Service at Longstowe

Dec 21st 4.00pm Carol Service at Caxton

Dec 24th 4.30pm Crib Service at Bourn

Dec 25th 10.30am HC at Bourn, 11.00am HC at Caxton, 10.30am HC at Longstowe

Dec 28th **10.00am Team Zoom Service**

The website papworthteamchurches.org has up to date service information for all churches in the team. It also has the Zoom link for the Morning Prayer & Team services.

ZOOM Chapel Morning Prayer (Mon – Sat) at 8.15am (Zoom)

Telephone service on Mondays at 5.00pm (except Bank Holidays)

Something new....

If you phone 01480 776464 you can hear a recorded message with all the church services across the team for the next Sunday.

Church cleaning

1 st Sunday	Henrietta Burbridge
2 nd Sunday	Donal & Monica O'Donnell
3 rd Sunday	Peter Reynolds
4 th Sunday	Janet Clear
5 th Sunday	Linda Rimmer

Church flowers and brasses

Dec 7	Advent
Jan 4 2026	Janet Clear

Church decorating for Christmas – date tbc

New arrival

We extend a warm welcome to Michael Brett who moved into 4 Field Row at the end of November. Michael has lived in Shropshire for 8 years but was previously from Hertfordshire, so he feels he is now returning nearer to home and friends. He works from home so is likely to be out and about in the village and on local walks with his dog.

Help with Winter Fuel Bills

The Winter months are a difficult time for most of us, particularly since the cost of heating and lighting our homes is at its highest.

This year the Kingston Parish Charity is able to offer grants to help with heating costs over the winter months (December, January, February and March) to people who are on low incomes and housebound, elderly or disabled. If you feel you could benefit from this please contact either Donal O'Donnell or Peter Reynolds, in confidence.

Donal O'Donnell

(odonnell924@btinternet.com) and

Peter Reynolds (peterreynolds299@btinternet.com)

Trustees The Kingston Parish Charity

Foodbank Winter Appeal

The winter months are the most difficult and expensive time of year for all of us, but it is especially so for anyone on a low income or going through family or health crises. Last winter Cambridge City Foodbank gave out 5,000 emergency food parcels to people in and around Cambridge. This year, with rising energy and food costs it is expected that even more people will need help to get through the cold months ahead.

If you would like to donate money directly to the Foodbank Winter Appeal you may do so online at www.ccfb.org.uk

If you wish to donate food you may do so at the Wednesday Coffee Mornings in the Village Hall or you may leave donations in the church at any time during church opening hours in December. We can only use non-perishable food that is in date.

Items currently needed are:

- Christmas chocolates/biscuits
- Christmas puddings
- Halal food items
- Instant coffee
- Long-life juice
- Long-life milk
- Noodles
- Pasta sauce
- Snacks (e.g. crisps, cereal bars, etc)
- Tea bags
- Tinned custard
- Tinned meat
- Tinned rice pudding
- Tinned soup
- Tinned tomatoes
- Tinned vegetables
- Tomato sauce
- Vegan food items



Village Carol Singing

The Village Carol Singing will take place on
Wednesday 17th December 2025.

Meeting outside the Village Hall at 6.30pm

Carol Sheets are provided - please **bring a Torch.**

Refreshments afterwards at the Village Hall

If you would like to join us,
or would like us to come and sing to you,
please contact Janet at
South Sea House, Bourn Road, on 07912 377490

The Church is very grateful for all contributions
received.

Please make Cheques payable to
Kingston Parish Church

*Taxpayers – please consider the “value added” factor of
gift aiding your contribution*



A relaxed and informal gathering with crafts, songs, a story and a simple meal. Everybody is welcome!



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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

Web: www.papworthteamchurches.org

Our Team Administrator, Revd. Chris Westgarth, works in the office normally on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 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 Matt Phillips

matt@papworth.team

01954 604889

People like me can and do Serve

As the Parish Council looks towards 2026, there is a need to fill the role of Parish Clerk and shape the future of the community assets such as the Play Park and the Orchard.

To do so in an effective manner, the Council have identified that, ideally, we require to undertake two tasks. One is to appoint a Parish Clerk, a paid post, who, by administering, informing, recording and otherwise, enables the Parish Council to function. The other task is to add additional Parish Councillors to our existing numbers. The belief is that sufficient village residents can see the benefit of stepping forward and stand for election to the Parish Council in 2026.

The current Council, who meet regularly six times a year, with occasional additional meetings to discuss urgent issues such as Planning Applications, have been set an example to follow by our previous counterparts, who fostered an environment where more residents felt empowered and inspired to be part of the Parish Council. We wish to continue in their footsteps by encouraging individuals to make positive choices. Standing for election is both an opportunity for personal development and an act of community service.

As I am sure that you are aware, Parish Councillors play a vital role in speaking up for residents and getting things done locally. By joining the Council, you can help decide how resources are used, influence improvements, and ensure your community's voice is heard.

Hopefully, the mantra of "people like me can and do serve" will be heard and we can move forward together. Kingston deserves an efficient and effective Parish Council, and with your contribution this can be continued.

If you would be interested in finding out further details of the roles, please contact Paul Wheeler at chair@kingstonvillage.org.



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Revd Paul Gildersleve: 7th June 1948 –12th October 2025

Paul was born in Cardiff, the youngest of three brothers. His older brothers were much older and left home when he was still quite young. The family attended a Welsh Presbyterian Church where Paul was involved with youth groups and the choir. These helped the faith he had learned at home become his own story and his commitment.

Paul enjoyed learning but struggled with reading: it was before dyslexia was recognised as needing extra support. His secondary school offered everything from practical training through to GCEs and he was able to leave with several GCEs and many practical skills. He was always grateful to the teachers for their support and encouragement.

Paul's first career was in metallurgy and problem solving within research and development departments, which stimulated his enquiring mind and his love for construction. Alongside his work at Aero Zip manufacturers and then Rio Tinto, he studied part time for an ONC, and then an HNC in metallurgy. Later, he came to work at the Tube Investments Research labs at Hinxton.

While living in Bristol, he met Ann and they were married in 1973. They settled in Comberton, and the family grew with the arrival of Ruth, Jo and Steve.

Paul had a sense of being called to work in the church, so he left his job to study at Romsey House in Cambridge for an external London University degree in Theology. The College then asked him to stay on to teach New Testament studies and New Testament Greek. Comberton Baptist Church asked Paul to also take on the role of pastor, but after 5 years Paul believed that the time was right to step down, not knowing what the next step would be.

As an interim move, Paul came to Manor Farm in Bourn to work with Ann's father, who was keen that Paul should know more about how to run the farm. That temporary job became a way of life. With the farm income as a base, Paul continued church work, helping to run children's groups in Comberton and in the old Stables at the farm. He also became more involved with Caxton Baptist Church.

In the late 1990's when Bourn Parish Church was in interregnum, Paul was asked by the church warden, Norman Greenwood, to take a Harvest service and then a Crib service. When the Papworth Team Ministry began, Paul was encouraged to train as a lay minister and then for ordained ministry. He trained full time at Ridley Hall for a



year while at the same time managing the farm and the redevelopment of 'The Stove' building and then joined the Papworth ministry team. He also enjoyed the role of School Governor at Bourn Primary School. He continued as a non-stipendiary vicar until 2017 when his advanced prostate cancer meant facing chemo.

Over the last few years, Paul continued to contribute in whatever ways he could, while trying to coax the old farmhouse into the 21st century, enjoying the challenge of solving whatever the current problem happened to be and his grandchildren also brought him much joy.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for all the cards, flowers and messages that we have received and for the wonderful memories of Paul that have been shared. It has been very special to hear how Paul's life touched and blessed those around him, sometimes in unseen ways. Paul will be remembered as someone who always had time for others. His humility, love, kindness and wisdom will live on in all our memories of him.

Ann, Ruth, Jo and Steve

Paul Gildersleve was truly a man of parts: metallurgist, teacher, farmer, businessman, youth worker, builder, information technologist; but in everything and above all, a man of God.

Paul served the Papworth Team Ministry from its first establishment almost twenty-five years ago: as a non-stipendiary (unpaid) vicar he undertook the full range of clerical duties throughout the Team's fifteen parishes, leading services of worship (often two or three every Sunday), officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals. He was involved on the administrative side as well. He served on the Team Council and for many years he prepared the annual accounts for the Treasurer, the late Tim Burgess. Paul also ran a Bible study group for the Team. He was particularly involved with the parishes of Bourn and Kingston, where he was a member of the Parochial Church Councils; for several years he was in effect our own vicar. He took seriously his pastoral role, visiting the sick and distressed; he was always cheerful, encouraging and sympathetic. Paul ran Christian youth groups in Comberton and continued this ministry in Bourn at The Stables; he was also a governor of Bourn Church of England Primary School.

Paul and Ann were active in supporting various Christian charities, and he was a trustee of the By All Means Gospel Trust, a charity devoted to the publication and



circulation of Bible studies and daily readings and the proclamation of the message of the Christian Gospel throughout the world. This led to travel abroad and gave Paul an international perspective on the Christian faith.

The Gildersleves moved to Bourn in 1991: at Manor Farm Paul began as a conventional farmer but soon saw the potential of the barns and outbuildings and became the project manager for their repair and conversion. They now house several flourishing businesses including The Stove, Knibbs the butchers and Bourn 4 Hair. With his family he organised many events, fairs and festivals, making use of the magnificent tithe barn as a venue. At the same time, he began work on the renovation of the grade II* listed, late C13 farmhouse (rivalling the Old Rectory in Kingston as one of the oldest dwellings in Cambridgeshire). He was meticulous and sensitive in this work, taking pains to use the appropriate materials and commissioning new furnishings and fittings.

Paul and Ann ran a desk-top publishing business with two arms, Mission Compleat and Mission Computers, the former a commercial enterprise and the latter offering favourable terms to churches and charities (and producing both Bourn and Kingston's parish magazines). In these enterprises, like so much else he undertook, Paul was largely self-taught. His perennial cheerfulness and humility masked a sharp intellect and an ability to assimilate rapidly new skills and knowledge.

Paul's spiritual odyssey took him from Welsh Presbyterianism to the Baptist Church and to priesthood in the Anglican Communion. But denominations were not important to him: memberships of churches were opportunities for service. His faith was founded on the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture. Paul was unusual in being both prayerful and practical, able to turn his hand to almost anything; interested in all trades and crafts and able to relate to all ages, sorts and conditions of people. He was not deterred by his cancer diagnosis; on the contrary and typically he regarded this as another opportunity, and he willingly cooperated with Addenbrookes' oncologists in trialling new forms of treatment.

In all his endeavours Paul was supported by Ann and his children Ruth, Jo and Steve, and son-in-law Mark. He in turn was devoted to them and to his two young grandchildren. To all of them we in Kingston extend our sincere condolences.

Paul was an exceptional witness to his faith and to the church, the community of Christ's disciples. Few indeed have responded so willingly to the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the *Gospel of St Matthew*, Chapter 22, verses 37-40:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it,

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

A service for the celebration of the life of the Revd Paul Gildersleve was held at St Helena and St Mary's church in Bourn on the 29th October, with the Revds Geoff Dodgson and Nigel Pearson officiating.

Peter Reynolds



You're Invited!
Jingle & Mingle

Saturday, 20 December
from 3pm at the Village Hall

Come along to the Village Hall from 3pm
for a joyful festive get-together!
Santa will arrive at 4pm with gifts for the children -
don't miss the magic!

District Councillor News

Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan

The draft Joint Local Plan -the first joint plan for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire and supporting evidence has recently been published and gone through Scrutiny Committee of both councils. The information and livestream of the South Cambs meeting on 6th November is at <https://bit.ly/4865Lp6>. The plan, “the most important document you have never heard of”, sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area for the period 2024-2045.

A lot of work has been going on for this plan – in fact 4 years ago was when the first proposals were published. It has been informed by several stages of public engagement and working with stakeholders. The video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa9MrnoELU0> helps people understand what the Local Plan is and its importance. The public consultation is starting from 1 December 2025 to 30 Jan 2026, a period of 8 weeks. Please look out for it on the SCDC website, engage and give your feedback.



South Cambs Christmas Market 7th December 2025

SCDC is hosting an indoor Christmas Market on Sunday 7th December at Cambourne Village College. There will be around 100 stalls from independent small businesses and market holders, presenting you with arrays of wonderful gifts, crafts and edible goods. It is very family friendly so bring the kids along for lots of fun. It will open from 11am to 3pm and entry is free. Please use active travel if possible – walk or cycle.

Village Markets and Shops

Do support your local small businesses, especially at this time of year, as the process of Christmas shopping gets into swing. There’s lots of local foods, arts and crafts and unique gift items. There’s quite a number of markets in our villages and you can find the list and times on the Visit South Cambs website at <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/see-do/markets/> and <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/shop/>.

Housing Provision

It’s been a landmark year of housing achievements in South Cambridgeshire. SCDC received £19 million from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock. This will support energy efficiency upgrades for 610 homes across the district.

Furthermore, 525 affordable homes were built in South Cambs in partnership with housing providers and developers. South Cambs are now building more homes than it is losing through Right to Buy. In addition, the Housing Team achieved a 62%

success rate in interventions that prevented homelessness for 278 individuals and families in 2024/25. To add to this, 75 long term empty properties were brought back into use in the last three years, enabled by the District Council's strategic decision to appoint an Empty Homes Officer in 2022.

Cambourne to Cambridge Busway

The public enquiry for the Transport Works Order started on 16th September 2025 ending on 21st November 2025. You can catch up on details at <https://gateleyhamer-pi.com/en-gb/c-to-c/> and watch the live stream recordings at <https://www.youtube.com/@GreaterCambridgePartnership/streams>

OxCam Growth Corridor and Cambridge Growth Company

SCDC has cautiously welcomed the Government's announcement that they will invest up to £400 million to help solve some of the challenges that hamper inclusive and sustainable growth in the area. The administration acknowledging that national intervention on matters such as water supply, wastewater, power, transport and healthcare are urgently needed, have lobbied successive governments for their help in solving these problems. The Government has announced its intention to consult on setting up a centrally led Development Corporation to help plan, manage, and deliver large-scale development projects in Greater Cambridge (South Cambs and Cambridge City).

Anglian Water (AW) Fen Reservoir Consultation

The third phase of AW's non-statutory consultation for the Fens Reservoir DCO Project commenced on 15 October and will run for 8 weeks until 10 December 2025. Full details available on this website <https://fensreservoir.co.uk/documents/>. The proposed site for the new service reservoir is to the south of Madingley (on the existing Cambridge Water site). It will have an approximate capacity of 30 megalitres (Ml) on a land area of approximately 13 hectares.

Postal Voters

If you have had a postal vote in the past, you will have to re-register if you still want one for future elections starting next May 2026. Government rule changes mean postal vote applications now expire after a maximum of three years (by the third 31st January after you make your application). The deadline to apply to vote by post, or amend an existing postal vote is 5pm, 11 working days before polling day. But you can sort it now by applying online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>, email elections@scambs.gov.uk or call 01954 713000 to ask for a paper form.

Bourn Airfield and Cambourne Community Forum

The quarterly meeting of this forum meeting took place on 12 November 2025. This is where you can find out first hand the development matters going on along this

corridor at Bourn Airfield, Cambourne and Cambourne West, as well as transport issues such as the Cambourne to Cambridge busway and EWR. Find out more on the forum webpage on South Cambs website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-and-people/community-forums/bourn-airfield-and-cambourne-community-forum>.

Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness calendar is highly recommended. It has a monthly theme and really good ideas for daily actions at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar>. Be kind to yourselves.

Regular Updates Don't forget to check out my monthly reports to the parish councils on my blog at www.tumihawkins.org.uk/caldecote-ward/reports for full details on these and more. Follow my Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/itsCouncillorTumi/> where I post up regular public information posts from community groups and other local authorities.

Here to Help You so contact me if you need help with SCDC services (planning, housing, housing repairs, benefits, council tax, bin collection, community services, environmental health, noise nuisance) by phone 07802 323269, email tumi@tumihawkins.org.uk, @CouncillorTumi on Twitter, @tumihawkins.bsky.social on Bluesky or Instagram @cllrtumi.



Here's wishing everyone who celebrates, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2026.

Free environmentally Friendly Menstrual Products

South Cambridgeshire District Council is once again joining the fight to end period poverty by providing free environmentally friendly menstrual products for hundreds more residents.

A funding pot of almost £10,000 has been agreed for the project, which will offer South Cambridgeshire residents a choice of one of three period product packs - either washable pads, period pants or reusable period cups. Hey Girls, a UK-wide social enterprise, will be distributing the packs, and residents can now apply at <https://www.heygirls.co.uk/south-cambridgeshire-home-packs/>. The scheme will run on a 'first come, first served' basis until all of the free products have been provided.

Christmas Safety from Cambs Fire & Rescue

Stay fire safe in your kitchen

More than half the fires crews attend in the home start in the kitchen. Here are some simple safety tips to help you stay fire safe in the kitchen:

- Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – this can easily catch fire.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking.
- Don't store items on top of hobs.
- Take care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.
- Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out – so they don't get knocked off the stove.
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls.
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.

Use a fireguard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers and make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed.

Mill Road Winter Fair

Saturday 6 December, 10.30am to 4.30pm.

Food and drink from around the world at food stalls, cafés and venues, Food Fair in Gwydir Street Car Park.

Live music and performance with music stages and busking.

Local arts, crafts and goodies stalls and work from local artists on display, Open Studios.

Fun things to do with the family like storytelling and magic, magical labyrinth, crafts, a comedy show, hands-on science, and Star Wars Lego and Santa (with reindeer) plus a parade with colourful dancers and musicians.

Guided history walks (£15) and free cemetery tours

<https://www.millroadwinterfair.org/whats-on/>



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Who can add to Christmas?

The perfect motive is that God so loved the world.

The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son.

The only requirement is to believe in Him.

The reward of faith is

that you shall have everlasting life.

Corrie Ten Boom



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Winter Wonderland

- Christmas light trail
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 - Refreshments
 - Music
 - Donkeys and more!

Sunday
14th December
3:30pm to 6:30pm

Milton Hospice,
Church Lane, Milton,
Cambridgeshire,
CB24 6AB

Entry and a visit with Father Christmas - £5

Entry only - £3

For more details visit each.org.uk/events



Registered Charity No. 1069284

Letter home from a Kingston family in Australia in 1848

This article was first published in the magazine in December 2020. I thought it worth submitting it again, given the increasing concerns about the current wave of migration into continental Europe and onwards to the UK. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the flow of people was reversed, with tens of millions, driven by poverty, unemployment and oppression, leaving continental Europe, Britain and Ireland for the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America. It is estimated that 12 million left the continent between 1870 and 1900, including seven million from Germany, alone. An estimated 22.6 million emigrated from the UK between 1815 and 1914 and, by the late nineteenth century, nearly as many people born in Ireland lived outside the country as lived in it.

Kingston was not immune from the pull of this human tide, reflecting the hardships experienced by agricultural labourers in the 19th century. The 1841 population of Kingston was 307 and by 1891 it had fallen to 283, presumably reflecting emigration to towns and the colonies during the great depression of British agriculture in the second half of the 19th century.

This 1849 letter from Adelaide was written by the Pitt family who, according to the 1841 census, were agricultural labourers living in Main Street, Kingston. Baptismal records show they were non-conformists. When this letter was written, the parents, Charles and Ann were 37 and 42 respectively, Charles junior was 18, John was 16 and Ebenezer was 13. The letter seems to have been dictated by the two older sons and probably written down by a local schoolteacher or clerk, as most labourers at that time were no more than semi-literate and certainly would have been unable to use colons, semi colons and Oxford commas. It is in the form of an open letter to a newspaper, but the original recipients were probably one of the two Pitt families still in Kingston in the 1851 census who, presumably, gave it to the local newspapers. If so, the paper would have edited the letter, adding (*near Cambridge*) to the second line. We know that Pain Custerson, a wheelwright, did not accept the invitation to join them as he is recorded in the Kingston censuses until his death. John Jakes (born in Eversden) was in Spalding in the 1851 census but is not listed thereafter, so he may have emigrated. I have added some contextual historical notes after this letter.

**From the Cambridge Independent Press
and
Bedford, Huntingdon and Peterborough Gazette
Saturday June 2nd 1849**

PROSPECTS FOR EMIGRANTS**Felix-stowe, near Adelaide, South Australia**

Nov. 13, 1848

We now take the liberty of writing these few lines, hoping to find you well, as we are at present. We left Kingston (near Cambridge) all in good health, and it was a delightful voyage. We landed safe in Australia and were happy enough when we got on shore. We had a comfortable walk to Adelaide. I was paid 8s per week, and board and lodging; but father saw Mr. Stow, and agreed with him to go altogether. I have been driving two horses to Adelaide. I got wood and hay; from 5s. to 10s. per load for wood, and 30s. to £3. per ton for hay. I was bid 12s. per week, and board and lodgings; but stopped again with Mr. Shaw, myself, John, Ebenezer, and father, for £125 a year, house, garden and milk. William takes the garden stuff to Adelaide. He makes from this 10s. to £1.10s a week. He has a billy-goat and cart; we work billy-goats, they are better than dogs. I, John and Ebenezer have a garden each, and it pays well. If anybody is coming, I would be obliged for them to go to Mr. Bell's, on Peas Hill, and get some cauliflower and brocoli (*sic*) seeds, as many sorts as they can; and some celery seed. I should be obliged to you to send me some of your choice flower seeds, and bulbs of tulips and lillies (*sic*) of different kinds. We will pay the bearer for them and their trouble. Send us as many sorts of flower seeds as you can. We should be very glad to see you with them yourself. If you do come you will never repent of it. Australia is the pleasantest country in the world. About twenty miles from the sea is a beautiful range of mountains; some of them are four thousand feet high; they are about four miles from our house: we have been to them three or four times; we have a waterfall in them – it falls a hundred feet – and when you come we will have another walk in them. If you come you will be able to get thirteen shillings per week and your rations; and you will soon have a farm of your own. You should bring out some Redhill sickles, shovels and forks; they are dear here and not so good. Tell Pain Custerson (he talked of coming out here) of he does come it would be as well for him to bring his tools for his use: and he must bring strong ones for the work is hard. He will get eight shillings a day, journey work. You can buy good milking cows for £2; bullocks from £3. to £4; draught horses from £20 to £40; sheep from 4s. to 22s, pigs for fattening, 13s; fat ditto from £2. to £3; beef, 1d. to 3d. per lb; mutton, 2d. per lb; pork 3d. to 8d. ; bread, 7d.per half loaf; that is dear, it has been 4d. This is the country for fruit. We have plenty of grapes – they grow like currants tied to a stake – and peaches, nectarines, and apricots; we have water melons of different kinds – they are very cooling fruit; we have sweet melons of different kinds, and the pie melon – they grow like cucumbers. We grow cucumbers, vegetable marrows, pumkins, oranges, lemons, loquate, citron and olives – these

are, as you know, hot country fruits. All sort of fruits that grow in England will grow here; they have got them all here but they have not got them to perfection. Corn does very well here; wheat is making 4s. 6d. per bushel; barley, 5s. per bushel; oats, 6s. per bushel; peas and beans do well here. There are two or three different kinds of seeds that we forgot to mention which we want such as poppey and pioney (*sic*). There are wild dogs, kangaroos, oppossums (*sic*), reptiles, snakes, lizards, and birds; there are plenty of cockatoos, parrots, crows, wild ducks, geese, turkeys, cranes, magpies, quails, larks, hawks (very large), and many other sorts of birds; there are very nice fish. After this year we are in hopes that father will get a farm for himself. Give our respects to all who know us, and tell them we would be very happy to see them here. We will never be seen in England again until we have our pockets full of money. A young man came out here about five years ago with seven pounds in his pocket, and he is worth about eighty thousand pounds; he has shares in the Bora Bora mines. A man is not sensible who stops in England when he can get out – working all day like horses, with nothing but a bit of bread to eat, while they may have plenty of roast beef, and work as you like. If you were here we could tell you more than the pen can describe. So no more from your friends.

CHARLES AND JOHN PITT.

Direct your letter to Charles Pitt, Jun., Adelaide, South Australia.

P.S. – We find we have more to tell you. We are never troubled with snow and hard frosts, as you poor frozen fellows are. You arise in the morning at five o'clock, with snow up to your knees; there you are, stamp, stamp, stamp; knocking your hands, grinning, and setting up your barks like hedgehogs a crabbing; but we may lay till seven o'clock if we like, and never see any ice as thick as sixpence, nor any snow. We are often with you at night, but in the morning you are gone. We suppose that G R is your brother by this time. If he is they are just the people to come out here. If any of you do come we have plenty of roast beef for you; we have a barrel of beer in the house, and a bag of sugar to make another when that is done, a tub of pork, a sack of flour, three fat pigs, a billy-goat, two kids, and soon some hope to get a farm; if that is not worth coming for, anything is not. Some people may say the ship will sink; but they need not be afraid of that, for it is a very safe passage; there's

*A life on the ocean wide,
All on the rolling deep,
On scattered waters wide.*

Bring your gun with you, and some shot – shot is worth 5d per lb. You may bring as many seeds as you can, for here good seeds are very scarce. Bring as many kinds of peas as you can; get half a pint of each sort, with their names on them. Father and mother send their respects to Mr. and Mrs. Prior and all inquiring (*cont ..*)



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friends. Mother says if any of you think of coming here, it would be wrong of your parents to try to hinder you; mother would be happy to make you a cup of tea here. Ebenezer sends his kind love to Mr. and Mrs. Custerson and all their family; he says he would like to see Richard and Joseph here. Ebenezer sends his respects to his uncles, aunts and his companions all. William would like to see his uncles and aunts. Our two little sisters say they won't come to England because there are no melons there. Tell John Jakes he must come here; we will make him plenty of broth, and, if that won't do, we will get him a round of beef. His wife said that she would see about coming when they had a letter from father, so we suppose she has made up her mind by this time. Tell our uncle we will write him a letter after hay time. Tell Abraham that if he can beg £25 of the farmers in the village, and come out here, father says he will take no hurt. Write as soon as you can.

Farewell.

Historical context:

I found this fascinating in many ways, not least in how it is a first hand and lucid account of a Kingston family working hard to prosper in a new continent. Some parts are reminiscent of the bragging by the returned emigrant in Cider with Rosie who so enraged the villagers of Slad that they beat him unconscious and left him to die in the snow. The picture painted here of life in Kingston is bleak, so I did a bit of research on what life would have been like there in the 1840s. I discovered that the agricultural labouring class would have been impoverished by three events outside their control. Kingston's common fields had only recently been enclosed (1815 onwards) so that people had lost their rights to farm this land. Instead, they were turned into agricultural labourers working for the new class of landed farmer. The latter had been hit by falling grain prices following the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 which reduced agricultural wages and farm employment. Finally, this has been termed the 'Hungry Decade' in northern Europe, including Britain, characterised by poor harvests and political unrest. As well as poor grain harvests, the failure of the potato crop affected much of Europe as well as Ireland. Therefore, rather than bragging, this letter might be seen as a well-meaning attempt to persuade friends and families to escape from poverty and build a better life in Australia.

The reference to dogs pulling a cart is interesting as this common practice had been banned in the UK in 1841, but was common in France and Low Countries until well into the 20th century. Were dogs still in use for pulling carts in Australia in 1849 and in Kingston before 1841?

Paul Wright

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Kingston Parish Playpark Restoration

The Parish Council plans to start a restoration project on the Playpark. The purpose is to restore the land to the standard that was set when the area was first established.

The activity to be undertaken will include, but not be limited to :

The reduction of the hedges, to the fence height, along the eastern and southern perimeter of the Playpark. The removal of grass, weeds and tree roots from the play park surrounding the Spider Frame. The reduction in height of the willow tree structure. The strimming of the mound containing the Tunnel and the Slide Tube. The pruning of the sole apple tree. The reduction in height, where practicable, of the northern boundary hedge. The return to vertical of the Bridleway sign.

The plan is for the work to be progressively undertaken, on a weekly basis, when it is not raining, every Monday morning between 10:30 and 12:00. If you have the expertise, time and suitable tools, your contribution would be more than welcome.

The Playpark is a valuable asset and deserves to be maintained to the standard set by the founding Parish members. Improvements can then follow for the benefits to all that use the facility, and the nearby residents.

A Note of Appreciation to a Member of the Parish Council

On behalf of Kingston Parish Council and the wider community, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Sue Dagleish for her dedicated service as Parish Clerk, and for her invaluable contributions in her previous roles as Councillor and Chair. Her steadfast commitment and meticulous attention to detail have guided the Council through challenging times, and her legacy has left us stronger and better organised than ever before.

Her support and leadership have made a lasting impression on all who have worked with her, and her efforts have ensured the continued success of the Parish Council. We are truly grateful for the time, energy and expertise she has devoted to our Village.

Sue will be stepping down from the Parish Council following the Annual Accounts Submission and the subsequent Annual Public Meeting in May 2026.

We extend the very best wishes to her for the future, and hope that her family commitments bring happiness and fulfilment. We are confident that she will look back on her time with us in Kingston with pride and fondness.

With sincere gratitude and warmest regards, on behalf of the Kingston Parish Council.

MARK STEELE

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peterreynolds299@btinternet.com
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