

*Kingston Parish & Church
Magazine*



March 2025

Village Diary

Sat 1st March from 6.30pm

Thurs 13th March 1 – 1.30pm

Folk Music and Pizzas in the Village Hall

Library Van at the crossroads

Tuesdays at 10-11am

Wednesdays at 10.30am

Fridays at 10.00am

Boogie Tuesday at the Village Hall

Village Hall Coffee Morning

Pilates at the Village Hall

Wheelie bin collection dates

Thursday 6th March

Thursday 13th March

Thursday 20th March

Thursday 27th March

Black bin

Blue and Green bins

Black bin

Blue and Green bins

Editorial

Brrrrrr. Never mind. February's over and spring is just around the corner so just hang in there. The trees might still be bare, but bulbs are popping up in most gardens.

Various village committees have been busy planning the year's events so watch out for those in upcoming editions. Once again, I make my usual plea for as many of you as are able and interested to get involved in the running of (or participating in) our lovely village. For any newcomers who aren't aware, all members of the public are entitled to attend Parish Council meetings held bi-monthly, but can't speak unless invited by the chair. Do check our two notice boards for dates and information. They are outside the Village Hall and in the bus shelter.

Miki Ellar miki.ellar7@gmail.com 07568 706106

*Cover picture: View from the road near Brook Cottage looking southeast:
courtesy of Simon Draper.*

Vicar's Letter: A new view from where I sit ...

We've moved home recently. One thing that has changed is what I see when I look (above the laptop screen) out of the window from the workspace I am using. I am doing the same things (by and large, day by day) but the outlook is different and that makes me think about what I do, how I try to do it and what else could change.

This happens in many walks of life. The relocations we go through - some chosen, others forced and unexpected - can be challenging, sometimes inspiring and releasing new energy for the tasks of the day; or casting a cloud over everything. So, what can we learn from these new scenarios?

Sometimes it's a mistake to expend ourselves trying to recreate everything we had in the old place. Instead, a key may be taking a bit of time to assess where we are, establish some new patterns and guarding carefully the things that are central to who we are; seeing such transitions as an opportunity even if they have been brought about by things we wished had not occurred. Perhaps it's a sign of advancing years (I prefer to call it maturity!), but I can think of a number of transitions and forced changes in my life where subsequently I have concluded "I am glad about the impact of such and such (whatever it was) has been, although I wish I could have got here by a different route!"

The idea of meditation shaped by the Bible encourages this sort of personal growth. In some traditions 'meditation' is, in essence, the practice of emptying one's mind and creating a vacuum for other things to take the space we have vacated; whereas the Judaeo-Christian tradition fosters the practice of turning our attention to the ways and things of God, typically through reading and reflecting on the sacred scriptures of Old and New Testaments as a premise for making new choices and key decisions.

Typically, we risk falling prey to at least 2 dangers. The first is something splendid and good happens and we are so excited we fail to seize the full array of opportunities it affords. Alternatively, when something bad or difficult erupts, we run around (like headless chickens so to speak), simply trying to survive and get through the crisis in one piece rather than taking stock of what it all can mean. The Church of England is in such a crucible at the present time. Whether it becomes a time of genuine, lasting and healthy renewal or marks the onset of something even more dangerous ... time and decisions being taken now will tell the story.

My point is this: whether we are regular churchgoers or more passive onlookers, the place of the Church of England in our community as much as the nation deserves a bit of our time and input, including prayer and wrestling with timeless biblical perspectives; so that what we value and need from it can be secured for the blessing of generations to come. We could find ourselves saying, a few years down the line ... "We wish such and such had never happened, but we rejoice over where we are even though we wish we could have got here by a different route!"

Nigel di Castiglione, (Papworth Team Ministry)

Kingston Church Services for February

Sunday 16th March Family Service 10.30am

The church is open every day.

Papworth Team Services (FS=Family Service, HC=Holy Communion, MP=Morning Prayer)

Mar 2nd 10.30am FS at Bourn

Mar 9th 8.30am HC at Bourn, 10.30am MP at Caxton, 9.30am HC at Longstowe

Mar 16th 9.00am HC at Caxton

Mar 23rd 10.30am HC at Bourn, 10.30am FS at Caxton, 9.30am MP at Longstowe

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.

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

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

Church cleaning

1 st Sunday	vacant
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

(no flowers during Lent)

Afternoon Tea

Longstowe Village Hall

everyone welcome

following Fridays: 2.00 to 4.00

28 Mar '25

NO tea in April

30 May '25

NO tea in June, July
or August



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Resignations and replacement of Team Clergy

Readers will remember that the Rev'd Stephen Day resigned in August 2023 when he moved to The Three Rivers Benefice (Chippenham, Fordham, Isleham and Snailwell). This left the position of Team Vicar vacant. There was some discussion in the Papworth Team about not replacing Steve and looking at alternative forms of ministry but parishes were unanimous in favouring the appointment of a new Team Vicar: the position was advertised last year but no suitable candidates came forward.

In the mean time our Team Rector Nigel Di Castiglione announced that he would retire in the summer of 2025. The Team's parishes all produced parish profiles which were added together to make a Team Profile for the appointment of a new Rector.

Representatives of the parishes met with our Archdeacon in January. In order to expedite the appointment of a successor The Rev'd Nigel di Castiglione very generously took the step of resigning as Rector on the 5th January and was appointed Team Vicar instead, and he has moved out of the Elsworth Rectory. This has enabled the Papworth Team to advertise last month in the Church Times for a new Rector with a house ready for occupation. Once appointed the new Team Rector will, in concert with the Team Council, appoint

a new Team Vicar. This will bring the 15 parish Papworth Team up to its full stipendiary provision of two full-time priests. Everyone will know that the only way the Team can work is because of the immense contribution of unpaid ordained ministers and all the other volunteers who serve in our parishes. The Rev'd Nigel Pearson remains Kingston's first contact minister and Chairman of Kingston Parochial Church Council: we are greatly indebted to him for his support.



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Folk Music and Pizzas in the Village Hall on Saturday 1 March

On Saturday 1 March, we will be performing a selection of folk tunes at Pub Night in Kingston Village Hall. On our first visit last year, we had yet to agree a name for the band but, keeping things simple, we are now the *Mike Rudge Folk Band*, named after our fiddle player and band leader.

Drawing from a group of 17 musicians, we play English, Scottish and Irish folk music, with occasional numbers from further afield including the USA. Some of our songs are drawn from the Playford compendium, which was first published in 1651, others are more recent including the ballad *Da Slockit Light*, a haunting lament from the Shetland Isles, and *Ashoken Farewell*, a beautiful 1982 composition by Jay Ungar. The song *Johnny Todd* will be familiar as the theme tune to TV's Z cars and many will recognise *Whiskey in the Jar* and *Mairi's Wedding*. We also play several tunes composed by a member of the band and many foot-tapping jigs and reels that are always popular.

Playing in and around Cambridge, including at Wimpole Hall, the mix of instruments varies but often includes fiddles, guitar, flute, mandolin, whistle, piccolo, djembe drum and percussion, accordion and bass.

A wonderful selection of pizzas will be available, as usual, produced on the spot by the Easy family.

Simon Draper

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Parish Council Budget 2025/26

The Parish Council has been working on our budget for the year 2025/26. This year we are faced with large increases in two areas - one in respect of our village grass cutting services and the other being expenditure for the maintenance of trees, ditches and open spaces including the playground. We believe there are quite a few trees in The Orchard that require attention on health and safety grounds as several are growing towards the electrical power lines.

We have however worked hard to reduce costs in other areas to try and offset the effect of these increases. After careful consideration of our expenditure, we have managed to restrict the total overall budget increase for the year to £1377.00. This is helped partly by reduced expenditure on our clerk's salary as Sue Dagleish has been performing the work of the clerk without pay for most of the current year while we advertised for a new clerk. She has now been appointed formally to the role but will continue to work without pay for the next 12 months. Street lighting costs have been reduced following a change in supplier. We have also received an increase in interest payments from our deposit account. We are hoping the cost of the tree works in The Orchard will be lower in future years once we have addressed the issue this year.

The final precept budget figure for the year 2025/26 for a Band D property will be £94.21 which reflects an increase of £9.72. Although higher than the rate of inflation, we feel that this increase is unfortunately unavoidable in view of the considerable challenges we face in respect of grass cutting and other village maintenance costs.



Papworth Team Ministry (C of E)

The Papworth Team Ministry Team Office:

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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 Nigel di Castiglione, Team Vicar – 07770 697240

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KINGSTON IN THE 1891 CENSUS

I reported on Kingston in the 1841 census and thought it would be interesting to see what had changed 50 years on, in 1891. The 1841 population, including the outlying farms of Kingston Wood, Edge Hill and Kingston Pastures was 307. By 1891 the population had fallen to 283, presumably reflecting emigration to towns and to Australia and Canada during the great depression of British agriculture in the second half of the 19th century. It is now a little over 200.

In 1891 life would have been hard for the agricultural labourers who made up the great majority of Kingston's population. The average weekly wage was 13 shillings and sixpence, equivalent to only £56 today, to pay rent and buy food and fuel for often large families. Cottages would have been dilapidated, dark, sparsely furnished and insanitary, and infant mortality in England and Wales peaked in the 1890s at a tremendously high rate of approximately 150 deaths per 1000 births. In 1889 a travelling showman spread diphtheria among children in Kingston, Bourn, Longstowe and Wimpole, with fatal results. Samples of drinking water from wells in these villages in the same year were all found to be polluted.



A romanticised view of late 19th century Cambridgeshire rural life



Reality: Contemporary print of rural poverty in 1890

The census enumerator was Bennet Clear, a grocer who lived in his shop with his wife Mary and daughter Alice in what is now The Thatches in Rectory Lane. He wrote in a neat hand and so his census is easy to read.

No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c, and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of Males/Females	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Employed in Agriculture	WHERE BORN
		No. of Houses	Number of persons living in the House								
36	Tricket Lane	1	3	Alfred L Newman	Head	ill	47	Agricultural Labourer	X		Combs Hardwuch
				Christanna	Wife	ill	38				100 Tipton
				Emma	Daughter		12	Peelton			100 Pepperton
				Alice	Daughter		10				100 Pepperton
				Mary A	Daughter		10				100 Pepperton

In 1841 there were ten inhabitants over 70, the oldest being 75, while in 1891 there were four over 70, of which two were in their eighties. By 1891 the number of males exceeded females by 35, presumably because most working women would have been in domestic service in nearby towns or middle-class households. Apart from the likes of the wealthiest farmers (such as the Hubarts of New Farm) and the rector, there would have been few households able to afford domestic help.

The great majority of males are described as agricultural labourers, working for six farmers (including Sam Clear). These included boys of twelve and upwards, while the oldest was 66. Other agricultural occupations were fruit grower (Joseph Webb), blacksmith (William Freestone), hawker (Elijah Smith), journeyman wheelwright (Pain Custerson), journeyman carpenter (Joseph Mills), hurdle-maker/thatcher (George Prior), stud groom (Eliza Izatt), Kingston Wood bailiff (William Dickinson) and gamekeeper (Henry Humphries). Gone since 1841 are the occupations of gravedigger, shoemaker and basket maker. The former is puzzling, but the latter perhaps reflect greater mobility of goods and people by the late 19th century.

In addition to Bennet Clear's grocery, there was another shop run by Esther Pryor in the eponymous Pryor's Cottage. There were two pubs; the Rose and Crown (now Mead House) run by Peter Jacklin and The Chequers (now White House on Field Road) run by George Custerson. Anne Male was an apprentice dressmaker, living with her family in South Sea House.

The rector was John Cheshire, aged 45, from Surrey who was unmarried and lived in the Rectory with his 33-year-old housekeeper, Martha Custerson. The schoolmistress of the British School (now the village hall) was Eliza Male, aged 32, who had to cope with 65 children aged between four and twelve. She could not possibly have managed on her own and, as there is no assistant listed in Kingston, presumably one came daily from a neighbouring village. In addition to the 65 pupils, there were 18 infants in the waiting.

What is remarkable is the number of family names that survived well into the 20th Century, some into the 1980s: Allgood, Chapman, Clear, Curtis, Custerson, Custance, Jacklin, Lindsay, Haggard and Wayman. In fact, nearly all the population of Kingston came from there or the surrounding villages, with only 18 recorded as born out of the county.

Does the 1891 census show that rural life in Kingston had improved since 1841? My view is that life was much the same for the agricultural labourers who comprised the great majority of the population. Agriculture was still unmechanised and would have been hard and unpleasant. Imagine guiding a plough through wet Kingston clay day after day in winter without the benefit of warm waterproof clothing and boots, followed by the backbreaking work of harvest.

Agricultural wages were still pitiful, worth around £3,000 a year in today's money, and the cottages were much the same as in 1841 – dark, crowded and insanitary. In fact it was only after



the WW1 that these cottages began to be demolished and replaced with more habitable dwellings. By the 1930s demolition was at such a pace that the Cambridge Cottage Improvement Society was formed to preserve and upgrade them. Until a few years' ago Shingle Cottage, opposite the church, had the society's terracotta plaque on the wall. The rural working class diet did not change much in the 19th century, relying on vegetable stews, cheese and bread, with only occasional meat. It is worthy of note, however, that rural recruits in WW1 were found to be sturdier and better nourished than their urban counterparts. Infant mortality was at a peak by the time of the 1891 census, while, in terms of longevity, only 1.4% of the population was over 70, compared with 3% in 1841. The 1870 Education Act was designed to address the issue of widespread illiteracy among the working-class population, but it is hard to imagine much progress being made by 65 children aged between four and twelve in Kingston's small, one-roomed school with one teacher and an assistant. For comparison, 65 is about the number squeezed into hall on quiz night.

The highest stratum of Kingston's social hierarchy, represented by the rector and the wealthiest farmers (such as the Hubarts of New Farm), was little changed in 50 years, except that by 1891 we might add the Male family of South Sea House whose wealth had come from whaling. Between these and the agricultural labourers, in the Victorian social hierarchy, would have been the smaller farmers, publicans, shopkeepers, the school mistress and, perhaps, the wheelwright and carpenter.

Finally, I was intrigued by Pain Custance's given name, but discovered this was not so unusual. Dolores, Morwen, Tristan and Ahmed all mean suffering and, of course Thomas Hardy named Tess's son Sorrow.

Paul Wright

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Papworth Team

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