

# Village Link

Issue 185



December 2022 - January 2023

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ISSUE 185

December 2022 - January 2023

### EDITORIAL

We are exceedingly pleased to announce that All Saints Church and Eyeworth Village Hall have become sponsors of the Village Link. A huge thank-you also goes to our sponsors for their renewing their support for the Village Link, in what are tough times for us all.

We try to support all our local charitable and volunteer organisations as best we can, but our relationship with sponsors goes beyond that. Just let us know how we can help. We also welcome sponsor representatives at our bi-monthly editorial committee meetings. If you would like to attend our next meeting on Wednesday 18th January 2023, please let me know.

Warmest festive greetings to you and your loved ones this Christmas!

- Simon Dear, Editor

*(Cover artwork by Cameron Bubeare used with permission)*

01767 631383

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### PLEASE NOTE

The views contained in the articles within this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher or the members of the editorial committee.

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **DECEMBER 2022**

- 1st Christmas Wreath Workshop, Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall from 7pm, hosted by Wrestlingworth Lower School PTA. Tickets available on-line.
- 7th Traditional Wreath Workshop, Eyeworth Village Hall, 7.30pm. Tickets available on-line.
- 10th Christmas Quiz Night at the Chequers, Wrestlingworth, 8pm
- 13th Women's Institute Christmas Party, Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
- 18th PWWG walk - Home Farm Circuit, starting at 10.30am from the Chequers, Wrestlingworth. Post-walk refreshments by prior arrangement.
- 18th Carols by Candlelight, St John the Baptist Church, Cockayne Hatley at 3pm
- 24th Lessons and Carols, St Peter's Church, Wrestlingworth at 6pm

### **JANUARY 2023**

- 14th Quiz Night at the Chequers, Wrestlingworth, 8pm
- 15th PWWG walk - Top Farm Circuit, start at 9.30am from the Chequers, Wrestlingworth.
- 16th Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Parish Council meeting at Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
- 18th Village Link Committee Meeting, 5.30pm, Chequers Pub, Wrestlingworth
- 19th Wrestlingworth History Society, AGM, Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall, 7.30pm. Talk topic TBA.

**Please check dates and times with organisers, as they may be subject to change.** Further information may be found later in this issue. We aim to include all events of interest to the residents of our villages, and rely on you to let us know. So, please email your diary dates to us at [villagelink@zoho.com](mailto:villagelink@zoho.com).

## **SELLING OFF THE FAMILY SILVER THE COUNCIL-OWNED PROPERTY COMPANY PAID FOR BY YOUR TAXES**

As Independent councillors we often find ourselves uncovering areas of concern within Central Bedfordshire Council; the latest one is a real worry. CBC is funding a housing company, with millions of pounds of public money going into it and none of it exposed to scrutiny in the same way as the council's usual operations.

In 2019, the Conservative CBC administration approved plans for a private housing company, owned by the council, to be called New Vista Homes (NVH) and agreed to delegate authority to a handful of officers and Conservative councillors as to how to set up the company structure.

One of CBC's justifications for the scheme was that "there is a shortfall between the demand for and supply of new affordable homes." But many councillors were also suspicious that CBC had merely decided it wanted to grab some of the profits being made by housing developers. We pointed out that:

- The cost of running such a company would fall on local residents via Council Tax.
- The council did not have the experience of running such a property company.
- The financial risk if house prices fall, lies with the council, and hence local residents.
- Is it really right for the council to endorse building on publicly-owned green spaces? Once this public land is gone, that's it.
- Councillors would not be able to scrutinise the behaviour of such a company if it was a private firm.

and, as CBC admitted:

- "The Board of the company are required to act in the interests of the company and not the Council, which may present a conflict of interest at times."

When the council proposed this project it sought to reassure people by saying there would be business plans we could read.

In recent weeks, we asked CBC how much this company had so far cost the taxpayer. It told us: "To date, the Council has provided a total of £1.1million loan finance to NVH. It is expected that NVH will continue to draw down from this revolving credit facility at upwards of £1million per year until its expiry date of 31 March 2026, at which point it is required to be fully repaid."

Of course, this assumes the company has made any money by then!

However, this isn't all. CBC added "More fundamentally, the Council intends to provide capital loan finance of £1million in 2022/23 for their first housing development. Further capital loan finance is expected to be provided of £17million in 2023/24 and £24million in 2024/25, i.e. a total of £42million."

That's right. A financial exposure in excess of £40million. And there is a considerable risk. CBC wasn't the first local authority to come up with the idea and there have been some very high profile failures elsewhere:

- Croydon Council has had to admit failure with its own housing company and is expected to make a loss of between £26.6million and £52.7million.
- Merton Council has wound up its own housing company with a loss of £500,000.
- Cambridgeshire County Council housing company was loaned £120million by the taxpayer and has since had to sell council land at a loss.

At CBC's Audit committee recently, we asked some pointed questions of council officers. We asked to what extent CBC had looked into high profile failures elsewhere. Officers mentioned they were aware of problems with Croydon Council's housing company but knew of no others!

And last month the council's Planning committee considered the first application from New Vista Homes, a development of 27 houses in Haynes. Local Independent councillor Rebecca Hares spoke out passionately against the idea of "Politically affiliated board members" on New Vista Homes and mentioned "a huge perception of conflict of interest, a perception repeatedly expressed by residents."

While Cllr Hayley Whitaker (Independent, Biggleswade) also criticised the application, she pointed out the proportion of social housing on the proposed development was, at 30%, no more than would have been expected of a

private developer. Cllr Whitaker said "we should be setting an example and building houses for our residents."

Remember those laudable aims CBC set out with. Providing enough social housing? Despite Independent councillors refusing to support the planning application, it was approved by Conservative councillors on the Planning committee.

And who are New Vista Homes? The directors of this company are Eugene Ghent (Conservative councillor, Dunstable) and Carole Hegley (Conservative councillor, Dunstable) as well as two senior CBC employees, and two others who are neither councillors or CBC officers but appear to be employees of New Vista Homes, William McCarthy and Adrian Davey.

CBC also now employs a 'Wholly-Owned Companies Business Manager' at public expense.

And remember those business plans promised at the beginning? We asked whether we could see the business plans for New Vista Homes. and were told "The business plans are not public documents, so I am unable to share those."

To read further updates please drop us an email to get the monthly email newsletter.

- *Adam Zerny and Tracey Wye*  
Central Bedfordshire councillors for Potton,  
Wrestlingworth, and Cockayne Hatley  
adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk - traceywye@icloud.com

## **A HUMBLE APOLOGY**

I learnt a humbling lesson last issue - value your proof readers! Travel commitments left only a few day to complete the edit before the issue needed to go to the printers, and I decided that the very important proof reading step be omitted. The glaring, unfortunate, and embarrassing error that appeared on the cover and in my editorial was totally my fault, and not that of our proof readers. I apologise to all our the readers and our team of volunteers for the mistake, and have allowed more time for checking from now on. *- Simon, Editor*

# **WRESTLINGWORTH & COCKAYNE HATLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **New Councillor**

At its last meeting, the Parish Council welcomed Marc Wilson, who has been co-opted as a new councillor to fill a vacancy. Marc has been asked to take over aspects of social media and the web site.

## **Parish Council Meetings**

Our last meeting was held in the Memorial Hall on 14th November, Draft minutes can be found on the Parish Council website:

**[wrestlingworthandcockaynehatley-pc.gov.uk](http://wrestlingworthandcockaynehatley-pc.gov.uk)**

Our next meeting will be on the 16th January 2023, at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

# **WRESTLINGWORTH MEMORIAL HALL**

Simon Dear will be taking over from Cheryl Roberts as our treasurer, with the transition starting in December. Thank-you Cheryl for the many years of super service you've given the Memorial Hall.

In 2023 the Hall committee are planning to run some fund-raising events in aid of Memorial Hall running and upkeep. Keep an eye out for details. If you would like to help in any way, please contact us.

## **Hall Hire**

The hall is an ideal venue for your children's party or private function, equipped with a fully fitted kitchen containing 2 ovens and 2 hobs, microwave and fridge. The hall has a large screen for presentations, and a full-sized badminton court with special-purpose lighting. A committee room may also be hired separately.

Our rates are very competitive. We welcome local clubs and societies considering using the hall for their regular meetings. For all booking enquiries, please email

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### Contact Us

Rev Liz Lavelle 01767 235071

Wendy Robinson, Church Warden  
01767 631283

For more information see: [www.dwe.org.uk](http://www.dwe.org.uk)  
Follow us on FaceBook group  
**'We Love Eyeworth'**

### Whoever you are, you are welcome here!

All Saints exists to serve the village of Eyeworth and the wider local community. Our regular congregation is made up of people of all stages of life and we hope to provide something for everybody. You are very welcome to join us at a service, reach out to us if you have a pastoral need or make contact if you would like to discuss holding a christening, wedding or another special service at the church.

### Upcoming Events in Eyeworth

#### **Church Services at All Saints Church**

<b>December 11th</b>	3pm	Nativity Service
<b>December 25th</b>	9am	Eucharist Service
<b>January 15th</b>	9.30am	Benefice Eucharist
<b>January 22nd</b>	3pm	All-age Worship

Details of future services will be posted in the 'We Love Eyeworth' Facebook group and on the DWE Benefice website ([www.dwe.org.uk](http://www.dwe.org.uk)).

**[www.facebook.com/groups/289732161550166](http://www.facebook.com/groups/289732161550166)**

Or call Wendy, Abi or Rev Liz Lavelle for more info.

**Wednesday 7th December-** Traditional Wreath Workshop, 7.30pm, Eyeworth Village Hall.

Come along & enjoy some festive fun as the very talented Anna from Anna's Flowers in Potton & Baldock leads us in a workshop to create our very own festive masterpiece to take home. All materials will be provided. £45pp. Drinks & nibbles will be provided. Please bring scissors/

secateurs. In aid of Eyeworth Village Hall.

For booking details, please follow

**<https://www.facebook.com/events/683915036488608>**

*For further information/more details on any of the above, please contact Wendy (01767 631283) or Abi (01767 631864).*

## **WRESTLINGWORTH GOODWILL FUND**

Hello from the Wrestlingworth Goodwill Fund.

When you read this we will have held our Autumn Quiz and would like to thank everyone who supported us on the evening.

Santa has been in touch to say he will be arriving on his sleigh to visit our senior citizens on the week end of 17th and 18th December from 1pm, with Cockayne Hatley, Tadlow, Eyeworth Road and Eyeworth on the Saturday and Wrestlingworth on the Sunday. He will also be greeting village children and might have some treats in his sack for those who have been good. Please watch out for him and come and say hello.

We will be holding our AGM in February and need some new people to step forward to be on the committee. We are losing four amazing and hardworking members at the end of this year, all of whom have been involved for many years. Without new people stepping forward to support the running of the Goodwill we will struggle to carry out the caring and committed help we give to the village. Please consider if you would be willing to help out on the committee and contact us if you would like to volunteer or would like to know more.

Please help us to make a difference.

For those of you who use Amazon you can also help The Goodwill Fund by switching to [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk) where Amazon will donate to us when you shop. Thank you

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- Sarah Burgoine

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## ST PETER'S CHURCH

serves Wrestlingworth and our wider local community. Services take place at 11am every Sunday (\* unless a Special or Benefice service) with refreshments afterwards. Rainbow Rock is a special activity area for children to enjoy.

All are very welcome at any of our services!

### Christmas and Forthcoming Services at St Peter's

Do come and join us, during this season of Advent, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and as we start the new year together.

<b>December 4<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Parish Eucharist
<b>December 11<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Sunday Praise
<b>December 18<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Benefice Family Eucharist
<b>December 24<sup>th</sup></b>	6pm	*Lessons & Carols
<b>December 25<sup>th</sup></b>	10am	*Family Eucharist for Christmas Day
<b>January 1<sup>st</sup></b>	11am	Parish Eucharist
<b>January 8<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Sunday Praise
<b>January 15<sup>th</sup></b>	9.30am	*Benefice Eucharist at All Saints, Eyeworth
<b>January 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	11am	Parish Eucharist
<b>January 29<sup>th</sup></b>	9.30am	*Benefice Eucharist St Mary Magdalene, Dunton

### **COFFEE MORNINGS**

*With a Raffle*

**First Tuesday of every month at 10.30am in church.**

**All are very welcome.**

If you would like to speak with someone about church matters, or to make arrangements for a funeral, baptism, wedding, or other special service; or you have a pastoral need, please contact **Revd. Liz Lavelle 235071**.

For more news and information, please visit our Benefice website ([dwe.org.uk](http://dwe.org.uk)), or "A Church near You".



*(L to R) Christine Elcombe, Lay Reader, Mick Bister, St Peter's Restoration Secretary, Mrs Susan Lousada, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Revd Brian Wilcox, Trustee of the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation, Revd Liz Lavelle, Priest in Charge, The Venerable Dave Middlebrook, Archdeacon of Bedford, H.Martin Stutchfied, Chairman, Francis Coales Charitable Foundation, Tony Elcombe, Lay Reader*

St Peter's church was delighted to be awarded the Francis Coales Memorial Chalice at a special presentation service in October. This is in recognition of the long restoration work that has taken place over four decades, starting in 1987. Whilst all members of our church community have been involved in the many projects over the years, Restoration Secretary Mick Bister was particularly praised for his 'indefatigable' dedication to making St Peter's what it is today, a beautifully-maintained and restored architectural gem, a beacon of our local community and a fitting place for worship as we bring praise and thanks to God.

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Please bring **donations to Sunday Praise Services** which are on the second Sundays of December and January.

### CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for volunteers to sweep leaves at St Peter's, Wrestlingworth. The church footpaths need to be kept clear of leaves and debris to be safe for our elderly parishioners. Our current volunteers take turns on a rota, so you will need to be able to sweep once a month. If you can help, please contact me,

- Bob Moore, phone 631557



# COCKAYNE HATLEY VILLAGE CHURCH IS CRUMBLING!!!

As is obvious from these photos the masonry on the south side of the church and the tower window is crumbling and badly needs repair. Cockayne Hatley Parochial Church Council had sufficient funds to cover the essential repairs but Covid lockdowns prevented the start of the work and since then costs have escalated beyond our means to cover all the necessary work. The estimated cost for the first two phases of work is now £100,000!!

The most urgent work will commence shortly and by the time you receive this issue of the Village Link, the scaffolding should be in place.

We are applying for grants to try to complete all the work but we may have to postpone completion of some of the work until we can guarantee the necessary funds.

If you are able to help to preserve this historic church for the future, you could make a donation to the building fund

(cheques payable to Cockayne Hatley PCC and sent to John Foulkes, Treasurer, at Church Farm Lodge, Cockayne Hatley, SG19 2EA) or you could leave a donation in the church box.

If you would like more information about the repairs to the church, please contact Christine Armistead, Church Warden, (01767 260 809) or John Foulkes (01767 631 443).

In the meantime, we have planned have our first **Carols by Candlelight service** after the lockdowns. This will be on **18 December** so please join us at 3.00pm for a traditional concert of carols followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Our **Christmas Day** service will be Holy Communion at 9 am.

The normal pattern of services (9 am on the second Sunday, 3 pm on the fourth) will resume in January.



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## BECAUSE BEER WON'T DRINK ITSELF!

When John and Janice Pritchett took on the March Hare BrewPub in the heart of Dunton in 2010, it was in a very bad state. They have spent the next decade slowly restoring it, balancing their efforts with running the pub and serving their local community. John and Janice have created a friendly traditional community pub that is a haven for local real ale, supporting local producers of beer and cider. John has received many Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) accolades for his efforts, most recently becoming Bedfordshire CAMRA County Pub of the Year 2022.



Before arriving in Dunton, John worked as a design engineer, and was a keen, prizewinning amateur brewer. Redundancy created the opportunity to pursue his life-long passion of brewing. They bought the pub hoping to brew his own beer there someday. But more important matters had to be dealt with first.



In April this year John started brewing his own beer at the March Hare BrewPub. It was the culmination of 15 months planning. The brewery was shipped from the U.S.A. and installed in the kitchen. The word 'bijou' is apt, emphasising quality not quantity, with small batches comprising just 18 gallons. It took a bit of adaptation to get the beer he likes - traditional beers, golden hoppy ales and stouts. They have been very well received.

John is passionate about his craft, and was keen for me to sample some. The Driver Jackson's Shunters Yard Bitter was exceptionally good, with a nice strong hopped finish. Others include a Mr Sedgewicke's Stout, a popular

Bitter No. 1, BGB (British Golden Beer), Triple Star and a special Santa's Sack for this Christmas. You'll have to ask John about their names.

With 18 brews under his belt so far, I wondered what is next for John and Janice. They have Christmas events coming up, then their Winter Beer Fest over the last weekend of January. John would like to run whole-day brewing experience days where you get to brew a beer of your choosing, enjoy a 'real ale lunch' and take home a dozen bottles of your creation. As the brewery becomes more established, they hope to exhibit at beer and food festivals.



March Hare BrewPub Opening Hours

<b>Monday</b>	6pm-11pm	<b>Tuesday &amp; Wednesday</b>	Closed
<b>Thursday</b>	6pm-midnight	<b>Friday</b>	5pm-midnight
<b>Saturday</b>	3pm-midnight	<b>Sunday</b>	1pm-10.30pm

**TRADITIONAL WREATH WORKSHOP**

**WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER  
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## IT'S A PUZZLEMENT

I have a confession to make. I have become an addict, but I don't need counselling or rehab - just common sense really. I have developed a compulsion to complete a jigsaw.

It all started at the Goodwill Fete in September when I handed over £4.00 to the Bric-a-Brac stall for two large jigsaw puzzles which I thought would keep my grandchildren busy during the winter. One was 3ft. long and educational, covered in garden birds, the other a pretty view of a cottage at Stratford Canal.

To make sure none of the pieces were missing, I tested 'the birds' first. Taking up half of my dining room table it took 2 days (on and off) to complete. The other was fiendishly difficult and took almost a week, far too complicated for 6 and 8 year olds, so I will pass it on to some other Bric-a-Brac stall, or charity shop. I shan't buy another jigsaw puzzle for a while. Yes, they gave me hours of entertainment and frustration, but I need to get some housework done. They are terrible time wasters!

- Carolyn Driver



## OUR BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING

*Nicola Adkins, of the Parish Walking & Wildlife Group, reviews the group's activities this year and looks forward to 2023.*

We were delighted to be able to operate a full programme of walks this year, after two years of effective stasis. Local monthly morning walks, starting at The Chequers pub, High Street, Wrestlingworth, on the third Sunday of the month, took us up and around Cockayne Hatley to hear the wonderful dawn chorus on International Dawn Chorus Day, around Wrestlingworth on the Wrestlingworth Loop, and up to Manor Farm via the Water End path to the Nature Reserve. Further afield we visited the rare and awe-inspiring display of Pasque Flowers at Therfield Heath and the over-wintering birds at Paxton Pits. We pond-dipped at RSPB Fowlmere, identified rare fungi species in Gamlingay Wood, and appreciated our beautiful summer butterflies on a local walk in the height of our summer heatwave in July.

The pond at the Nature Reserve, accessed via the Water End path off the High Street heading towards Sutton, almost dried out under the onslaught of the extraordinary drought this year, and work is in hand to repair the pond liner, and improve the hide, which still attracts birders from near and far according to the recording book there. With funding from the 'Plant a Tree' initiative to celebrate HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we will be planting a new hedge to fill a gap on the Reserve boundary and, thanks to a grant from the Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Parish Council, we will be weather-proofing and installing guttering on the hide, and adding a new bench near the information board so that visiting walkers can 'rest a while'.



**Parish  
Walking &  
Wildlife  
Group**



*Walkers gathering around to identify a rare fungi find in Gamlingay Wood in October*

... continued on page 22 ...

## FINAL REPORT FOR 2022

The evening after our late Queen's State Funeral and the end of National Mourning, the WI went ahead with their Open Meeting. Following a minute's silence in memory of the Queen (she had not only been our monarch for 70 years but also a WI member) and Rosemary leading us in the National Anthem, I introduced David Tall and his wife Roslyn, who had come to talk about their "Life in submarines". He traced his career in the navy, following his elder



*Success for our Darts Team!*

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brother into the service, to eventually being given command of a nuclear submarine. Roslyn gave her perspective of what it was like to run a home, raise children and hold a job as a teacher - all while being a navy wife, sometimes with no contact with her husband for weeks, not even knowing where he was. An occasional “Familygram” was allowed—but what can you say in 28 words?

I surprised him by telling him I had been down a submarine TWICE. Once - as a 10 year old at a Portsmouth Navy Day when we went into the claustrophobia of a sub. as well as over the huge aircraft carrier ‘Ark Royal’. The second time was this year down into ‘HMS Ocelot’ in the Chatham Historic Dockyard. An amazing experience.

Eight of us attended the Sandhills Group Meeting hosted by two Biggleswade WIs held in Sutton Village Hall when we were able to socialise, exchange ideas and be entertained by David Tomkins a magician/ventriloquist who interacted with the audience to hilarious effect.

Our Darts Team of Sarah Burgoine, Jackie McDonald and Sue Winwood were Runners-up in the Final Competition of Bedfordshire Federation, with help from Jan Turner and Lilian Jones during the league games. Congratulations – and a trophy to go with it!

Our Annual Chilli Evening was a great success. Following Sheila Brown’s accident in her garden, she was still able to lend her catering experience to the Committee who put on a meal up to her standards, we hoped.

In November we are having a go at Indoor Curling – no ice, just wheels apparently – and are going on a trip to the Cambridge Arts Theatre to see a matinee performance of “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel”, stopping off at Croydon on way home for a meal. Then, my goodness, it will be Christmas Party Time - don’t forget it is on second Tuesday of December. No formal meeting in January but another meal out – we will all be on a diet next year.

The committee sends you all our Christmas Greetings and hope you have a peaceful New Year and that we have finally kicked Covid into touch!

*- Carolyn Driver*

## **PWWG Update (continued from page 19)**

After many years of expertly steering the activities of the group, Robin Barratt stepped down as Chair following his move to Bury St Edmunds. While the group struggled initially to follow his 'hard act', we were very pleased finally to appoint a new Chair (Jim Hawkins) and Treasurer (Karen Greenaway) in August..

A full programme of walks for 2023 will be published in the next (Feb/March) issue of the Village Link but meanwhile please join us on our December and January walks (details below). All are welcome!

### **Sunday December 18th Manor Farm Walk**

Meet at The Chequers at 10.30am for a short local walk around Manor Farm via the Nature Reserve, finishing at The Chequers for a bacon baguette and some Christmas cheer. Baguettes (£4 each) must be ordered and paid for in advance. Please contact Nicola Adkins 07720 294929 to order.

### **Sunday January 15th Top Farm Walk**

Meet at The Chequers, Wrestlingworth at 9.30am for a walk of approximately 8 miles, taking in the magnificent views around Top Farm and part of the ancient Clopton Way.

## **QUIZ NIGHTS AT THE CHEQUERS**

Quiz Night is once again a regular fixture at The Chequers, Wrestlingworth, taking place the second Saturday of each month. Upcoming dates are:

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 8pm**

*Our Christmas Quiz! So wear your festive jumpers. The Best Dressed Table will win a free round of drinks.*

### **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 8pm**

So why not put together a team with friends and come along? Entry is just £2.50 per person, which includes a raffle ticket. All profits go to support the Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall. *Each quiz is hosted by volunteer quizmasters. We welcome new quizmasters - if you want to give it a go, contact Jim Hawkins ([JimHawkins@metronet.co.uk](mailto:JimHawkins@metronet.co.uk)).*



# WRESTLINGWORTH HISTORY SOCIETY

On November 17th members and guests logged in for a fascinating presentation via Zoom entitled 'Kindred: Neanderthal Life, Love, Death & Art'. The talk was given by archaeologist and author Dr. Rebecca Wragg-Sykes of Liverpool University.

Since the first discovery of this close species to ourselves in the German Neander Valley in the mid 1850s, much has been learned of how they lived. Evolving from a common ancestor with homo sapiens some 500 thousand years ago Neanderthals spread mainly across Europe with some evidence of reaching Eurasia.

The latest archaeological techniques are shedding new light on their social lives, including possible death rituals, stone and bone tool making, and appreciation of colour (from mixed pigments covering shells). And the sensitivity of DNA sequencing technology has advanced so much that today paleogeneticists can find Neanderthal DNA in the very dust from caves.

These hunter-gatherers died out some 40,000 years ago. However, there is evidence that they inter-bred with humans and some Neanderthal DNA continues today in human beings.

## **2023 Meetings**

The Wrestlingworth History Society promotes local and general history and arranges presentations throughout the year by learned speakers and local historians on topics of local interest.

We meet on the third Thursday of every other month. Forthcoming meetings are announced on the 'We Love Wrestlingworth and Cockayne Hatley' Facebook group, through our email distribution list, and on flyers around village noticeboards. All are welcome to attend. There is a small charge for non-members. For more information, contact: [whssec@hotmail.com](mailto:whssec@hotmail.com)

*Next Meeting - AGM - 19th January 2023*

The Village Link Committee were saddened when David D'Ath stepped down in November, having been our treasurer for nearly 3 years, and an active colleague and good friend throughout. It was great fun working with you, David. Thank you for all you did, and good luck for the future.

## WRESTLINGWORTH SCHOOL PTA

We are now into our second half term and counting down the days until Christmas. This term is notoriously busy for the children, parents and most definitely for the teachers! Thank you to everyone who supported us last academic year to raise money to replace the old and tired reading books. The children have been graced with new sets of reading material which support their development and are more representative of the families they belong to.

This year, the focus of our fundraising is musical instruments which are in desperate need of an upgrade! The children would really benefit from the replacement of many of the old and tired instruments as we support their creativity and passion for music. We will shortly be launching a crowdfunding page if anyone feels able to help us.

Have you heard about our school lottery? Go to

**<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/wrestlingworth-lower-school>**

to find out more. Your School Lottery run a weekly draw which supports our fundraising. I've definitely had more luck on this lottery than any others I've played and there are other prizes up for grabs too!

So far this term we have enjoyed 'pennies in the playground' where children bring along coins to create pictures. Soon we have the children favourite campfire event where they enjoy roasting marshmallows, eating hotdogs and singing.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December we are hosting a Christmas Wreath Workshop at the village hall from 7pm. The cost of this is £40. Please join us for a night of festive crafting and mulled wine **<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/bedfordshire/wrestlingworth-memorial-hall/christmas-wreath-making-workshop/2022-12-01/19:00/t-mojaazy>**



On 3<sup>rd</sup> December we hope to have a family games afternoon. Please check our Facebook for details.

Everyone on the PTA wishes you all a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

*- Anna Hines*

## **A WALK AROUND WRESTLINGWORTH, REVISITED (PART 4) BY BRIAN BUCK**

Before we get on with the next stage of the walk, I would just like to thank our editor Simon Dear and also James Bonfield for kindly providing more information about the field behind Church Farm, known locally as Butchers Knolls, in the last edition of the Village Link. I am very grateful to you both.

In that edition after leaving Butchers Knolls and passing the hen house we reached Church Farm on the right. Since I last wrote there have been fewer hens to see here and I suspect that this has much to do with the “bird ‘flu” which is going around at present.

Anyway, as the footpath ends so you find yourself in Potton Road. Turn right here and walk up the gentle slope and as the road bears right turn off into Mill End, just past the red ‘poo’ bin! Then walk up the track, past the well-kept houses on your right, which soon becomes a single track pathway and which is very pretty in summer as it passes under an archway of trees. But at its conclusion the landscape changes dramatically as you enter a field and you are almost overwhelmed by the views now available to you, especially when you can spot Eyeworth in the distance.

One thing I have come to realise and appreciate on my walks through the fields surrounding the village is how the farmers rotate the crops they plant in them, especially as they are no longer allowed to burn stubble. Instead, they either allow fields to remain fallow (not re-sown) for a year, or they plant crops in them which will reinvigorate the soil or provide animal feed. So, when you see a field in which nothing appears to be happening for a long while after harvesting is complete, then do not become impatient, as something may be going on under the soil that you do not know about. For example, the appearance of a crop of peas (animal feed) took me completely by surprise last year!

Turn left here and follow the footpath round the edges of the field, noting that in season you can find some edible damsons or (inedible but good for gin) sloes in the hedgerows. Soon you will see a sign which will take you to the Chequers pub if you wish. If not then continue along a track, which can be very muddy and wet in winter. Then just before you come out onto a more substantial track you will see a sign pointing the way to Lousy Bush Nature

Reserve. I have partially covered this part of the walk in a previous edition of this magazine but in a future edition I will do it more justice by way of a separate article, as it is a lovely place to visit. So, at this point of the walk, instead of following the field round, leave it and walk on less than ten yards and you will come out onto a lighter coloured gravel track, leading up to what I call the White House. Cross over this track and go through a swing gate into another field.

When I first started my walk's, I used to love going through this field as the grass was long and it also contained a lot of unusual (to me) wild flowers. But these days the cows or sheep seem to munch their way through it all more regularly. I do not know if it applies to this field or not but I have been told that one lady finds it easier to feed her sheep by renting a field to graze them in rather than buying food for them. Of course, the landowner benefits by not only getting the rent, but having their grass trimmed for nothing!

Anyway, continuing on with the walk, head off down in the direction of a thatched cottage and as you do so you will see a couple of fields which usually contain horses, one of which contained a very friendly one on one of my recent walks. On one of my walks, I got talking to a local resident about her horses and as we talked, we got chatting about blacksmiths. Did you know that it takes four years to train up a new blacksmith? At the bottom right-hand corner of the field, go through a swing gate and then cross the village brook, which has been near enough devoid of water due to the lack of rain during the summer. Only the recent rains have seen it start to fill up again. The bridge here is safe now after undergoing repairs.

Once over the brook you immediately have to turn right, as there is no other option, but before you almost immediately turn left, note an old tree stump, covered in fungi. It is so pretty to look at. Then turn left as you work your way round the back of the garden to the thatched cottage. Here I noted that on 16 January 2021 I saw the first flowering snowdrops of the year. They flowered a bit later this year.

Join me again next time when I reveal more finds from my walks around the village.

*If you have any comments, additions or corrections to make then please contact me at [brianbuck66@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brianbuck66@yahoo.co.uk) and I will add them to a forthcoming article. Also, if you give me permission then I will acknowledge your contribution by name. Thank you.*

# **TRIAL AND ERROR COOKING BY GORDON BLUE (ASSISTED BY EGON RONNIE)**

## **Mincemeat Cake (serves many!)**

### **Ingredients:-**

8 oz of self-raising flour	3 eggs
5 oz sugar	5 oz margarine
3 oz raisins	1 lb jar of mincemeat
Flaked almonds - optional	

### **Method:-**

Firstly, mix the margarine and the sugar together so that it looks like a creamy paste. Then mix in the eggs until everything looks the same colour! Next add the self-raising flour. It is done when you cannot see any traces of flour left. Then stir in the mincemeat and finally the raisins. Pour (or help!) the mixture into a cake tin, lined with greaseproof paper and if desired, sprinkle some flaked almonds over the top before cooking. Then cook at 160 degrees for an hour and three-quarters.

### **Egon Ronnie comments:-**

This was wonderful Gordon! It had a lovely brown colour once cooked and it tasted almost like a Christmas cake!

## **WANT TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON DIGITAL HEALTH?**

Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health and Care Partnership is developing a strategy for digital health and care services.

The use of technology and digital access to services was increased due to the Covid Pandemic and many of the ways people receive treatment or advice have changed and may have been supported by digital or remote services.

We would like to understand how residents feel about digital health and care services, what they think works well and what barriers there may be to residents being able to access services in this way.

We want as many people as possible to share their views and help shape services across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, so please complete the survey at

**<https://eu.surveymonkey.com/r/BLMKDDigital>**

The survey runs until Thursday 12 January 2023.



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#### Wrestlingworth

Millennium Garden bus shelter  
opposite 78 High Street, SG19 2EP

## TRADES DIRECTORY

NAME	TRADE / BUSINESS	CONTACT
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<b>Wrestlingworth, Eyeworth &amp; Dunton Churches</b>	Revd. Liz Lavelle - Priest in Charge Nicola Adkins - P.C.C. Vice Chair (St. Peter's) Wendy Robinson - Church Warden (All Saints)	01767 235071 01767 631789 01767 631283
<b>Church and Poor's Fund</b>	Liz Teague	01767 631628
<b>Wrestlingworth &amp; Cockayne Hatley Parish Council</b>	James Kirkpatrick - Chair Kevin Puddephatt Lorna Chapman Andy Ewens Julie Dix Marc Wilson Catherine Dear - Clerk to Parish Council	01767 631767 07950 691905 07858 776514 07740 553229 01767 631480 07793 465062 01767 631383
<b>Central Beds Council</b>	Adam Zerny - Independent Ward Councillor Tracey Wye - Independent Ward Councillor	01767 261319 01767 261319
<b>Wrestlingworth Lower School</b>	Nancy Sheehan - Head Teacher Kelly Whitfield - Friends Chair	01767 631249 07834 614613
<b>Women's Institute</b>	Lesley May	01767 631259
<b>Conservative Association</b>	Doreen Gurney	01767 680395
<b>Wrestlingworth Goodwill Fund</b>	Sarah Burgoine - Chair Margret Pantry - Doctor/Hospital Transport	01767 631415 01767 631548
<b>Wrestlingworth Memorial Hall</b>	Jim Hawkins - Chair Edwina Parker - Bookings	01767 631736 07808 125613
<b>Eyeworth Village Hall</b>	Wendy Robinson - Bookings	01767 631283
<b>Parish Walking &amp; Wildlife Group</b>	Jim Hawkins - Chair Nicola Adkins - General Enquiries	01767 631736 01767 631789
<b>Wrestlingworth History Soc.</b>	Connie Walker - Coordinator	01767 631450
<b>Badminton Club</b>	Jim Hawkins	01767 631736
<b>The Chequers Public House</b>	Dave and Carin Moore	01767 631818
<b>Village Link</b>	Simon Dear - Editor Geoffrey Coan - Treasurer Carolyn Driver - Distribution Coordinator	01767 631383 01767 631260 01767 631350
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## EMERGENCY (24 HOURS)

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Electricity (UK Power Networks)	0800 783 8838
Water (Anglian Water)	0800 145 145
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	0300 300 4439
Potton Surgery	01767 260229

## USEFUL NUMBERS

Potton Surgery (Appointments)	01767 260340	Police (Control Room)	01234 841212
Samaritans	01234 211211	National Rail Enquiries	08457 484950
CBC Dog Warden	0300 300 8302		

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