

Together



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

December 2020 - January 2021

Dear friends,

As I write this, Joe Biden has just been elected President of the US. He and his running mate Kamala Harris are, by all accounts, decent people of integrity, compassion, and faith. Mr Biden has been through terrible personal tragedy and cares for those in need. He quoted from Ecclesiastes at the time of his victory, which says 'there is a time to heal', and the hope is that he will bring reconciliation to a divided nation. There are high hopes too that a vaccine is on its way to defeat Covid-19. Who knows what other developments there may have been by the time you read this. So there is light at the end of the tunnel and hope for the future.

Advent, leading up to Christmas, is the season of hope. For centuries Israel longed for a Saviour, and when he came in the person of Jesus he brought 'good news of great joy for all people'. So Christmas is the festive season of goodwill. But we don't know yet to what extent we'll be able to celebrate. Maybe a 'space' after 2nd December to shop and boost the economy, and a couple of days to see loved ones over Christmas, and then a further shutdown to recover. Hope is one of the great themes running through the Bible, and it lasts, said St Paul, along with faith and love. Billy Graham was right when he said, 'I've read the last page of the Bible, and everything turns out good in the end!' – 'Keep the faith,' said Joe Biden.

Just as the Covid lockdown may have given us more time for quiet reflection and an opportunity to take stock, may a less commercialised Christmas (for once) bring us back to its real meaning, that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.' Holding on to that fills us with a hope that none of the dreadful things we've been going through during 2020 can rob us of. So let me wish you a happier New Year in the words of St Paul's prayer: 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit', and lift our spirits.

Take care,

Graham Bell



All enquiries about Church Services to Churchwardens:

Cranford

Brian Keech ~ 01536 330232

Grafton Underwood

Rog Hatlem ~ 01536 771279

Paul Harris ~ 01536 330567

Twywell

Sean Flanagan ~ 01832 733569

Michael Hurst ~ 01832 733926

Slipton

Tony Fraser ~ 01832 734059

Parish Representative

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

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

Cranford – Jo Fry

Grafton Underwood – Rob Donnelly

Twywell – Cathy Steele

Slipton – Liz Heath

Many Thanks

Diocesan News

Not just waiting

I love the 'not-yet' seasons of the year, Advent and Lent, when we look forward (sometimes patiently) to the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Many of us can sympathise with the child who prayed "Lord, please give me patience and give it to me right now!"

Waiting is unpopular. We desperately try to guess which checkout queue is moving fastest. We begrudge the extra time spent waiting for late buses, trains or people. We loathe being told to "just hold" on the telephone.

Yet God's people are frequently encouraged to wait upon God, to look for the signs of his work in the world, to hope and pray and strive for this world to be more like his Kingdom. Indeed, Jesus himself was acclaimed as the Christ, "the one we've been waiting for", the fulfilment of centuries of longing.

In Lent and Advent, I always try to read at least one more reflective book, sometimes as part of a group. This year, please let me commend two in particular – *The Glorious Journey* by Liam Kelly, based upon the film *The Two Popes*, and *Frequencies of God*, written by one of our own clergy, Carys Walsh, based on the poems of R S Thomas.

Carys is Assistant Priest at Saints Peter and Paul, St Michael's and All Saints' Churches in Kettering, and our Curate Training Officer. The *Church Times* has said her book "should become a classic" while Mark Oakley (Dean of St John's College, Cambridge) has commended it for being "infectious, poignant and inspiring". I agree with them both – it's a mind-enlarging and soul-refreshing read.

The book offers five weeks of daily poem-based reflections focused on waiting, accepting, journeying, birthing and seeing, which lead us through the anticipation of Advent to the celebration of Christmas.

In one helpful passage, Carys reflects that in waiting upon God "we may find ourselves discovering that there is a tightrope of desire and longing to be walked, which calls out from us a depth of yearning for God, and demands focus and surrender as we teeter between longing for God to speak and knowing that as we wait, we know God more".

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus first coming into our world, and meet him in our daily lives, may we all come to know God more this Advent.

With my prayers and best wishes for a holy and inspiring Advent.



+John
Bishop of Brixworth

Cranford News

The most important and most widely welcomed news has been the award of the British Empire Medal to Brian Keech. We do not know what was said to bring this about, but someone no doubt mentioned his 32 years as churchwarden, his annual *Ride and Stride* (this year's total has now topped £400) and his tireless contribution to the community, not least through his verge-clearing activities. We hope that the pandemic will have abated enough for his family and friends to be able witness the presentation of the well-deserved medal on a suitable occasion in 2021.

Less welcome was the announcement at the end of October that we were to go into lock-down again and that, after four months of regular Sunday services, we could no longer join together in worship.

During those four months Sue Craxford and the team have kept the church wonderfully (and safely) clean while members of the congregation have led most of the services and (even) given talks. One exception was the Harvest Festival on Sunday 20th September when the Reverend Doug Spenceley, in his sermon, gave a graphic demonstration of the disproportionate amount of the world's food that is consumed in the rich countries and how little in the poor. Following the service we were able to take a substantial donation of produce to the Kettering Food-bank. On Sunday 11th October, Charles Wide QC, the lay reader of Glapthorn Church, took our service and on Sunday 18th we welcomed the Reverend Graham Bell back to our church for a celebration of Holy Communion; the novel service (bread brought to us in our pews and wine for the minister only) had attracted a congregation of nineteen and was every bit as inspiring as the more traditional form.

In August Sandra Naylor arranged for the local Wildlife Trust to visit the churchyard and following their report we have started to make the churchyard even more friendly to wildlife. We have set aside an area for wild flowers and Sandra and her team have planted Yellow Rattle seeds to get it going. Plans are afoot to install bird-boxes and bug hotels, and the School will be involved with the project in the Spring when life – we hope - returns to normal. Meanwhile the valiant work of the mowers and hoe-ers, Jeremy Craxford, Brian Keech, David and Jenny Butler, and Andy Forbes has helped to keep the churchyard a special place to visit.

Since the last edition of *Together* in which we reported the August funeral of Michael Guest, his sister, Rosemary Mackay, has told us a little more about the family. They had moved in the 1930s into the Manor House where Michael was born and they remained there until about 1959 when they moved to Barton Seagrave. Rosemary attended the village school which gave her what she considered to be an excellent educational grounding, contributing to a "lovely childhood in Cranford with many happy memories".

The funeral of Mary Shakeshaft was held in St Andrew's Church Kettering on Tuesday 20th October. Mary's family were well known in the village. She was the daughter Charlie and Maud Newell; Charlie was for some years a churchwarden of St John's and, as tower captain, led the bell-ringers. Mary was, among other things, an accomplished seamstress, teaching at

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Kettering Technical College and sending a number of Cranford brides and bridesmaids up the aisle in her creations. A number of people from Cranford and further afield had gathered in the churchyard when the family arrived for the burial conducted by the Reverend Nick Wills. It was a solemn and moving ceremony, but we know that Roy Shakeshaft, the President of the Kettering Area Motor Club, was pleased to see Richard Barlow's grandson's 1934 Austin 7 parked on Church Lane in tribute.

In October the School produced a highly imaginative online celebration of harvest. On the 21st a member of staff brought two children to the church to video-record Brian Keech and John Ross reading an introduction and a prayer. Later they filmed each class singing a harvest song and the Reverend Doug Spenceley saying a closing prayer. The final product was uploaded to YouTube so that all the parents could join in the celebration. This may seem like a miracle to some of us, but to the children it appears to be almost second nature.

For our normal Remembrance Services a barbed-wire, wood and poppy installation is placed below the war memorial in the church. This year, with services suspended, we moved the installation to the churchyard and on Sunday 8th November after the two-minute silence, laid a wreath of poppies on it before a reading of John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*. A surprising number of people seem to have taken their morning walks at the same time and nearly thirty people stood in the road or in the churchyard to remember the dead. There was a collection for *Combat Stress* (the veterans' mental health charity).

We held our annual and routine PCC meetings by Zoom on Wednesday 11th November. We welcomed three new members – Jim Arkell, Bridget Jones and Sarah Simeons – and noted the departure of Shelagh French and Sue Craxford; Shelagh has been a most conscientious minutes secretary and Sue has diligently maintained the electoral roll for a number of years. We are most grateful for their contributions and pleased that they continue to be involved in the life of the church, notably with Sue looking after the cleaning rota. After some months in the wings and in the absence of any other candidates, John Ross was elected churchwarden in succession to Brian Keech; Brian has nobly agreed to remain on the PCC.

The PCC now looks like this:

Chairman	Sir John Robinson
Churchwarden	John Ross
Treasurer	Joanne Fry
Fabric Officer	Jim Arkell
Correspondence	Sarah Simeons
Safeguarding	Neil Bradley
Flowers & Churchyard	Sandra Naylor
Minutes	Bridget Jones
School Liaison	Buffy Ross
Member	Brian Keech
Member	Vernon Forbes

We are pressing ahead with plans to repair the roof and improve the alarm system; funds permitting, we hope to complete the work by the spring.

The lockdown has meant that church has only been open for private prayer on Sunday mornings during November, but we plan to hold our next service at the regular time of 11am on Sunday 6th December. Looking a little further ahead, we hope to be able hold two Candle-lit Carol Services in December on the evenings of the 13th and the 20th in place of the 11am service; Graham Bell will be leading our service on Christmas Day at 11am. We will set up a booking system for these three services. Our Sunrise Service on New Year's day will also be unusual this time: following the *rendez-vous* at the church at 7.30am and the hill-top service, we will enjoy our breakfast up there in whatever the elements may throw at us.

The clean-up of Cranford's approach roads planned for spring 2020 did not take place because of the coronavirus shutdown. A number of villagers have, of course, continued with their daily or weekly litter-picking during the year, but we are planning a larger-scale pick-up for the weekend of Friday 26th February to Sunday 28th February 2021 when the winter die-back will allow us to do a thorough job. Please make a note of these dates in your diary. A further reminder with detailed arrangements will appear in the February/March issue of *Together*.

Cranford WI

It's been a very difficult time for us all as we have been unable to meet at all during 'Lockdown'. In the spirit of the WI we have kept calm and are carrying on. Our committee meetings are conducted by Zoom as are our general meetings. We have all learnt new skills, determined to still keep in touch and support each other.

The general Zoom meeting in November was very interesting as we had a presentation from 'The Cocktail Shaker Boys' from Market Harborough entitled 'EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT COCKTAILS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK'. The presenter Andrew Seaward, together with his friend 'Steve', told us all about the history of Cocktails and showed us how to make some at home. We were given a list of the cocktails with recipes and some members prepared these as the meeting went on. It was very informative and fun. We will certainly invite them to come and speak again once 'Lockdown' is over.

We have a lot of surprises planned for Christmas and although we won't be able to meet I'm sure members will enjoy what we have planned. *Jenny Potter*

The Village Hall

(A personal statement)

I am still here! Clean and tidy, with all due attention to the COVID regulations, but without the cheerful noise of visitors! I am lonely!

The committee are doing their stuff, but until 2nd December, I cannot open my doors (and arms) in welcome. So, there is a plan to invite you to share a cheerful activity. In Cranford we hope many will join the Light Up Cranford, between 2nd December and New Year, by creating a Christmas decoration in their garden, for all to see, and we hope you will tour the village to see the decorations. There will be a prize for

the best dressed tree, and in the garden of my hall, there will be a tree on which I would like you to place a bauble, with a message of Hope, to cheer.

Of course, I am so keen to see you back as soon as possible, and my website is always open.

In January I expect to have my porch renewed, with easier access for wheel chairs, but more of that later.
GP pp The Village Hall

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

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Jenny Potter



Grafton Underwood News

It was lovely to be able to have some services during September and October, which were very much enjoyed by all. At Family Worship we were blessed with a knowledgeable group of children who participated in Ann's quiz with much enthusiasm and a trio of 'smaller ones' that solved the 'no singing' problem by dancing for us instead!

Our Shoebox service might not have been quite the same as usual but we were certainly not deterred by Corvid-19 when it came to packing. A brilliant team of people shopped, knitted, sewed, covered boxes, appeared with bags of things or cash, and generally pulled together to see that the children with nothing will receive a Christmas present. We may not all know one another but with help from Sandra we have made an excellent team!



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL! We have sent 109 boxes.



It was sad to have to cancel our usual Remembrance Service. However, we did remember all those who lost their lives, during our prayers. After all you can always remember no matter where you are or what is happening. There was also a small gathering at the memorial for a brief Remembrance Service in the afternoon when the wreaths were laid. Hopefully we will be able to commemorate properly again next year. We have obviously been back to opening for 'prayers' between 11am and 12noon during November but are hoping to have Morning Prayer at 11am on Sunday 13th December. Below is a schedule. If allowed! Hopefully we maybe able to resume more services by our next newsletter.

At the moment it is difficult to get to know the many new people we have in the village but we are pleased to welcome Nigel and Jocelene from *Riverside* and Shaun and Rachael from the *School House* at one of our prayer mornings. If anyone else would like to join us you will be made very welcome. I would like to thank our very small church cleaning team (only 4), especially Kate who has cleaned for a large part of this year, but appeal to anyone who feels able clean in 2021 to contact me (330646).

Our Parish Council URGENTLY needs a Parish Clerk. This is a paid post, but you have to have had the specialised training. If there is anyone who thinks they may fit the bill, please contact a member of the PC or myself. If you would like more details, please phone Alistair Wildgoose on 330741. For those of you who are interested in Parish Council matters they do post information on Grafton Echo Facebook page.

Finally, please note that the Defibrillator Course due in January has been postponed as the village hall is at present closed for maintenance.

As we start a New Year donations for the magazine will be very welcome either to Rob Donnelly or myself. I do hope you all manage to enjoy your Christmas, even if it is not quite what you would have liked, and let's hope and pray for a better year in 2021.

Jenny Daykin

Tree warden

Several trees along the Warkton road hedgerows are senescent and a hazard though the risk is low. There are also 3 trees in Grafton that are of concern. A dead Horse Chestnut and an overlarge Maple plus a tree that has outgrown the garden of no. 33. All come within the remit of Boughton Estates and one has been in contact with them.

I have been picking Midland Hawthorn berries (*Crataegus oxyacanthoides*, Daniel!) as they are rather rare. Also several types of cherry that have fruited this year. And will attempt to grow some next spring.

Frank Crosier, who was born in Cranford and now lives near Salisbury, has been in contact and has various types of disease resistant elm that he has imported from the continent and one is tempted to purchase some. But where to plant them?

R. D.

Twywell News

Just when we thought we were making progress and were able to re-introduce elements of normality into village life, we find ourselves, once again, thrust into the abyss of lockdown. However, God willing, we will be re-emerging again by the time this magazine lands on your doormat. The pandemic is proving to be a roller-coaster ride of bad and good news. This is even more so, should we dare to believe it, with the announcements that several vaccines are looking to be very effective against this awful virus and may shortly be available to those who need it most. We should, therefore, ensure a steadfastly positive approach whilst still taking great care of ourselves and also looking out for our neighbours, the elderly and vulnerable, who will all need our support more than ever as we advance into the dark and cold winter months. Christmas is a time of giving and the best gift we can give is that of kindness to someone in need.

Even with our regular plans being periodically disrupted by government guideline reviews we continue to plan for a normal festive season. Service information follows in this magazine and, of course, is subject to guidelines at that time, but plans do include the very special Christmas Day morning service this year at 9.15am. We are also hopeful that we will once again enjoy the village Christmas tree illumination which has provided so much pleasure to those who live here and those who pass through. Again, look out for further information in early December. As with all village events, updated information will be posted on the notice boards and the village website; www.twywellparishcouncil.co.uk. Other useful sources of fast-changing information are the facebook pages: 'The Twywell Zone' and 'St. Nicholas Twywell'. The Twywell Zone is a closed group which was established to enable residents and friends of Twywell to communicate events and support information within the parish and has become a very popular and daily used conduit.

Finally, after months of plans, cancellations and amendments Sophie Winfield married Capt. Thomas Dudley on Saturday 10th October. Although they were restricted to fifteen guests, a good number of villagers spontaneously greeted them at the church gate to share in their happiness.

Our Harvest Celebration on Sunday 18th October was of a modified format as no hymns were permitted and was very well attended given the circumstances.

Poems and scripture readings provided the seasonal interest and reflection. Sadly, the planned harvest lunch which was to follow the service had to be cancelled at late notice. We will however, strive to find another way soon to sample the home grown beef from Dawn Holmes' family farm, and which was to be the highlight of the menu.

On Sunday 8th November we remembered those from our village who left to fight for our freedom and were never to return. A much scaled back and ever-emotional service was held outdoors on an overcast morning with an autumn stillness which was very fitting for such a sombre event. The wreath was laid by ex-serviceman James Totten, and the names were read out by Keith Sawford. Margaret Ansell's beautiful woven poppies adorned the temporary altar and the porch notice board. The Revd. Graham Bell was once again our rector for this event.



We say farewell to Russell and Trish Smart, who have moved from *Cyprus Row* to take up residence in Sudborough. We thank them for their contribution to village life and thank Russell especially for his willingness to do absolutely anything to support the church maintenance and fundraising events. Their energy in particular will be greatly missed.

It is with deep sadness we report that former Twywell resident, Daphne Jacques (née Green) passed away on 11th September, aged 96 years, at home in Derbyshire. Born in Home Farm Cottages to Ronald and Doris (nee Thomas), sister to Donald (late of Oakdene), Margaret and Janet, Daphne married the late Lionel Jacques and became landlady of The Masons Arms pub after a short time living in Pleasant Row (now demolished). Running the village concert party, football team and old people's parties, they both were heavily involved in village life during the 1950s and '60s. Daphne lives on through her two daughters, Maureen and Helen, nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and 17 great-great-grandchildren!

Other news

The Old Friar was the venue for a hugely successful pumpkin carving competition on 31st October, with close to 20 skillfully created entries depicting everything from a VW campervan to autumn leaves and even highland cattle! Prizes were awarded to Helena Flanagan and Keith Sawford. Much fun was had by all and we thank Ben & Becca Hyman with their Old Friar team for hosting this year's event, as well as the competitors who created the masterpieces.



The first five of the new street light replacement programme have been installed and are providing a much improved level of illumination at a fraction of the running cost. Further units will follow next year. Police Surgeries have now been cancelled for the remainder of the year. Once we have a list of new dates for 2021, we will post the information in this magazine and on the village website.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 27th January at 7pm (enquiries to twywellclerk@gmail.com or www.twywellparishcouncil.co.uk). Please refer to the

notice boards or website for details of whether the meeting will be virtual or in person.

Plans have now been submitted for the residential development of Manor Farm and Home Farm buildings, as well as a further application for land at the rear of 57 High Street. Please take a few moments to have a look at these and commute any comments to the parish council or the Planning department of East Northants Council before the relevant deadline dates. We live within a working democracy and your opinion matters in the decision making process.

We send our best wishes for continued recovery to Annette Kelly, Jim Bradshaw and Sean Flanagan who are all recovering from recent health setbacks.

As this is the last *Together* magazine of 2020, we take this opportunity to thank you for reading our magazine and wish you all a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year; hoping you will finally be allowed to share the company of those who are most dear to you. Enjoy it and, fingers crossed, 2021 will bring with the lengthening days much needed good fortune, freedom and, finally, an opportunity to put this very challenging year well and truly behind us.

And finally 'A Pause for Thought'
"Fire is winter's fruit".

Keep safe and well,

Twywell PCC
st.nicholas.twywell@gmail.com

Slipton News

Arthur Hishin, a magnificent, nine-year-old resident of Slipton learnt to ride his bike in May this year. Within two weeks of mastering this, Arthur pledged to ride his bike for one mile a day during lockdown to raise money for the NHS. Over this time, Arthur has raised a fantastic £1010.00 for the COVID-19 appeal, supporting staff and patients at Northampton General Hospital and the community hospitals across Northamptonshire. Arthur has become quite a celebrity with an article on Arthur's inspiring challenge in the *Northampton Chronicle and Echo* on 20th May 2020 (online). Congratulations and a huge thank you to Arthur, you are an inspiration to us all.

On Remembrance Sunday this year, Revd. Graham Bell led prayers around the Memorial Cross in the Slipton Church yard. This year we were able to remember Slipton villagers by name who lost their lives during World War I. Due to weathering the inscribed names on the memorial had been lost but now, thanks to Paulk Ingles, who re-searched military records and presented the Church with a plaque to remember the four villagers who lost their lives, we will once again be able to remember them.

Thank you to Lindsay and Tom for continuing the French family tradition in cutting the church-yard hedge. It is immaculate and through the hard work of local residents once again the church yard is in superb condition.

Tony Fraser has been our village church representative in the absence of a church warden for a number of years now, we would like to thank him for all the hard work and time spent representing us and looking after our Church.

Our Christmas Eve carol service this year will look a little different. Dependent on COVID-19 restrictions, we are proposing to hold a village gathering in the church yard to sing our favourite Christmas carols. Please wrap up warm and bring some mulled wine in your own flask. Details of the event will be posted on the village notice-board nearer the time.

Following on from last year's success, a Christmas tree will be in the church porch a week before the service and children are invited to make and bring along Christmas tree decorations during this time to decorate the tree.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Angela Fenton



Services in December 2020 & January 2021

Sunday 6th December	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Morning Service (BCP)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Led Prayers
	11.00am	Slipton , Eucharist
Sunday 13th December	9.15am	Twywell , HC CW (trad.)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , MP led by Val
	6.00pm	Cranford St John's , Carols by Candle-light
Sunday 20th December	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Carols & Lessons to listen to
	6.00pm	Cranford St John's , Carols by Candle-light
Thurs. 24th December <i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	TBA	Slipton , December Carols in the Churchyard (Details to be confirmed locally)
Fri. 25th December <i>CHRISTMAS DAY</i>	9.15am	Twywell , HC CW (trad.)
	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Christmas Day Service
	11.00am	Slipton , Eucharist
Sunday 27th December	–	Cranford St John's , No Service
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Holy Communion led by Graham
Friday 1st January <i>NEW YEAR'S DAY</i>	7.30am	Cranford St John's , Meet at Church for walk to Sunrise Service
Sunday 3rd January	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Morning Service (BCP)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Led Prayers
	11.00am	Slipton , Eucharist
Sunday 10th January	9.15am	Twywell , HC CW (trad.)
	11.00am	Cranford St John's , All Age Worship
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , MP led by Ceri-Anne
Sunday 17th January	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Holy Communion (BCP)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Led Prayers
Sunday 24th January	9.15am	Twywell , MP CW
	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Morning Service (BCP)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Family Worship
Sunday 31st January	11.00am	Cranford St John's , Morning Service (BCP)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood , Led Prayers


 Merry
 Christmas
 & Happy
 New
 year

A host of useful information and resources to help you during this time can be found via
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus