

# GRASS

THE NEWSLETTER AT THE ROOTS OF THE GRAND UNION BENEFICE  
OF BLISWORTH AND STOKE BRUERNE/ SHUTLANGER,  
WITH GRAFTON REGIS, ALDERTON AND MILTON MALSOR

## Rector's Letter



The Government has shared with us its road map for how our nation will emerge out of lockdown over the next few months. This last twelve months have brought changes to everyone's lives, in how we live and communicate with each other, as well as the structure of our days and weeks. For many we still have led busy and complicated lives, whether you have been studying or working from home or just returned to school and work place, or retired, there can be very little time to relax and enjoy the simplicity that life can offer. Repeatedly, we ask ourselves "How can we find more time, (or maybe you have enjoyed the space this year has brought and you don't want to lose it)?" when every minute of our lives is already in high demand. Then there is the question of who is in control of your life: what are the outside forces that demand your time? What occupies your mind is such that it is always thinking of a hundred and one things all at the same time? Or can you honestly say that you are the one in control?

There is a Greek saying, 'Know yourself.' To know yourself honestly is one of the hardest spiritual journeys or pursuit that we can embark upon. So why do it? Meister Eckhart (1260 to 1327) taught that we could not know God if we do not first understand ourselves. Eckhart was precise in saying that we can only know ourselves by returning to the human heart. Fr John Main, the twentieth-century Benedictine monk, adds to this by saying that meditation is the way of self-knowledge and self-acceptance, and that this is an indispensable step in our journey towards any knowledge of God.

The knowledge of which John Main speaks, therefore, is not an intellectual pursuit by reading and studying, but the knowledge that comes through a profound harmony of stillness in mind and body. It is the practice of meditation. Through the art of meditation, we learn how to control our mind by concentrating on a secret word, and mantra. There is also an ancient saying: 'Control your mind control your life.' If you want to be in control of your thoughts, your life and find more time in your day; to pursue those activities that will bring harmony and growth to your life in ways that bring fulfilment, then I invite you to find out more, about Christian meditation. Once we can meet safely we will hold meditation classes in the Benefice to learn this simple life changing way of prayer. In the meantime, do please get in touch with me if you would like to know more.

At the present moment we continue to meet for worship on line on Wednesday and Sunday mornings at 9.30 am which is open to all.

Peace, Richard

### Useful Telephone Numbers for the United Benefice of Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne with Grafton Regis, Alderton and Milton Malsor

**Rector:** Canon Rev'd Richard Stainer, The Rectory, 37 High Street, Blisworth NN7 3B, tel 01604 857619.

**Churchwardens of Blisworth:** Mrs Fiona McKenzie, tel 01604 859541 and Mrs Angela Cheesbrough, tel 01604 858059.

**Churchwardens of Stoke Bruerne:** Mrs Christine Frost, tel 01604 862561.

**Churchwardens of Grafton Regis:** Mrs Jean Glanville, tel 01908 543463 and Lord Charles Fitzroy, tel 01908 542908.

**Churchwardens of Alderton:** Mrs Margaret Hall-Townley, tel 01327 811307 and Mrs Linda Dards, tel 01327 811265.

**Churchwardens of Milton Malsor:** Mrs Jane Treharne, tel 01604 858323 and Mrs Sue Bell, tel 01327 351043.

## VILLAGE NEWS



### STOKE BRUERNE

#### Book Club

Book club continues with meetings by Zoom. We meet on the last Tuesday of the month at 7.00 p m. If you are interested in joining, please let me know and supply an email address. You could just read the book of the month and not join, so in case you are interested the book for February is 'Being Mortal' by Atul Gawande and the book for March is 'I am an Island' by Tamsin Calidas.

We have started reading Sandi Toksvig's Almanac which was January's choice and had an even mix of opinion, ranging from 5 to 9 out of 10.

Dates of future meetings are: 30 March, 27 April, 25 May, 29 June, 27 July, 31 August, 28 September, 26 October, and 30 November. Angela Downhill, email: [acasc442@gmail.com](mailto:acasc442@gmail.com), tel 01604 864280.



### GRAFTON REGIS

#### Margaret Colgrove RIP -16 January 2021

Margaret went to New Zealand in 1933 with her family; her father, who had moved there 2 years earlier, was killed in a work accident in 1941. It was a tough time for the family left behind but Margaret always remembered the fun times. After leaving school she went to work in a bank but in late 1945 she started nursing training.

With family persuasion they returned to England in early 1947, although Margaret's preference was to stay in New Zealand. Margaret and John had met before she left for New Zealand; however neither remembered the event - they met up again on her return and were married at Calverton church on 6 December 1952.

John had been working as a herdsman at Halse, where he stayed until 1955 and then in March 1957 they moved to a farm at Tyringham where John was the farm manager. They took up the tenancy of Paddock Farm at Grafton Regis in April 1956, Tony was already one year age and his sister, Pat, arrived in 1957.



Margaret was a keen member of The Mothers Union; we still have the banner in the church, and the W.I. She was involved with the local Arthritis and Rheumatism branch and received a gold medal certificate after 25 years of service.

Margaret had her first trip back to New Zealand in 1977 and this is where her interest in spinning started; she brought the spinning wheel she purchased back to England with her. With a few other fellow spinners and weavers, the Spinners and Weavers group was set up in 1979. It is only during the current pandemic that the group has been unable to hold their monthly meetings. Her last trip to New Zealand was in 2017, when Pat and Bob accompanied her. She took this opportunity to visit her old school, not on horseback this time though, although this had been her mode of transport for getting to school, and met an old boy that she had been at school with.

New Zealand was always her first love.

A funny memory from Tony is: She enjoyed going to the Chestnut Club at Yardley with Maureen, but for a couple of months they stopped going. When we asked them why, they both replied that it was full of old folk, Margaret and Maureen had just turned 90; they did start going again and enjoyed the meetings.

Margaret was a very healthy lady and could put many of us to shame with her enthusiasm for sport, particularly tennis which she was still playing in her 80s. Her other passion was playing bridge.

### Memories of Margaret by Some of her Neighbours in Grafton

I have known Margaret since the mid-50s when she used to come to the Post Office (which was in our living room!) with toddler Tony who, despite his mum's protests, would go straight to the pantry and without a word, point to the biscuit tin. I also remember when she would ask us children to help find Tony on the frequent occasions he escaped.

Later, when our daughter, Andrea, was at a friend's house and they ate a quantity of junior aspirins, it was Margaret who came to the rescue to whisk us all off to casualty for them to have their stomachs pumped. As our children grew, Margaret would always encourage them to help bottle-feed the orphan lambs.

In more recent years, I was often able to spend an hour or so with her to reminisce about life in the village as we both remembered it. Gil and I have very fond memories of both Margaret and John and miss them both.

Joy Wilson

When they moved into the village and took over Paddocks Farm she was really friends with my mother's generation. She was always "Mrs Colgrove" to me, which was a sign of respect I was told. She was, of course, very busy with the farm and raising her family, but always found time to help with village matters, especially the church/PCC and social club. I knew her well as a villager and used to spend time chatting either about village matters and the farm/countryside in general. She was never without a dog at her heels.

So, although I knew her all the time she lived in the village, I have not one particular memory, just that it was always lovely to spend time chatting with her or working with her on village projects and I certainly did respect her.

Wendy Smith

When we arrived in the village in 1980, John and Margaret kept us up to date with Grafton matters, John as Chair of the Parish Meeting with official business, and Margaret with her rather more interesting personal take on these events!

I always enjoyed our afternoon chats over the fence when she was walking her dog, Pickles, in the field behind our house.

Kathy Harry

I moved into Grafton Regis 8 years ago but got to know Margaret as a close friend after John died. We used to walk with Pickles over the fields, or sit in the summerhouse whilst she regaled me with one of many of her stories.

She had lived such an interesting life and she always had a tale to tell. There was a lot of laughter but Margaret was proud of her years of service to the church and to the village. Like her family and many friends, I shall miss her deeply.

Joan Tuckey

Margaret was the first person I met when I moved into Grafton and I gradually got to know her each time I bumped into her on dog walks with her beloved Pickles. Later, she introduced me to the Spinners and Weavers group, so that I could learn to spin and even lent me one of her spinning wheels until I had bought my own.

She was always positive and upbeat and seemed completely unaware of what an incredibly interesting life she had led.

Lorraine Cesar





## ALDERTON

Church Cleaning Rota

March:

Don & Doreen Allen

### The State of the Knight

Although the world has been a relatively quiet place over the last months, we have still been continuing to work towards the next stage of Alderton's Knight project. The next stage is to relocate our 800-year-old wooden effigy to a safe and permanent place. This is a minefield as we would like to place him in the chancel of the church and to do this, we would alter the visual symmetry of the Victorian interior design.

Our knight would have been near the altar originally. He would have been in this position before the church was reduced in size and rebuilt in 1842, and it would be appropriate to place him once more against the north wall of the chancel so that he can look towards the altar in the east and toward 'Resurrection'. Our knight comes from a time when an individual's whole life was dedicated to the hereafter and the nearer he could be placed to the most sacred point in the church and the more he could do to promote the church and the Word of God, the more chance he had of a kinder afterlife.

Considering that one of our possible knights, Sir Pagan de Cadurcis (Charworth) died at the age of about 30 having already served a full (and probably very violent) military life, been Patron to two Welsh priories, rebuilt the interior ward of Kidwelly Castle and was in the process of rebuilding and improving Alderton. The other, and the one favoured as being the subject of the effigy, Sir William de Combemartin, had developed his business to become the most successful wool exporter of his time (at a time when wool was one of Britain's most valuable exports) and supplied huge amounts of funds to Edward I for the construction of his castles. He was an Alderman of London and was working his way up the medieval social scale. Both had worked hard towards their goal in the hereafter.

Both of our knights have a strong reason for being housed in the chancel of the church but the problem is that to do this we would have to move the choir stall on the north side to accommodate a new tomb chest (plinth). One design was put forward that offered the reuse of the existing wood of the choir stall but neither the DAC nor the PCC were keen on this idea. Another design has been submitted for a completely new wooden tomb chest and another made of stone (much more expensive). We almost have the funds for the new wooden tomb chest but we still have to gain permission to make changes to the chancel from the various conservation societies and ultimately from the Chancellor. This all takes a huge amount of effort and time.

Our fund now stands at £5,000, thanks to your incredible generosity. All of this money has come from the village and our friends, with the exception of the remains of the funding bid given by the LECHE Trust, who kindly allowed us to keep the remaining funds from the bid designated to the last stage of conservation of the effigy. You are all absolutely incredible! It



now remains for us to continue to fundraise for this project: a) to permanently relocate the knight, b) To put in built in security to allow us to open the church, and c) to properly research, write the story of these two amazing men and produce imagery etc. for posterity. The most important stage at present is to relocate the knight and then we can clear the way to opening up the church for services and for hospitality. We are at a crucial stage and one of the most difficult. We desperately need your continued patience, help and generosity. Thank you.

Margaret H-T.

### Servery/Toilet Project

This is an ongoing project which has been severely hampered by rising costs and the covid problems. We are in discussions with Adrian Ringrose, the architect, with regard to the best way to deal with waste – the options are mains drainage (very expensive), a septic tank, (possibly less expensive but rather disruptive in terms of where we place it, location of old graves and the expense of long-term maintenance), or a French drain. The latter seems to be the best option at present but we have to ensure that the Environmental Health

people are happy with our proposals and it may be that we go for mains drainage. Adrian has agreed to approach Environmental Health and we are awaiting the results of his conversation with them; he is also going to explore exact costs of main drainage to date. We are waiting to hear if we have a renewal of the faculty for this aspect of the project. The last faculty expired due to rising building costs and the time it takes to fund raise. We have decided to take a simpler approach to the project and achieve one aspect at a time. Even this gentle approach is hampered by red tape and spiralling costs but we are continuing to work towards our goal. We really appreciate your patience and will keep you informed. MH-T & LD

### Fundraising for the Church

Since the launch of Easyfundraising we now have 11 supporters and we have raised £16.01, not much money but it's going to mount up.

Please feel free to share the link with your friends and family - the link to St, Margaret's Church is: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmargaretsalderton/?invite=YMCJDN&referral-campaign=c2s>

You will need to add your name, email address and create a password. Easyfundraising is completely free to use and it won't cost users anything extra as the retailer pays the donations, not you, the shopper. You can download the Easyfundraising app from the App Store or Google Play.

Please contact me if you encounter any problems and thank you to those that have supported the scheme.

Brian Patton, Treasurer Alderton PCC, Moat House Church Lane Alderton NN12 7LP, tel 01327 810250/07803 268047



### MILTON MALSOR

#### Holy Cross Church

We are on the final leg of our grand restoration job here at Holy Cross. The weather has not been good for the workers but they bravely and professionally carried on. Most of the scaffolding will be down this week and we have been promised all clearing up day is 1 March.

Then we will start the restoration on the organ which we love to hear played but often has a mind of its own.

When all is completed and we are all cleaned up and allowed in church again, we wish to invite you to see how lucky we have been. None of this would have been possible without the legacy of a wonderful member of the village. For this we are most grateful.



February was celebrated not with red heart but with green hearts to show the love for our environment, health and wellbeing for ourselves and others around the world. Here is our offering at Holy Cross.

## GENERAL NEWS

### Notes from a Local Farmer

Welcome to farming in the locality in February. We will start with the weather, which apparently for December and January, has been the wettest for 100 years, although I thought last winter was terribly wet as well.

We have had our sheep on stubble turnips for the last two months, with no drying days at all so it is very muddy but on the other hand, a great proportion of my land has been under water so this higher ground has been a godsend. All the corn has now gone, reaching high prices towards the end, and the last of last year's lambs have gone to market, fetching remarkable prices as there is a shortage. We rarely see this in the commodities market as we usually struggle with low prices.

Lambing pens are being constructed ready for a start around the third week of February and lasting for about four weeks. Let's hope the weather is kind to us in March because it does make a difference when turning out newborn lambs.

Corona virus still dominates the headlines. I was very impressed with the organisation at the Pavilion Centre in Mouton, where I went for my vaccination. There were people to help park your car and guide you in and there were 10 bays for injections. The whole operation ran so smoothly; they must be able to do 1,000 people a day there.

Speak to you again next month.

Robert Davy

### How to Contact the Police

We no longer divide our villages between officers unless they are specifically sponsored by the village. Our team cover all South Northants villages and this ensures villages are covered across all shift patterns. If they have a query for a specific officer, it's best to mark it for their attention via an email and they will pick it up when they are next on duty.



999 – For a crime or incident in progress

101 – For non-urgent incidents

03000 111 222 – Direct dial Northamptonshire police

To Report online: <https://www.northants.police.uk/ro/report/>

Email for Towcester: [neighbourhoodteamsouthnorthants-towcester@northants.pnn.police.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodteamsouthnorthants-towcester@northants.pnn.police.uk)

Your local officers are as follows:

PCSO Peter Firth, PCSO Charlotte Morris, PCSO Nicole Degg, PCSO James Herbert, PCSO Kev Thompson (Schools Liaison Officer)

For more local NPT information, visit the local policing pages [www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk).

### Alfred's Fruit and Vegetable Stall, Towcester

Alfred's fruit and vegetable stall is situated in the passage by Hartwells (formerly Elliots) in Towcester on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9.00 a m until 2.00 p m for seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables.

You can order vegetable boxes or fruit and vegetable boxes at £10 and £15. He is happy to do local deliveries – please contact him by email: [Alfred.searle6600@gmail.com](mailto:Alfred.searle6600@gmail.com) or on 078 949 90613 for details.

#### **SNIPPETS:**

*Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God which is why we call it the present.*

*Most people do not listen with the intent of understanding; they listen with the intent to reply.*

*Never regret anything that made you smile.*

## R. Wilson Garden & Tree Maintenance

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### THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 25 March

If you can get any copy to us earlier than that it  
would be very much appreciated

Please send any copy to: Linda Dards, Moorend, Spring Lane, Alderton NN12 7LW tel 01327 811265, e-mail: [linda@dards.net](mailto:linda@dards.net). **Could you please include your name & phone number with entries in case we have any problems.** If you would like to add photographs or drawings to your text these are welcome and can be supplied via email or as photos, and returned after scanning. Contributions by email are most welcome, we can accept most formats; please request a response from us on receipt – so you are sure that we have your submission. Word (any version) is preferred.

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