

TEMPSFORD TIMES

Issue 81
May/June 2020

The village magazine of Tempsford, Bedfordshire
www.tempsford.org



MARSH MARIGOLDS

**SIGNS OF
SPRING,
OF LIFE
CONTINUING
DURING
A LOCKDOWN**



CRAB APPLE BLOSSOM

PICTURES BY GUY ANDERSON

TEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

| NAME | POSITION |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Adrian Besant | Chairman |
| Simon Fraser | V-Chairman |
| Chris Bettles | Councillor |
| Steve Cooney | Councillor |
| Jim Donnelly | Councillor |
| Tina Goddard | Councillor |
| David Sutton | Councillor |
| Linda Collins | Clerk |

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE WARD COUNCILLORS

Contact details: Adam Zerny adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk
Tracey Wye traceywe@icloud.com

Every communication we get these days starts with,
“As we live in these challenging, difficult and unprecedented times...”

As the previous edition went to press, we all knew about the coronavirus and how it was spreading, but no one knew just if, how and when it would affect us. As I prepare this edition we are in our 4th week of lockdown with all its controls and regulations. As such, this is being delivered to you with gloved hands, and as part of our daily walking exercise.

With Tempsford Times being a record of life in our village, you might think there is little if anything to include as meetings and gatherings are cancelled for the time being. However our usual contributors have responded with articles to lighten our lives, to encourage and support, and to which I add my own thanks to you all for what you are doing. When we applaud key workers on Thursday evenings we are also saying to each other “Here we are, living and working together as a wonderful community”.

*Adrian Besant, “Tempsford Times” Editor
and Parish Council Chairman*

A personal “Thank You” from Linda Collins, Tempsford Parish Clerk.

At the beginning of March, no one would have believed how much our lives would change within a few weeks! Coronavirus, followed by weeks of Lockdown meant everyone staying indoors, with shopping etc hard to get to and people stock piling for no real reason. Tempsford was no exception and we too have a good number of elderly and vulnerable in the village.

So, the Parish Council asked everyone to look out for their neighbours and for volunteers to help shop, collect prescription and anything else that may need to be done, I, the Clerk, being the co-ordinator. Tempsford did what Tempsford does, and eleven people from both sides of the village offered their services, either to shop, collect prescriptions because they work at a doctor’s surgery, and even an electrician in case an elderly or vulnerable person needed something doing. Knotts Farm shop also offered to deliver any orders to people that needed it in the village.

The past few weeks have been a testing time for us all, but in a time of crisis, you see the best and the worst of people, thankfully in Tempsford, we have only seen the best. So, this is just a **BIG THANK YOU!!!** From me the Clerk and the Parish Council, to everyone that offered their help in anyway whatsoever and as the lockdown continues, remember we are still here to help, so please contact me on 01767 640968 and we will get help to you as soon as possible.

Thursday evenings have been a very emotional sight, to see so many Tempsford residents outside their homes, clapping for the NHS and Key workers; do keep on remembering them and do keep well and safe yourselves.

Linda Collins, Clerk to Tempsford Parish Council.

From Helen Nellis, Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire

On Monday 23 March 2020 our Prime Minister announced that we must immediately adhere to strict rules requiring us all to stay at home apart from the four exceptions he listed.

It will be a challenge to adapt to this, but we must play our part and follow the rules rigorously so that we can protect our lives, the lives of loved ones and the lives of all those who are working selflessly to help us. We must all dig deep and find the strength to do what is right in these hard times.

Continued overleaf.....

Bedfordshire people are already demonstrating their compassion and ability to look after those who are alone and vulnerable. I believe that we will look back on this time, as individuals and as neighbours, and say that we rose to the challenge, that we made the sacrifices, that we showed our love for those in need and that we have built even stronger foundations which make our county a wonderful place to live in.

Helen Nellis

From Councillor James Jameson leader of Central Bedfordshire Council

Dear Resident,

I hope you are keeping safe and well. The coronavirus national emergency is worrying for everyone. And those who may be vulnerable and are not able to access support from family, friends or trusted neighbours will be particularly concerned. We are working across the area with local groups and individuals to help those people in need.

These may be people who are unable to leave the house, perhaps because they are elderly and live on their own, are pregnant, self-isolating, shielding, or have a disability or mental health issues. The council can provide emergency food parcels and medicine delivery for those in urgent need, and we are working with voluntary organisations across the area to provide support longer term to vulnerable residents.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers and community workers who are looking out for others and supporting those who need some help. Everyone can help, even from the safety of your own home, by remembering those who may be isolated and vulnerable, and giving them a call just to check they are okay.

If you are worried about anyone, please get in touch with us, either [online](#) or via our dedicated helpline 0300 300 8900 which is open 7 days a week (9am to 4pm at the weekends).

We're also appealing to the business community who may be able to help in the effort to provide food parcels to vulnerable residents. Any local companies who may be able to contribute either surplus food stocks or packaging for the parcels (boxes, bags and bottles) are urged to get in touch.

Finally, the most important thing we can all do is to stick to the guidance about staying at home. If we give up on this now, all the benefits of the past three weeks will be lost. It's a bit like a course of medicine which we really need to complete before things get better!

Cllr James Jamieson

From Cllr Tracey Wye (Potton Ward) Thank you Tempsford - fantastic support for each other

Some of the positives we can take from all this is the amazing support networks that have sprung up in our communities. Friends and neighbours looking after each other, and, in some cases, strangers becoming new friends as they support those who are self-isolating. Our local businesses have adapted their opening hours and started deliveries to ensure customers have food on their tables, or even some of life's small pleasures such as writing and posting birthday cards on our behalf.

People are finding new interest their local surroundings as they take their limited exercise and many are reporting joy at hearing birdsong without the background noise of cars, lorries and aeroplanes.

A huge thank you goes to all those who have stayed at home while valiant NHS workers, those keeping council services going, posties, supermarket staff - in fact ALL those who have to go out to work - put themselves and their families at risk of contracting the virus.

As your ward councillor, I have been working with the community support networks, offering help where I can and liaising with Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure no-one is left behind.

In the coming weeks, I will be trying to visit people who are at risk, self-isolating, or considered vulnerable that have not responded to NHS or council attempts to contact them.

If you know anyone who is in need of help which cannot be provided locally, please call Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 8900, or me on 0300 300 8528.

While there are positives to this situation, it is not how we want to live our lives. Let's hope the end of lockdown comes quickly and we can once again see our friends and loved ones and go out and do the things we enjoy, while remembering the lessons an enforced simple life has taught us.

Cllr Tracey Wye

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING NOTES:-

The following is a summary of the main points of discussion at the Parish Council Meeting held on the 16th March 2020. Full copies of the Minutes are available on the village website www.tempsford.org or from the Clerk.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, some Councillors were not in attendance. Present : 4 Councillors and the Clerk, 1 CBC Councillor and 2 representatives of Anglia Water. Cllr. Simon Fraser, Vice Chairman, took the chair. All Councillors, Clerk and visitors were socially distanced from each other.

Apologies – Apologies were received from, Chairman Adrian Besant, Cllr. Donnelly, Cllr. Bettles.

Co-option of new Councillor. David Sutton was officially co-opted on to the Parish Council. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct were duly signed by Mr. Sutton and the Clerk.

Declarations of Interest. Cllr. Cooney declared an interest in item 16.

Acceptance of Minutes. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2020 was approved and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Police Report Cllr. Goddard did not have anything to report.

Public Session Simon Love and Neil Roach of Anglian Water were in attendance to explain what had been wrong with Church Street sewers. The intention was for the public to be present, so that they could answer questions. Neil was the day to day engineer which is why he was at the meeting. They had changed 1150 metres of sewer in Church Street, they could have patched it up, but the best option was to reline it. Photos and diagrams of what had been done in Church Street were shown. Station Road was also mentioned, and Simon Love reported that something was not quite right there, and he would be following it up. It was an informative presentation and a shame that the public could not be present. However, Simon Love offered to come back later in the year for full public meeting as they wanted to install confidence within the community. He also mentioned that they would be happy to give a donation to the village.

Central Beds. Councillor Adam Zerny was in attendance. In the light of the present situation he was putting pressure on CBC to get supplies to communities that were in quarantine. Leaflets were being distributed into letter boxes. He was encouraging Parish Councils to bring together their community to help those in need.

Planning Application received – CB/TAC/20/00106 93 Station Road, Work to trees in conservation area. Fell and replace 1 apple tree. No objections. .

East West Rail – Councillors commented that really the events were just a PR presentation. Although a meeting for the 15th April was being arranged, it would no doubt be cancelled because of the present coronavirus situation.

Highways The Black Cat meeting for the 17th March had been cancelled.

Green Infrastructure – The Council is awaiting payment from CBC/BRCC for the green infrastructure money which had been paid out.

Grass cutting Mark Zwetsloot asked if he can reduce the hedge in the cemetery to be more manageable? All Councillors agreed.

Neighbourhood Plan and Privacy Policy No update from the Neighbourhood Strategy Group, but asked for the Council's Privacy Policy. The Clerk had produced an up to date one that she has emailed to all Councillors for approval. The Councillors decided they should re-read it and review it over the coming weeks.

Finances Invoices were presented by the Clerk and were approved for payment. The Clerk had spoken to the Chairman, in isolation, as Easiprint needed to be paid for the printing of the Tempsford Times = £192. Neighbourhood Plan Committee need a payment made to Alison Eardley Consulting £462.00 . The Precept will be paid into the account in April.

Churchyard Cllr. Cooney reported there was a good turnout of people to continue the clearance of ivy etc from the gravestones in the churchyard. A lot was achieved, but more needs to be done later when able. Thanks were expressed to Cllr. Goddard for supplying the bacon rolls.

Communication – Tempsford Times

There had been some offers of sponsoring the printing, which will be followed up after this difficult time. In the meantime, the Parish Council would have to pay for the printing. As a new advertising manager was being sought, David Sutton mentioned that he would probably be able to take this on.

Village Event – WW11 VE Day. Cllr. Cooney was arranging quite a large event for July 5th which included speakers, 40's singer, small tank, food, tearoom etc. He wanted to make it a free event for the whole village so was asking the Parish Council if they would partly sponsor the event.

RESOLUTION – after discussion it was agreed to offer £500. SF and TG proposed and seconded. Owing to how things progress with the coronavirus lockdown, this may have to be discussed again in the future.

Date of next meetings. The next meeting was the Annual Parish Meeting, but due to the coronavirus guidelines it would be unlikely if this went ahead. Future Parish Council dates would be discussed via email as the situation unfolds.

Linda Collins : Parish Clerk

ST PETER'S PARISH CHURCH,
Church Street, Tempsford
Priest in Charge: Rev Graham Buckle
The Rectory, Park Lane, Blunham
01767 640412

KEEP GOING!

I notice that they have been screening on television some of the Ealing Comedies. One of my favourites is The Titfield Thunderbolt. A village is set to lose its railway and they decide to set themselves up to keep it going, despite the best efforts of the local bus company to take over the passengers. As usual, there are the fair means and foul to get the railway back up and running, and eventually the authorities grant them a licence to keep going. The Vicar and the Bishop finally get to drive the old locomotive, requisitioned from the museum to set them on their way! Railway service restored.

It has been good to see how people have come together over the past weeks, to provide a valuable service to our communities, caring for each other as neighbour and friend, working together for the good of the community. It's been strange not holding services in our churches, but as we know, the church is the people not the building. We have been holding services, not in our buildings, but with myself leading at The Rectory, and it has either been pre-recorded or streamed live. A new way of worshipping together, perhaps the way forward for church?

I think like everyone else we have been missing the interaction between people, either at place of work, or places of leisure, and even friends and families not being able to visit. It has been noticeable some of the tensions that have been creeping into the channels of communication there has been, particularly social media. It happens easily when we are in close proximity with someone for long periods of time, and don't have other outlets.

It is important as church members that we join together on a regular basis, in fellowship with each other. Sharing and finding out, discussing the vicar's sermon etc. Mainly we are a social race, and

need that communication with each other, face to face. It's not quite the same if we have a Facetime or Zoom conversation!

I have had many conversations with people on my daily exercise walk, keeping a safe distance of course, and most seem pleased to have someone to talk to! I'm not sure whether we will be out of our lockdown situation as I write this, but I know there will be a massive sigh of relief when that does happen, and we can start putting our lives back to "normal".

It will good to be back with people worshipping together in our beautiful church buildings, it will be good to be able to mix with others again in our daily routines, one line of communication that hasn't been broken, is our link with God, through the medium of prayer.

Keep praying!

With Christian love

Rev Graham

TEMPSFORD METHODIST CHURCH,

Station Road, Tempsford

(part of the St Neots and Huntingdon Methodist Circuit)

Minister: Rev James Bamber 01480 453857

Church Steward: Stephen Gosling,

81 Station Rd, Tempsford 01767 641175

Due to the present situation and lockdown with the Covid19 pandemic the Methodist Church is closed until further notice. The regular meetings of Meet & Eat, Chat Club, Coffee Mornings and Services are on hold at this present time. We hope to resume these as and when the situation changes.

However Rev James does produce a weekly service sheet for private meditation and reflection. A copy can be emailed to you if you let Stephen Gosling know. Rev James also produces a Sunday "Thought for the Day" which is available all week on 01480 597118.

ARMCHAIR BIRDWATCHING IN TEMPSFORD

At the beginning of the lockdown, Doreen and I decided that we'd do a daily armchair birdwatch for an hour each morning. We're fortunate that our garden looks over the fields and down towards the Ivel so we are able to observe 'flyovers' as well as the birds in the garden. Since we started watching on March 22nd, we have had a maximum count on any one day of 29 species and an overall total of 40 at the time of writing.

Of course, it's not just about 'twitching' or ticking birds, it's about observing them as well. We have blue tits building in our nest box and each day they've been bringing in huge clumps of moss and other nesting material. Robins have built a nest in our woodstore. The most amusing sight, however, has been of starlings nesting in a neighbour's broken toilet vent. Every time we see them we say, "the starlings are going to the toilet again". Starlings are under-rated and many people ignore them completely but, in the sunlight, their plumage shows beautiful iridescent blues, purples and greens.

We observed our first swallow on April 4th and three more on 6th, 'hawking' around the house for insects. Also on the 6th, the first house martins appeared and they started investigating last year's nest under the eaves of a neighbour's house. We have also seen blackcap, jay, yellowhammer, lapwing, little egret and the more regular flyovers like buzzard, red kite, the



occasional sparrowhawk, cormorant, greylag and Canada geese and black-headed gulls.

Further afield, we have done a few exercise walks down Mill Lane and into the fields beyond, down to the wooden bridge over the Ivel. On our way, we've heard chiffchaff and, perhaps more surprisingly, the explosive call of a Cetti's warbler from the centre of a bush near the river. Our walk back takes us through the fields right at the southern end of Church Street. One of the fields here has been left fallow and it is growing a luxuriant crop of speedwell and groundsel. This provides perfect ground cover for skylark and we watched them taking off vertically from the ground with their beautiful burst of song and then 'parachuting' back to the ground. The field has also provided an excellent feeding ground for linnets and we observed great clouds of two or three hundred birds bursting from the ground and settling once more to feed. It's amazing how quickly nature returns if we allow it to by leaving fields or field margins to grow wild flowers.

We have also walked through the Millennium Garden and, apart from the usual garden birds, we have heard and seen nuthatch and coal tit. We also came across a very well disguised song thrush nest with a bird in residence.

In these very difficult and stressing times, it's amazing how therapeutic bird watching and, particularly, birdsong can be. With less traffic on the A1, it is also easier to hear!
Brian & Doreen Harrison





Neighbourhood Plan Update

We hope you're all keeping well and safe in these unprecedented times we're all facing right now. These current circumstances have completely impacted what we're able to do and I want to let you know what means for our Neighbourhood Plan.

As we communicated in the last edition of the Tempsford Times, our Plan is now completed and we're in the next stage of this being approved by each of the different statutory authorities, this is called Regulation 14. We've had confirmation from Central Bedfordshire Council that all Regulation 14 submissions are being put on hold, and this therefore means we're unable to progress any further at this time.

Following the completion of Regulation 14 stage, we will be presenting the Plan back to the Tempsford community so you can see it before we hold a referendum to get your approval and ensure it is legally binding. We were planning for this to happen shortly after we have Regulation 14 completed. However, due to Covid-19, there have also been some important changes to the Neighbourhood Planning process from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. These mean there will be no elections or referendums until 6 May 2021. This includes Neighbourhood Planning referendums. These provisions will be kept under review and may be amended or revoked in response to changing circumstances. These measures will also mean that our Neighbourhood Plan will come into force later than it would have done.

This also means we have not spent all the grant money we were allocated within our original time scales and therefore ordinarily would mean any remaining money would be returned. Philip Joyce has been doing a great job again, completing many complicated, not user-friendly forms to request a hold on our unspent money and we're awaiting approval of this.

Once we have confirmation that the restrictions within Central Bedfordshire Council have been lifted, we will follow up with the Regulation 14 submissions and then present the final plan to you.

Kind regards and stay safe

Andy Bennett and Christine Creese

tempsfordneighbourhoodplan@gmail.com



TEMPSFORD WI

Meetings have been cancelled for the time being in accordance with Government guidelines.

BLUNHAM COMMUNITY CINEMA
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ROXTON & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY GROUP
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DO YOU HAVE HEDGEHOGS IN THE GARDEN?

Station Road in Tempsford is home to a thriving community of hedgehogs. Say the word hedgehog to anyone living in Station Road and they are likely to answer, "yes, I've got one of those in my garden". It may well be the same in Church End. I hope someone will let me know.

We have become hedgehog watchers only in the last few years. A friend from Eynesbury group of hedgehog enthusiasts provided us with a large plastic plant saucer and a piece of plastic pipe about 40cm long and 10cm in diameter. Fill the saucer with water and put a handful of food in pipe, he said. The food could be special hedgehog food or simply dry cat food or suet pellets sold as bird food. The pipe will deter other wildlife but not hedgehogs who seem to have no fear of confined spaces. Then look out of your window, he added, they usually appear about half past eight. And the amazing thing was, that very same night as we watched out of the window at 8.30pm, a hedgehog appeared! It went to the pipe to feed, had a drink and then wandered off as though it had been doing that all its life.

After that initial success we were hooked. But as nights got darker we struggled to see them through the window. Then our son came up with a special torch with a red beam made especially for wildlife watching. This inexpensive piece of kit (costing less than a tenner) enabled us to see the hedgehogs however dark it was, whereas ordinary torches shone through a window simply reflect back at you. So for several years we watched usually one hedgehog, occasionally two, keeping a record of when they first appeared each year and when our last sighting was in the Autumn.

Then we decided to go one better than the red beam torch and have a light installed above the feeding area. Enter James the electrician who was not in the least fazed by being asked to create a hedgehog light. He ran a cable from the back of our shed, along the fence and put in a small LED light that shone down from the top of the fence making a pool of dim light. This meant we could watch the hedgehogs and their antics from all the windows facing the feeding area and in a larger patch of light. He installed this for us in February 2019, and because the previous year the first hedgehog put in an appearance at some point in February, we watched in anticipation. Weeks went by, and no hedgehogs. The weeks turned into months. We were seriously worried. Had our hedgehogs failed to survive the winter?

Then, reading our local Wildlife Trust magazine I noticed an advertisement asking for volunteers willing to provide homes for rescue hedgehogs. Thinking that this might be the way forward to getting hedgehogs back into the garden, I swiftly applied. Judith, Site Release Manager, who helps to find

homes for hedgehogs after they have been released from Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital emailed back straightaway. Unfortunately, she said, they only release hedgehogs into gardens where there are hedgehogs already present. This is to make sure they become part of a hedgehog community and should they breed the gene pool would be increased. But, she said, be patient, I am sure your hedgehogs will come back. And sure enough at the very end of April they did.

During the Summer we were in touch with Judith again, and she asked if we were still interested in looking after rescue hedgehogs. Of course we agreed, and Judith came and carried out a garden inspection, checking for hedgehog hazards like garden netting lying around or ponds with steep sides, and making sure there were enough holes in the fencing to allow access to neighbouring gardens. We passed the test, and were instructed to create one or two hedgehog homes (I knew it was a good idea to keep those old pallets!) and an enclosure about three metres square. We also needed to buy some kitten biscuits. Several days later Judith turned up with a cardboard box and carefully lifted out two small hedgehogs - Maurice and Florence. They were hoglets born that year but not so small they would be unable to survive the winter in hibernation. We kept them in the run for three days as instructed, and then let them escape. One beetled off never to be seen again, the other hung around for a while and joined the others feeding from the pipe.

Did they survive the winter? We don't know. Did they hibernate in our specially built hedgehog homes? Impossible to tell. Are they the ones who are visiting the pipe this year, who knows? And this is the thing about hedgehogs - they are a complete mystery. They appear and disappear. Sometimes they head off one way, sometimes another. Sometimes they turn up at 10pm and sometimes not till four in the morning. Sometimes they eat from the pipe scarcely moving it. Other times they shunt it every which way. Sometimes they just hunker down inside. But this enigmatic quality is very much part of their attraction. We are fascinated by them because they are so mysterious and unpredictable. And we are fascinated too by that unmistakable characteristic shape, and the shrewd pointed face and bright eyes, and that elusive endearing quality that makes them everyone's favourite wild creature.

Juliet Pennington

Please note: While hedgehogs happily Hoover up bird food left on the ground they should not be fed peanuts or mealworms as these can cause them problems.

Wild Tempsford - Vitamin N

In these unfamiliar and worrying times, I have never been so glad to live in Tempsford. Why? Because we live in a village. A village with loads of gardens – both large and small. A village surrounded by countryside, with footpaths, bridleways and lanes leading us quickly to fields, woods, hedgerows, and a river. And those gardens and that countryside and that river are crammed full of things that make me – and I suspect quite a lot of us – smile and lift our spirits.

My daily routine now consists largely of phone calls, a laptop and the slightly fuzzy images and sounds of my colleagues on a video conference. Interspersed with coffee (yes I did panic-buy..) and fretting uselessly about vulnerable family members elsewhere. And I am lucky, many others have much more stressful lives right now.

But if I step outside into our garden, I am instantly distracted from all this, as a feathery bundle of musical exuberance – otherwise known as a Blackbird – sings the best bird song ever from our shed roof. It is not alone. Goldfinches – clearly the design work of a 5-year old let loose with the felt-tips – tinkle and twitter over the garden, and then squabble ferociously with each other over a bird feeder. A Wren sneaks along the bottom of a hedge, works its way to the top, takes a deep breath and blasts out the most complex and loudest continuous burst of noise you could ever imagine such a tiny animal ever making. You can see the whole Wren vibrating with the effort required. A Red Kite drifts lazily overhead – how amazing to see these magnificent birds back in our skies after a century of absence (they were wiped out from England by those who believed that anything with a hooked beak or claws was ‘vermin’ and should be obliterated). But they are back now, and joined in our skies by Buzzards and Ravens, also on their own roads to recovery.

Lower down in the airspace, the first butterflies of the year are out. Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells have emerged from safe overwinter resting places. Some look a bit tatty as a result. Others like Brimstone, Orange-tip and Holly Blue have emerged from their chrysalis, and are pristine. And all this is against a backdrop that is changing every day.

The cherry tree in our garden is now in peak flower; the blossom almost obscures every branch. The tree hums with bees of all shapes and sizes; bumblebees, honey bees, mining bees and a myriad smaller species that go far beyond my identification skills. Cowslips decorate a field edge next to footpath. A wide hedgerow along a Roman Road reveals a carpet of bluebells at its base, hidden until you are walking, running or cycling right next to it. The dark gnarly skeletons of oak trees have, in a matter of days, been

transformed. First by a coating of ginger brown buds, and now a solid crown of fresh bright green leaves.

The effects – on us - of being able to see, hear and/or smell all of this stuff – is being called Vitamin N. Where the N stands for Nature. Tempsford in spring and summer has lots of Vitamin N. Get out and try some. You might like it.

Guy Anderson, Station Road, Tempsford

A short History of Tempsford Methodist Chapel

The Chapel itself was built in 1804, eleven years after the formation of the Tempsford Methodist Society. The date can be seen on the stone above the entrance, and is surmounted by the single word **EBENEZER** from the Bible reference in 1 Samuel Ch.7 v.12, where the meaning is given as 'Thus far has the Lord helped us'.

At the front of the Chapel and down the right hand side you can see the memorial stones of those members of the Society who were buried in the grounds. Formerly these stones were alongside the path, but were moved to their present position nearly seventy years ago. To the left of the main door is the grave stone of John Browning Jr. (1819-1902) and his wife, Mary. He was the leader of the Society for the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century. On the opposite wall note the memorial stone to Rachel, daughter of John and Elizabeth Browning who died in 1839.

John Browning's photograph and memorial can be seen inside the Chapel itself. On the opposite side of the front wall of the Chapel note the memorial to Samuel Bennett (who established Methodism in Tempsford) and his first wife, Mary. Near to this you will note the photograph of Edwin Lewin (1857-1927), another influential figure in the history of Tempsford Methodism, while on the same wall prints of John and Charles Wesley may be seen.

Behind the Chapel is the hall, which was built as a Sunday School in 1878 on land given by John Browning.

The Chapel is testament to the rich record that still exists of over two hundred years of Methodist work and witness in the village.

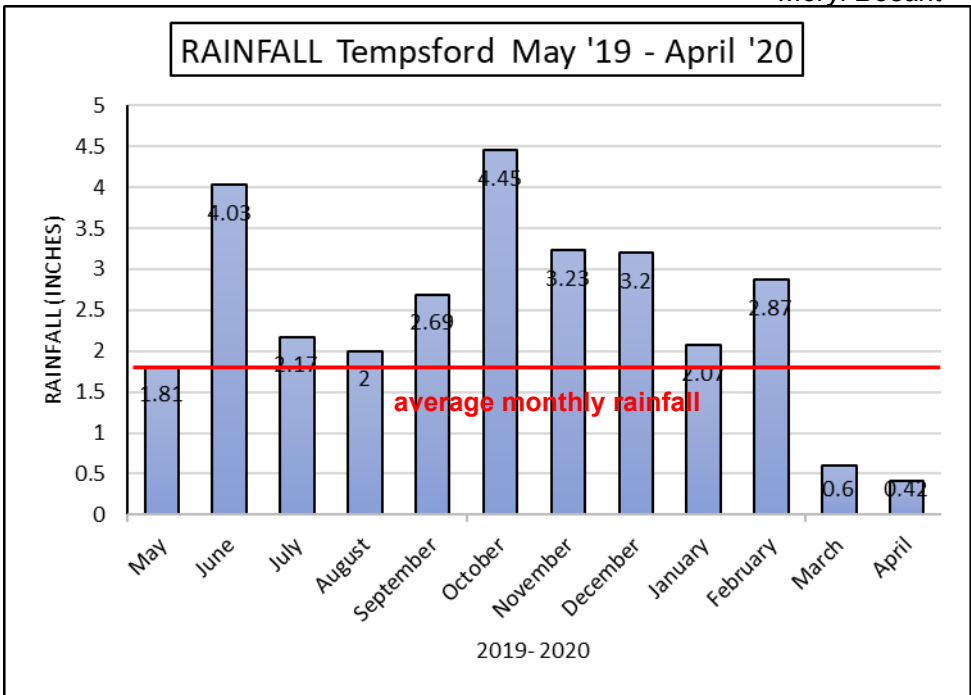
WHAT A LOT OF RAIN!

The most interesting feature of the weather over the last 12 months is the amount of rain that has fallen. In my graph you can see that from June 2019 to Feb 2020 all months had over the monthly average which exactly what we had in May last year. Nothing else about the weather was particularly outstanding except that July 25th was the hottest day I've ever recorded at 38°C. Other than that, Summer merged into Autumn and then Winter and it remained mild throughout.

The rainfall was exceptional though. You can see October was the wettest month, closely followed by June (very disappointing for the first month of summer!). These two months had more than twice the average rainfall.

Not surprisingly now though, the weather has turned much drier with March having well below average, and April virtually no rain, the gardens are getting desperate. It is very true that weather always repays its debt. So could 9 wet months be followed by 9 dry? I'll let you know later on in the year!

Meryl Besant



LOCKDOWN ON THE A1?



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and much more.**

TEMPSFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

We began March with our semi-final cup tie vs high-flying Bluebell. An incredible match saw us finish 2-2 at the end of normal time, with goals by Cameron Dunlop and Andy Gosnell.

It went to a penalty shoot-out, with your village football club on the verge of making history by reaching our first ever cup final. Despite us leading 3-1 after both sides taking three penalties each, Bluebell managed to turn it around to convert their next three penalties and win 4-3 to progress to the final. Our players gave it their all and despite the obvious disappointment, they can raise their heads high and build on this experience for next season.

Our next match was a friendly vs Biggleswade Social Club on March 15th. It was a strange time as the Coronavirus situation was just beginning to take hold, and the FA had decided to suspend the league. The game went ahead however, and a spirited game ended in a 3-4 defeat with goals coming from Liam Watts, Owen Meads, and even a rare goal from me (the club's founder). Please take a look at our Facebook page if you wish to see it - it was voted goal of the season !

The seriousness of the pandemic really started to hit home the following week, and we made the decision to postpone all future activities in order to safeguard the wellbeing of our players and their families. It was at this time that the FA made the decision to void the season 2019/2020, with an eye to begin the new season in September.

As the season has now officially ended, we would like to congratulate the following players:

Manager's Players of the year: Conor Seaman and Josh Dawkins

Players' Player of the year: Josh Dawkins

Clubman of the year: Richard Blackburn

Top scorer of the year: Andy Gosnell.

We would also like to thank all our players for their magnificent efforts this season, our fantastic manager Craig for his leadership, and our amazing fans for coming to watch us every week. A special mention too for our terrific sponsors this season - Knotts Farm, Pecoro Pizza, and LSK Toilet Hire. As soon as lockdown finishes and it is safe to do so, we shall begin preparing for pre-season. If you are interested in joining the club, please contact us via our social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) or send us an email to tempsfordfc@gmail.com. If you would like to help the club in any other capacity such as sponsorship, please do get in touch with us. We appreciate all your support.

Joe Lawrence

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TEMPSFORD MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

It seems so unusual not to be advertising our next Tempsford Museum Exhibition, but we are living in some very strange and unsettling times at the moment. Indeed, you could say that it's another challenging chapter in Tempsford's history. The Tempsford Museum and Archives will be noting and saving for posterity, just how this lovely village coped with this global disaster and how we all came through it.

Just over eleven hundred years ago, Tempsford was dealing with the aftermath of the Viking's invading the village and the slaughter that took place. Over the centuries this village has had its fair share of catastrophes, such as disease, famine, failed harvest, accidents and the numerous deaths of its young men in two World Wars. Those before us dealt with it and came through, we too will come through this together and be all the stronger for it.

The Tempsford Museum and Archives opened its doors in July 2013 and over the past seven years it has become a hub of the community. On average we have about 50/60 visitors, with many of them old Tempsfordians, who love to return each month to view our exhibitions, which change every two months, so there is always something different to see. The tearoom is a huge draw, with home baked cakes, tea and coffee on tap and the atmosphere is wonderful and a joy to see.

Unfortunately, with all the Government restrictions and the country in lockdown, all this has come to a drastic stop for all our village institutions, the Church, Chapel, Women's Institute, Village Hall and Local Pub. It seems so alien to what we are used to, and we all yearn for those happier days to return, but return they will and when they do, we can all move forward to the next chapter of our village history and the world will look back on Coronavirus as another war we all won, but once again at a sad cost to some.

A big "Thank You" to all those who are doing their bit to keep up moral and helping to retain that vital ingredient in our village, "Community Spirit", we are so lucky to have it. Let's look forward to our next chapter.

I speak for all the Trustees of the Tempsford Museum and Archives, when I say, we all look forward to welcoming you back at the end of this dark period of time. Keep checking our website for updates

www.tempsfordmuseum.co.uk

Keep Safe everyone.

Steve Cooney (Chairman TM&A)



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STUART MEMORIAL HALL

Most of you will be aware by now that we have had to close the Hall down because of the Covid-19 restrictions. This has meant that we have had to disappoint a number of people who had bookings for weddings and parties. We are really sorry that we have had to do this but we had no other choice but to close. To have remained open would have been irresponsible and would have breached lockdown requirements. Linda Collins, our Bookings Secretary, has contacted all the people with bookings to the end of May and has told them that the Hall is very likely to be closed until then at the earliest. She has also warned those with bookings in June and beyond that we will have to follow Government guidelines, whatever they are, later in the year. Linda is still taking bookings for later in the year and next year but, again, our ability to fulfil these will depend on regulations.

We have cancelled the Summer Barbecue that we were hoping to hold on 13th June but, at this stage, we're hoping to go ahead with the Quiz Night in November and the Burns Night on January 30th, 2021.

A decision on whether or not to run this year's Tempsford Show will be made in mid-June so that we can publish details in the July edition of the Tempsford Times. We may have to run a cut down version of the Show because it would be irresponsible of us to go house to house asking for sponsorship at the present time. Many of the businesses that normally sponsor us must be suffering too. If restrictions are still in place we may have to cancel.

The AGM was due to be held on April 28th but this has had to be postponed. If we can, we will hold it later in the year but we are advised by the Charity Commission that, under current circumstances, we can postpone it for a year. In the meantime, we are producing an Annual Report which we are hoping to have ready by the end of April. If anyone would like to have a copy by e-mail, please contact me.

On the brighter side, the redecoration of the interior of the Hall has been completed. The main hall looks resplendent in its bright new colour scheme and the committee room looks so much bigger in the lighter colour scheme that was chosen. The toilets are also complete, with new vanity units, boxed in pipes and repaired plasterwork. The main hall ceiling and some of the walls required much more work than we had anticipated



because of damaged plasterwork and peeling paint. We must thank Gary Blick and his team of decorators, led by Lee, for all their hard work. Work on redecoration was completed just as the lockdown started but we have not yet been able to start work on the disabled ramp at the north door. We will start this as soon as Government regulations allow.

We very much hope that we will be able to re-open as soon as possible but we are very aware of our duty of care to the community and all users of the Hall.

Brian Harrison, Chairman, Hall Committee

b.harrison46@btinternet.com

www.tempsford-stuart-memorial-village-hall.co.uk

PERSONAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Michael Joseph Honan 17.7.1937 - 26.3.2020

Judy, Christine, Martin and Elizabeth would like to thank everyone for all the beautiful cards, messages and flowers received following the loss of Mike. He loved Tempsford and thought you were all wonderful. Your many kindnesses to us will never be forgotten.

Hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, with the sun shining we can all get together once again to celebrate his life in the time-honoured fashion.

HOW CUBA SAVED US!

We were on holiday on the Fred Olsen cruise ship "Braemar" that got caught up with Coronavirus victims on board. The whole experience itself is quite a story, how we eventually got home is a story in itself!

The familiar chimes came over the PA system and by now all the diners knew to stop and listen. This wasn't the Captain's usual midday report on our position, the state of the sea and the weather ahead. This was Monday 9th March; we'd left dry land just 12 hours ago and we weren't to know that we wouldn't set foot on it again for 10 days with one island after another refusing us entry. The Captain confirmed coronavirus, and you could hear, even feel the intake of breath, wondering what was to happen to us. Every announcement was met with "what next? when will we hear some good news?"

On Tuesday March 17th the Captain told us that "Fred Olsen", British Airways and the UK Foreign Office had been liaising with the Cuban authorities for us to be disembarked and flown to the UK. Clapping and cheering broke out at breakfast, and the crew and waiters had a spring in their step and a smile on their faces again.

The arrangements that were made were astounding and only became more so when we looked back on the event. We were told it was going to be a long day and so it turned out to be. We were only allowed to take with us our usual hand luggage; our suitcases we had to leave in the cabin, and these would be shipped to us after Braemar arrived back in UK, who knows when!

Four planes had landed the night before, 3 for the asymptomatic passengers to be taken to Heathrow and the fourth to take those symptomatic and their relatives to RAF Boscombe Down where they would be isolated and cared for.

The ship had arrived overnight at Port Mariel, Cuba, early in the morning. We wondered why the place looked deserted, the cranes all motionless, no trucks moving containers around, and not a soul to be seen. Then two black cars parked at a distance with small flags on them, and on a distant container, a line of tripods and cameramen appeared. Two large containers had been parked on the quay either side of the gangway from the ship. At 12.20pm a slowly moving procession of 10 coaches, each 20-30 yards apart preceded by two police cars, with two more at the rear plus an ambulance and a breakdown truck, arrived. The first coach drew up with its door directly opposite the gangway (photo) so the first 30 or so passengers were allowed to walk off the ship and straight on to the coach, after which the coach moved forward further down the quay while the whole line of other coaches moved forward. The procedure continued until 9 coaches were filled. At 1.50pm, with two motor-cycle outriders in front, the whole procession travelled at 20-30mph the thirty or so miles to the airport, outside Havana. At every roundabout, road junction and road overbridge there were police or army personnel blocking other traffic, allowing us to pass through freely. People in their homesteads or streets must have been told this was happening as they were outside watching, waving and smiling as we passed.



It took an hour and a half to reach the airport. The coaches drove to a hard-standing away from the terminal buildings and fairly close to the 4 aircraft. We saw two camouflaged tents, beside which each coach in turn parked, and inside which were standard luggage scanners operated by 4 fully gowned people. By 5.15pm we took our turn to go through and then out the other side we stepped straight into another coach which drove us directly to the steps of the waiting aircraft. As we boarded at 6.25pm we could see that on the other side of the coaches there was another line of camera men including live tv, so we waved at them as we went on board, and several of the pictures were published in the Daily Mail. I reckon we had taken no more than 20 steps in total on Cuban soil.

It wasn't too long before the engines were started and by 7.30pm we were on our way and the whole procedure was repeated for the three other planes. There were nearly 700 people to be rescued. When we got home we began to realise what a mammoth exercise this had been for Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, British Airways, the UK Foreign Office and the Cuban Authorities, well done to all of them. We sent a detailed letter to Fred Olsen Cruise Lines expressing our thoughts and thanks for the care and rescue we had been given.

It was a holiday we will never forget for lots of reasons; we DID go to several other places in Central and Southern America before the problem arose, and enjoyed those, and we are thankful to those who looked after us in the end. I now wear a Cuban flag badge-pin in my sun hat in recognition of the help they gave, which as they said in their press release, was "for the sake of humanity".

We wish everyone who suffered a safe and happy outcome.
Adrian and Meryl Besant

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