



Bunyan Meeting

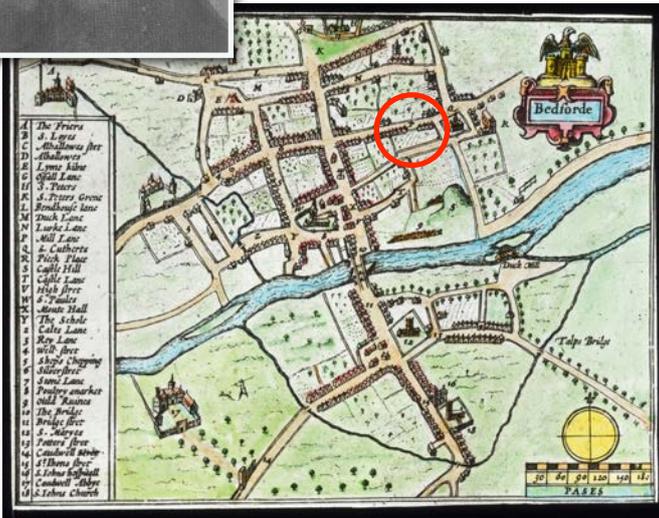
News Letter/28

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 2020



Dear friends

In just over a year's time, on December 21st 2021, we will mark the 350th anniversary of John Bunyan being called as minister of this church. This anniversary is the first of a whole series of 350th anniversaries that will extend through much of 2022. We hope to mark these several anniversaries in various ways during that year.



Map of Bedford 1610. Mill Lane, and the site of the barn and orchard are circled in red.

The Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council Virtual Library

In January of 1672, Bunyan was set apart as minister of the church “and received of the Elders the right hand of fellowship.” In March of 1672 the Conventicle Act was suspended under the Declaration of Indulgence, allowing our church to meet freely for the first time after twelve years of persecution. The church quickly sought a meeting place and one member, Josias Ruffhead, purchased a barn and orchard in what was then Mill Lane from Justice Crompton of Elstow. On May 9th the barn was licensed as a place of worship “for the use of such as doe not conforme to the Church of England who are of the Perswasion commonly called Congregationall to meet and assemble in, in order to their Publick Worship and devotion.”

On August 20th 1672, the barn and orchard in which the church were now meeting was conveyed from Josias Ruffhead to John Bunyan, John Fenn, Thomas Crocker, Thomas Cooper and Samuel Hensman, our first Trustees, for the sum of £50.

The barn and orchard were set well below the level of the street and John Brown - a former Minister - suggests that this is because the site was part of the moat which once surrounded Bedford Castle. That small church could scarcely have imagined that almost 350 years later their successors in the faith would still be worshipping on the same site.

Anniversaries such as these, remind us that we have much to celebrate. As we look back and survey our past we remember the way in which God has led this church through the centuries. We rejoice in a rich heritage of faith, we see the hand of God upon His people and are encouraged in our own work today.

We live in uncertain days as did our forbears in 1672, but we press on in the confidence that we are not alone in this work. Like our forbears, we can scarcely imagine the wonderful future that lies ahead for God's church in this place. But if we are to take hold of that future, we must remember that we are God's church. Bunyan Meeting is not our own possession but God's. We are His co-workers, and united with Him by faith, all things are indeed possible.

Please keep sending your articles for our News Letter direct to me at chrisdamp@mac.com or by post to the church office for my attention.

Your friend and Minister **Chris**

“As you come to him, the living Stone.... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.... you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2 v 4 -5 & 9

This Week at Bunyan Meeting

Wednesday 28th October **Church Meeting** 7.30pm in the church and also via Zoom (zoom details available from church office)

Sunday 1st November **Morning Worship** 11.00am
conducted by the Minister

Sunday Worship at Mill Street

We continue to meet each Sunday at 11.00am for worship. Our services are short, lasting about 35 minutes. It is a legal requirement that we should wear face masks in the church (unless you are in an exempt category) and we must allow as much ventilation as possible, so it will be feeling colder in church! We have sought further guidance on ventilating the building as we want to keep people safe from both the virus and the cold!

It is essential that you maintain a distance of six feet or two metres from others inside the church building. Please also remember your umbrella as you may have to wait outside the church until the stewards are ready to seat you.

After the service it is essential that you remain in your seat until a steward directs you to leave the church and please do vacate the building promptly, not stopping to speak with others until you are outside. Once outside, please keep the path to the gate clear, remember to keep your distance from others and do not gather in groups of more than six.



Helena Kent - A Tribute

I was fortunate enough to have met Helena and Paddy on my very first visit to Bunyan. Each Sunday thereafter, before the service started, Helena would come and join me for ten minutes or so to help put the world to right and have some banter. When little Eve Gibson started to come to church and joined me in the back row, the putting right and banter by the three of us, got even better. Helena and Paddy became members of Bunyan Meeting in 1967, a lifetime of faith and worship. Helena was with Delia when Listening Ear was conceived, and she was a volunteer at The Samaritans, helping many, many people. Whenever I would visit Helena, post her stroke, I would ask after her health and how she was coping. Her answer would take about 15 seconds, then say; *‘that’s enough about me, tell me what you have been doing since last week?’* When I had finished my rendition of the week’s events, she would then want a blow-by-blow account of Bunyan life and its people. Helena wanted to know everyone's joys and woes. I haven't met anyone as caring or as thoughtful as Helena, she had time for absolutely everyone; especially me.

Helena also proved to be a very feisty lady. One dark evening while caring for Paddy, burglars broke into the house, cut the phone wires and proceeded to search for anything valuable. They did get away with some loot, which included a Rolex watch taken from her arm. Then the unthinkable, she poked one of the intruders in the belly

and kicked the other in the shin, and told them to 'GET OUT'. Her justification for taking such a risk was; they were disobedient; they entered the room where Paddy was and she had warned them not to. Helena has definitely been a good and faithful servant to so many people.

It was indeed a privilege and immense pleasure to have known her and I will miss Helena so much; as will many others. My thoughts are with Fiona, David, Christopher and Lisa.

Michael Thomas

Service of Thanksgiving for Janet Barratt



Thank you to all those who were able to attend the service at Bunyan to give thanks for Mum's life. We had a short service at Woodlands Burial Ground, Keysoe led by my brother, Nicholas, which was very special, followed by the service in Church. We have had some lovely comments about the service and we are very grateful to everyone who was involved in any way to make it such a memorable occasion for our family. We know that Mum would have been pleased with the service because so much of it included things she had asked for: the two

hymns; the Bible reading; the poem; the anthem 'Look at the World' which was in the last service she and I were able to watch together on 20



Flower arrangements at the Service of Thanksgiving for Janet Barratt



September; the piece of music by Beethoven. The recording of the duet played by her daughter in law, Helen and granddaughter, Sophie would have meant a lot to her.

And another thank you for the many cards we have received. The phrase most used to describe Mum is "lovely lady" and there are some wonderful tributes paid to her which are a great comfort to us as we read them over and over. She would be quite overwhelmed

by all the things people have said. Thank you too for the tributes which have been included in the News Letters over the past weeks, for the phone calls, the emails and text messages. We really do feel very blessed by the kindness and prayer support from our Bunyan family.

God bless

Gilly and Alan Millbery

Anne Holloway writes:

Dear Chris and Bunyan friends,

Firstly I would just like to say thank you for the services and news letters online. I have very much enjoyed them both. Hearing the lovely hymns and being able to sing at the top of my awful voice without anyone being deafened !!! You have all worked so hard well done all !!! I love hearing how you all came to Bunyan. I now come to the Christ, Coffee and Croissant services and bring various members of my family. My grandsons Harry and Henry love coming.



My Mum and Dad started coming to Bunyan meeting when they first moved to Bedford from Dunstable. My dad, John Russell, also helped in the Museum and knew much about John Bunyan. My mum, Violet, used to help in the Open Doors with Vera and

sometimes Ruth and also sometimes with the lunches. She was known as the Whippet by Brian Gregg, the Caretaker, as she used to run about so fast. She was so very sad when she was struck down with her kidney disease and wasn't able to help anymore. All of you that knew her would know how frustrating it was for her not to be able to do these things. She valued your visits to her over her illness. Chris has been great to both my Mum and Dad during their illnesses visiting them in hospital and during their last days and was a great comfort to me too and I thank him very much for this. Poor thing won't forget my Mum and his visits to Lister in his truck! After one unfortunate bump in the car park I think he started parking on the roadside instead. The car park there is not very truck friendly!

I used to come to some of the services with them and met some of you. I feel privileged to have become very good friends with Micheal and Pearl through my Mum and Dad and they have become part of our family, and to have met some of the lovely people at Bunyan. I am not able to be at church over the next few weeks due to the imminent arrival of our new Grandson. My daughter is due to have the baby by cesarean section the first week of November so as I am second in line, after her husband, as her birthing partner I am avoiding any large groups (well would we have ever have thought that over 6 is now classed as large). We have to isolate for four days before the birth and Melissa and her husband then have to have Covid tests just to make sure, then it is all go! Strange times but also wonderful times with a new baby. I hope you are all well.

I have seen Pearl and Micheal and have loved their company they are such lovely people. Micheal as always so busy with all the jobs and help he gives to people and helping at church. It was lovely to see you all at the Christ (minus) coffee and croissants in September. I hope to see you all very soon. Take care. God bless.

Anne and the various Holloways.

A passing thought.

On the odd occasion when I use cash, and receive a 50p coin in my change, I always check the reverse, could it be the famous and very rare Kew Gardens coin. Alas no, but it did bare the inscription:

Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations 31 January 2020.

If only that turned out to be true, here's to 2021.

Brian Cornish

3 Museums Project – Focus Groups

I can now confirm that the focus groups will meet on Wednesday 11th November. We already have 9 volunteers signed up but it is not too late if you would like to join. You will be required for just a one hour slot on that day. Please let me know asap if you would like to be part of a focus group and then I can allocate people to one of the slots.

Thank you.

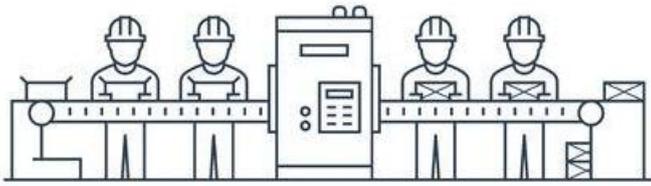
Cherry Protheroe: caprotheroe@btinternet.com 01234 378806

The Conveyor Belt

I have just had my flu injection. What I find remarkable is how someone can cheerfully and professionally carry out a repetitive procedure over and over again without looking



bored. I include those who take blood also. These ladies; and it is mostly ladies smile, sometimes chatter but gently complete the job.



This is reminiscent of the old British Leyland conveyor belts where one person would tighten a single bolt for 8 hours a day, or the operator remove the broken biscuit from the moving belt. It is why the machines broke down so often as to disrupt the boredom, some bright spark would drop a foreign object into the machinery.

It reminded me how many other jobs could get boring. For the final 10 years of my working life I worked on the front desk of a very busy police station in the Met. At first, meeting people I would never have mixed with was interesting if not exciting, but eventually you saw the same faces day after day.

During my period there we had a very high number of vehicles stolen. The victim would attend the station and we would create a crime report. One day whilst the Inspector was speaking to me, someone came in to report their car had been stolen. I moved to the computer and entered the details and gave them a crime report. That report was then automatically circulated and they left. As the victim went out the Inspector asked me if I was going to create a report. I said I had. It had actually taken me three minutes. Creating stolen vehicle reports became so routine, I could flash through them. We then had a discussion as he pointed out that that victim had lost his most expensive possession after his home. He would probably miss a day's work as he reported it and made other arrangements. He probably felt this had been a personal attack on him. It reminded me that I was dealing with individuals in tragic circumstances but because of the routine, I had forgotten, whilst doing what had become repetitive work. The next time you give blood or have an injection, do appreciate the concentration and commitment of the doer.

Keep safe,

Ken Thomas

Ruth Blake writes:

Well my Grandfather has had his hip op last Thursday so far everything is OK. At the moment we don't know when he's coming home as we can't get in to see him, as this virus has stopped hospital visits.

Apart from that, I've not been doing many things. I have got a very large bag of stamps for BMS and have given my Grandfather's model railway a good dust and Hoover so when he comes home - with our help - he will hopefully sort it out!

Ruth

Problems are sent to us to make us think, not to make us worry.

The kingdom of God is not for the well meaning, but for the desperate.

Theology is not simply a thing of thought; we learn as much theology as life teaches us.

Submitted by **Ken Wells**



Daily Hope - 0800 804 8044

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

For Your Prayers

Please remember **Ruth Blake, Wendy Carter, Mary and Kenneth Davies, and Fiona, David** and all of **Helena Kent's family**.



Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd November 2020
230pm to 400pm
Quarry Theatre, 26 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN

Quarry Theatre
01234 362337 (Booking)
01234 362269 (Enquiries)
quarrytheatre@bedfordschool.org.uk



Bunyan Meeting
Mill Street
Bedford MK40 3EU
Telephone 01234 213722
email bunyanmeeting@gmail.com
website www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk