



## Bunyan Meeting

# News Letter/35

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER 2020

Dear friends

The Friends of the John Bunyan Museum are creating a series of short videos to highlight our Museum and its collection. The first video tells the story of the Blue Plaques that we find in the district, highlighting a John Bunyan connection. This week's video tells us something of John Bunyan's anvil. There will be two more videos available during Advent, so please do look out for these. The videos are to be found on the Museum section of our church website under the Friends area.

### DECEMBER ONLINE BUNYAN HIDDEN HIGHLIGHTS

Join us during December for a series of short talks on objects from the Museum, or further afield, for Advent. Talks are 3-5 minutes, accessible FREE from the Friends, Museum, or Bunyan Meeting Church website or Facebook pages. Go to <https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/> and follow the links. There will be four talks, on Wednesdays at 12.30pm and 6.30pm (the same talks). Talks will be accessible until the end of December and then move to a dedicated page on the museum website.

**Wed 2nd December**  
12.30pm and 6.30 pm



**Blue Plaques to John Bunyan,**  
by Helen Kennedy

**Wed 9th December**  
12.30pm and 6.30 pm



**John Bunyan's Anvil,**  
by John Pestel

**Wed 16th December**  
12.30pm and 6.30 pm



**Lighting the home in John Bunyan's time,**  
by Janet Wootton

**Wed 23rd December**  
12.30pm and 6.30 pm



**John Bunyan's Tombstone,**  
by Christopher Damp

Link to the Bunyan Meeting website: <https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk>

Over the years, our collection of Bunyan relics has grown and developed. The door from Bedford Prison was once displayed in the old entrance to the church whilst many of the other artefacts were kept upstairs in the Church Parlour, which we now know as the Harlington Room. A story is told of a Ladies meeting taking place in the Parlour which was interrupted by a guide showing visitors around the church. As he opened the Parlour door the guide announced in a loud voice "and this is our collection of relics"!

The current Ampthill Room was known as the Gifford Library, where some of our extensive book collection was once kept. The Library was named after our first Minister, John Gifford.

Next year marks seventy five years since we first opened our Museum. The books and relics were gathered together and displayed in what is now the Harrowden Room. I can still picture the old museum with its many glass fronted book cases and Victorian display cabinets. It was all so very old fashioned compared to our current museum. For many years Fred Wells curated the Museum and later Alan Cirket served as our Curator. He and his wife Nora would open the Museum each Saturday to visitors. Things have certainly changed over the years!



One of my earliest adventures when I first came to Bunyan was to take Bunyan's will over to Duxford for conservation. This document was backed with canvas and in need of urgent attention. The iron gall ink was damaging the paper and needed treatment to halt further deterioration. Doreen Watson, Pat Hurry and myself drove to Duxford with the will packed into a large cardboard box in the back of my car.

The canvas which supported the will was removed during conservation and revealed some notes which were written on the reverse by our former Minister, Samuel Hillyard. He recorded that the will was found hidden in the chimney of Bunyan's cottage in St. Cuthbert's Street and he noted the date when it was presented to the church. He stated that the church should preserve the will and that it must be kept with our first Church Book forever.

Our Church Book is displayed in the museum and records the transactions of the church from the early 1650s. This tradition continues each church meeting as we make a record of the business of the church in our minutes. Our first Church Book is one of the earliest Dissenting church books to survive and it has been reproduced twice over the years. Michael Davies of Liverpool University is currently working on the Church Book and hopes that Oxford University Press will publish a new edition of the book during 2021.

For our predecessors, the Church Book was a hugely important document. It was a record of God's dealings with His people, it was a "means of witnessing and memorialising their providential history". The Church Book was viewed by our forbears in terms of a spiritual document, rather like a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles, a record of the history of God's church and of the lives of the men and women who comprised that church.

We stand today in this great tradition of faith. We are the heirs not only of Christ's promises, but of those men and women who have gone before us here in this church. Our history is important for it tells of God's gracious dealings with us, His people, in this particular place. We treasure this story of faithfulness and commitment to Christ.

The question that we must ask ourselves today concerns the story that we are writing. What of our faith and commitment to Christ? How do we continue the work of furthering the gospel in this place? What will history say of us and the way in which we have undertaken the work that Christ has entrusted to us? May we run that race which is set before us with perseverance and let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12 v 2 - 3)

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

Your friend and Minister

**Chris**

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*"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."* Revelation 20 v 12

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## Sunday Worship

Bunyan Meeting is now open again for Sunday worship. Arrangements for services will be just as they were prior to the recent lockdown. Do remember to wear warm clothes as some doors and windows will have to remain open during the service to aid ventilation. Please do try to book in for services, particularly over the Christmas period as seats are limited.

This Sunday we have our morning service at 11.00am. On Sunday 20th December, we hold our nativity service at 11.00am when our CCC congregation will lead some of the service and we have our carol service at 6.30pm.



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## Live Streaming of Services



Bunyan Meeting website - [click here to view](#)

We are still preparing for the eventual live streaming of our services, but we do need more volunteers to assist with this during Sunday services. If you might be able to help, please do speak to the Minister.

As a first step towards live streaming we hope that over the next few weeks we may be able to record some of the services and make these videos available on our website. There will be more information about this in the near future.

We must thank Myra, Allan and Ian in particular for the many hours they have spend working on this new project.

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## Stewarding in Church

We urgently need help with Stewarding in church over the Christmas period. If you would be willing to help please contact either our Minister or Church Secretary.

We also need some volunteers for cleaning the toilet in the church foyer on a Sunday. This is an essential task and allows us to provide toilet facilities during the services. Again, please contact the Minister if you can help with this.

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## This Week at Bunyan Meeting

Sunday 13th December	11.00am	<b>Morning Worship</b>
Sunday 20th December	11.00am	<b>Morning Worship with nativity celebration</b>
	6.30pm	<b>Carol Service</b>

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## Dr. Richard Maddison

Ricky Maddison's daughter, Anne, has been in touch to say that her father has died. His funeral service will be held at **St. Andrew's Church** on **Tuesday 15th December** and can be viewed via St. Andrew's Church website.

Ricky was for some years the Scout Master here at Bunyan Meeting. We give thanks for his work with young people and remember his family in our prayers at this time.

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## Bedford Food Bank

Dear Supporters,

Many thanks for your continued support this year. The last two months have seen us feed over 800 people giving out over 10 tonnes of food.

The list of items that we are currently requiring are :



UHT Fruit Juice  
Tinned Chicken meat ( small tins)  
Long Life Sponge Puddings  
Tinned Rice Pudding  
Tinned Spaghetti Hoops  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Tea 40 or 80 packs

Tinned Vegetables  
Coffee  
Anti bac cleaning spray  
Shampoo  
Shower gel  
Washing up liquid  
Laundry tablets.

Thank you for your support. Please see the website or telephone for further guidance on how to give food or donations. Gifts of food can be left in the church foyer on a Sunday or in the foyer by the church office during the week.

<https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk> or by telephone - **01234 268569**

To donate by post, please make cheques payable to 'Bedford Food Bank' and send them to - 71 Murdock Road, Manton Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7PL Christmas Quiz



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## Christmas Quiz

Covid or no covid the Bunyan Christmas Quiz must go on. A copy of the quiz is available on the church website. A generous five weeks to find the answers this year so some high scores are expected. There will be prizes for the best.

Contributions to church funds will be most welcome.

Please return your answers to us. Details on the quiz sheet.

**Mary and Kenneth Davies**

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## Bunyan Postal Service (BPS)

For the first time in many a decade BPS will not be operating this year, another victim of Covid-19. As was mentioned in last week's Church Meeting, a page will be set aside in the News Letter for Christmas greetings, with a request that a donation is pledged for **Smartejs, Prebend Street**. Over the years our annual Christmas donation has steadily risen to over £500, so, please donate what you can, and GiftAid when possible.

Donations can be either made directly through their website SMART Prebend Centre - SMART [smartejs.org.uk](http://smartejs.org.uk) - or may be placed in an envelope marked Christmas Card Appeal and sent in to the Church Office, or in the offering box at a Sunday Service.

Christmas greetings will appear in a special Christmas edition of our News Letter on December 20th. Your Christmas greeting can be sent to our Minister by email: [chrisdamp@mac.com](mailto:chrisdamp@mac.com) or to the church office. *Deadline for this News Letter will be Wednesday 16th December.*

Thanking you in advance

**Brian & Brenda Cornish**



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## The Magic of Books

Have you noticed with Zoom calls on TV how many use the backdrop of books? Now sadly it seems there are many households that have no books at all, and that is sad because without them how can you gain the knowledge, or more importantly enjoy moments of happiness or wonder as you absorb the words from the page. But hopefully it will influence people, especially youngsters to obtain their own, albeit smaller libraries.

I like to see the untidy rows rather than sets of volumes because that indicates to me that they have been read rather than just be ornamental. That said I have been trapped into buying Wisden every year for my son that I started when he was just 14 and I took him to Lords to watch his first cricket match. I understand those who prefer books in tablet form as it can be convenient, but nothing beats the feel of a book, the physical turning of the pages and the quick look back to remind you of part of the story.

When I retired the first few weeks felt like being on holiday, and it left me with plenty of time on my hands. I discovered the Oxfam shop that sold second hand books. Browsing the shelves I had my interest in many of the classics reinvigorated and enjoyed Dickens, Bronte, and R. L. Stevenson, I even progressed to Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo and many more. My greatest achievement; and I thought it a challenge at the time was to read War & Peace. My son reckons no bookcase should be without a creased back spine of War and Peace, and believe me it is a wonderful and informative tale, try it.

**Ken Thomas**

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Persons winning an argument have no need to loose their temper; persons loosing an argument cannot afford to.

There is only one positive freedom - the freedom to choose between good and evil.  
If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen.

Submitted by **Ken Wells**



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## 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 live or online church services at this time.

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## For Your Prayers

Please remember **Heather Caves; Heather Maull & her family; Alan and Gilly Millbery.**



## Bunyan Meeting

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