

PARISH NEWS FROM THE ASTWELL BENEFICE

Helmdon, Radstone, Syresham, Whitfield, Lois Weedon & Weston, and Wappenham

Issue 8: 14th June 2020

We would love to feature your 'lock-down' news, stories and photos here! Please send them to Sarah Rudkin at: rectorastwellbenefice@aol.com.

We will also continue to list overleaf all those for whom we pray on a regular basis. If you know of anyone who would like to be added to list, please ask them to contact Sarah or Wiggy.

All in a day's work – a tale of simple country folk!!

You asked me the week before last (or even earlier than that), if I fed the birds, and I replied, 'yes', we do.....

Having thought about it, we only feed the birds by throwing food out to them, or in the winter clearing the snow and putting food out, so..... - I asked Bill to build me a bird table - which he has made wonderfully! It has a base, surrounded by a lip to stop the seeds blowing off. It has a wooden roof which overhangs the base (in oak from off-cuts found in the garage) very posh!!.... *Version 1.*

We then added two pieces of wood at each end of the apex with a large round hole in the top half - it looked lovely. We also lowered the roof by 1" as well.... *Version 2.*

We then watched the crows having a ball - taking everything but the sunflower seeds, so we then put a piece of wire across each open side and end, thinking that would put a stop to them - not a chance! So we lowered the roof..... *Version 3.*

We then continued to watch the crows sitting on the wire and bending down to get into the food, so we again lowered the roof.... *Version 4.*

We then added a second row of wire - that would stop the crows. Oh no - *not a chance!*..... *Version 5.*

We then found a squirrel sitting inside the feeder taking his fill! So, we had the grand idea of putting a plastic dustbin lid under the feeder to stop the squirrel from jumping up - he won't be able to reach, the dustbin lid was curved! Oh yes, we had him this time, Ha. Ha! *Version 6,*only to see him jumping from the low wooden fence bar, up onto the dustbin lid, and into the bird table, and having his fill again. Bill caught him at it, and thumped the top of the roof making the squirrel jump. He flew out of the box, onto the bean sticks and then up the acer tree! We gave up, deciding to take the bird table down and forget it.

The next day, after thinking about it all night.....

Bill is now putting stiff wire netting about 1.5" square around the bird table.... *Version 7.* And now, of course, we can't get the food onto the bird table - we need a tube to be able to feed them!!

Version 8 - Bill is now hinging the roof, so that we can feed the birds from the top - and that's where we aretoday!

Wish us luck!

Judith & Bill Elkington, Helmdon



Bill with Version 6!

TO HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

We bring before our loving heavenly Father those in our villages and others we know who are unwell, recovering from illness and all those who need our prayers for any reason during this difficult time:

From Helmdon: Joyce Beech, Philip Gulliver, Emma, Jon, Ellouise, Lilly & James, Barbara Buxton, Diane Thorpe, Vanessa Vicars, John Thorne, Alison & Cara, John & Janet Snow, Margaret Reardon and David Bowen-Jones

From Lois Weedon: Joan Jacobs, Lis Cockrell, Jeremy "Jez" Wilcox, Ernie Wheeler & Colin James.

From Syresham: Derek Hollyoake, Peter Sims, John & Ann Widdowson & Collette Andrewartha.

From Wappenham: Judy King and Claire Kennett.

For those known to us:

Pauline Collis, Christopher Carr, Evelyn Johnson, Jonnie D'Arcy, James Smillie, Peter Sheen, Dick White, June Brereton, Roger Cane, Penny Bonnymeade, Barbara Whitlock, Ollie Dotterill, Christabel Grant, Marina & Froede Amundsen.

Please pray for those bereaved, and the family & friends of:

Maurice Tucker, David Sheppard, Steve Goodwin, Dorothy D'Alton (nee Abbot), Sally Gore, Teresa Fleetwood, James Gadd, Ron Pratt, Margaret Hinton, Judith Allen, Marcus Durant, Tom Samways, Greg Oles, Mike Durant, Stewart Gundle, Ian Kidd, Richard Tims, Peter Payne, Ivan Hathaway, Robin Oliver, Sue Corbishley, Jason Holt & Shirley Holt, Dennis Hackett, Dick Wilson, Mark Kilby, Keith Hawkins. Also, for the Bearman family, Susan Clarke & family, Kathryn and Peter Oliver, & Geoff and Jo Abbey.

Also, please pray for the work of the Beacon Centre, the Wolverton Mission, the Hope Centre, Katharine House Hospice, Northampton Women's Aid and The Womens Refuge. We also continue to pray for all refugees fleeing persecution, all victims of terror, and all those affected by the Covid-19 virus.

Reflections

I start my 3rd contribution to the Parish News with mixed feelings. A sense of relief and regret. A feeling which was shared with my trusty assistant Richard T. He has returned to the village he grew up in at the same age I came to the village. He is of the next generation and I spent more time in his company during that period than I had in the past 40 years. I wish I could have spent more.

A couple of Thursdays ago we did our final 'Clapathon'. I realised when I started the music bit that I may have given myself a rod for my own back. The decision to stop was taken out of our hands by the very people who decided to start it and those who were the object of our plaudits. Wisdom indeed.

I mention 'regret' because those weeks were quite special. Those who enthusiastically joined in, people like me and Richard who did their bit, and how it gave even the most reclusive a sense of community which we thought may have dwindled. We have always been quite good at celebrating events and anniversaries. Diamond Jubilees, Royal Weddings, Remembrance Day, Children in Need etc. And let's not forget 2012. But this is a different scene. The irony of VE Day being cancelled because of a situation which most reflected wartime conditions was not lost on me. This quite terrible event has given us cause to stop and reflect. All those parents who were obliged to exist in the bubble of their family must now question whether their 'busy' lives are contributing to an inexorable shift away from the reason we were placed on this planet. ie preparing our children to live a contented and good life. Our concern for those who selflessly protect and sustain us in times of difficulty who are poorly rewarded and under-appreciated, especially those who do not share our ethnicity.

We now seem to be in a twilight zone. Uncertainty about the wisdom of our leaders, confusion about exactly what we can and cannot do, implications for our livelihoods, how are we paying for all this? The problem with all these questions is not the ultimate outcome, but the corrosive anxiety it engenders. Already there are calls for resignations, inquiries into decisions made, actions taken by both individuals in authority and some sections of the population. A biblical phrase comes to mind 'Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do'. Who in their right minds would want that responsibility? And thank God for those who try.

Frank Hunt, Churchwarden at Lois Weedon