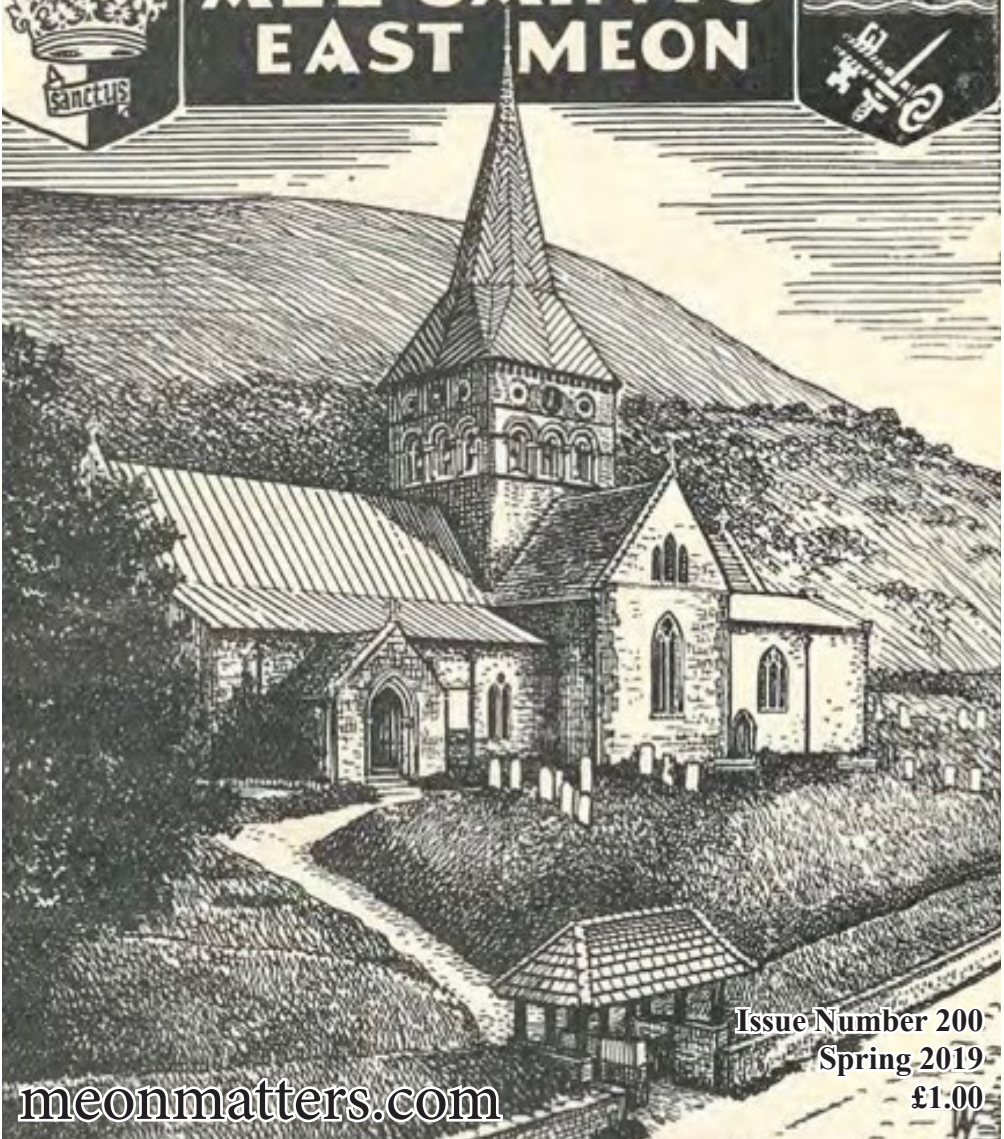


Meon Matters



**ALL SAINTS
EAST MEON**



Issue Number 200

Spring 2019

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It is a great honour to have been asked to write the editorial for this, the 200th edition of Meon Matters.

I have been connected with the magazine on its journey from two sheets of paper typed on both sides, printed on a Gestetner 230 duplicating machine in an estate agent's office and then stapled together. Next came the digital age and subsequently a larger and sometimes glossy magazine before sadly coming to an end in 2018.

Like all good things, this is now the 200th edition, which feels remarkable and proves it certainly is a survivor!!

During its life time, starting with Chris Brough, it has had a variety of editors. Denys, my late husband, took over as Editor No. 5 with edition 75. As each new editor took over, Meon Matters changed slightly and in 2010, Denys wrote a booklet about the making of Meon Matters and how all the people involved along the way contributed to its success, not forgetting the twenty-one distributors, delivering a copy to each house in the parish.

On behalf of a grateful village community, I must finish by thanking all those who have contributed their time, money and efforts to make Meon Matters the success that it has been. Here's to the next 200 issues!

A remarkable achievement.

Rosemary Ryder

The Editorial Team:

Editors: Marc Atkinson, Sigi Goolden, Andrew Hughes, Sharon Sillence

Contributing Editors: Ron Ingerson, Annabel Tyrwhitt-Drake, Debbie Evans

Roving Reporter: Charlie Gaisford

Advertising and Finance: Andy Hales

Distribution: Rosemary Ryder

Layout and Printing: Wildy Upbeat Printers

MARCH

Portsmouth – ‘Harlots, Dung and Glory’

March 21 @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
All Saints Church Hall

ANOTHER Evening With Noel!

March 24 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

The Lone Barn

monthly pop-up cafe 9am-4pm

Friday to Sunday

March 29 @ 9:00 am - March 31 @
4:00 pm

APRIL

Moviola A STAR IS BORN

April 26 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

April 29 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

The East Meon Parish Council invite you all to attend the 2019 Annual Parish Assembly at the East Meon Village Hall

East Meon Country Fair

May 6 @ 10:30 am

The Village Hall committee has decided to run the Country Fair in 2019 on the first bank holiday in May, the 6th

Countryside Day for Schools Bereleigh

May 8 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Bereleigh Estate East Meon
Petersfield Hants GU32 1PH

East Meon Parish Council Meeting

May 13 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Meeting of the East Meon
Parish Council.

The Lone Barn

monthly pop-up cafe
9am -4pm Friday to Sunday
May 24 @ 9:00 am -
May 26 @ 4:00 pm

JUNE

Lobster Shoot

June 1 @ 9:00 am
Saturday 1st June

Longest Day Berefest

June 14 @ 8:00 am
- June 15 @ 10:30 pm
Fri 14th & Sat 15th June



Parish Council Update – March 2019

This is a condensed version of the highlights from your Parish Council meeting in January (please go to our website for the full and formal minutes of our meetings at www.eastmeon.org.uk).

We lost a valued member of our community in January. Mrs Val Harfield had been nominated as recipient of the Parish Award for 2019 but sadly she passed away before being presented with the award. At the request of the family, the Chair placed the award on Mrs Harfield's coffin at her funeral. Mrs Harfield's name will be added to the Parish Award board in the Village Hall.

The Parish Council has been discussing options for the future of the Pavilion. As part of this, we have engaged with the Village Hall Committee to understand how better to use the Pavilion and the Village Hall to provide a greater range of facilities for residents and visitors. The Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council are exploring funding and at the Annual Parish Assembly some suggestions for additional facilities will be presented and parishioners will be invited to contribute their ideas.

On matters financial, our Finance Officer advised that she was confident that the outcome at the end of March 2019 would be within budget as long as February and March expenditure was in line with the budget. Councillors were confident that this would be the case.

The Citizens Advice Bureau applied for a grant to support their services. The CAB do a lot of good work for our community and councillors happily agreed to donate £400. It was also agreed to continue our subscription to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). At £36 for the year, this was deemed to be excellent value!

The Open Forum section of our meetings gives residents the opportunity to raise their issues of concern from the floor. In January a resident raised concern about the weeds on the gravel area next to the bottle banks. Councillor Tyrwhitt-Drake reported that weed killer had been deployed in the past and would look at this again. Another resident asked about the upkeep of the hedge by the Glebe strip and if it could be cut. Councillor Tyrwhitt-Drake undertook to find out if the Hoares or the Tyrwhitt-Drake family had cut it in the past.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, 25th March 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Church Hall.

Useful Numbers

Police:

101 Or 01962 841534

West Meon Surgery:

01730 829666

Out Of Hours Doctor:

111

East Meon Stores:

01730 823224

Citizens Advice Bureau:

03444 111306 / 0300 3300650

EHDC:

01730 266551

East Hampshire Councillor:

Rob Mocatta 01730 823908

East Meon Parish Council:

01730 262882 / 01730 776207

Hampshire County Council:

0845 603 5638

Vicar:

Jane Ball 01730 823221

East Meon Care Group:

0705 017 7505

East Meon Village Hall Bookings:

07956 783061

2018 Church Flower Report

In comparison to 2017 I think 2018 has been quite a busy year – this is not only reflected in the accounts but also in the number of events the flower team have been involved in.

We have a truly wonderful team of extremely talented ladies who are so kind to give their time to making each occasion different and special for the people involved. Whether it is a christening, wedding, funeral or important date in the church calendar, their dedication and enthusiasm is much appreciated.

There were seven weddings and we were involved with five of them. They were neatly spread throughout the year and each reflected arrangements of wonderful seasonal flowers and decorations.

Christmas was a variation on last year – the repeat of two trees behind the altar seems to be popular and the remainder of the church was a good mix of seasonal greenery, lights and candles.

The diary for next year seems to be filling up with five weddings already booked.

We have a great team but if there is anyone in the village who would like to lend a helping hand I would be delighted to hear from them – we are always open to new ideas and talents.

Philippa Tyrwhitt-Drake





East Meon Garden Club – 4th March Meeting
A Talk on Hints and Tips for Success on the Showbench
By Margaret Williams

We were delighted to welcome Margaret Williams to the Garden Club, although she is no stranger to us as she regularly comes to our Annual Show to judge the culinary produce.

There were tips for the Committee on how to write schedules, how to make them interesting, suggesting they could have a theme and try not to have too many rules!

Margaret passed around a copy of a schedule her Mother had produced for a 'Co-operative Tea' in 1965 and the classes made very interesting reading from cooking Quaker Oats Biscuits, Yorkshire Teacakes, Fruit flan with biscuit pastry, bottle of salad cream to a jar of bottled stone fruit. Margaret made a point of not being too specific, for example, a Victoria Sponge is better than asking for a 7" Victoria Sandwich, much better for people to provide the cake than not, should they not have the 'specified' size tin. Will encourage more people to enter the classes. Incidentally, the perfect Victoria Sponge is filled with a good quality raspberry jam and topped with a light sprinkling of caster sugar!

There were tips on the types of jars to use when making preserves, always use scrupulously clean jam jars, and you must buy new, screw top lids and make sure the labels are the appropriate size and put on straight! Methylated Spirit is excellent for removing any marks from the glass jars! Ensure that you put the full date of when the jam/preserve/chutney was made. It is also essential that chutneys are kept for a minimum of 3 months in which to mature. How to test chutney to see if it is ready? Run a spoon across the mixture and if the vinegar runs back into the groove, the chutney needs a further 10 minutes or so to cook. Keep chutneys for a maximum of 2 years as they will start to discolour thereafter.

Always fill the jam jars to the top for when the jam cools, it settles and in so doing forms a good seal. When making curds, remember they have a shelf life of 3 weeks and must always be kept in the 'fridge. Fruit jellies are best put in smaller, straight sided jars with no 'ridged' sides as these can create air bubbles. These however, can be eliminated by sharply banging the filled jar onto a flat surface!

When making a quiche, never, ever use a ceramic dish, always metal on a heated baking sheet and egg wash the base of your pastry before putting in the filling.

Make sure you use plain cutters, flan tins/rings for savoury items and fluted for sweet. Using silicone mats are brilliant for scones and biscuits.

Always present bread on a board, use plain plates for presenting food and make sure the items have a covering.

If you want to know exactly the A – Z for success on the Showbench, obtain a copy of 'On with the Show' which is produced by The Women's Institute and can be obtained online from The Women's Institute.

Now we all know what to do, we look forward to many more of you entering the classes at our Annual Show which is on the 4th August in East Meon Village Hall. Put the date in your diary now!

Pamela Peacock
East Meon Garden Club

Gardeners' Question Time comes to East Meon!

The Team from BBC Radio 4 Gardeners' Question Time was welcomed to East Meon Garden Club on Tuesday 19th March. We were so lucky to have such fabulous panellists, Chris Beardshaw, Bob Flowerdew and Pippa Greenwood, chaired by Eric Robson.

Chris has won 35 prestigious design awards including 12 RHS Gold Medals, the latest was for the NSPCC Garden at RHS Chelsea in 2018.

Bob Flowerdew is known as one of Britain's leading organic Gardeners. Interestingly, his family have been farming the land in East Anglia since before the time of the Tudors.

Pippa Greenwood is our local lady and has been a regular panellist on Gardeners' Question Time since 1994. She is a trained Botanist and was the gardening consultant for the ITV series 'Rosemary and Thyme'.

A little background to the event.

From the time we were informed the Team would like to come to the village and the time of the event itself was barely six weeks, so it was a 'all hands on deck' situation! The application itself was some 10 pages long and when it came to the question, 'why should the team come to your venue' who else was there to answer that, but our wonderful historian, Michael Blakstad! Needless to say, he wrote a remarkable piece on the history of East Meon, resulting in a meeting with Dan Cocker (GQT Producer) at Leydene House on the afternoon of the event itself, so that the outline of the original and famous Rose Garden could be seen.

Tickets for the event sold out within 10 days and we were delighted at the help we received from the East and West Meon Shops and 'One Tree Books' with selling tickets. It was also nice to see Jennie and Rob Ham in their support capacity as the St John Ambulance Team.



A lot of extremely hard work by the Garden Club Committee resulted in the transformation of the Village Hall, the stage looked particularly beautiful. Spring had truly sprung with gorgeous flowers donated by 'West End Flower Farm' in Froyle and brilliantly arranged by Amanda Wyatt, who, as you know, is the Garden Club's regular contributor. Amanda is also known for her culinary expertise as... 'Sage & Season'. Contact Amanda...amanda@sageandseason.co.uk

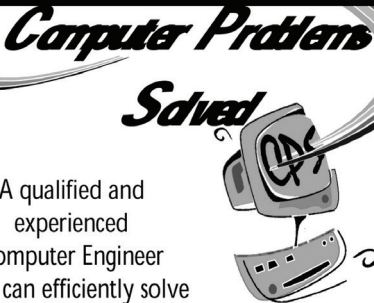
The Committee would like to thank The Village Hall Committee for accommodating us so well and lastly, but by no means least, a huge 'thank you' to the husbands, wives and partners who rolled up their sleeves, put out chairs, traffic cones, parking signs, poured out the wine and prepared and served the most delicious food imaginable to the Production Team and Committee throughout the afternoon. What a Team!

East Meon Garden Club wishes Eric Robson a long and happy retirement, he will be sorely missed.

The broadcast can be heard on BBC Radio Four Gardeners' Question Time on the 29th March and again on the 5th April

Pamela Peacock

Communications Officer
East Meon Garden Club



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Your Country Fair Is back!

May Bank Holiday was just not the same last year and we all missed the mayhem on the Village Green! So, this year it will make, we hope, a wonderful comeback. The Village Hall Committee have been working through the winter to come up with ideas for the first May Bank Holiday of this year and we hope that you will all come along and enjoy the day. As a 'Country Fair', it seemed logical to seek out those things which make our part of the world so very special. Surrounded by stunning countryside, East Meon boasts a brilliant variety of personal hobbies and rural livelihoods.

This would seem to be a day when our village can enjoy and find out about the things on our doorstep, but above all, have fun. From Bee Keeping, Charcoal Burning, Leather Working to wonderful Home Baked goods, Plants, Hog Roasting and fun stalls for adults and children alike. The normal suspects will, of course be there. Bric-a-Brac, Tombola, Raffles, Coconut Shy, plus, we hope a few surprises! The Dog Show, Maypole Dancing and May Queen will, of course be happening, which, no doubt, will be enjoyed by all those attending.

The odd sheep may also lose its 'woolly jumper'! There will, of course be music a-plenty and beverages of the alcoholic kind, but naturally, the chance to enjoy excellent tea and cake will feature high on the list of locals and visitors alike. Vintage and Countryside, we hope will be the order of the day, with the addition of some new and interesting stalls and exhibits filling the Green with friendly folk out for, what we all really hope will be a dry, if not sunny day. This day has been part of East Meon's history for many years and for those of you who have been lucky enough to reside here for any length of time, you will know that the funds raised help to support our Village Hall and keep it being the building the village is able to use for functions such as nursery, children's parties, evening events, clubs, indoor sports, village Café, Moviola Film Nights, Weddings and the use of our wonderful The Big Screen facility for National and Sporting events.

The Village Hall Committee always want this to be a great day for visitors, but particularly for families who live in East Meon. Always delighted to have new volunteers to help with the pre-Fair set-up, being part of the crew on the day and the clear-up afterwards, we would love to see new faces along as part of helping this well-known event thrive and survive. Looking forward to seeing you on the day East Meon puts on its 'Party Frock'!! Come and be a part of this fun tradition.

George Thompson



ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
Monday 29 April 2019 – 7.00pm
EAST MEON VILLAGE HALL

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Consideration and approval of the Minutes of the 2018 Assembly (Available on the Parish Website)
3. The 2019 Chairs' report
4. Financial Report: Accounts for 2018/2019 Year and Forecast for 2019/2020
5. Reports from County and District Councillor
6. The Pavilion and the Village Hall - providing a greater range of facilities for residents and visitors.
7. Parish Forum
Please stand and give your name when asking a question or responding, thank you.
8. Parish Award
9. Guest Speaker, PC Scott Graham, Country Watch and Wildlife Crime Officer for Hampshire

Cheese and wine will be served after the meeting

Spring is Sprung

Just when we were all enjoying winter, nothing too wet, some cold weather with hard frosts and everyone else having the white stuff except for us. Ideal. Then, out of the blue, we have beautiful sunny days and 14 degrees which, from South Farm's perspective, throws everyone into turmoil as this gives us a window to get out on the land for some spring cultivations.

"Too early," I hear the old boys cry. "A speck of dust in March is worth a King's Ransom". Well, with last year's Beast from the East rocking up in mid-March and with the prospect of a pest from the West and a storm called Cyril.... the thoughts are 'South Farm you may take every opportunity as it presents itself'. So that is why in the last few days you have seen machinery trundling through the village.

I'm sure you have noticed the size of some of the kit coming through, it doesn't get any smaller does it? Though believe it or not, it is all within the legal requirements to travel on the highway. It is 3m wide for a tractor and equipment and 3.5m wide for a self-propelled machine i.e. a combine, but they need assistance and a police permit. With that in mind, a heartfelt plea to all, if we could keep a 3.5m gap through the village especially at those pinch points, the general flow would be a lot easier.

That's got the farmers' whinge out of the way, let's get back to the here and now. We are living through some interesting political times and there's one industry which will probably be affected more than most. I can't see the agricultural support continuing past our EU exit unless it is directly linked to environmental schemes. Will the loss of the Single Farm Payment affect our profitability? Yes, of course - any reduction in income would. However, would it affect it as much as say, another Beast from the East resulting in a late spring and a difficult lambing? Then no, I don't think it would. That makes it quite reassuring to think that Mother Nature still has more clout

than a bunch of incompetent politicians. So, with that in mind, that is why on 15th February when the over- wintered environmental schemes came to an end and the sun came out, all hell broke loose at South Farm. I am writing this on 18th February and with the forecast looking good for the next fortnight or so, there will be a lot of movement to and fro through the village, so do feel free to give us a wave as we gingerly navigate our way through the village on our red and green monsters!

Nick Atkinson, South Farm



Beautiful Swirling Patterns

After a long fight for survival a local landmark has sadly has gone. For many years a deadly bacteria has been eating away at the beech tree outside Rosemary Ryders home in Frogmore. In 2010 an official report was conducted outlining the trees health. The results showed a bacteria called 'Kretzchmaria' was slowly decaying the tree. Rosemary had a follow on report conducted in 2018 which advised that the tree was to be taken down within 6 months as it faced an imminent collapse.

The tree was almost 15 meters high, far taller than the houses it was in danger of falling onto. Rosemary knew that if she didn't act fast the result could have been devastating. Many, including Rosemary her self, were sad to see the beautiful tree go. She told me "I didn't want it to come down, it's very sad but I realised that if I didn't two houses could have been in danger".

Local tree surgeon Chris Brooker was on hand to help Rosemary. Despite Chris's expertise, the sheer size of the tree was too much for one person to handle. Chris drafted in the help of three extra colleagues. They worked solidly managing to take the tree down in just one day. Using winches they made sure the tree would not fall into the nearby homes.

Once cut beautiful swirling patterns emerged from within the tree trunk. After standing for over 200 years the tree has grown in and around it's landscape. Now there is a large hole where the great tree once stood. It is very difficult to see such a beautiful, natural creation destroyed. However, the tree, like all things, was coming to the end of its time. Rosemary poignantly told me, "everyone has their life, I think 200 years is a pretty good run".

Charlie Gasford



Full Circle

By Michael Blakstad

September 2017: editors past and present celebrate 25 years of Meon Matters. Left to right, Denys Ryder, Hazel Rendle, Christopher Brough (Founder), Marc Atkinson, Sally Anne Brough, Michael and Tricia Blakstad.

The next edition will be the 200th of Meon Matters; in its new format it is close to the original newsletter which Christopher Brough produced in May 1982. Had the internet existed then, he would almost certainly have wanted to use it to provide up-to-date information between print editions of the magazine and the cut-and-paste editions he produced are echoed in the A5, mainly black-and-white format of the 2018 version. Only the size of the team has changed, since Chris and Sally Anne produced and distributed the original version virtually unaided.

Christopher and Sally Anne lived in Cross House, next to East Meon Stores. Christopher was on the Parochial Church Council and had the job of updating information on the display case by the lych gate. (There seems not to have been a parish magazine since the 1950s.) On a rainy day in early 1982, he suggested to the then vicar of All Saints, Rev Rodney Smith, that “no one was going to be able to read the notices because rain had got into the cabinet and that the village needed a newsletter.”

Christopher proceeded to edit, publish and distribute 20 editions over the next six years with the help of Sally-Anne and his secretaries at the estate agency Messenger May Baverstock of which he was a partner. Meon Matters was printed in-house and the first 4-page edition of 400 copies cost just £180, which was covered by contributions from parishioners.



The Meon Matters Team



Detail of the cover of the first edition of Meon Matters, May 1982

"In the beginning I said I only wanted copy relating to the village and I think one has to keep this in mind otherwise the contributions would force the magazine to grow too much and forget the reason for the magazine." It was Chris' editorial policy that there should be no editorial policy ... articles were contributed by those who wanted to; the editor's views were not reflected.

After the Brouchs left East Meon to live in the Dordogne, a succession of editors took on, and handed on, the role of editing and we found out just how much work it was! When Denys Ryder took over the role of 'editor-in chief' in 1988 a 'group of interested villagers met to discuss contributions and decide what should go into the next edition' (Denys Ryder). The magazine grew first to 20+ pages, then full colour and glossy paper. As Christopher reflects today: "I guess it is natural to try to improve things ... 40 pages was something waiting for a fall." And in 2018 it did. The cost of producing six editions a year was now £8,000; the sale of advertising space and contributions by villagers no longer covered the cost, and in April the magazine failed to appear for the first time in 16 years.

Until December, when a new, fit-for-purpose version appeared in time for Christmas, there seems not to have been a parish magazine since the 1950s. Now A5 and black and white in format, except the cover, Meon Matters will appear four times a year and in the gaps between print editions, the website carries news and, crucially, a diary of events. Costs have been dramatically cut and covered by advertising and subscriptions. "I think Marc and his team have done a fantastic job in getting the computer age first edition back on the original road as a village magazine." writes Chris from France and the wheel really has come full circle.

Close encounter of the avian kind

Last August, during the summer heat wave I was pottering in the garden. It was mid-afternoon, my wife was out but due home so when I passed near the Kitchen door, which I had left wide open, I heard a noise which I first thought was her. I called “hallow”. No one answered but there was a racket coming from inside, it sounded like someone was chucking things around in the front room. I called hallow again, a bit nervously this time as it sounded like we had a homicidal burglar. I got no reply, but the noise continued. I had a trowel in hand so slowly entered, ready to give anyone jumping out on me a good dig. I crossed the kitchen and tentatively entered the lounge to discover the cause of the commotion.

A large bird of prey was flying furiously at the front windows attempting to escape. It had knocked all the ornaments from the cill and dislodged the small stained-glass decorations stuck to the pane. The window only has two opening casements but only one was ajar at the time. As both were partly obscured by the curtains, the bird was throwing itself against the fixed central windows. I crept into the room to try to push the open one wider.



This of course startled the bird which left the window and flew in a tight circle around the room. It was huge and I could clearly make out its talons, so I automatically crouched as low as possible and, as it was the nearest exit, quickly left through the door to the hall.

From outside the front of the house I pulled the window open as far as it would go but unfortunately the bird continued to concentrate on the closed one. I thought I'd try to open the other window and after putting on my cap for a bit of protection, I re-entered the room. The bird saw me and flew to the other side of the room where we have a bookcase. It hung on one of the shelves, its back to me, but turned its head so I could see it in profile. A big beady eye watching me closely. From the colour of the eye, a piercing yellow, I knew it was a sparrow hawk.

The problem was, it's new perch was only a foot or so from the window so I knew I couldn't approach without disturbing the bird, which was still at last. Luckily, I had another idea. Rather than scare it into flight once again, I slowly pulled the curtain almost all the way closed. I retreated back to the hall closing the door tight behind me. By the time I had gone around the house to the kitchen door, the hawk had decided to try the window again. I crept cautiously towards it, keeping low. Mr hawk was concentrating so much on flying through the glass that I managed to get to the side of the window and was able to pull the other curtain across, catching the bird between the drapes and the window. In this confined space it thankfully settled for a moment.

Ever so gently I wrapped the curtain around it and guided it to the wide-open window. It was gone in a flash. I started to relax, the adrenalin draining from me. Inspecting the damage, I was surprised to find it hadn't "messed" anywhere, obviously a relief. I picked up the things that had been knocked over and luckily none were broken. The only casualty I did discover was unfortunately, a small dead Starling. I suspect the hawk was chasing it and, in a panic, the starling flew into our open back door with the bird of prey in hot pursuit. Whether the Starling hit the lounge window or being in the close proximity of the hawk had been too much for it, I don't know. It was obvious the Hawk hadn't got it as it was unmarked (I can't say unharmed I'm afraid as it was dead).

Later, when recalling my encounter, I cursed myself for not taking a picture when it was clinging to the book case relatively calmly, 20-20 hindsight of course. I did though, measure the space between the shelves and can estimate its body was between 14 to 16 inches long and its wingspan at least 2 foot 6 inches to 3 feet, even though I'm sure it was more like 10 foot at the time!

Despite keeping a good look out, I haven't seen it since.

Chris Sims

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Village website

The village website is now up and running! Visit meonmatters.com and take a look. We have built it around the features that the community has most asked for. The main headings are News, Events, Country Life, Sporting Life, Village Life, Useful Numbers and following this issue of the magazine, a Magazine section where you will be able to find a full colour version of Meon Matters magazine as well as an archive of back issues.

The most important part of the Website will be EVENTS. Here you will find the village calendar, consisting of a main display of the current month as well as links to each further month. Upcoming events will be listed on every page. Click on any event to see full details of that event.

Email: meonmatters@gmail.com to give us your event details for inclusion in the events calendar and upcoming listing.

We look forward to your visit to meonmatters.com and hope you will enjoy the new website.



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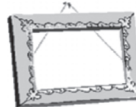
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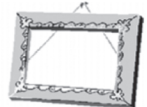
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**Talk in Droxford Village Hall given by Elaina Whittaker-Slark,
Ranger of the South Downs National Park Authority on 10 January 2019.**

*Elaina presented an excellent and most interesting talk on re-introducing
the Water Vole back to the River Meon.*

There are four teams of rangers in the South Downs National Park stretching 87 miles from Winchester in the west to Eastbourne in the east through the Counties of Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex and as Elaina said, they 'get up to all sorts of things.' The teams do a lot of project work engaging with the public, land owners and farmers. As 85% of the Park is farmed, there are what are called Farm Cluster areas which are being encouraged to join together to make bigger corridors for wildlife.

There is also the Meon Valley Partnership www.meonvalleypartnership.org.uk. This body was formed as a result of a meeting in 2008 called to discuss the future of the River Meon. There was an impressive turnout of people comprising farmers, fishermen, residents etc. and one concern voiced was that there were no Water Voles on the Meon anymore!

Elaina went on to show a map of the River Meon which starts in East Meon and flows down to Titchfield Haven.

She pointed out that the river has a 120m gradient, the highest in the country, this makes for some fast flows along its length. The river has no tributaries which was one of the problems for the Water Voles as a tributary can provide an escape route from predators. The Meon is one of the rare Chalk Streams of which there are only 200 in the world – 160 of which are in this country. It is because of the chalk geology and its aquifers which provide good quality water that make these streams so special for wildlife. Also, the gravel bottom allows good habitat for invertebrates and fish such as brown trout.



When the Meon Valley Partnership got together, their first project was Water Voles. Why?

Not because they're cute, but more importantly because they're the fastest declining mammal in the UK – 90% have gone since the 1950s. It looks like they are still declining but in 2016 there were signs that the numbers are slowly coming back up. Another reason for Water Voles' importance is that they constitute the biomass of our countryside which provides meals for the predators, which with the decline in rabbits and hedgehogs is critical.

A 2010 survey in the UK estimated 875,000 Water Voles. Compare this with Orkney, which has its own species of Vole, and there are one million of them. Elaina pointed out that these mammals should be plopping into the water everywhere, but the last sighting of an original one on the River Meon was in 2002. She posed the question: why did they disappear? There were two reasons 1. Habitat loss and 2. Because of a non-native species, the American mink.

To illustrate the habitat loss Elaina showed a photo of a straight stretch of the river in Droxford with no vegetation and no diversity. She pointed out that with no depth, the river heats up a lot in summer. However, The Wild Trout Trust plus volunteers created deep pools, planted willow whips and installed flow deflectors. Importantly a fence was made to keep the cattle out. The difference in the river a year later was extraordinary; the landowner was delighted and the team worked on a whole mile of river at Droxford.

Similarly, at East Meon where a concrete channel had been made after the river flooded badly in 1953, volunteers worked with the Wild Trout Trust. They shovelled 18 tons of gravel and put in stones to keep the gravel in place. But local children had great fun making a dam with the stones! So the following year flow deflectors were bolted into place and then the river was planted up with the help of the children, who consequently now look upon the river as 'theirs!' The vegetation is regularly cut back to ensure the water flow.

The 62 sections of the River Meon was surveyed and a report sent back to landowners and residents. This Habitat Suitability Survey scored from 1 up to 8. The bankside vegetation was part of the score – Water Voles don't swim particularly well and spend most of their day on the bankside as they like to graze grass and are known to eat 226 different types of vegetation. Trees are also important, and the Voles are known to climb them, particularly if apples are to be had. Non-native species like Himalayan Balsam can cause bank erosion so it would make a low score. The rangers worked with the people involved – e.g. Angling Clubs who obviously like bare banks but they can be persuaded to leave a patch of cut grass for the fishermen and leave the rest to the Water Voles.

But the main reason for the demise of the Water Voles was the American Mink. Female mink can fit into Water Vole holes – she can clear out a whole population. She also eats fish, pheasant and partridge. Mink are mustelids (as are badgers and otters) and as such they are curious creatures, they will investigate rafts filled with clay thus leaving their distinctive prints. (Otters come along and eat the clay however because of the minerals in it, so the clay has to be replaced now and then!). The Mink comes from North America and was farmed in this country when farmers diversified into mink breeding between World War I and II. There was not much control and no licensing was needed and when some of them escaped nothing was done about it. Thus the Mink slowly increased in numbers and became naturalised. To prove that Mink have become wild, Elaina showed us a photograph of a current Mink – chocolate in colour with a white chin – which she says is what all the Mink they have trapped look like. When they were bred for their fur, the breeders followed the fashion, and turned out silver, black, red, orange or white furs. It was only after the American Mink had been controlled that Water Voles could be re-introduced into the River Meon.

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The final part of Elaina's presentation was about releasing the Water Voles onto the Meon. They are bred in Devon on a Water Vole farm. All the voles get a pond to practise swimming and they are amply fed on apples and carrots which they love. Trained volunteers release the animals early in the morning into pens beside the river from where they can come and go; they are fed for seven days. Then the pen is adapted and after another 4 days, the pen is removed. Elaina and her teams have released 2,833 Water Voles over 20 release sites from the Meon source to the sea. An amazing achievement! The SDNP authority deem it very important to engage with the communities involved – for instance activity days with local schools – and they have interacted with 56 landowners along the Meon.

Water Vole monitoring is very important. The teams feel they have a duty of care. Now the first 5 year monitoring programme is over, the next 5 year programme is being planned. One of the main methods of checking the presence of Water Voles is by looking at their droppings (their vegetarian poo doesn't smell – unlike those of rats and mice!). Floating foam rafts are placed in the river which are favourite places for Water Voles – if there are individual droppings, the animal is only passing through. However, if a 'latrine' is found – the raft is covered in droppings and 'patted down' by the animals to mark it with scent glands on its side – that is a sign that they are breeding. The good news is that Water Voles are breeding on every site they were released into and they have also spread to 10 other sites.

The Water Vole population decreases during the winter – females have a life expectancy of less than a year, this is not surprising as they have a hard life raising up to 5 litters in a season. The males live for up to 2 years and may cover 2 or 3 female territories and have been known to trawl 7 km to find new wives.

All in all, what the Elaina and the rangers have achieved re-introducing the Water Vole back into the river Meon is a wonderful example of organisation, communication and interaction with local communities.

The South Downs National Park has a newsletter www.southdowns.gov.uk

Article produced with the kind help of Elaina Whittaker-Slark and with acknowledgement and thanks to the South Downs National Park.

Sigi Goolden



'SHORT MAT BOWLS'

Have you played bowls at sometime or perhaps you would be interested in learning how to play?

Bowls is a good way to keep active, have some fun and can be enjoyed by all ages.

It would be great to start a Short Mat Bowls group in the Village Hall, all the equipment will be provided.

So please if you think you would like to take part

Contact Jean Cooke 01730 823363

OPENING IN THE NEW YEAR, EAST MEON'S COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Come along and enjoy a 'Coffee, Cake & Chat' at the Village hall
on

Tuesdays 2.00pm – 4.00pm

&

Fridays 10.00am – 12.00am

Starting in January on

Tues 15th & Fri 18th

We look forward to welcoming you there!

PETANQUE

Would you be interested in playing Pétanque in East Meon? Also known as "French Boules", the game has an enthusiastic following in Hampshire where it is truly a family sport, played by people of all ages and equally enjoyed by both men and women.

There has been a suggestion that we build our own court or "boulodrome" adjacent to the Village Hall, would you be interested in playing, if so please email Mike Critchley at eastmeonpetanque@gmail.com

Details of the local clubs and leagues are on the Southern Counties Petanque website: southerncountiespetanque.org

The Good Causes Fund

Did you know that the village has a 'Good Causes Fund', which is there to respond to applications from village organisations requiring funds for particular projects?

Since 1999, when the fund was set up, donations have been made to village organisations such as the almshouses, Cubs, the school, village hall, Toddlers group, Garden Club and History Group.

Donations are modest and will be made to projects that benefit our village community. Applications for possible funding should be made to Jane Copley at janeccoble66@gmail.com



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Talk to the History Group on the Union Flag

Malcolm Farrow gave a talk on the Union Flag to the History Group on 21 February. It was well attended. Malcolm began by explaining why flags are such emotive and significant symbols in all societies and went on to outline the complex history of our flag and how it developed over the years and became so internationally widespread. Malcolm's theme was based around selected questions concerning our flag and its constitutional position namely - what statutory instrument declares its status; when was it established and what is its name; why the complex design of offset crosses; what proportions and shades of colour is it; how many versions have there been; which national authority is responsible for its governance, and how many world-wide flags still include it as their principle defining feature?

The answers to each of these questions ranged widely across the globe covering many centuries and many disciplines and contained a number of surprises. For example: the flag is often made in proportion 1:2 (twice as long as it is wide), but increasingly in proportion 3:5 (a bit shorter for a given width). Which is correct and does it matter? Malcolm suggested it does matter, just as it matters if your name is spelt correctly. He went on to explain why he believes 3:5 is correct and 1:2 is wrong. This opinion is based on Samuel Pepys's statement in 1685 that flags should be in proportion half a breadth to half a yard where a breadth (of the material out of which they were then made) was 22 inches. This results in a proportion of 11:18 or 1:1.636, which in turn is close to the proportions found in Fibonacci's series discovered by the Italian mathematician in 13th Century, which gives a ratio of succeeding numbers to infinity of 1:1.618.

This was reinforced by Garter King of Arms in 1938 who maintained 3:5 (1:1.66) was the correct shape for flags. All three are very close. This is no surprise because the ratio of 1:1.618 (known to artists and scientists alike as the Golden Ratio) is the most attractive proportion found throughout nature, architecture, art, music and the human form, and Malcolm maintains that a rectangle in broadly these proportions makes the best flag! But, as he observed, aesthetics are of course a matter of opinion, so which do you prefer?

Malcolm Farrow



1:2



3:5

This Annual Report reviews the work of the Parish Council over the 12 months from April 2018 to March 2019.

We have had 5 regular meetings in the last year in May, July, September, November and January and will be meeting one more time in March before the Annual Parish Assembly on 29th April. Recently we have had very few parishioners attending meetings and would urge residents to come along to listen to our discussions. Agendas and minutes are posted on line on the new Parish Council website (www.eastmeonpc.org.uk) and put up on the 2 parish noticeboards. At each meeting there is the opportunity for parishioners to raise matters they wish us to consider. Alternatively if you wish to bring something to our attention at any time please either contact the Proper Officer (Parish Clerk) at properofficer@gmail.com tel 07913 559579 or any of the councillors whose contact details are on our website and noticeboards.

Finances

As always careful consideration was given to setting the precept for the coming year. The Responsible Finance Officer presented a budget for the year ending 31st March 2020 and advised Councillors that the average Precept increase over the last 10 years was 4.5%. In the 18/19 year the increase was 2.5%. The recommendation from the RFO was a nil % increase this year in view of the reserves and the balanced budget. This was duly considered and agreed and will be reflected on your Council Tax demand. Councillors are acutely aware of their open and transparent responsibility and you can access reports and other financial information on the new website.

Recreation

Over the last 12 months we have continued to improve the 2 play areas. At the Village Hall we have put rubber matting under the slide and at the Recreation Ground the climbing frame has been totally refurbished and repainted and the see-saw made more user friendly. Last year we had a new main gate installed and we have now added a smaller pedestrian gate to make it a safer environment for small children. The all - sports court has had new basket ball nets and boards and we are looking into replacing the broken football goals. The Pavilion window frames were painted in the autumn to help preserve them.

The arrangement with Clanfield Football Club continues to operate well. It is just disappointing that East Meon youngsters do not get involved. All the relevant contact details are on our website and noticeboards.

Highways/Road Safety

We have taken delivery of a Solar Powered Mobile Speed Sign to be rotated between 3 sites on the roads entering the village from Langrish, Coombe and Clanfield. We are still waiting for HCC to put in the relevant post extensions and are hopeful that they will be operational by the time of the APA.

Parking continues to be a major problem in the village. At the request of the school the Parish Council has worked with EHDC to introduce parking restrictions outside the main school gate on Coombe Road. In addition following a complaint by a resident in Hill View EHDC will be authorising yellow lines on both sides of the road at the school end. Please continue to report potholes at www.hants.gov.uk/roads/roadworks a huge number of have been repaired over the winter, but there are many more requiring attention.

East Meon River Restoration

There has been further progress in enhancing the river as it flows through the village. Our thanks go again to the SDNP Volunteer Rangers for clearing out the willowherb and an enormous amount of litter and debris particularly along the stretch behind the houses in Workhouse Lane. We are looking at installing a throttle board under the bridge to the rear of Cross House to regulate the flow down the channels along The Cross and to the rear of the Workhouse Lane houses.

General maintenance

We joined the HCC Lengthsman Scheme last spring whereby the County Council allows us as a parish to employ a Lengthsman to carry out £1000 worth of work funded by HCC. Sadly the work we had hoped to have done was not completed. A new Lengthsman has been appointed. The benches along the High Street and elsewhere in the village were refurbished last year and from now onwards the wood will be re-treated each spring.

Planning

Since 1st April, 2018 the Parish Council has received 38 planning applications, requesting our comments as consultees. These are broken down as follows:

	No objection	No objection with comments	Objection	In progress	Total
Dwellings & buildings	20	5	3	1	29
Trees	7	1	0	1	9
Total	27	6	3	2	38

The Planning Committee visits the sites of all applications before submitting a response. Comments made were varied, the most frequent being requesting planners to consider ensuring mitigation against light pollution, supporting the SDNP Dark Skies policy and highlighting any non-compliance with the policies of our Neighbourhood Plan. For those applications to which the PC objected, a public Planning Committee meeting was held to allow open discussion of the objection before it was submitted. Details of planning applications for East Meon can now be accessed on our new Parish Council website under the 'Planning Tracker' tab.

The Pavilion and the Village Hall

The Parish Council has been discussing options for the future of the Pavilion. As part of this, we have engaged with the Village Hall Committee to understand how better to use the Pavilion and the Village Hall to provide a greater range of facilities for residents and visitors. The Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council are exploring funding and at the Annual Parish Assembly some suggestions for additional facilities will be presented and parishioners will be invited to contribute their ideas.

Behind the Scenes

We have brought all our paperwork up to date with a new set of Standing Orders and in line with all other organisations have adopted comprehensive GDPR policies. Our particular thanks go to George Thompson for his advice and assistance in ensuring that as a council we are GDPR compliant. All our policies can be viewed on our website.

Thanks

May I take this opportunity publicly to thank my co-councillors for their work over the year. In July Richard Bartlett retired having been a much valued Vice Chair and Chair of Planning and we welcomed Matt Atkinson onto the Council. We rely on our volunteers contributing to make East Meon such a special place to live. Over the last year we have had a team acting as "Wombles" collecting litter co-ordinated by Joan Williams. She has now retired and we are looking for someone to replace her....so if you would be able to spare perhaps an hour a week please do let any councillor know.

Finally my sincere thanks go to our new Proper Officer Suzie Brooker who has settled in brilliantly and our Responsible Finance Officer Sarah Cowlrick, who continues to keep all our finances in such good order.

Susan Davenport
Chair East Meon Parish Council



WEST OF PETERSFIELD NEWS

EAST MEON

Lead thief starts prison sentence

BY JON WALKER
jonwalker@petersfieldpost.co.uk
Newsdesk: 01793 232603

A MAN who stole lead from All Saints Church in East Meon church and five other church buildings has been sent to prison for seven years and six months.

Petre Romeo Cazan, of Town Road in London, was snared thanks to phone data, road cameras, and DNA from a cigarette end left on a church roof.

A sentencing hearing on Friday, March 8, at Cambridge Crown Court heard the 42-year-old stole lead from isolated churches during the hours of darkness between June and October

2016. Cazan climbed up drainpipes to the roof before throwing the lead down to the ground. The lead was then taken away in a van or other vehicle waiting nearby.

Not only was lead stolen during the offences, but considerable damage was also caused to the structure of the church roofs and stonework. Cazan's crime spree began on June 13, 2016, when he targeted All Saints Church in Marsworth, Hertfordshire.

He was linked to the crime after his phone was traced to within 2km of the church, and his car was caught nearby on Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras on nearby roads at 3.40am.

The next day, a payment

for scrap metal of £1,351 was paid into his bank account.

On June 16, Cazan targeted All Saints Church in East Meon and stole lead covering the 60ft by 40ft roof.

He was again traced to the crime through phone cell site data and ANPR cameras. His phone location was also traced to London Scrap Metal Recycling and a payment of £2,215 from the recycling depot was paid into Cazan's account.

Then between June 17, 2016, and July 12 he removed lead from five other church roofs. He was arrested in November 2016 and was found guilty of seven charges of theft and criminal damage at Cambridge Crown Court on February 11.



Petre Romeo Cazan, of London, was sent to prison for stealing lead from East Meon church.

Village property could be extended

PLANS to add a two-storey and single-storey extension to the side and rear, respectively, of Slade Cottage, High Cross Lane, Froxfield, have been lodged. Type 00752 after following the link at www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning for more details.

Question time show is a sell out

BEC RADIO 4 will bring their Gardeners' Question Time event to East Meon Village Hall next Tuesday evening but East Meon Garden Club have announced the event is a sell out with the last ticket sold earlier this month.

Go to the Post's website for the latest stories & breaking news

www.petersfieldpost.co.uk

East Meon School

Keeping the Green Flag Flying

(With the help of birds, bees and butterflies)

As a school, we would like to make East Meon Primary School as Eco friendly as possible. To do this, we have a keen group of children who have applied for different roles within our Eco Team which is dedicated to increasing recycling and reducing energy use, while monitoring and evaluating different aspects of sustainability around the school.

So far this year, we have begun to record the liquid propane gas (LPG) readings to monitor the amount we use as a school. We are continuing to monitor the water usage within the school and are going to install new push-down taps in a block of toilets and classrooms to help reduce water usage. The Team are working really hard towards our Eco assessment to keep the Green Flag that flies proudly outside our school. To do this, we have to show evidence of the work we have carried out towards at least 5 sections within the Eco assessment framework. These are Energy, Healthy living, Transport, Grounds and Waste & Recycling.

The School will be having a 'whole school mix up day' where all of the year groups are mixed up together to carry out activities around birds, bees and butterflies. The Eco Team will help plan and resource the day, making sure all of the activities are linked to our current actions. The activities will include making bird feeders, planting certain plants to attract bees and butterflies, as well as learning about different birds. There are some keen gardeners from around the village who will also be helping us to take an active part in our learning and to support us with additional information.

Our East Meon Green Group has now started, it is a weekly club for children to come and learn about gardening, all things eco and helping our environment. The children will plan their thoughts and ideas and then work towards achieving these. We will be looking at how to attract the bees and butterflies as well as a programme of planting fruit and vegetables throughout the year.

Miss Lambton



East Meon School

Exciting things

There have been lots of exciting things going on at East Meon CE Primary School-read on to find out more about our 4 fantastic classes!

Oak Class

The Oak Class topic is Carle's Creatures. The pupils have been reading books written by Eric Carle and learning about the animals in his stories. They have used these books to help them work on their writing-I have been so impressed with their beautiful sentences!

Oak class have also been working on pattern and counting in the maths session. The pupils have been making towers to help them with their number skills.

Oak Class also loved having a visit from the Reptylers team. They were particularly impressed with Mr Bubblegum, the chameleon as they have been reading Eric Carle's 'The Mixed Up Chameleon'.



Oak Class and Mr Whippy, the Snake

Willow Class

Willow Class finished their learning from their Dinosaurs topic and kick-started their topic 'Paws and Claws' by going on a fantastic trip to the Natural History Museum in London.

They were also lucky enough to experience the 'Life in the Dark' exhibition which took them into the darkness of the night and the depths of the ocean to discover strange and unusual creatures, some of which have only recently been discovered. You can see more photos from this fantastic day out on the school website-Key Information-Classes-Willow.

Willow Class have also had Reptylers in for a visit this week. Willow class had a more extended in depth workshop and were able to handle many of the animals. The learned about the 6 main animal groups and what different creatures do and use to survive in the wild.



Willow Class meet a Stegasaurus

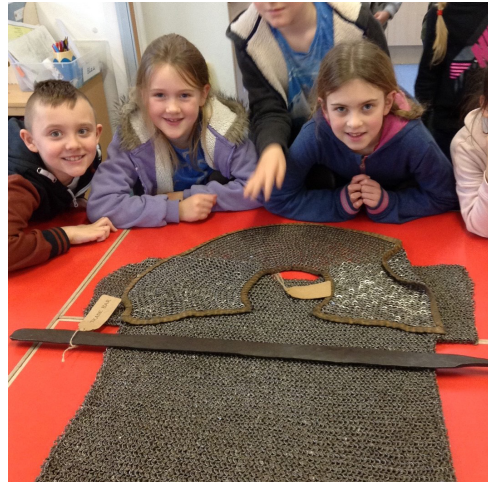


Willow Class in Interactive Gallery

Holly Class

Holly Class enjoyed a fantastic visit from Iron Age Matt before half term. The pupils learned about the difficulties of living as a warrior or as a home maker in the Iron Age. They were able to handle artefacts and animal skins similar to those that would have been used to make clothes and then in the afternoon they held an Iron Age battle on the school field.

This half term the pupils are deepening their understanding of early British history by visiting Butser Ancient Farm to see replicas of Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon housing and even take part in a small on site dig!



Session with Iron Age Mat

Hazel Class

Hazel Class loved their topic 'Scrumdiddliumptious' half term. The pupils learned all about Fair Trade products, where they come from and considered their responsibilities as global citizens. In DT, they worked on creating their own sweet brand. They had to consider their target audience, marketing strategy and connotations of their colour scheme. To complete this unit they were lucky enough to work with a professional chocolatier for the morning. In this workshop they learned where chocolate really comes from and the science behind our favourite treats!

This half term Hazel Class will be working on their topic 'Brainiacs' where they will be finding out about inventions that have changed our world. They will also be conducting several experiments of their own, learning how to measure and record results accurately and prove or disprove a hypothesis.



Session with chocolatier

Book Week

Book week has been so much fun this year!

The pupils have had the chance to read with the parents, take part in an extreme reading competition, dress up as their favourite characters, read in their houses with children from other year groups and take part in an incredible carousel day!

Young Voices

On 30th January East Meon CE Primary Choir headed to London to perform at the O2! Our small choir joined over 8,000 other children from schools across the country-there were even two schools from abroad! The 8,000 strong choir rehearsed all afternoon and in the evening performed to an audience of over 10,000! I was extremely proud of the whole choir-they were beautifully behaved and sang their hearts out! Well done everyone!

Ms O'Toole

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Self-storage at Meon Springs. We're here when you need us.

Meon Springs, Whitewool Farm, East Meon, Nr Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 1HW

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East Meon Country Fair

...is back!

Monday 6th May 2019 on the village green

1pm – 5pm

www.facebook.com/EastMeonCountryFair

www.eastmeoncountryfair.org