Meon Matters

News, Views & Comment from East Meon



£1.00
Autumn 2021
Issue Number 210
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The season of mist and mellow fruitfulness has arrived after a rather patchy summer which seemed at times to mock the growing alarm over global warming. For many of us it has been a few months of near normality tinged with anxiety that – as last year – the colder months may bring more disruption and worse. Let's hope not.

But many of us made good use of the summer with East Meon enjoying a Festival, the cricket teams' enjoying a full schedule, and more than a few residents getting away to enjoy some travel (the braver amongst us getting on planes or crossing the channel. Wow). The village had its share of news and events;- comings and goings at the church, rumours of change at the pub, the Festival, a jazz concert, the village hall coming back to life, an excellent community defibrillator campaign and – reportedly – over 35 new residents over the past year.

And the growing number of events have added some interest to our website, www.meonmatters.com, which lists public village events. We have also started mailing links to the events listing every month. Please get in touch at meonmatters@gmail.com if you would like to be added to the mailing list, or if you have questions comments and suggestions for the magazine.

Finally as nights draw in a horribly early Christmas notice. Our Christmas issue is due to print around 1st December. We plan to repeat the shopping guide insert, so please ensure any entries for that or contributions for the magazine reach us by mid November.

Andrew Hughes

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East Meon Village Disability Access Audit

Hi everyone

My name is Sue Williams and I have lived in the village for the past 30+ years at Ottery in the High Street. For the past 25 years I have lived a very fulfilled but at times very challenging life in my wheelchair, but have always enjoyed living in the village.

I was a founder member of South Downs Association of Disabled People, a registered charity which developed the Shopmobility service in Petersfield as well as conducting many access audits.

For the past 18 years I have been chairman of East Hampshire Disability Forum, and currently a volunteer with East Hants Community Rail Partnership, having carried out disability access audits at Liphook, Liss and Petersfield railway stations. I have recently been approached by East Meon Parish Council to carry out a village disability access audit, which will enable all villagers to more fully enjoy our lovely village, whatever challenges in life they may encounter.

While I may have experience of 'four wheels on my wagon', I am equally aware there will be challenges for those of you have may have sight or hearing difficulties, learning disabilities or mental health challenges as well as mobility issues. I am very keen to hear from anyone in the village who may be encountering any of these disabilities, or from a family member or carer.

I am sure you will appreciate there may be some obstacles that we cannot overcome for very real reasons, but I am sure there is much we can do to improve our quality of life and enjoyment of this lovely historic village, as well as enhancing the experience for visitors.

I would like to thank the parish council for this privilege and opportunity to, with you all, make East Meon village a more accessible place for all to enjoy together, whatever challenges we face day to day.

Or drop written comments through the letterbox - we are opposite the village stores.

I look forward to hearing from you - best wishes Sue Williams.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR RESPONSES BY NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Email: sue.williams09@hotmail.com

Telephone: 01730 823664 - (answerphone - please start with your name and mention the survey)



An Eventful Autumn

With restrictions easing, the village is getting back to full steam on events.

Moviola makes a welcome return in the village hall with a program of autumn films now confirmed, including Limbo or 29th October, Supernova on 26th November and Another Round on 10th December (tickets available at the Village Shop).

The Harvest Supper is set for October 2nd (tickets available at the village shop). The History group has also set out a full plan of monthly talks into the new year, including Roman Archaeology (18th October, Portsmouth; Dung, Harlots and Glory (22nd November) and the history of the Meon Valley Railway (13th December). All talks are £5 to non members, held at 7pm in the village hall.

Yoga classes have restarted in the hall, and gents pilates classes are underway. Bedales theatre is now open and booking for theatre (www.bedales.org.uk/events).

You may have missed the September Country Fair and Bereleigh, the West Meon Festival (classical music) and church choral events at East Meon on 18th and Langrish on 11th, but more proof that social is back on the menu.

The events are listed on the website and monthly reminders can be emailed (contact meonmatters@gmail.com to be added to the list).

EAST MEON CINEMA

FILMS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

AUTUMN SEASON 2021 - SAVE THE DATES!

NOMADLAND
Friday 24th September

LIMBO
Friday 29th October

SUPERNOVA
Friday 26th November

ANOTHER ROUND
Friday 10th December

- All films will be screened in East Meon Village Hall.
- The doors and bar open at 7pm.
- At 7.30pm the programme begins with shorts and trailers.
- Short interval for refills and ice creams
- The feature film starts around 7.50pm

Tickets
£6.50 each

- Available to buy in person at East Meon Village Shop – (cash only, no booking fee)
- Online at https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/east-meon-cinema (booking fee applies)
- Buy on the door (subject to availability) – card, cash or cheque
- The seating is not allocated

Bar
The Village Hall doors and the bar open at 7pm for wine, beer and soft drinks

Ice Creams
Delicious Jude's Ice Creams are available in the interval following the shorts and trailers

Mailing List
If you would like to be kept up to date with future screenings, join our mailing list. Email Lucy at eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN
OR FOR THE FIRST TIME!

The East Meon Cinema Team

Festival Report

Over 500 East Meon residents came together on the village green on August 15th for the first village festival. They enjoyed music, beer, food, kids races, and a host of stands and stalls from sweeps to gin, with a very strong emphasis on village clubs, suppliers and activities. The relaxed atmosphere and the village focus were greatly appreciated by all.

The festival was also a chance for the whole village to say goodbye to Reverend Jane Ball, who was presented with flowers by Parish Council chair Susan Davenport. Susan also presented the parish prize for both 2019 to Philippa Tyrwhitt-Drake for her outstanding service to the village over many years, and the 2020 prize to the Care Group, who have been providing a service to the less mobile for over 40 years.

Kids games were a highlight, ably organised by Georgina Lumb, supported by Laura Croft and team. Nothing beats the concentration of an egg and spoon run, or the frantic energy of a sack race. Lots of races and lots of prizes, and most of all lots of laughs and happy faces.



KIds Games organiser Georgina Lumb



Meon Matters editor Sigi Goolden



Three legs



Three legs adults



Festival pictures by Nick Williams and Lou Bushell

Dancers



Interested spectator



Amy Lague and Her Egg

Flags were another feature with research establishing over nineteen countries with East Meon connections and a suitable display across the houses fronting the green and in the village hall. Flagmeister Malcolm Farrow was at the helm, ably supported by Alistair Dudley-Williams.

Village societies and clubs, marshalled by club supremo David Levin, put on a good show though few could match the Garden Club 148 member powerplay of preparation and activity. Even Meon Matters managed a stand.

The food and music were excellent, with hog roast, ice cream and the (superb) cake stall doing roaring trade and the vegetarian options from Alchemy offering a fig leaf of responsible eating for others. We had four bands;- Igloo (ukele and voice), Solent City (acapella), East of Meon (Latin jazz), and local favourites Nuthin Yet. Cries of 'we want more sax' were heard towards the end of the evening, and the dancing was joyful.

In amongst it all the event director, David Pepper, swanned around in a bright green baseball hat pleased that the months of preparation, chivvying and charming from him and the production team had paid off. Well done all.



Above: The Main Man David Pepper
Below: Our Comperes



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Festival Jazz

The Festival opened with a very successful concert in the church featuring East of Meon, fronted by local resident Kati Whitaker, who took an audience of over 100 through the development of the devil's music with everything from swing to Latin jazz. It was great to see a full house and the event raised over £1,000 for church funds.

Andrew Hughes



East of Meon jazz band performing in the Church



Parish Council Report & Annual Parish Awards

One meeting to report on in this issue, plus two years' worth of Annual Parish Awards. Our July meeting was Sam's first as our new Parish Clerk, stepping-in seamlessly.

Also present were a group of residents led by Clive Tillbrook and Maureen Carney. They were here to make the important case for a second village defibrillator, to be located in the phone box outside the Izaak. We would need to adopt the phone box, which we quickly and unanimously agreed to do, and not just because Clive mentioned a forthcoming big breakfast fund-raiser. The whole proposal was well thought-through, covering maintenance responsibilities, warranties, cctv protection and training.

We had a harder decision to make with Speed Watch. Training here has taught us that our volunteers' task is near impossible - in the space of seconds they are required to note the offending motorists' vehicle colour, type and model, speed AND number plate! And after 3 offences by the same car, the police may follow-up. You've more chance of success betting on the horses. So, we are redoubling our efforts with technology, obtaining hopefully with district grant support an enhanced 'smiley-faced' speed warning sign that also collects speed data which we can use with the authorities. A no-brainer really, as the SID sign is a much better deterrent and costs as much as a single speed gun. Apologies, jargon - a Speed Indicator Device is a vehicle activated illuminated sign used to display vehicle speeds.

We've suffered a similar set back with our yellow lines on Coombe Road, which no sooner they were refurbished than they were submerged under some dreadful resurfacing material. Take it on trust that words have been exchanged with the relevant authorities.

More positively, our section 106 monies are being deployed across a range of equipment and sites across the village, we have secured a grant to reimburse our highly active Nature Group for their much-appreciated notice board, and our new Lengthsman, Tom, is a great addition. Work continues on the Workhouse Lane Visitors' Noticeboard and on the Pavillion, where we will arrange a working party as soon as the harvest is in. Our Assets of Community Value registration for our 2 pubs was unanimously approved and has been submitted to EHDC. Planning applications continue apace, and we've also been asked to comment on SDNPA's Design Guide.

Finally, we also agreed a £200 donation towards the cost of the East Meon Festival. Speaking of which, we then used this venue as the perfect setting for our much-delayed Parish Awards from 2020 and earlier in 2021.

The first was awarded to Philippa Trywhitt-Drake as long overdue recognition for her huge involvement in village events and activities over the last 30 years, including putting on 3 Meonfests, chairing the school governors for 6 years, arranging the village's commemoration of Battles Over (marking 100 years since the end of the First World War), and organising parties for the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. And true to form, Philippa has started work on next year's Platinum Jubilee!

The 2021 award was given to the East Meon Care Group, marking some 50 years of this ever-changing group of willing volunteers providing a hospital and doctor appointments driving service for the elderly and immobile, together with arranging a medley of tea parties, bingo afternoons and theatre outings. In the last 18 months, the Care Group has further helped with shopping and prescription collection for the COVID vulnerable and keeping tabs on those isolating with phone calls and Zoom coffee mornings.

Two humbling and worthy winners, we are sure you will agree.

Andy Hales



Philippa Tyrwhitt-Drake accepting her award



Members of the Care Group receiving their award

Child care in East Meon gets a Boost

East Meon families will be getting a boost this autumn with two child care services opening in the Village Hall.

Home-Start Butser is delighted to be opening up their Little Steps Family Group for local families. It is a parent and child group, charging very modest fees and will run on Mondays 9.30 – 11.30 am at the East Meon Village Hall. It opened on Monday 13 September.

Little Steps offers a welcoming, friendly, relaxed space where the children enjoy fun activities, crafts and games. Parents and carers can meet others with young children and can share experiences, have a hot drink, all in a supportive environment. A delicious healthy snack will be offered for any hungry tummies. Qualified and experienced Home-Start Butser staff and volunteers organise the activities, and are there to provide a listening ear if needed.

Emily Rankin, the Family Group Leader says "I am very excited to run this group in such a lovely setting and very much look forward to meeting many of local parents, carers and their young children and getting to know them. Many thanks to the East Meon community for helping to make this possible." A parent who attends Little Steps in Clanfield: "The group has been my saviour! I have been coming for a year now and it has been lovely to meet other parents for a chat and great breakfast. My son loves the group and can't wait to come, which is lovely for me, and a welcome break. I love coming and have made some great friends too."

For further information please contact office@homestart-butser.org.uk, 01730 233755

In November it is expected that The Village Nursery will move to the village hall from its current base. This is a professional operation taking children from 2-4 years running five days a week (9-3pm bar Tuesday – 9-12), allowing working mothers to leave their children at the village hall. It costs £5.25 per hour. The Nursery has an established client base, many of whom come from the village. This will save the travelling time.



Child care - Little Steps opening day

Local mother and school governor Anna Tebbut – who worked at the previous hall based nursery - said "there are currently children in the village who have never been to pre-school because there are families living in East Meon without any transport. Pre-school is an important element of child development and having a pre-school in the village once more would enable more of our community to access child care". Contact Jo Baker CNSplay@outlook.com for further information.

Village Hall Committee chair David Pepper said "This is a significant new use for the larger hall and while it will reduce availability for other daytime users, having a nursery in the village again will support children who were unable to benefit from pre-school. The committee has consulted widely on this and also carefully considered how this will affect the village. Appropriate protections are in place and we will monitor how this works over the coming months".

Andrew Hughes, Village Hall Committee



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Goodbye Jane Ball

On 22 August, the parishes of East Meon, Langrish, Warnford and West Meon said farewell to Jane Ball after some seven and a half years serving our communities. It has been no easy job at a time when congregations are dwindling and when the whole notion of a spiritual dimension to life is under challenge. Nor is the Church of England an easy team for which to play; it has spent the last 20 years putting more shots into its own goal than into the the net at the other end: resistance to women priests and bishops; cover-ups of sexual abuse within its ranks and it's struggle to respond to rapidly evolving social values. Against this background, parish priests across the country have struggled to counter a widespread view that the church is out of touch and irrelevant. It is to Jane's credit that she has maintained a clear spiritual compass and a faith-driven inclusivity - we are all pilgrims on the road of life and her church and her ministry have been open to all who approached her door.

It is easy for clergy to lose touch with the struggles of life outside of the religious fold; but no one could have accused Jane of being stuffy or sanctimonious. She had a healthy disrespect for cant and lively, down-to-earth sense of humour: her fondness for quotes from Life of Brian was but one example of that. In the right hands, humour can bring warmth, humanity and even understanding. And, that was true no less at her last service in the parish. It was an act of worship laced with gentle humour, often self deprecating, but also with Jane's trademark personal honesty, warmth and humanity. It has not always been an easy time for her dealing with the challenges faced by the church and by all of us as humans but it is fair to say that she put a real beating heart at the core of our parish. Her final service was testimony to the reach and impact of her ministry with a near full church from across the United Benefice; it was a congregation that included the many elements of the community that her ministry has touched, worshipping but also simply those who have admired her as a human being. It was great that so many were there to thank her for her work across the Benefice and to wish her and Jonathan, her husband, every happiness at Christ's Hospital.

Jonathan Iremonger



Rev Jane Ball speaking at the village festival

BEAM BEAM BEAM BEAM

Byways **E**nvironmental **A**ction **M**ovement

TO

PROTECT OUR HISTORIC BYWAYS

Please join our meeting

The Cowshed, Barrow Hill Barns, Ramsdean

Monday 1st November 2021

At 7:30 pm

Come to this meeting if you are concerned about our rapidly deteriorating Byways Open to all Traffic (BOATs) and would like to find out how the community can work together to:

- Educate, Influence and Support the actions of Local Governments and the South Downs National Park Authority to protect our BOATs, villages and the environment
- Ensure that BOATs are safely available to walkers, cyclists, horse riders and are free of motorised traffic

The meeting will include information and updates on the topic from local parish councillors and local residents.

Plus, ideas and discussion on how we can all work together to influence both local Government and The South Downs National Park Authority

THE REVD PHILIPPA GOOD

Thank you to all who welcomed me and my family so warmly at the East Meon Village Festival earlier this month. You were all so smiley and chatty and we felt very at home straight away. I am guessing you would like to know a bit about me, the bare bones. I am looking forward to seeing you around the parishes as I move forward in my ministry to the whole Benefice. Please do not be upset if I forget your names at first. I shall soon learn them and look forward to meeting with you individually and in families.

I grew up in Esher, Surrey and then we moved to Salisbury when I was eight. I spent my formative years paddling in the many rivers and reading books on the river-banks. I feel that I will be very at home as I walk around the Benefice. If you ever see a grown-up with their feet in a stream, it may be me!

I am married to Charles and we have three dogs, one cat and two children still at home. I love to cook, garden and sing. I do quite a number of crafts like embroidery, knitting and other textile related things. I very much enjoy using some of my talents to make things for illustrations in assemblies and when I visit Care Homes to take services. I even started painting in my Curacy which I have enjoyed, although I am not nearly as proficient as some who live in The Meons!

I have two grown-up children, too. One, Edward, is living in Hong Kong for work. The other, Peter, is in the final year of his slightly delayed degree at Portsmouth University. Peter married Rebecca two years ago and they now have a son, Jakey, so I am a granny, which is a very wonderful thing to be.

John, my third son, is starting his final year at TPS in Petersfield, and my youngest, Emma is going into year 9 with all that that entails in terms of GCSE courses starting.

However, that is quite enough about me for now! I look forward to hearing all about you and your lives.

Yours,

Philippa Good (Phili)

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Seasonal Wine Recommendations

There hasn't been much of a summer this year, with plentiful rain and gloomy skies meaning fresh whites, rosés and sparkling wines have sadly stayed firmly on shelves. But if we are lucky the next couple of weeks may present an opportunity to enjoy crisper styles.

I recently discovered that packaging and shipping make up 40% of a wine bottles' carbon footprint. In light of this revelation, I decided to sample wines presented in alternative guises, from pouch, to bag-in-box, to can, in a bid to do my bit for the planet.

A lovely cleansing rosé to enjoy on a summer's day is the Cotes du Provence pouch available at Marks and Spencers. At £17 for 1.5 litres, it is the equivalent of 2 bottles and can stay fresh once opened for up to 6 weeks (if you can make it last that long...). Waitrose's Philip Schofield range in bag-in-box is also fantastic value for money, with a Nero di Troia IGT from Puglia showing ripe, juicy black fruit flavours whilst the Beneveto IGT Falanghina is a crisp yet tropical white with huge freshness, both of which are 2.25 litres and organically produced.

If you're after something delicious on the go, then Waitrose also stock a bubbly rosé in a can by The Uncommon. Produced from 100% Pinot Noir grapes from Kent and Hampshire, it is only softly sparkling with subtle notes of strawberry and raspberry. A great picnic option at £4.99 for a 25cl can.

For those cooler, autumnal evenings, I would consider deeper, darker wines that can stand up to hearty pies and warming casseroles. I find South American wines fit the bill here and offer great value for money. Malbec is a grape variety that provides brilliant structure and flavour concentration, perfect for fire-side sipping. Catena Zapata are a superb producer in Mendoza who offer a range of quality levels, starting at £10 for their Malbec which is available in both Majestic and Waitrose. The lesser known Carmenere, Chile's flagship grape variety, is also worth a try if you prefer a leafier, herbal style of red wine. The Terra Noble range at General Wine Company shows great typicity, with blackcurrant leaf and menthol notes encased by soft, smooth tannins, starting from £9.99.

I'm delighted to be starting up Tipple Talk's monthly wine club again from October, so if you like wine and want to learn more, don't forget to sign up. Taking place on the first Thursday evening of the month, six 50ml wines from a particular region or country are delivered to your door to be sampled during a one hour webinar. Residents local to East Meon should use code MEONMATTERS at checkout to get tickets at £25 (rather than £27.50). First virtual stop - California!

Cheers!
Katrina Smith
tippletalk@outlook.com www.tipple-talk.com

Shady Business - Trees and Global Warming

In days of old when England was Merrie, when Sir Alastair was allowed to exercise his longbow men on the village green and when tea, coffee and chocolate were all a distant dream, Susan Davenport would sit under a large oak tree in the centre of the village and dispense justice. The tree has gone and you now have to undertake a speed awareness course rather than spending a happy hour or two in the village stocks.

That is not the only tree that has gone. Dutch Elm disease did for many of our finest historic trees and now Ash dieback is taking another slice. All this comes at a time when there is a pressing need to plant more trees as part of the Government's carbon offset strategy. Britain is one of the least wooded countries in Europe and the UK Government's England Tree Strategy aims to increase the current level from 10% to 12% by 2050. A rather modest target but one that is currently under review following a recent Government consultation.

We are lucky in East Meon to be blessed with large areas of woodland in the valley. But there is room to do more. Nature Group members are convinced that we need to look at planting more trees, whether to make up for the losses to ash dieback or because they are such great habitat for our wildlife, and indeed for people. And there are reasons why we might all want to do more in this area. Carbon capture is a key issue for all of us. Global warming threatens our planet and has implications even for someone like me who has retired. It is a much more serious issue for our children. Whatever we may do now, we are faced by increasing extremes of weather - flooding, droughts and high temperatures are something we are going to have to come to terms with.

Trees have a role here quite apart from carbon capture. They can reduce flooding and the erosion that goes with it. They can provide outdoor shelter from the sun during the increasing periods of very high temperatures (40^{o}C plus). And they can improve air quality and reduce temperatures on our streets. But it may not be the current trees that we need. Our countryside reflects the temperate climate that we and our predecessors have enjoyed in Hampshire for many hundreds of years. Some of the trees and plants that make up our wonderful landscape will not survive climate change. If we want mature trees around us in future, then we need to think about planting them now. They take 30 years to grow to a reasonable size.

Of course, it is not all hopeless. Trees are being planted on the farmland around us and on sites around the village, and the government is bringing forward measures to stimulate more planting. But most of the current planting is on private land. We also need to think what we want around the village as a public amenity. This does not mean planting trees across valued public spaces. But it does mean thinking now about what we want the village to look like as the climate changes. It does mean thinking about where we want shade. And it does mean thinking about the trees we plant in our garden and whether they will survive in this new climate.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Nature Group agreed that it would offer some thoughts about what we might do now. Fundamental to this is capturing the views of those who live in and around the village. We want to know what you think. If you have views on this, we are keen to hear them. Contact us through our website at eastmeonnature.com and we will try to pull together all the different views to offer the Parish Council a balanced view. We will keep you in touch with the responses we get, what we think we should do to reflect these, and how the Parish Council responds.

Jonathan Iremonger, Nature Group

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How things have changed

I have been privileged to be part of farming life in the Meon Valley for over 60 years. I came down from Cumbria in 1958 and my wife Belinda's family, along with other farming families, have farmed here for over 100 years.

When I first came to East Meon there were up to 20 farms with a herd of dairy cows producing fresh milk for our everyday use, now sadly there is only one.

Have things changed in general? The answer has to be YES - in that the smaller farms, like ours, are now part of larger farming enterprises.

In the early days, many of our village and farm cottages were lived in by farm workers, now things have changed. No livestock, no need for extra staff. As farming units get bigger the need is for larger machinery to get the work done at the appropriate time, weather permitting.

We can all appreciate how the seasons have changed after the weather of 2021, lasting frosts during April, wet weather in July, no summer in August - let's hope September will be better.

I remember in the late 50s, a Massey Ferguson tractor and a Landrover Defender costing £650 each. That tractor would not have the power to cope with today's needs. A new Defender would set you back £65k today, a new tractor £160k plus. Many people complain about large machinery going through the village on a daily basis, this is needed because each farmer is helping out other fellow farmers. The cost of these vehicles is much greater thereby enabling farmers to work many more acres, which helps spread the costs.

We have also seen many changes in the way in which we use our land. In the early days, a crop rotation would be grass for 2 years, then ploughed and put into wheat or barley, followed by a spring crop for several years before returning back to grass again. Now with the lack of cattle around our farms, there is no reason for so much grassland, so cropping rotations have changed as you will all see when walking the footpaths around you.

Some farmers have turned to wild flower meadows for the benefit of wild creatures and birds - whilst this helps wildlife, it means the land is less productive and does not grow food for our ever growing population.



Frank and Belinda Moffat

Another of the biggest changes around the farming sector is the use of old farm buildings and cottages. Once used for staff, they are now being used for holiday or rental accommodation which all helps to give much needed extra income to cover the ever growing costs. When I first came to East Meon and worked for Wilson Atkinson, we had 2 dairy herds and many sheep to lamb, consequently we needed lots of winter fodder, or feed as you would say. We used to make some 25,000 small bales of hay which all had to be carted home on trailers. Wilson and I would do this together, a pitch fork each and up goes the bale onto the trailer, imagine the time taken - now it's all done by machine. No telehandlers then!

Our combine had only a 10-12 foot header for cutting the grain, no cab so all the dust followed over us, and no bulk tank so we had to fill the sacks, tie the top and slide then down a chute onto the ground. Two of us would then swing each sack up onto the trailer, each one weighing approximately 2 CWT or 100 kilos. A new combine today with a 30-35 foot header costs up to £500k.

How things have changed. Now I am retired, I can sit back in comfort to watch others do the work. We live in a beautiful Valley so lets all enjoy the surroundings we have.

Frank Moffat



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Wood Burning Stoves and the Clean Air Strategy

There have been some changes in the life of a chimney sweep since the Victorian era, particularly around health and safety and dust control. It's not quite such a filthy job these days and we don't send small children up chimneys anymore, thankfully. However, the basics remain the same; we use rods and brushes to remove soot and other debris from chimneys.

Brush design has evolved to suit different types of flue and the debris found therein. No matter the fuel which is burnt, all chimneys will need regular sweeping; lined and un-lined, from oil boiler flues to wood burners, pellet stoves to inglenooks and everything in between. I must have around two dozen brush heads in my van of different sizes and materials for the range of flues and problems I encounter. Rather than send a child up the chimney, most sweeps will now use a camera to inspect the condition of your flue and advise on any work that may need doing.

What is changing rapidly, is the role sweeps play in reducing the environmental impact of domestic burning. We have the knowledge and experience to give advice on reducing emissions, supported by the various chimney sweeping associations, the Stove Industry Alliance and Defra. If there is a problem with a chimney, the one person who can give impartial professional advice is a qualified chimney sweep.

There has been a lot of negative press around domestic burning recently, with the result that I am asked almost daily if wood burners are going to be banned. The short answer is no. In accordance with the government's Clean Air Strategy, by 1st January 2022, all new wood burning stoves must be 'Ecodesign Ready' or clearSkies certified. This means the stove must meet a tough new set of standards for efficiency and emissions. Many stove manufacturers are already there, with efficiency ratings typically around 75-90% compared with an open fire which is only around 15% efficient. That means that 85% of the heat produced on an open fire is lost up the chimney! Ecodesign stoves must also produce 90% fewer emissions than an open fire and 80% fewer emissions than a stove manufactured 10 years ago. Burning wood in a new stove is a renewable and sustainable source of heating, which aligns with current biodiversity polices and the circular economy. Used correctly, a new stove has a smaller carbon footprint, producing less than 10% of the carbon emissions of gas, oil or electricity. Replacing an old stove or an open fire is one sure way of tackling emissions and should not be overlooked in the drive to low-carbon homes.

If you own a solid fuel stove, or are thinking of having one installed, the fuel you burn and how you burn it is extremely important and has a huge impact on the emissions produced. Coal has been shown to be the most polluting fuel and the sale of house coal has been banned this year. Some inner-city areas are designated Smoke Control Zones, which means only smokeless fuels can be burned unless you have a Defra-exempt stove.

If burning wood, it must be below 20% moisture content, but ideally between 8% and 15%. Seasoned hardwood (ash, oak, beech, etc.) is best. Kiln dried wood is often less environmentally friendly since another fuel, usually wood, must be burned in order to fire the kiln.

Tips for getting the best from your stove and reducing emissions:

- ☐ Use seasoned wood between 8% and 15% moisture. Your sweep can check this for you, or you can invest in a moisture meter so you can check the wood yourself. They cost around £15 - £20.
- ☐ Store your fuel carefully. It doesn't really matter if your wood is unseasoned when you buy it, as long as you have good storage facilities in which to dry it out and keep it dry. The sale of unseasoned wood is now restricted to amounts less than 2 cubic meters. If seasoning your own wood, it should be kept dry for at least 2 full years between felling and burning.
- ☐ Every stove will be slightly different and will perform differently depending upon several factors, including chimney height, topographical position of the property, and ventilation. If you are new to owning a stove, read the instructions to get the best out of it. As a general rule, when first lighting the stove, have the air vents fully open. When the fire is established, close the air vent to around halfway, or wherever is comfortable and allows the fuel to burn cleanly.
- ☐ Allow the fuel to completely burn by not fully closing the air vents before you go to bed. This is the number one cause of tar build-up, creosote, rotten liners and chimney fires and is highly polluting, releasing carbon dioxide, particulate matter, organic gaseous compounds and nitrogen oxide into the environment. You should be left with a small amount of ash in the grate, with no charcoal or blackening to the stove glass.
- ☐ Your stove is not a waste disposal unit! Do not burn excessive amounts of paper, and never burn wrapping paper or plastics.
- ☐ Ask your sweep to recommend a professional stove installer if you are thinking of buying a stove. A poor installation can lead to high emissions and is, quite frankly, highly dangerous.
- ☐ Have your chimney swept once a year by a qualified chimney sweep. Speak to them about your stove – ask questions, we love it!
- ☐ Keep your stove in good working order. Again, your chimney sweep can help you with this.
- ☐ Always choose a qualified chimney sweep to clean and maintain your stove and chimney.

If you would like to learn more about Ecodesign stoves, clearSkies certification and the Defra-approved independent research behind the figures I have quoted above, visit the Stove Industry Alliance website at www.stoveindustryalliance.com

Katie Foster - Meon Valley Chimney Sweep



A large lump of tar removed from a lined flue. The stove attached to this liner was much too powerful for the size of the room, meaning the air vents were always closed and the fuel was smouldering. A camera inspection confirmed that the stove is no longer safe to use until the liner is replaced as it is at serious risk of a chimney fire.



A stove thermometer will help you make sure your stove is running at its optimum temperature for efficient burning and low emissions.

A moisture meter will help you determine the moisture content of your wood, meaning you'll be sure your emissions are kept low and your chimney or flue liner kept tar-free.

Flags in the Village

Those of you who attended the splendid village festival on Sunday 15 August will have noticed several national flags displayed from the windows of the houses on The Green. Those flags formed a very colourful backdrop to the festivities but they were not simply there for decoration and were chosen carefully.

There are at least a couple of hundred national flags in the world today, and countless thousands more for regions, provinces, states, counties, islands, towns and villages etc etc, so why were those particular flags chosen to adorn our village event, and what is special about a flag anyway? After all a flag is just a piece of coloured material with a design comprising a few stripes perhaps or maybe a cross or crescent or stars or other devices on it. Some flags are more artistically attractive than others and some more complex than others. So what?

Whilst a flag should be distinctive and attractive to the eye, what it looks like isn't the most important feature: it's what it represents that really counts. A flag is merely a symbol and it is in our human nature to need symbols to reflect our allegiance or interests. People of different views can unite around a symbol - think of a football club or school or the Armed Forces for example. Symbols unite people in common purpose and create the conditions for developing community cohesion, and a national flag is exactly for that purpose. It is an historical picture of the country.

Our own nation has been around for a very long time and we have tended to take our national symbols for granted - a big mistake in my view. But when a new nation is formed following political upheaval, creating and promoting their flag is one of the very first things they do to unite the people under a common symbol owned and shared equally by all.

Around 1,200 people live in East Meon and there are several obvious flags under which we can all unite here. The Union Jack or course is the main one, but we also have the flag of England, the Mercian flag and the recently created flag of Hampshire too. All these are entirely relevant and appropriate to fly and so are several others like the Red Ensign or the Commonwealth flag for example. We all have several loyalties and allegiances at different levels and can be proud to declare every one of them in the appropriate circumstances.

Meon Matters notes an East Meon flag was designed a few years ago. We would welcome further information.



Flying the Flags and the Festival

The Union Flag was flying at the festival of course but so were 17 others. They represented Armenia, Austria, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Gibraltar, India, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Romania, Scotland, South Africa, USA, Wales and Zimbabwe. They reflected the people of those different nations or backgrounds presently living in this village and what remarkable diversity in such a small place. We know we missed at least one but had no time to get the flag of Uganda after discovering somebody from there just a couple of days before. Maybe someone reading this has roots in another nation we missed too - if so please let us know so we can get your flag for next year.

Nevertheless, returning to my theme above, everyone can fly the Union Jack and the other flags I mentioned because that is where we all live, but that does not prevent us displaying proudly a flag from another place from whence we came originally or with which we have close connections. Furthermore there is an increasing number of small villages around the country which have developed their own unique flags and which they display with enthusiasm and pride at such events. There is no reason why East Meon can't do that too. It just needs a village-wide competition to create and select a winning design following a public vote. How about that for next year? If you want inspiration take a look at the Flag Registry on the Flag Institute website - flaginstitute.org - where some really splendid village flags are shown. The bottom line is that a flag for the community must be owned by everyone whether that community is a nation, a county, a town or just a small village, because symbols do matter.

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Stroud Evening WI

Like most organizations during the covid lockdown Stroud Evening WI resorted to holding our meetings with our speakers joining us via Zoom, which worked well for most of our members and our non zoomers were kept in touch by phone or emails. So now at long last we are able to meet together back in our home village in the new village hall, where we met for the first time, in August to enjoy a wonderful social evening catching up with all our members.

We are a friendly and active WI, our membership is made up with women of all ages from Stroud, East Meon, Petersfield and Steep so quite an eclectic group.
We meet once a month on the 2nd Tuesday at 7.30pm and are entertained with interesting talks or demonstrations on a huge variety of fascinating topics. There is also time to chat and socialize and enjoy some refreshments. And throughout our year other annual events also take place.

The WI provides women with fun and friendship, plus the chance to learn new skills, get involved within the community and take part in a wide range of activities. If you are interested in find out more you are welcome to come and join us at one of our meetings, you can also find out more about the WI Organization at www.thewi.org.uk. Or contact Jean Cooke Telephone Number 01730 823363 email dandjcooke@btinternet.com.

I look forward to hearing from you
Jean Cooke

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Hampshire Country Sports Day Reaches 40

Sunday 12th September dawned sunny and warm for the 40th HCSD. Started by Michael Poland master at the time of the HHH on his mother's Estate at Downlands up the A3. It has maintained its original ethic of showcasing as many field sports as possible, providing the opportunity for people of all ages to "have a go", be involved with the hounds and dogs and hopefully produce a profit for what was then The British Field Sports Society, now the Countryside Alliance.

Our committee met on Zoom in March to decide if we could run the show this year, having successfully gambled last year, holding it on, what turned out to be, the last day before the Autumn Covid lockdown.

The positive attitude persisted in May and we pressed the button which meant asking our incredible Show Organiser, Sara Rutherford, to book trade stands, tents, loos, main arena attractions, medical support and caterers for up to 3,000 people. Unlike the Alresford Show, which, due to its huge expensive infrastructure costs, cancelled again, we are able to be up and running quickly and cheaply.

It all came together in three days of committee and volunteer help, much from Bereleigh Estate family and staff, ready for "the off" on Sunday morning at 6.30am, when the 65 trade stands pulled in.

At 9.30am the first shot was fired in the clay shoot, this year organised for the first time by Richard Faulds MBE, Gold Medallist at the Sydney Olympics. His shooting layout was much admired by a very large number of guns. The day ran smoothly, the public were very complimentary and the same committee and volunteers had everything back in the container by 7.30pm. The end of a wonderfully satisfying successful day.

Bill Tyrwhitt-Drake

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Monday 18 October 2021
Peter Price: Roman archaeology in East Hampshire

Monday 22 November 2021
Andrew Negus: Portsmouth: Dung, Harlots and Glory Part 2

Monday 13 December 2021
Edwin Grimshaw: The history of the Meon Valley Railway

Monday 17 January 2022
Rob Mocatta: The 1939 Register of England & Wales

February 2022 visit
Mike Critchley: D-Day Map Room tour at Southwick House

Monday 21 March 2022
Bill Tyrwhitt-Drake: The history of Bereleigh

Plus: A short guide to the Chalke Valley History Festival (nr Salisbury) 20-26 June 2022
Richard & Lesley Dampney

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EAST MEON GARDEN CLUB ANNUAL SHOW 1st August 2021

The Committee had 'hummed and hah'd' as to whether the Annual Show should go ahead this year in light of the continuing COVID uncertainties, but my goodness, we are delighted we did as your response was so much better than we had expected or hoped for.

We decided to reduce the number of classes to avoid too many exhibitors and visitors in the Hall at any one time and this proved highly successful.

Despite the dreadfully wet April, the sizzlingly hot spell followed by torrential rain AGAIN, this did nothing to dispel your enthusiasm to support the Show.

The vegetable section of course was dominated by Dave (Wyatt) and Alastair (Dudley-Williams) but what a display they produced and good to see the good natured competitiveness between these two skilled gardeners. Dave pulled off his second RHS Banksian medal to boot. The Banksian Medal is a very special award and is named after the great scientist Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820). It is awarded to the exhibitor with the highest number of points in the Horticultural sections, ie the vegetable, fruit and flower growing classes.

The Produce and Preserves looked mouth-wateringly delicious.
Sue (Atkinson) won overall but the competition was hot on her heels with the final result nail-bitingly close!

The variety of flowers was fantastic, despite being battered by wind, drenched by rain and baked in the sun. It is always encouraging to see new winners and Mary Chaplin won The Novice Shield, The East Meon Flower Cup and Best in Show.

The Arts and Crafts section allowed exhibitors to express themselves from needles and paint brushes to blow-torches - what more could be asked for? Connie (Caudray) and Olivia (Hickling) shared First Prize in this section.

It was a shame we didn't have any children's entries this year but now we have some younger members move into the village we will be looking to them to 'fly the flag' of the younger generation next year.

As an additional bonus we had 6 new members signed up on the day, two of whom won firsts in their respective classes, a dish of perfect blueberries and a first each in the sweet pea classes.

On behalf of the Committee, may I say a huge 'thank you' to exhibitors and visitors alike who supported us, it certainly made all the hard work worthwhile.
All power to respective elbows for 2022 event!

Pamela Peacock



Fruit and Vegetables



Val Uden and Garden Club Chair David Lewin



Banksian Prize winner David Wyatt



Connie Cawdrey and Olivia Hickling with their Flower Arranging Cup

Police, Camera, Fly Tip Action

In the last few months Countrywatch has welcomed two new team members, PC Amy Giraudet covering the East around the Bordon and Petersfield area, and PC Nick Atkins in the West of the county at Test Valley. There is also additional recruitment under way for two further officers in both of these areas, significantly increasing the presence of our dedicated rural crime policing team.

In May 2021 five males were stopped following a report of poaching in Clanfield where an off-duty police officer witnessed a hare being set upon by dogs. The males made their escape as police arrived, but the vehicle description was circulated and located heading North on the A3 where it was stopped at the Hindhead tunnel by armed officers responding to the incident. They were joined shortly after by our specialist dog unit, the neighbourhood policing team and a roads policing unit. Two males were arrested and four dogs, a 4 x 4 vehicle, two phones and a quantity of items believed to be used in poaching were all seized. A three month investigation was undertaken by the Countrywatch investigator Anna Presswell, with the Crown Prosecution Service and police working together closely to look at all possible options for securing evidence. These included exploring cell site data (phone location tracking) and forensic phone examinations to extract files, photos and messages. Unfortunately due to the vehicle not being seen in close enough detail when leaving the scene to identify the passengers or a number plate as it left the scene, the other evidence - even though excellent - could not satisfy a court that the males stopped were those seen within the fields, and the case was discontinued after seeking Crown Prosecution advice. This case provided an example of the sheer challenge in witnessing crimes and criminals over some distance in rural areas, where visibility and access can be difficult to overcome and witnesses cannot always provide the detail needed by the court. Nevertheless, the out-of-county group had their vehicle, which was being driven untaxed, permanently removed and destroyed and one dog was returned to its rightful owner. They are now well aware that Hampshire will seize and rehome dogs used in crime, where we can.

In other news, a rural Day of Action was held by PC Bassett in Bishops Waltham on 21st June 2021 where 55 vehicles were stopped as part of our scrap metal collector and unlicensed waste carrier disruption efforts. One vehicle was seized being driven with no insurance, one for being driven without a license, a number of tickets were issued for non- endorsable offences (such as no MOT or illegal tyres), two vehicles were fined for being over the weight limit by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and five further vehicles are currently under investigation by the local authority for operating without waste carrier licenses.

Countrywatch have also recently undertaken enquiries to identify a vehicle fly-tipping in the Meon Valley area after it was spotted dumping rubbish in Chidden on a trail camera. Police enquiries led to a vehicle being identified, which PC Bassett then located and linked to a driver. As a result, a referral has been made to our partner agency the local authority who are now investigating the driver for illegal waste tipping.

If you have any questions about rural crime (agricultural theft and burglary, wildlife crime, poaching of pheasants, game and fish theft) please email countrywatch@hampshire.police.uk. If you wish to report a crime which has already taken place, please call 101 or report via our website. For an emergency or where a crime is in action taking place, please call 999.

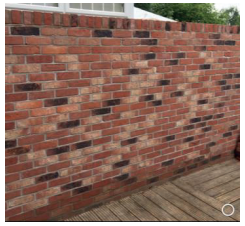
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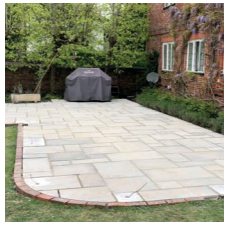
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