

# Meon Matters

*News, Views & Comment  
from East Meon*



£1.00

Summer 2023

Issue Number 217

[meonmatters.com](http://meonmatters.com)

**Editorial**

Dear Readers

Well we have a bumper edition for you this quarter with a wonderful array of interesting features to mull over whilst hopefully enjoying the British sunshine which continues to shine down on East Meon.

You'll be able to read all about the fabulous Coronation celebrations in the village, along with the ever popular boat race, accompanied by some lovely photographs to record the ultimate of royal occasions.

We also bring you our Village People Q&A with Nigel the Postman on life as our village postman over the last decade as he enters retirement, and two inspiring articles by local residents on their Scottish adventures by land and sea - not for the faint hearted!

Along with our regular features, we also bring you news of two fabulous exhibitions from some of our extremely talented local artists.

I think that after reading this Summer Edition of our lovely village magazine, you will agree how lucky we are to have such a wonderful array of interesting people, events and groups to write about.

Happy reading!

Annabel T-D

If you have any ideas for Meon Matters contributions please contact us on [meonmatters@gmail.com](mailto:meonmatters@gmail.com)

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## Ring My Bell – East Meon Are Recruiting

Bell ringing is a distinctively British tradition with around 6,000 working bell towers across the UK. Here in East Meon our beautiful, ancient church of All Saints has a superb ring of 10 bells. They vary in weight from the treble, a mere 3cwt (150kg), to the mighty tenor which weighs in at 18cwt (915kg).

If you are looking for a new hobby or considering what skill to learn for your Duke of Edinburgh Award, or curious about how bell ringing works, or rung in the past and would like to start again, we would love to hear from you.

People of all faiths and none are welcome to join. You don't need to be musical, mathematical or strong. We have learners and experienced ringers from 8 to 80+. Why not come along and experience the fun and satisfaction of bell ringing. But please note that the bell tower is accessed by steep steps and a short ladder, and children under 18 should initially be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

We meet Fridays at 7.30 in the church. If you would like to try please contact Pam Barnsley, Tower Secretary on [pmbarnsley@hotmail.com](mailto:pmbarnsley@hotmail.com) or 07751505123 for more information.

Pam Barnsley



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SJP Approved 10/06/23





## Church Report

It's a joy to be invited to write for this edition of 'Meon Matters'. I'm Rev'd Will Hughes, and as well as being the Vicar of your neighbouring parishes of Petersfield and Buriton, I'm also coming to the end of a period as the acting archdeacon of the Meon. In that role I've tried to support the parishes and clergy of Petersfield, Bishops Waltham, Fareham and Gosport deaneries since Gavin left to be a bishop back in 2021. Now we've got a new Bishop, Bishop Jonathan, and a new substantive (and full time) archdeacon who will take up her post on 2nd July. Ven Kathryn Percival is an excellent appointment, and will continue the process of working with Bishop Jonathan to shape ministry across the diocese. A vital part of this task will be ensuring the future of ministry in the Meon Valley.

I'm deeply aware, as is the Bishop, that the parishes of East Meon, Langrish, Warnford and West Meon have been vacant for a very long time - far longer than would usually be the case. The combination of Covid, structural change in the diocese, and financial uncertainty has meant a long gap for you and several other parishes, and I'm deeply sorry that you've been without a parish priest for so long. I know the church wardens, PCCs and teams have done a wonderful job, and am full of admiration for what you have achieved through these strange and challenging times- not least in the way you've found ways of working together across the four parishes to shape services and events.

I met some people last week walking the pilgrim trail through the Meon valley. I'd forgotten how central pilgrimage has been throughout the history of these villages. It's a reminder that each of us and each community is on a pilgrimage - changing and developing as the generations and personalities come and go. Long before Christians were called 'Christians' we were called 'followers of the way'- a reminder that life and faith are a process, not a steady state. I'm very aware, particularly as we negotiate the weighty challenges of our time - both close to home and further afield, of the part each of us have in shaping this chapter of the story of our communities, our Church.

It would be almost impossible for a difficult time like this not to involve facing challenges and issues. I'm glad that when these emerge, churches have the courage and confidence to ask for support, which you've done in different ways. Bishop Jonathan and I have tried to address these, as each PCC will know. As part of this, Bishop Jonathan has invited me to chair the PCC in East Meon for a while.

Above all, I look forward to being in East Meon for your service on 17th September.

With my prayers

Your acting archdeacon  
Will

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**EAST MEON CINEMA - FILMS ON YOUR DOORSTEP  
- AUTUMN 2023 SEASON  
SAVE THE DATES!**

We don't want to interrupt your summer sunshine, but here at East Meon Cinema we're already looking ahead to welcoming you to a new season of films in the autumn!

Moviola provides us with the list of films from which we choose in July, after this edition of MM has gone to print, so we can't let you know just yet what the films will be, but we can give you some dates for your diaries:

FRIDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER  
FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER  
FRIDAY 24TH NOVEMBER  
FRIDAY 29TH DECEMBER

As soon as we have the films, we'll post all about them on the Meon Matters and Village Hall websites, by email and flyers and posters, so keep a look out for details.

Here's the usual useful info.....

The films will be screened in East Meon Village Hall. The doors and bar open at 7pm, the programme begins at 7.30pm with a 'short' and trailer followed by a brief interval - delicious Jude's ice creams are available - then the main film starts around 7.50pm.

Tickets are £6.50 each and you can buy them in lots of ways:

- in person at East Meon Village Shop (cash or cheque, no booking fee)
- online at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/east-meon-cinema](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/east-meon-cinema) (a small booking fee applies)
- on the door (card, cash or cheque)
- reserve by emailing Lucy at [eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com](mailto:eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com) for collection and payment on the night.

NB seating is not allocated.

If you'd like to be kept up to date with future films, join our mailing list. Get in touch with Lucy at [eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com](mailto:eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com)

See you in September!

The East Meon Cinema Team

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**Nature Group - It was a lovely Spring, wasn't it?**

To the innocent eye, it's been a marvellous spring - stunning snowdrops and tulips; hawthorn such as I cannot remember - trees thick with white blossom, fading to pink; and now a wonderful show of roses. The harsh spell in winter took many of the semi hardy garden plants that had survived recent mild winters. But, most things, it seems, have thrived on the unusual pattern of weather.

Look below the surface, though, and it's a more complex picture. Those gardeners who watch for flying insects visiting their flowers will have noticed their almost complete absence this Spring. As late as early June, there was hardly a bee, a bee-fly or a hoverfly to be seen. It's been a similar picture on the Nature Group's butterfly transect walk up behind South Farm - the numbers are generally massively down on the figures for last year and the cold winter does not seem to be the explanation - we've had plenty of cold winters in the past and they have not affected insect populations. But wild see-sawings of rainfall and temperature do.

It seems to be the fate of nature watchers to fill the Cassandra role, coming up with gloomy prophesies that no one believes. But the evidence is irrefutable for collapsing insect populations and the dire effect that this will have on us as humans because of their role as pollinators for things that we want to eat.

If we want to survive as humans, we're going to have to accelerate the steps we are taking to reduce our appetites for hydrocarbons, insecticides and monocultures.

More widely, there are good things to report on the Nature Group front. In the Spring, we escorted across Coombe Road 503 toads and 360 newts on their way to their summer breeding pond. Our two new natural hedges, planted on the cricket ground and along Workhouse Lane by the Tree Working Group (TWiG) and a great group of volunteers, are growing but will need watering soon because of the prolonged dry spell. There are new fruit trees in front of the Village Hall. The wild flower area by the Workhouse Lane pavilion is maturing well (though we need to keep the brambles under control). It seems to be an excellent year for Pyramidal Orchids in the wilded area of our churchyard. And a litter of 8 polecats has been spotted near to Colchenna.

The Nature Group and TWiG are community initiatives and we continue to welcome participation from people across the village, whether it is helping toads across the road, planting new hedges (we plan to plant a further new hedge around the football pitch next year) or counting butterflies. Or you can just continue to do the right thing in your own gardens, planting pollinators, minimising the use of chemicals and accepting a bit of managed wilding to provide habitat for those insects and animals with whom we share the planet. Follow this link for some further tips.

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/seven-ways-to-create-a-wildlife-friendly-garden.html>



## East Meon Open Gardens Raises £900

On a glorious summer's June afternoon (with only a sprinkling of the rain that gardeners have been praying for) 12 beautiful East Meon Gardens opened their gates to 180 people. Visitors came from as far away as Havant to take the opportunity to view, walk round and be inspired by established gardens of historic houses, cottage gardens, newly designed borders, wildflower/'no-mow' planting and thriving allotments.

Visitors were able to enjoy tea and a scrumptious variety of cake thanks to East Meon Church supporters. The Toolman also had a stall displaying a wide range of useful, beautifully crafted and collectible tools that our mothers and fathers would have been proud of. Open Gardens raised an impressive £900. A donation will be made to the Rosemary Foundation, which provides such a vital support service to those living locally with cancer. A plant sale also did a good trade in herbaceous, vegetable and fruit plants raising £163 for East Meon Garden Club. Thank you to all those who generously donated plants. There was fierce competition for the Ginger Lily and Sugar Snap specimens!

Open Gardens, an annual East Meon Gardens Club event, owes much to those volunteers who both plan and get involved practically. Thank you so much. We are always keen to involve younger members. Please contact our Membership Secretary, Jane Cobley, at [janecobley66@gmail.com](mailto:janecobley66@gmail.com) or 01730 823813 if you are interested in joining or would be keen to come to an evening garden outing. We are happy to try to arrange one if that would enable you to attend outside working hours.

Nicky Staveley





## **DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **East Meon Village Hall**

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 at 6:30pm  
 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 6:30pm

**ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**7pm Monday 22nd April 2024**  
**In East Meon Village Hall**

## **Parish Council Report**

This quarter we've had the Annual Parish Assembly and the Annual Parish Report, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual General Meeting for the Recreation Ground. Hopefully that's satisfied your appetite for Annuals for another year.

And thank you for turning up in such large numbers to the Parish Assembly and being so engaged with your questions. These inevitably included hardy Annuals (or is it perennials?) such as potholes, sewerage and fly-tipping, and new items including road diversion damage to both Frogmore and Workhouse Lane. As Rob Mocatta prompted us, do take copious photos of sewerage and pothole damage ([www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes/report-pothole](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes/report-pothole)). The more noise we all make, the better and quicker our chances of the necessary repairs. And don't forget to keep a tennis ball handy! Of course, the real draw of the Parish Assembly was Trudie Lang's enlightening talk on combatting Ebola, Zika, Covid and Malaria, deftly followed by drinks generously provided by the Tyrwhitt-Drake's. A big thank you to all concerned.

Our Annual Parish Meeting began with formal appointments and reappointments. Spare a thought for Susan Davenport who had barely called the meeting to order before we unanimously agreed she should lead us for another year. Steve Ridgeon already has his hands full as a Councillor and Chair of Planning, and now he is also leading our Parish Priorities Statement response (see the separate feature on the PPS in this issue of Meon Matters), spreading himself too thin to continue as Vice Chair as well. So, in a substitution Pep Guardiola would be proud of, we welcomed Charles Ritchie as our new Vice Chair.

And that was all in the first 5 minutes!

We were equally unanimous in our appreciation of the flawless Coronation celebrations and would like to record our thanks to David Pepper and his equally proficient band of associates and willing helpers for all their hard work. Similar thanks are extended to our Tree Warden John Mackinlay and the Chair of the Garden Club Steve Grier who planted our Coronation Oak Tree on the Recreation Ground on the actual day of the Coronation. Here they are in their all-weather gear!

And let's not forget to also thank the band of 20-something Big Help Out Day litter pickers who fought Coronation party "exhaustion" and a dodgy forecast to comb our hedgerows and lanes for litter. And what a load of rubbish they found (no, not the bike!). Thank you to Sharon Sillence and Mike Critchley for the corralling and cajoling, and Anella Parker-Martin for the delicious refreshments. We should also thank the village's 4 "Wombles" who go out every week collecting rubbish thoughtlessly dropped by others. The Parish Council will be organising another litter picking morning in the winter.



The rest of the Annual Parish Meeting might have been an anti-climax, but we also had good progress to report. Not least with the excellent resurfacing of the All Sports Court and Pavilion insurance claim and remedial works. Sticking with sport, Harvest have done well finishing a highly credible 3rd in their new division. Harvest are also starting an Under-16 side, which we hope to open up to East Meon youngsters. We are assured pitch condition considerations will limit how much football can be played.

There is healthy demand too for our allotments - apologies to anyone waiting - and from September the new allotment contracts will include a metered water charge.

Where we are far less happy is with the BOATS, where the authorities have failed to apply for a large grant that would have provided permanent gates to protect these byways from unwanted winter traffic, and with Southern Water (another hardy perennial) where a recent workshop revealed our sewerage leaks are regarded too low a priority to feature in either their 5 or even 10 year plans. Rest assured we are not taking this lying down. We are also sponsoring the training of 4 River Fly monitors to help with SSSI accreditation of the River Meon and so bring the Environment Agency into our sewerage fight.

Better news. You recall we have received a £15,000 grant for traffic calming and road markings? Well, the work is now budgeted for this 2023/24 fiscal year. And we are shortly meeting with the SDNPA to discuss our long list of projects that the village's CIL monies could potentially finance over the next few years, to establish which of these projects the SDNPA is most likely to also help fund.

And finishing on money, we've been successfully internally audited for another year.

Have a great summer.

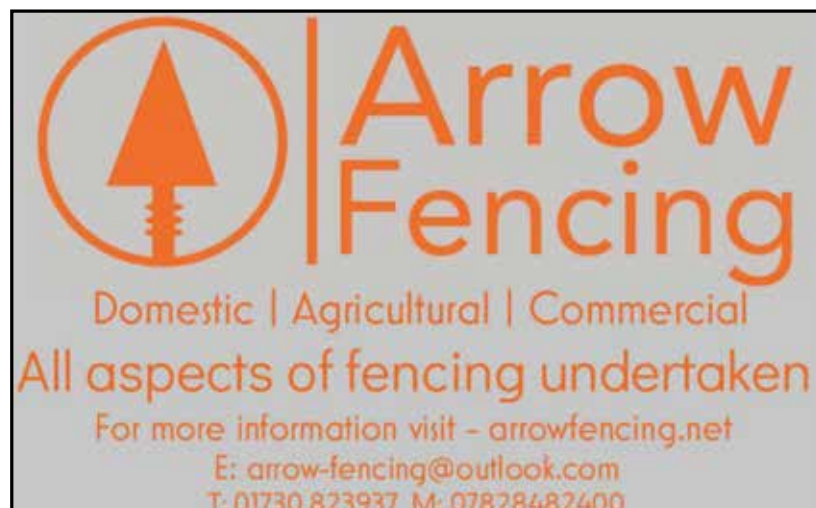
### Parish Priorities Statements – We need your help!



The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is reviewing its Local Plan in line with Government Policy and to ensure the Plan delivers on priorities relating to Climate Action, ReNature and a National Park for All. The views and inputs of local communities into this Local Plan Review are vital, particularly those of town and parish councils. One way in which town and parish councils can contribute to the Local Plan Review is through a Parish Priority Statement (PPS).

The SDNPA has invited East Meon Parish Council to prepare a PPS. The PPS involves answering specific questions, some of which have already been answered in our Neighbourhood Plan (NP). These questions are:

1. What are the three key changes you would like to see in your Parish over the next 15 years?
2. What type and level of development would you like to see in the parish? (See NP)
3. Are there any areas of the Parish you would like to see developed?
4. Are there any specific areas you want protected for other uses? (See NP)
5. What type of homes would you like to see in your local community? (See NP)
6. What size of home is needed locally? (See NP)
7. Are there any areas of local character which are particularly important to the local community?
8. Any particular features of buildings of local character? (For example, building materials, boundary treatments – see relevant points from the NP)
9. Are there opportunities to make nature bigger, better and more joined up? (For example, connecting two areas of woodland or heathland or the restoration of a local pond)
10. Provide information about business you would like to protect and business opportunities that should be provided
11. Name the important greenspaces in your local area, identify any opportunities for nature recovery (See NP)
12. What local infrastructure does the local community need, where are there shortfalls or a lack of local provision? (Consider active travel priorities, roads/parking, community buildings needs, waste/water infrastructure, broadband, renewable energy etc.)



At the Annual Parish Assembly in April, three important priorities for our Parish were discussed and these would form our answer to question 1. They are (in no particular order):

- Solve the village's sewerage and drainage problems, especially in Workhouse Lane
- Improve safety for residents and visitors by introducing 20mph speed limits on some roads
- Achieve 'designated' status for the River Meon in our parish to increase protection of this chalk stream, a rare and precious habitat

The SDNPA will consider the principal needs and prevailing views set out in our PPS in their Local Plan Review and update of local planning policy. Our PPS will also be useful when applying for funding from the Authority, for example, from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Sustainable Communities Fund. Our PPS will supplement the Neighbourhood Plan, not supersede it.

### **We need your help!**

The weight that the SDNPA gives to a PPS will depend upon the level of input from the local community. The Parish Council will be holding a drop-in session for residents to see and comment on the draft PPS during September. The final version must be handed to the SDNPA in October. It will be published on the SDNPA and Parish Council's websites.

In the meantime, we need as many residents as possible to send in comments, questions and suggestions about any of the questions listed above. Are there any other priorities for East Meon? Do you have any suggested answers to the questions and so on. The more input we get, the more weight our PPS will be given. Even if you simply agree with the priorities, an email saying that will be important!

Please send any comments to [eastmeonpriorities@gmail.com](mailto:eastmeonpriorities@gmail.com). Thank you very much!

## **Penny Mile Update**

The houses on the Penny Mile development are starting to take shape, so we thought it would be timely to give an update on progress. The developer is aiming to have the site completed in the autumn, with residents starting to move in around this time. A significant number of enquiries registering an interest in the properties have been received, including from existing local residents. The developer has released prices to the people who have registered an interest first (in line with the Neighbourhood Plan). If any more residents are interested, the developer asks that you contact them (01489 780087).

Regarding the affordable dwellings on the site, the developer is in discussions with affordable housing providers and in the next few months hopes to inform us about who the provider will be. 4 of the dwellings will be 'social rent' and 2 'shared ownership' (for those who have a connection to East Meon) out of a total of 12 homes.

The drainage, which is of keen interest to us all, is not completed yet. Over the next month, the large swale at the front of the site will be formed and other features, such as the rain gardens and balancing pond, will also begin to take shape. Landscaping will be one of the final pieces of the jigsaw to ensure there is no more machinery/workers on site to damage any plants.

The Parish Council worked with East Hants District Council and Royal Mail to come up with suitable road names for the two clusters of houses - Windwhistle Rise and Salt Hill View. Looking at the site the left-hand side is Windwhistle Rise and the right-hand side is Salt Hill View.

There will be 12 swift nesting bricks installed across the development, integrated into the walls of the properties. Hampshire Swifts ([www.hampshireswifts.co.uk](http://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk)) assisted with planning the location of these. The photograph below shows the bricks that have been installed on the side elevation of the white building (plots 11 & 12). Maybe the swifts will be the first residents to move in! In total there will be 12 of these installed across the development.

Steve Ridgeon, EMPC



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## A festival with wide appeal

This year's West Meon Music Festival, from 14th to 17th September, promises a wide range of classical music to appeal to all tastes: favourite chamber pieces, song and piano recitals, early music and composers from Monteverdi to Mahler, Schubert to Schoenberg.

The festival, now in its thirteenth year, opens with the event's founders the Primrose Piano Quartet, performing Brahms' A major Piano Quartet as well as duo works by Mozart and Schubert. Friday evening sees a recital by Thomas Kelly – winner of numerous international piano competition prizes – followed by "Who's afraid of Arnold Schoenberg?" an informal late night concert by the Primrose exploring his work.

On Saturday 16th September the festival spreads out across the Meon Valley: in the morning the strings of the Primrose will perform a version of Bach's Goldberg Variations at East Meon's historic All Saints Church while in the afternoon the beautiful twelfth century Church of Our Lady at Warnford hosts the Gonzaga Band performing works from the "Age of Monteverdi".

On Saturday evening the Primrose are back at West Meon Church with Schubert's Trout Quintet followed on Sunday by a morning recital of French song with exciting young soprano Harriet Burns. The French theme continues for the "Festival Finale" in the afternoon with works by Fauré, Chopin, Saint-Saëns, Françaix and Bizet.

Full details of all concerts are now available at [www.westmeonmusic.co.uk](http://www.westmeonmusic.co.uk) and the box office opens on 1st June. The West Meon Music Festival is a registered charity no. 1185082

For more information contact: [enquiries@westmeonmusic.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@westmeonmusic.co.uk)

The Primrose Piano Quartet is one of the country's leading ensembles and its acclaimed discography includes classical favourites as well as many unjustly neglected works by early 20th century British composers. Their major commissions include piano quartets written for them by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Anthony Payne. The quartet appears regularly in London at Kings Place and the Conway Hall and has recently toured Denmark, Germany and Bulgaria. Its latest recording of the complete Brahms piano quartets, made in Vienna on authentic pianos of the period, has been highly recommended on Radio 3's "Record Review".



Susanne Stanzeleit – violin, Dorothea Vogel – viola,  
Andrew Fuller – cello, John Thwaites – piano.  
[www.primrosepianoquartet.org.uk](http://www.primrosepianoquartet.org.uk)

Pianist Thomas Kelly has won many international 1st prizes including Pianale International Piano Competition 2017, Kharkiv Assemblies 2018, at Lucca Virtuoso e Bel Canto festival 2018, RCM Joan Chissell Schumann competition 2019, and the Fourth Theodor Leschetizky competition 2020. In 2021 Thomas was a finalist in the Leeds International Piano Competition and most recently, he was awarded 2nd prize and special prize for best semi-final performance at Hastings International Concerto Competition 2022.

The Gonzaga Band was formed by cornettist Jamie Savan in 1997, with a mission to explore the intimate relationship between vocal and instrumental performance practice in the Early Modern period. The ensemble takes its name from the ducal family of Mantua: the Gonzagas who were influential patrons of the arts in the late Renaissance and employed Claudio Monteverdi as their maestro della musica.

Soprano Harriet Burns is fast developing a reputation as a “polished, witty, expressive and sweet-toned” (The Times) performer both in recital and on stage. An acclaimed interpreter of song, Harriet has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Oxford Lieder and Leeds Lieder Festivals, International Lied Festival Zeist, Ryedale Festival with pianists including James Baillieu, Imogen Cooper, Graham Johnson, and Sholto Kynoch.

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## Womens Institute Report - June 2023

Our April meeting was the AGM where the Secretary, Treasurer and outgoing President all gave a report outlining the events of the previous year, the state of our finances (healthy) and plans for the following year. The County Adviser, Cathy Winter, then took over in order to run the election process. All committee members had agreed to stand again and were duly re-elected. Angie Trenchard was re-elected as President and could then continue to chair the meeting.

Our speaker was Susan Howe, a long-standing qualified London Blue Badge Tourist Guide. She explained that in order to gain the qualification she had trained for two years so that she has an in depth knowledge of London's main tourist highlights as well as of places off the beaten track. She regaled us with anecdotes and indiscreet revelations of incidents which had taken place during her long career - it seemed that Americans were often the most demanding clients!

Our speaker on Monday 15th May was Gillian Taylor and she talked to us on “A garden adventure in France”. Gillian was a local vet, who lives in Upham, and in retirement she volunteers for three charities - Perennial (the gardeners' charity), the Hampshire Gardens Trust (where she works with schools and organises their garden visits) and the Historic Houses Association. As if this does not keep her busy enough, she and her husband have a house and large garden in France. Their property is situated on the border of Normandy and Brittany in an area called The Mayenne. Gillian showed us beautiful ‘before and after’ photos of the house and garden, and in particular of the lovely orchard which her husband has created. She also showed us photos of the local chateaux and scenic towns which they visit on a regular basis.

Sue Kinloch



### East Meon Celebrates the Coronation

On Sunday 7th May the village celebrated the Coronation. In case you missed it (or if your recollections are a bit fuzzy (ahem!) ...) here's a whirlwind recap of a fantastic day. Events began with the Great East Meon Coronation Boat Race where an enormous number of craft of every kind made their way down the river all under the protection of David Lewin's wonderful Guardship, complete with helicopter.

Celebrations continued onto the Green with the Village Tea Party. The sports day saw children of all ages compete for medals, the Maypole was danced, God Save the King sung and tea served by Philippa and her fabulous team. Villagers had brought a wonderful selection of homemade sandwiches, scones and cakes to share. It was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and to meet and get to know other villagers.

The Friends of East Meon School hosted an incredibly successful BBQ raising funds for the school, there was a delicious veggie food stand, and later on a Hog Roast. The Bar proved very popular, and the volunteer bar staff, kept up with a brisk trade. Around dusk the fabulous band "Nuthin Yet" fronted by our very own rock star Nigel played a host of dance floor filling favourites. It seemed like the whole village was rocking. And as the sun set, to round off a fabulous, fun filled day, there was a firework display from the top of Park Hill.

A team of plucky, bleary eyed volunteers cleared up on Monday morning, and by the end of the day you would never have known there had even been a party on the Green. David Pepper, Village Hall Chair, and party organiser said "It takes a community to put on an event the size of the Coronation, so I am enormously grateful to everyone who helped. It was fantastic to see so many friends and villagers enjoying themselves. 2024 will be the 50th Anniversary of our wonderful Village Hall, which seems like a perfect excuse for another party".

If you would like to help out at future events, please contact [chair@eastmeonvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:chair@eastmeonvillagehall.co.uk)  
Meon Matters Reporter





### East Meon Arts - Organ Recital

Visitors to the latest East Meon Arts event are being asked to volunteer ideas for themes for our guests organist to play and improvise over at an organist recital on Friday July 28th at All Saints Church East Meon. Stuart Miles, one of Worth Abbey 's organists, is performing a programme of works by Howells, Ireland, J.S. Bach and Liszt plus a couple of lighter musical bon-bons to throw into the mix but has also agreed to open the recital up to suggestions at the end for a 5 minute improvisational piece.

Stuart Miles is much in demand as an organist in London and the South. Having studied music at the Royal College of Music, Stuart Miles became a teacher and Head of Music at three schools in the West Midlands, Hertfordshire and London, before becoming Head of Keyboard at St Albans High School. Now living back in Sussex, Stuart Miles maintains his link with STAHS as school organist and plays for their Founders' Days and Carol Services in St Albans Abbey. He is also School Organist at Gordon's School in Woking as well as playing Masses and the monastic offices at Worth Abbey. He enjoys a busy schedule of playing in London and the South East most recently at St Albans and Arundel Cathedrals

Stuart is passionate about the value of music education for all young people. He was a guest lecturer at the Institute of Education on the PGCE and MA Music Education Courses. He also deputised as a teacher at the RCM Junior Department, and is now a foundation governor at a secondary school on the South Coast with particular responsibility for arts education.

The evening will begin at 7 0pm where visitors can buy drinks – followed by the recital at 7.30. Tickets are £10 each from Eventbrite, the village shop or on the door.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/organ-recital-tickets-661898745967>

Kati Whitaker

## Village People – Nigel Legget the Postman

It came to our attention recently at Meon Matters, that Nigel The Postman is on the cusp of breaking free of the valley, hanging up his postbag, and searching for pastures new... And so, given he is a true man about town, probably someone who knows more about everyone in our community than anyone, we thought we ought to give him a bit of a Meon Matters Grilling before he (extremely sadly for us) retires, so here you go, the life of Nigel.

A big thank you from all of us in the village, you will be very much missed.

### 1. How long have you been a postman in East Meon?

I have been delivering to your lovely village for just on 10 years.

### 2. What do you love about the job?

I get to meet a lot of lovely people within the village plus I love working on my own.

### 3. What do you find challenging?

The most challenging part of the job for me now is our increased workload and not having the time to do it all.

### 4. How many steps a day do you clock up?

On average 34,500 a day!

### 5. Have you had any scary encounters with dogs?

I have been very lucky delivering to the village all the dogs I come into contact with are great and friendly, although my previous delivery area in Hindhead I was not so lucky, I was bitten eight times. It's not nice.

### 6. Have you ever knowingly delivered a card from the Queen or King on a 100th birthday?

I have delivered two 100th birthday cards from the Queen (not this area) and of course I had to deliver Frank and Belinda Moffat's 60th wedding anniversary card from the King in April this year.

### 7. Do you think the amount of mail delivered has decreased over the years?

The amount of mail has fallen dramatically over the years what with emails and texts and of course social media.

### 8. What is the strangest package that you have delivered?

A packet containing bees for a beekeeper in Hindhead.

### 9. Which is your favourite view of East Meon?

I guess my favourite view in the village is standing by Barnards Corner looking towards the church and with Park hill behind.

### 10. Do you think East Meon has changed from when you first started?

The only changes I notice are the people that come and go. We have lost some lovely people but they have been replaced with some lovely ones as well.

### 11. Were you ever propositioned by a resident of East Meon on their doorstep?

No! I have never been propositioned by anyone - wherever I've done my job. Everyone is far too nice!

### 12. Apart from your van, what will you miss about the work?

The only thing I will miss about my job are the lovely people I come into contact with.

### 13. What's next for Nigel?

Not sure yet but I will be retiring this year.....watch this space...

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## East Meon Artists

A number of local artists have recently been exhibiting their work outside of the valley and it seemed right to acknowledge their pluck at spreading their wings and letting the rest of the world see (and buy) their creations.

The Stilwell Art Group is an informal group of about 15 painters who live in East Hampshire, led by Anthea Stilwell who is a professional art teacher and also a successful artist. The group has been together for more than 10 years and every 2 years or so the whole group stages an exhibition, and within the group a smaller group of 5 (known as “Just four+ two”, which includes Jane Martin and John Mackinlay) exhibit separately.

In June Just four+ two set up an exhibition in Bourton House, Gloucs. With over 100 paintings between the 5 artists, the exhibition is on until the end of August. It’s worth a visit – the contemporary paintings are hanging in a beautiful Tithe Barn set in wonderful gardens which visitors can wander around – and there is a cafe selling magnificent meringues.

Bourton-on-the-Hill, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9AE

Meanwhile, Georgia Fiennes has been taking on London and causing a bit of a stir with her beautiful, original and humorous work. Here’s a little Q&A Georgia kindly agreed to with MM.

### How long have you painted for and when did you first embark on art as a career?

I have been painting professionally since 2002 after completing a combined degree in Illustration and Fine Art. I initially planned to be a sculptor but painting seemed far more portable, I do plan to return to sculpture though, when my children are older. I also worked as a jewellery designer for five years to help make ends meet while I was getting the painting off the ground.

### What are the main inspirations for your work?

My mother was an Interior Designer so I grew up surrounded by beautiful patterns and antique furniture which definitely had an influence. These days, I am inspired more and more by our beautiful valley and all the nature and flowers within.


**Are there any animals that you particularly love / hate painting, why?**

Cows are definitely my favourite. I don't particularly like painting anything amphibious or reptiloids.



**Do you listen to music when you're working, and if yes, what?**

Yes, I always listen to music when I'm painting but it varies very much between each body of work. Sometimes I will listen to the same CD over and over for a month for fear that changing it may disrupt the flow! I wish I liked them, I never listen to Podcasts because I find people talking very distracting, so it is always fairly calm, relaxing music that doesn't take over when I need to concentrate for long stretches.



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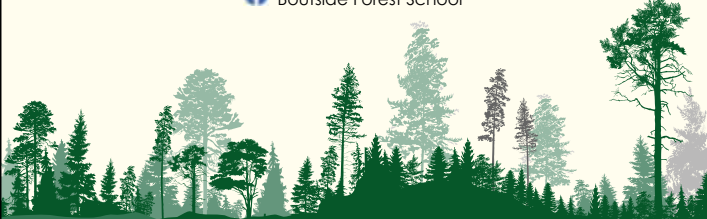
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**With your recent exhibition in Chelsea, how long is the planning and how many hours do you think you spend on the work?**

I started work on the show in May 2022 and finished in December, leaving 4 months for framing as all my frames are handmade and gilded. There were 50 paintings in total of varying sizes; I imagine I spent thousands of hours on the work!

**Having conquered London, what next for Georgia Fiennes Art?**

Ha ha! I'm now working on commissions off the back of my recent show for a few months and then I'll start work on paintings for a group show at Eastwood Fine Art in Stockbridge nearer Christmas and a three man show with them next June. Then at the beginning of next year I will start on work for another solo show in London for 2025.



CdeL.



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## THE GREAT EAST MEON CORONATION BOAT RACE

The second annual Great East Meon Boat Race took place on Coronation Sunday with over 100 boats in three classes racing essentially from pub to pub, the Izaak to the George.

With plenty of time for preparation and boat building, plus a dedicated afternoon at school so as many competitors as possible could build a boat, there was no shortage of variety and theories of what would make a boat go faster. Boats that come to mind were a model bathtub (including a 'pee/pea in the bath') in Class 1, all manner of decoration in the Class 2 which were made of milk bottles and then a very notable message to Southern Water in the form of a floating poo for the repeated flooding of Workhouse Lane in Class 3. There was also a lively technical debate about whether the boats should have a flat shallow draught form so as not to run aground or something of a keel to harness the faster flowing stream under the surface. The answer is a closely guarded secret.



Competitors were asked to register their boats first by the Izaak Walton, where they were scrutineered to meet the Class rules and also check for any small parts that might have fallen off to cause ecological damage. After being appreciated by the crowds of onlookers and appraised by the judges, they were placed on the starting board, roughly seven at a time, and the board lowered into the water so they could float off and away down the river, past the River Meon Patrol 'guard ship' anchored mid-stream, to the finish at the Church Street bridge.

Many thanks to the great diversity of competitors and entries for making it such a fun and interesting competition and especially to the staff at East Meon School and The Friends of East Meon School (FEMS) without whom it would not have been so very successful. All money raised went to supporting the children at the School.

Make sure you enter next year.



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## Having a little adventure...

By John & Elizabeth McNaughton

We were the people who always said we were “never going to own a boat”. For many years, we have had no shortage of sailing in a variety of craft and in a variety of locations; there always seemed to be an opportunity to get out on the water on lots of different boats. Our view was that variety was, very much, the spice of life. It seemed like madness not to enjoy getting on the water this way.

However, there was one downside to this itinerant sailing life—lack of control. We were always dependent on others’ projects and schedules, adapting to their plans rather than our own. But we started to want to explore the hidden corners of the coastline, the places rarely seen by the average sailor. We wanted to escape the confines of the familiar “theme park” of the Solent and venture further into the Southwest, towards Falmouth and the Isles of Scilly and beyond that, the Irish Sea, and the West Coast of Scotland.

As we delved into the world of boat ownership, one type kept resurfacing in our conversations with friends—“Contessa 32.” This yacht was described as the perfect vessel for our plan. A well-built, easily manageable craft, ideally suited for a couple like us.

Long story short, we bought Coric – a 1973 Contessa 32 in mid-2021. A boat with an obscure history, where expensive work had been done on the hull and the deck and was essentially a blank canvas.

By the time we got to Christmas, it was beginning to look like a real boat; engine in, new chart table, gas and water all functional, synthetic teak decking fitted and a mast waiting at the riggers. There were still lots of jobs to do including the varnishing of the tiller and flagpole at one end of the scale and the installation of all the navigation equipment and deck gear at the other.



In mid-April, the moment of truth arrived—we embarked on a test sail. The sky was clear, the wind blew at a favourable 15 knots, and the tides were on our side. Fully loaded up and brimming with excitement, we watched as Elizabeth took the helm under the guidance of James, the skilled boat builder who had played a significant role in Coric’s transformation. As we blasted down the Solent with the spinnaker flying in the wind, a profound sense of satisfaction enveloped us.

Summer of 2022 was spent being out and about pretty much every weekend. Not travelling big distances or indulging in mammoth sails – just very much getting to know the boat and doing everything there is to do; anchoring, mooring, going alongside in various circumstances, all sorts of sail combinations and testing all the equipment in primary and fallback modes. We have been very much welcomed by the Contessa 32 Class Association and we have attended a couple of the rallies, including the slightly delayed 50th anniversary of the class in Lymington in July 2022.

Elizabeth and I started to plan a much longer trip for 2023. There were a couple of big decisions; sack work competely or try to do this working part-time? to rent our home out or leave it unoccupied? what to do about vehicles? what to do with the allotment? To push ourselves we set a date for departure of 2nd April (wouldn’t choose the 1st of April – would you?).

We had, when asked about our itinery, always said “the only plan is that there is no plan”. There was an element of truth in this but there was always a plan to get to Scotland for the best of the summer and ideally return to the south coast after the holiday season and before the onset of colder weather.

Like all projects there was a sense of ground rush at the later stages but we got away on time. We didn’t travel far on the first day – little bit too much emotion to add in a significant night sail. We parked up in Cowes and met up with some friends for a quiet drink and an early night.

Next day we started in earnest and set off down the channel taking in Salcombe, the river Yealm and Falmouth in quick succession. We holed up in Falmouth while Storm Noa went through but we managed to visit Malpas (and on foot to Truro) and then Helford. We arrived in Scilly to savour St Marys and Tresco in really lovely weather however an impending blast of North East wind made the 130 mile crossing to Cork something we needed to do or face a prolonged stay in Scilly.

We were able to catch up with friends in Crosshaven and were able to tour Cork and Cobh (previously Queenstown) while the storm wind blew itself out. We then started heading anti clockwise round the Irish coast. We found the people delightfully chatty and helpful and there was a sense of being off the beaten track a little – very few boats and a recurring theme was that we were just ahead of the season; ideal.

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Then into Dublin where we adopted the role of tourists including Irish Pubs, Molly Malone, and the Guinness Store where a bit of smooth talking purloined a few extra drink tokens. All very lovely and walkable from our berth in the City Centre. From Dublin, we sailed to Peel on the Isle of Man, where we lingered for a few days before crossing over to Northern Ireland.

At this point we could see Scotland and we crossed over to Campbelltown then onto Troon via Holy Island and Lamash. Troon was an opportunity to see family and get fully stored up (Diesel, Gas, Food and Wine). We spent a few days in the inner Clyde, in some ways characterised by what we missed – had hoped to visit Helensburgh and Rothsay but it made no sense to do tiny journeys and we pressed on to the Kyles of Bute stopping at Colintravie, Caladh and Tighnabraich.

It was then onwards and upwards – or rather northwards. We opted to take the 9-mile canal from Lochgilphead to Crinan – the Crinan Canal. We anchored at Loch Shuna and then Puilladobhrain and then Loch Aline in the sound of Mull before having a lovely Saturday evening in Tobermory; fish and chips and a couple of drinks at the Mishnish Hotel were a highlight.

The weather in Scotland has been rather lovely - a very significant high pressure had settled into the Northwest giving us very benign sailing conditions. We then started doing some island hopping and visited Coll and Muck.

The repertoire of wildlife and the attractiveness of the scenery has been a joy to take in. Neither of us are super knowledgeable about but we are trying to keep track of what we have seen including minke whales, porpoises and dolphins, all manner of gulls, gannets, and guillemots as well as seals and herons and quite incredible numbers of jelly fish. Every corner of Scotland seems to have a castle and is awash with beautiful flowers.

Our adventure is ongoing, and we hope to go quite a bit further North before turning round and being back in East Meon in the Autumn.

You can see more:  
<https://instagram.com/coric.co32>  
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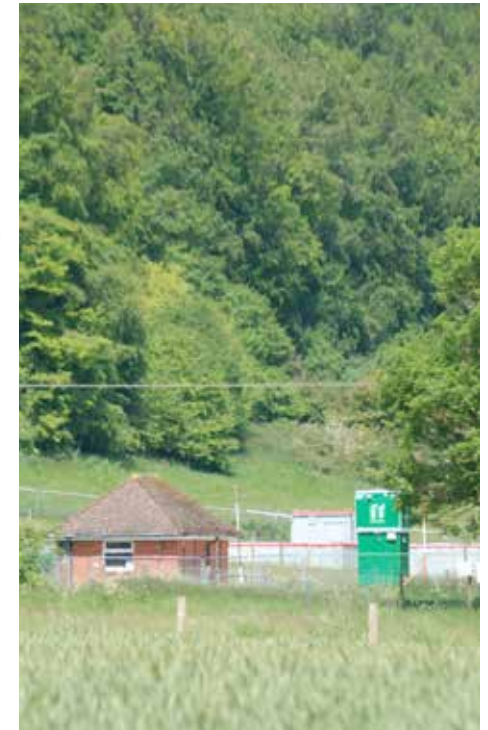
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## The Saga of the Green Tardis

Residents on the west of the village and anyone walking their dogs in that direction will have watched a lot of activity around the sewage works. The most visible is the strange green tower that has appeared at the edge of the site closest to football field. That and the installation of containers, extra fencing, building rubbish and all sorts of stuff that doesn't belong in one of the loveliest valleys in England. What is it? Most of us assumed a tall temporary toilet for the builders, but it became clear last year that this was intended to be a permanent fixture.

Some of us – including the author – are pretty cheesed off by the fact that Southern Water have suddenly made their presence felt in this way. I live in Chalk Dell and had enjoyed the largely building free view I get towards Hen Wood and on towards Coombe and Winchester Hill. Why can we now see all this when the site was previously so well hidden? So I started the painful process of complaint. That was long, slow and far too tedious to relate in detail, but involved letters to CEOs, being passed down the minion chain, not getting much help from our MP etc. Halfway through I had the sad sight of some Southern Water contractors removing the diseased ash that was once the best way of making the site invisible.

The net result is that last month a small – but powerful - delegation of Meonites met them at the site, had a tour, and gave them our views on what they have done to our views, and discussed options for improvement. So I finally met the Tardis, and can reveal all about their cunning plans, and how we MAY have persuaded them to tidy things up.



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Southern Water are – as Meon Matters reported some months ago – installing new filtration tanks. These will help it remove nitrates, phosphates and other chemicals from the water that goes back into the Meon after being treated. The installation process has included building the filtration tanks, and will shortly see the arrival a big (8ft high) black tank containing the chemicals that neutralise the chemicals. And (did you guess?) the green Tardis is a shower tower, designed to allow the delivery tanker driver to very quickly wash off anything that spills during the process. It's tall to allow gravity to store and splash a lot of water fast over the driver.

At the meeting there was a brief conflict between the importance of maintaining the Tardis colour because that was a 'standard operating procedure' and us saying ugly coloured industrial kit didn't belong in the Meon valley, but progress was made. The good news is we are now promised action. Southern Water have already tried to camouflage the Tardis, but they may need military help as the nasty white roof and and vivid colour are still very visible. They have also submitted a draft plan for planting new trees and hedges around the site to hide it better (or 'improve its visual amenity' in utility speak). Given we will lose more of the ash trees sooner than replacements can grow this might take time. Nothing is certain in life, but a small battle to protect our beautiful valley has made a promising start.

Andrew Hughes

## Cricket Sixes Village Party June 2023

Another fantastic turn out on the sunny cricket pitch on 1st July, with 8 teams in a variety of technicoloured shirts and slogans, all vying to hold the EMCC trophy in their triumphant sweaty palms.

This year the winners were the Bereleigh Bandits captained by Eddie TD – congratulations to you all - with Ali Hales' Park Farm Raiders the runners up.

Here are some facts and figures from the day to get your teeth into:

0 balls lost (first time in years that no balls have been lost);

1 broken nose;

2 pulled hamstrings;

8 empty bottles of Pimms;

10 popped Proseccos;

15 energetic matches;

80 pints of local cider;

648 slurped pints of beer;

900 balls played;

100's of hangovers!



The cricket pitch looked impeccable, and thanks need to go to Chris Warren for his care and time spent manicuring the green. I think it's OK to feel a little smug when we look out over the pitch and think, 'Yes, this really is the best looking pitch in the entire world, if not the universe'.

Thanks too to the entire cricket club. This year the party was headed up by Andrew de Lotbiniere once again, with weeks, - no months - of planning to make it the great and laid-back vibe that it is, We had fantastic beats from DJ Nicola from the Izaak and awesome melodies from the Black Cherry Jam band, and chips n' burgers left right and centre. Thank you to the school for your lunch time bbq to soak up some of that Pimms before heading to the dance-floor.

This is the 14th year the party has been in action (2020 was Covid) and each year it raises money for good causes in the village – including the food bank, village hall and care group. Thank you once again for putting on a great show EMCC! Here's to the 15th anniversary next year!

CdeL.

## Running the Cape Wrath Ultra Marathon

So I run, and I have been known to run long distances and at times through the desert but this was a different level of hard. Fort William to Cape Wrath, (250 miles) over 8 days (average of 31 miles a day) taking in 45,000 ft of ascent - equivalent to twice up Mt Everest. But then you add in the terrain. One Scottish Highlands mile felt like at least four South Downs miles. There are very few paths on the Cape Wrath Trail, it's mostly endless bog, often thigh deep, even at the top of the hills, and when it's not bog it's slippery sheer rocks or heather and more bog. Added to this is the need to self-navigate, and I can get lost walking out of my front door.

The race organisers then add in 'cut offs' that you have to make several times each day, 'doable' if you race hard and don't stop, and can successfully navigate food from the recesses of your race pack into your mouth while holding poles and crossing a river.... 163 of us from all round the world set off from Loch Linne, having been ferried across from Fort William, and were piped across the start. You start the race each day at 7am ...and have to be in by 10pm. You finish in a camp each night, tents erected and chips, cake and then a meal provided by 100 amazing volunteers, and aided by Scotland's finest midges.



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Day 1 and 2 went to plan, though I had had covid 10 days before the start, and the effects slowed me down. Bogs I can do, steep ascents I oddly enjoy, but technical descents were my downfall and Day 3 had a great hike up to The Saddle and then in the fog, wind and rain I managed to lose everyone on a descent that had me clambering down rocks wondering about my sanity. Needless to say I was timed out at the next checkpoint. All was not lost, I moved down to the Explorer option, shorter distances each day, (still 250km) but the pressure was off. Now I could look up, take in the stunning scenery, chat and really enjoy the challenge.

The organisation was faultless, and the warmth and enthusiasm of the volunteers, many of whom hope to race next year was absolutely incredible. They cheered every runner in every day, sometimes standing at the finish line for 5 hours. The camaraderie was fantastic - the front runners never failed to chat as they ran past us each day, and as we dwindled in number more and more friends were made. Our tent of 8 became 7, but 100 of the 163 that started made it to Cape Wrath, the most North West tip of Scotland, and I was proud to be among them.

Emma Burton



## Summer Recipes and wine!

Melanie Lewin & Katrina Smith

### Prosciutto, Olive and Manchego muffin

Makes 12

150g olives with chilli

150g manchego cheese, cubed

110g of prosciutto ham cut into 1cm ribbons

150g Greek yogurt

150ml of whole milk

2 eggs

Tbsp. capers drained and chopped

275 self-raising flour

½ tsp baking power

Salt and pepper

Preheat Oven 190c gas mark 5

Line muffin tins with paper cases

Save 6 olives, 12 cheese cubes and 12 ham ribbons to decorate at the end

1. Combine the eggs, yogurt, milk, capers in a jug

2. Put flour and baking powder in a large bowl and mix. Pour in the yogurt mixture and combine quickly, when half mixed add the olives, cheese and ham.

3. Divide the mixture between the muffin cases and top with the left over cheese, olives and ham. Add seasoning to taste.

4. Bake for 25-30 mins until golden and well risen.

5. Enjoy warm or cold.

*Freezes well*

**Wine pairing:** This Mediterranean dish deserves something crisp and light yet equally saline. Although a number of Spanish and Italian white wines would fit the bill well with these flavour combinations, Greek white wines produced from indigenous single grape variety Assyrtiko will provide textural balance and zingy, zesty flavours. Try Aldi's Athlon Greek Assyrtiko, a bargain at £6.99.



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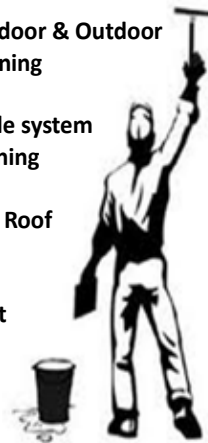
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### Summer vegetable salad

Serves 6/8

15ml wine vinegar

60ml olive oil

1 tbsp chopped tarragon

275g small new potatoes

150g each asparagus tips and mange-tout

Seasoning

1. In a small bowl whisk the vinegar, oil, tarragon and season

2. Cook potatoes, asparagus and mange-tout separately, drain and cool in ice water

3. To serve, drain all the vegetables and toss in the dressing

**Wine pairing:** Herbaceous flavours from the asparagus and mangetout call for an aromatic white wine such as Sauvignon Blanc or Bacchus. Try a fruity, leafy Sauvignon Blanc from South Africa, such as Great Expectations Sauvignon Blanc available from Stone Vine & Sun for £9.95, or The Uncommon White Bubbly, a gently sparkling Bacchus blend produced in England, available in 250ml cans from Waitrose, £4.99 a can.

### Buckwheat and Lentil Pilaff

Serves 8

250g green lentils

250g buckwheat

12 rashers of bacon, cut into strips

450g shallots, finely chopped

10ml each of ground cinnamon and ground coriander

5ml salt

3 garlic cloves, crushed

Olive oil

60ml chopped parsley and coriander

142ml sour cream, cinnamon

1. Soak the lentils and buckwheat in separate bowls for an hour

2. Drain the lentils and buckwheat, put the lentils in a saucepan with 1 1/2 pints of water, the spices and salt, cook uncovered for 20 mins or until the liquid has been absorbed.

3. Boil the buckwheat for 15 mins and drain.

4. Mix the lentils and buckwheat together

5. Fry the bacon stripes until crispy, drain on kitchen paper

6. Add the shallots and garlic to the pan and fry until golden brown (adding a little oil if necessary)

7. Mix all the remaining ingredients with 30ml of oil and season.

8. Serve warm or cold topped with the sour cream and a sprinkling of cinnamon

**Can be made a day ahead**

### Wine pairing:

The earthy, savoury notes in this dish call for a spicy red wine that still maintains a light body and freshness on the finish. Beaujolais from Cru vineyard sites such as Fleurie, Morgon and Julienas will have provide enough backbone to pair with the depth of these flavours, and yet benefit from being chilled for 30 minutes prior to pouring. Chateau de Pizay, from Cru Brouilly is available from Majestic for £12.99 with a mix six bottle discount.

**Beetroot, carrot and seed salad with a pomegranate dressing**

Serves 4-6

500g raw beetroot peeled and grated

700g carrots peeled and grated

Handful of chopped mint

80g raisins

30g sunflower seeds, toasted

30g pumpkin seeds, toasted

Salt

Dressing

2 tbsp. pomegranate molasses

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

60ml of orange juice

60ml olive oil

1 tbsp honey



Place all the dressing ingredients in a jar and shake to combine.

1. In a large bowl combine the beetroot, carrots, mint, raisins, seeds and salt.
2. Pour over dressing and toss.

**Wine pairing:** Rosé wine provides a great drink option between white and red, with enough structure to balance strong beetroot flavours whilst still providing a refreshing finish. Red fruit berry flavours help to balance the sweetness of the pomegranate dressing too. Try Mirabeau en Provence Classic Rosé, priced at £10.49 down from £13.99 as part of a 25% off deal at Waitrose until 4th July.

**Off we go again**

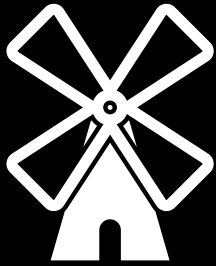
Subject to the weather being warm and dry, it is that time of year when the combines rumble into action once more. At Bereleigh we were lucky last autumn that we managed to get all our drilling done before it started to rain..... because if you remember, it never stopped! Even in March and April it remained very cold and consistently wet which meant that if anyone was late with their drilling, the seed simply didn't get in the ground.

Of course, as is the way, once it stopped raining in the spring, we then had a drought and this means that the spring crops, for us just barley and linseed, are not going to yield very well and therefore we will have less to sell and a smaller profit. The flip side is that the oilseed rape, the winter barley and the winter wheat have all enjoyed the spring and summer sunshine and are looking good for a heavy crop.

All the hard work for the year behind us will soon culminate in this exciting harvest season, and you may be cursing the farmers when we hold you up with our slow tractors and trailers rumbling down the roads and lanes of East Meon once more. We farmers look forward to your patience when you remember that however frustrating it is being stuck behind us, we may well be working into the early hours to get our crops into the sheds. Happy harvest to all!

Tom TD, Bereleigh





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