

Meon Matters

*News, Views & Comment
from East Meon*



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meonmatters.com



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Here we go again... Winter is on its way but hopefully via a nice dry golden autumn... Some of the villagers are waiting to see if Southern Water has upheld its promise to sort out drains before the next 'rainy season' arrives and our streets are treated to more flooding. Keep your fingers crossed they have!

In the meanwhile, your village magazine has been busy-busy-busy scouting for news, events and stories that will entertain and engage you in the lives lived in our beautiful valley. Whilst the Big Farmers are fully occupied sorting out their fields and animals for the winter, we decided to focus on the other side of farming – those in the village who run small-holdings and look after animals on a slightly smaller scale. There are some lovely pieces reflecting the joy that the cows, sheep and chickens bring to people's lives.

We also have some reviews on various performances which have taken place over the summer and of course the great thing about the change of seasons is the re-opening of Moviola and Lucy has some fantastic films for you to watch this autumn. Moviola has to be one of the worlds most convenient cinemas!

It's funny how there is always something going on in the village – we may not be London but we sure do work hard to keep our lives busy and interesting... So please, if you have an interesting story to tell or would like to be involved, be in touch (meonmatters@gmail.com). You do not need to be a journalist to run this magazine (as you can probably all tell)!

I would just like to add that it has been a pleasure being part of the editorial team for 7 years, there is always a surprising amount to learn about the village and I definitely enjoyed our editorial meetings at the Izaak but it's time for me to rest my pen for a wee-while.

CdeL.

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East Meon Garden Club Annual Show

A stunning array of colourful flowers, vegetables and cakes amongst other things greeted any visitor to the Flower Show this August. Despite one or two hitches, like judges pulling out at the last minute, the show team yet again pulled off an immaculately planned and delivered annual event.

It was great to see some new entrants and to learn from the experts about how to stage their dahlias or their onions to best effect on the day. As ever the maestros were worthy winners. Norma Snart won the Challenge Cup for flowers and vegetables but the RHS Banksian Medal for a competitor who has not previously won it, went to Emma Roberts, who also won the Novice Shield for a competitor who has not previously won.

This year the photographic competition was well supported with some interesting entries in new categories such as “Wild Nights”, which was widely and “wildly” interpreted. There was one beach bar picture by a nameless photographer that certainly made people chuckle! The hard-fought battle for the Photographic Cup was won deservedly by Pamela Peacock.

The cookery classes are always highly competitive with our top chefs vying for first place and a table full of deliciosities, which sent people rushing to get a cup of tea and a slice of cake to satisfy their hunger pangs.



There were more entrants for the children's classes this year, which was good to see and the chocolate crispy cake class was very popular. I wonder why? The paper planes were beautifully executed as was the edible necklace. Masha Lopotina kept hold of the Children's Cup with her imaginative entries.

Janet Khambata was a keen contender in the Arts and Crafts section and took home the John Davies Salver. The standard in this section seems to get higher each year.

Mary Reynolds won both the Edgebourne Cup for Flower Arranging and the East Meon Garden Club Members' Flower Cup.

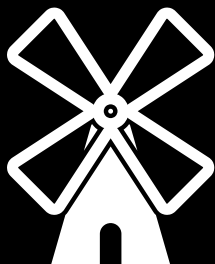
East Meon Garden Club Cups had the name Norma Snart etched on two of them: the Plate for 'Best in Show' and the Vegetable Cup. Alastair Dudley-Williams won the Allotment Jug.

David Lewin, a past Chairman of the Club kindly agreed to give out the prizes. He can be seen congratulating his wife Melanie on winning the Produce Cup for Produce and Preserves.

This is an event where the whole community comes together with good humour, talent, an ounce of competitiveness but above all enjoyment. The sun shone and there was a constant hub bub and peals of laughter rang out.

Nicky S.





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Announcement - The Privett Centre Educational, Arts and Events

It has been a couple of years in the making but we are delighted to announce the opening of The Privett Centre. Dave Wyatt (aka Daddy Wyatt) hasn't had quite the retirement that he may have hoped for but having been a previous pupil of the school thankfully there has been an invested interest in bringing the love and life back into this beautiful Victorian building.

It is our hope to establish an inclusive, sustainable and socially conscious venue that can be enjoyed by all with an emphasis on nurture, care for guests and the environment surrounding the centre. We will be open to collaborations from all areas and the spaces can be dry hired should you wish to host your own workshop, event or gathering.

Do get in touch to discuss your thoughts and ideas in more detail, we welcome any input. There will be concessions for local residents and charitable events.

www.theprivettcentre.co.uk

Thank you very much for the support and I look forward to seeing you at the PC some time soon!

Amanda Wyatt





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A Few Cows

If you're in need of a calming influence, cows are perfect. Leaning over the gate to watch them graze may prompt a brief lift of a head to acknowledge your presence but the steady task of cropping and munching the grass will resume. They move slowly, only occasionally glancing around to see if anything more important is going on – usually it isn't. I believe cow-hugging is the latest form of therapy but cow-watching comes close!



We introduced cattle to our small acreage nearly 20 years ago - in the hope that it would be an easy way to keep the grass cropped, and so it has proved. We started off in 2005 with a 7yr old Dexter cow with calf at foot, sold by a veteran Dexter breeder as an ideal first cow. Dear Jute proved to be just that – with a wonderfully calm temperament, she was completely unflappable and an experienced ‘mum’ who went on to produce 4 more calves out in the field and without any fuss – usually at night – so on checking at first light one was greeted with a new arrival already on its feet and suckling. At any one time there are usually 4 animals in the herd, and there have been a total of 27 over the years. Calves (we have produced 20 so far) are raised as steers for beef or heifers to become mothers in due course. Sometimes an old cow whose joints wouldn't manage another cold, wet winter has had to go - returning as delicious beef for the freezer.

Dexters have the advantage of being hardy animals, able to live outdoors all year round and they are of a manageable size. Mine are not halter-trained but, loving their food, they can be readily enticed into an enclosure with a bundle of hay when necessary. The only equipment needed is a secure enclosure and a crush – making the annual TB testing, and any other interventions - so much easier. Animals who live outside are generally much healthier and there have been very few occasions when we've needed to call the vet – usually routine interventions such as castrating or de-horning can be combined with the DEFRA-funded annual TB test. TB testing at other times is costly and since it is required for all cattle movement, we no longer have bulls to stay and instead now use AI (artificial insemination). The advantages are that you have a greater choice of bulls, you can select which cows to get in calf and you know exactly when they will arrive. The downside is a variable success rate and a need to collect and contain the cows for several interventions – but it generally works well for us.

here really isn't much more to it – the daily welfare checks, feeding hay over the winter months are more than rewarded by the gentle company, the efficient grass-cropping and the delight of a new calf arriving. I would thoroughly recommend caring for cows to anyone with a few spare acres of grassland.

Clare Bartlett

The Izaak Walton

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A Little Farm on the Watershed

Some may think that our little ten-acre farm is farming made easy. However, it really does involve most of the same ingredients that all stock farmers experience, from the thrill of 50 ewes producing a field full of lambs to the depression of a terrible calving, taking in on the way the stress of getting the hay in before the rain comes, the daily winter routine of feeding - come rain, snow, wind or shine - and piles of wet, smelly muck to be spread. The other thing is that for all the hard work, the return is liable to be negligible.

Our introduction to sheep was when Denys Ryder drove his flock of ewe lambs off Butser to our fields, with the assurance that none were in lamb. Quizzy Lizzie, Wildy and a couple of others promptly produced lambs and were the beginning of our flock. Wilson Atkinson helpfully suggested that we should have Beatrix Potter, lovely white-faced Scotch Halfbreds (Border Leicester ram on Cheviot ewes). For years after that the Easter holidays were sleepless nights of lambing. I loved the sheep, except Quizzy Lizzie, with her long curly Masham wool, who was always the first to push through the electric fence and Wildy who did nothing but butt me when being handled in the yard.

Sasha was absolutely mustard at delivering lambs with a problem. Her hands are just the right size for working out the problem, which was usually a leg back. Then the lamb had to be pushed back when the ewe was not straining. Then the backwards leg was worked forwards so that when the ewe strained again two little hooves appeared on either side of the nose. Often she could then manage on her own. If not, it was ropes on the legs and a big heave. That was my job, if I was awake.



Occasionally Sasha could not manage and would get help from Malcolm Painter. If they were too busy at Lower Farm, it was a question of loading the ewe into the car. On one occasion, Sasha was getting desperate as the school run was looming. So it was a dash for help, lambs delivered and into the foot well and dash back to Hill Hampton. Half way back there was a loud bleating from the ewe in the middle of the road. In the rush the boot opened and the poor ewe had rolled out. With the ewe back in and boot closed, it was all's well that ends well and the children made it to school on time!

However I was not always so enamoured of all the 101 things that Sasha's sheep needed doing (and they definitely were hers).

These included:

- Heptavac injections in the spring;
- Fly-strike preventing pour-on in the summer;
- Seemingly endless toe nail cutting. Despite regular running through a foot bath, the sheep still managed to get sore feet. The cure was cutting the nail and pad back really hard and spraying with purple, potassium permanganate spray, resulting in nice purple hands. Everyone knew when we had been trimming toe nails!! for the this the ewe had to be turned and balanced on one or other buttock to stop her struggling;
- Heaving seemingly endless quantities of muck out of the yard and lambing pens. Later in the autumn it had to be spread on the fields;
- Topping the fields in the summer;
- Grading the lambs for the market in the summer;
- Come winter there was the pleasure of fencing to keep Quizzie Lizzie and Wildy from being ring leaders in the Great Escape. It seemed to be impossible to keep ahead of them.


All this hard work culminated in the rewards and the inevitable occasion disaster (as Wilson used to say “where there is livestock there is always dead stock”) of lambing. Then there was the spring-time joy of new life as the lambs filled the fields with delight.

In the end, with negligible return, the breeding flock had to go on a one way trip and Sasha bought a couple of pens of ewes lambs when Wilson bought his replacements. They were much easier to look after. After a year they were sold on for breeding. This was at Wilton Sheep Fair. I am sure that the price was helped by Sasha, complete with her crook, going in the ring with her shearlings to be bid for. She loved that.

Nigel Brooks

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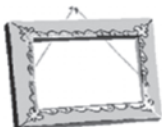
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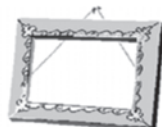
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Meon Chicks

For several years now we've kept chickens – ranging from the exotic, fluffy (and expensive) to the cheep (sorry) and cheerful. The local foxes seem to have expensive tastes, so we no longer go for the glamorous Sussex Whites, Marans, or bantams etc; now we buy in ex-battery hens who arrive looking shabby and hen-pecked, stepping nervously out over this new weird landscape of “grass”, but within a few months are perky, feathered and mugging us for corn.

It's a win-win: they have a few years outdoors, happy and free range, and we get the eggs. There's nothing like your own fresh egg for breakfast, and there's something very comforting having a few “helpers” as you weed, scratching around for worms and insects. (Equally, there's nothing more annoying having your seedlings scratched up by the same helpers when they've found your veg patch!)

The benefits (eggs and comic characters) far outweigh the pains (more rats and mice), although I'm afraid we've drawn the line over having a cockerel. We tried once, but “Rocky” had a hazy idea of when dawn should be and crowed under our bedroom window at an ungodly hour. Loudly. Every morning, come rain or shine. Much as I love the sound of a distant crowing coming up the valley, this was just too near, and too loud.



The best advice I can give anyone thinking of looking after their own hens is: buy an igloo or coop that is not made of wood (such as reconstituted tyres). The wooden ones may look picturesque but will rot, be hard to clean and attract all kind of pests. And install a light-sensitive or time-controlled door mechanism. The cosmic and universal Law of Sod will mean that the one time you're tucked up in bed on a wintry night, thinking "Oh no: did I shut up the birds?", Mr Fox will have already had the same thought...!

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I Love Chickens

Mum and I have recently acquired chicken hens, named Jacqueline, Martinez and Jimsy (or Jackie, Martin and Jim to those who are not sensitive to gender specific names).

Jackie, a Rhode Island Red, is a menace, but a lovely one. She is very friendly and likes to spread her wings and run down the garden at top speed. She also likes to come into the house and behaves like she owns it.

Jim, a Black Rock with beautiful petrol coloured feathers, is an absolute GOAT! She's very friendly, loves cuddles and will be picked up by anyone at any time. She has a corn fetish and also likes to walk into the house of her own free will.

Martin is a bluebell, not as friendly as the others but still follows us around if there's corn on hand and will leap in excitement if she sees some. She demolishes apples off the grass and joins the others in keeping our ants nest at bay.

We get 3 delicious eggs a day, have totally fallen in love with them all and can highly recommend chickens as a great addition to your family.

Jamie B.



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Living on the Edge

Frogmore is the sleepy edge of the village where houses and thatched cottages give way to rolling hills and fields, we hear the distant peal of church bells and leather on willow during the summer months. Living right on that edge in Frogmore like many of our neighbours we run a smallholding with an orchard of 30 apple trees, a flock of Wiltshire horn sheep and some chickens.

When we moved to Frogmore in 2019 we realised that the grass grows very quickly and we needed something that would graze the field and paddock so that we didn't have to mow it continuously so we bought 3 Wiltshire Horn ewes from a farm in the New Forest.

It's a bit unusual as during the day we work as Architects running our office from a room above the garage and working on mainly old listed houses. Then, at the end of the day and at the weekends we are normally with the sheep and the chickens, collecting eggs, pulling a stuck lambs head out of a fence, and raking out the barn.

Freddie the ram was donated to us by a farmer in Catherington, he lives on the paddock just next to the footpath off Frogmore Lane, currently he has his three sons with him (Freddie, not the farmer).

Not having kept sheep before we have relied heavily on our friends and neighbours for advice on how to look after them, they have been paid back for their help with jars of pickled onions, homemade marmalade and whisky in varying quantities and depending on how messy things got.

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When we move our sheep from field to paddock we have to ask our neighbours for help just in case someone from the village decides to chance it and drive through the potholes on Frogmore Lane. They have escaped once or twice and run off up Frogmore Lane with us all shouting and chasing from behind (the sheep not the villagers).

It is hard work and does take up all of your spare time, but we think it's worth it, there's nothing quite as beautiful as walking along Frogmore Lane early in the morning as the mist is rising watching as the sun bursts through, relishing the crack of the freshly fallen hazelnuts as you go, the sheep come running over to the sound of the shaking bucket of sheep nuts, pushing and shoving each other, and us, and we try to avoid getting butted on the backside by Freddie – which he is a bit prone to do.

But best of all is the wonderful Frogmore roast lamb, do we get upset that we have birthed and reared them? Not at all, it is all the better knowing that the lamb has only eaten the Frogmore grass, jumped and hopped around the fields and paddocks and roamed amongst the elderberry, blackthorn and hawthorn hedgerow all its life.

Mark & Liam.



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Cricket Report

As the season draws to a close – at the time of writing, we've played twenty four, won eleven, lost five and drawn six, with two fixtures lost to the weather – we can look back at another successful season for EMCC.

On the whole availability has been good (we've had more than 25 players play this year) – although we're always looking for new players (please contact captain@eastmeoncricketclub.org.uk if you're interested) – and we've been able to turn out a side every Sunday since the 14th April.



Season highlights include two hundreds for Ollie Atkinson, plus a hundred each for Will Atkinson and Ali Wheeler – Ali's first hundred for the club since he made his debut back in 1987 was up at Bedales, as we played the OBs and was rich reward for an excellent season for him so far with the bat.

Bowling has been led by the captain Will Atkinson, whose 6-4 against Lynchmere ended the game pretty promptly and whose 5-24 against Roteers won us the match with four balls remaining. Tim Clay also picked up 5-45 against Captain Scott's, but the standout bowling performance of the season was Tim Lawrence's, who came on against Westbourne with their score at 61-1 chasing 166 and promptly reduced them to 78-6 taking 5-16 before they were all out for 85.

The sixes and village party at the end of June was a great success – with the overseas side Porchfield (allowed off the Isle of Wight for 24 hours) winning convincingly, and lots of money being raised for the club as well as good causes in the village.

Big thanks also go to all those who donate their time to keep the club running, the groundsmen, those who keep the pavilion clean and the fridge stocked and those who can help with the running repairs on the pavilion as and when required.

A big thanks to the Izaak for being so accommodating after matches both mid-week and at the weekend and whose flexible seating allows us all to congregate in the garden after play for a well-earned beer.

AdeL



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Veterans Football East Meon

More sport comes to East Meon with the start of the football season and the resurrection of the football team. In their first match against Hawley Vets the teams ended in a 3-3 draw;- a good comeback from 3-1 down. The goals were all scored by Craig McCarthy who got a hattrick.

If you'd like to come along and watch, the next few fixtures are:

27th October - Headley Veterans (Home)

10th November - Samba Kings Veterans (Home)

Games are played Sundays with a 10.30 Kick off.

More importantly, East Meon! The team is open to new players, you must be aged 35 +; We have training on Wednesdays at 8-9PM.

Please contact us at eastmeonvets@mail.com for more info if you would like to join.

Come on! Go dig out those dusty old boots and get out there for some fresh air and team fun.

Henry E.

Church News

We are very pleased to announce that Father Tony Forrest is back at work again. His walks are getting longer and more undulating by the day. Whilst he has been recovering from his operation our regular services at All Saints' have continued with the generous help of clergy from outside the Parish and the efforts of Rosemary Bishop and Parish volunteers. We owe them all many thanks.

Save All Saints'.

All Saints' is an important part of our community. Over generations it has hosted our community with baptisms, weddings and funeral services. However, All Saints' is facing major challenges to its future.

The first involves the fabric of the church. Our beautiful old church is needing urgent repairs to the spire and the roof, with other general repairs needed on the fabric of the church. The PCC is currently looking into ways of raising major funds as well as seeking grants that we may apply for to help cover these huge costs.

Secondly, we are currently running a substantial deficit on regular income compared to outgoings. To try and reduce this deficit we are reinstating some of the traditional village fundraising events. We are planning a Christmas Wreath Making Event, a Church Fete next summer, a Barn Dance and getting some fabulous speakers to come and talk on a huge variety of interesting subjects. Keep an eye out for when these events may happen – you will certainly be informed!

EVEN if you are not a church goer, if you live in the Parish of East Meon there cannot be many days when you pass the church and don't think 'how lucky we are to have this beautiful church in our village serving our community'. It would be sad to see it fall into a state of disrepair and no longer be able to serve our community. The PARISH GIVING SCHEME means that that everyone can make a contribution, be it monthly or annually, you can give as much (preferably) or as little as you like. The scheme automatically collects Gift Aid which helps us significantly. If you would be interested in joining this scheme, or would like to talk it through further, please contact Graham Davenport on 07768 023290 or email him on grahammdavenport0@gmail.com.

He would be very happy to give you help and advice. Please give this careful consideration.

On a more light-hearted but equally important note, please note what is coming up in the way of village events.

The Harvest Festival Service at All Saints' on Sunday 6th October at 10.30am. A great occasion for our farming community to join us.

We have our Annual Harvest Village Supper on Saturday 19th October at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

The Remembrance Sunday Service on Sunday 10th November at 10.30am followed by the prayers and dedication by the War Memorial. This will be followed by drinks for everyone in the Village Hall.

Please remember there is a Eucharist service on the first Sunday and our Lay Led service on the 3rd Sunday of each month both at 10.30am. Holy Communion is every Sunday at 8am.

We look forward to seeing everyone at some of these events:- as always – the more the merrier.

The Churchwardens – Emma Bird and Stuart Martin



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What does 'Companionship' mean?

Back in 2016 my dear late Mum had a sudden stroke and after a long spell in hospital was discharged with the need for full time care. I was flung headfirst into navigating the world of carers, allowances, financial planning as well as managing the emotions that obviously come with that type of life changing situation.

It's like putting a jigsaw together - the right kind of agency to provide the right kind of carer(s), getting the right medical support, the right financial support etc. Probably the most difficult was finding a team of people to help me fill in for the carer during her breaks. I emailed everyone I knew who might be interested in earning a bit of extra cash and a few friends were keen to be part of the team. But I still had gaps.

I had been aware of Local Treasures before this time for their other services supplying gardeners, cleaners etc., so I called them and luckily for me they came up trumps with a couple of lovely companions to spend time with my mum. Brilliant!

Companions are people like you and me. Generally not qualified in social care but level headed and kind individuals who enjoy spending time with people and bring a bit of joy into their lives. They're able to give anything from an hour or two a week to a few hours two to 3 days a week. Many partners and family members become exhausted and overwhelmed with the time and responsibility of looking after their loved ones in need of care. Companions can give them the time they need to get out of the house for shopping and errands or just a change of scene. They can help with preparing meals, light housekeeping, doctors appointments or just reading the paper together... and more.

I'm very excited to have recently taken on the franchise to run Local Treasures. We provide skilled and vetted, experienced individuals to help you in the home from companions, gardeners, cleaners and handymen, amongst others. If I can help you in any way, or you'd just like to find out more, please do give me a call. In what can be a really challenging time for a family, our aim is to help you as much as we can.

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EAST MEON CINEMA

Forthcoming films for the Autumn

We are overjoyed to be back with some wonderful films for you over the next few months. By the time this edition of Meon Matters is in print, the Autumn Season of East Meon Cinema will be underway and for those of you who saw Wicked Little Letters at the end of September, we hope you enjoyed it.

Friday 25th October

THE FALL GUY

(Cert 12, 140 mins)

Emily Blunt & Ryan Gosling star in a gloriously fun, screwball action film

Saturday 23rd November

A Special Fundraising Gala Screening of the 1974 Oscar-winning film

THE STING

(Cert 12, 130 mins)

to raise money for the Village Hall refurbishment.
Save the date! - more details on the following page

Friday 29th November

WILDING

(PG, 75 mins)

The British countryside is celebrated in one of the most significant re-wilding experiments in Europe

Friday 27th December

SWEDE CAROLINE

(Cert 15, 97 mins)

A very British mockumentary - a scandal rocks the competitive giant vegetable growing world



As usual, all the films will be in East Meon Village Hall at 7.30pm on the last Friday of the month (except for the gala screening of The Sting). Tickets are a bargain at £6.50 each and there's a bar, ice creams, excellent company and great entertainment.

If you would like to be kept up to date with what's coming up, join our mailing list. Email Lucy or Caroline at eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com

Looking forward to seeing you again or welcoming you for the first time!

The East Meon Cinema Team

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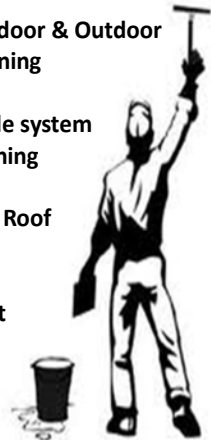
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AN EXTRA SPECIAL EAST MEON CINEMA EVENT

Our Village Hall, built in 1974, reached its 50th anniversary this year, a symbol of our community and shared memories. To ensure it remains a vibrant hub for us and future generations, the hall needs support to secure the next 50 years. Every building needs a bit of TLC after five hardworking decades!

As frequent users of the VH, we at East Meon Cinema realise the importance of a well-appointed, comfortable, state of the art hall to benefit everyone. As members of the audience, we expect you feel the same and are as keen to contribute to the much-needed refurbishment of our Village Hall.

Who remembers the iconic film THE STING? One of the best caper films of all time and the glory days of Paul Newman and Robert Redford - a gripping 1930s tale of the ultimate con trick, accompanied by Scott Joplin's sensational music. Fifty years ago in 1974, it won seven academy awards including the Oscar for Best Picture; we thought it was about time to give it another airing and at the same time do our bit to raise essential funds to support the Village Hall's renaissance.

The red carpet will be out, so wear your Oscar-award-ceremony finest or, to give the evening a touch of authenticity, 1930s Chicago-chic (optional of course)

SAVE THE DATE

Tickets will be available to buy online or at East Meon Village Shop from 27th September or email eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com to reserve yours

So, without further ado....

East Meon Cinema and the Committee of East Meon Village Hall are delighted to invite you to a special Fundraising Gala Screening of

THE STING

(Cert 12, 130 mins)

On Saturday 23rd November 2024 in East Meon Village Hall

Tickets are £20 each to include a glass of fizz and canapés on arrival

6.30pm Drinks and canapés

7.30pm THE STING

The red carpet will be out, so wear your Oscar-award-ceremony finest or, to give the evening a touch of authenticity, 1930s Chicago-chic (optional of course)



Nature Group

By any measure, it's been a terrible year for the flying insects we see in the gardens and countryside around us. Our butterfly count has recorded only half the numbers seen last year, and wider recording across the UK (and Europe) confirms the collapse of populations of major flying insect species - butterflies, moths, hoverflies, drone flies and many others. I little imagined ten years ago that I would be fretting about the pathetically small numbers of Cabbage Whites and Wasps - species that we have come to see as unwelcome pests. But these all have an essential place in the natural order, whether as food for birds and other insects, as predators for garden pests such as blackfly, or as pollinators for the wild plants and crops on which we entirely depend.

Figures for the scale of the collapse can only be snapshots over a particular period and for a particular area. But all tell the same story. Illustratively, a German study (2008-2017) found that populations of insects had collapsed by two thirds. The position in SW China is so bad that farmers have taken to pollinating their fruit trees with paint brushes. Enough said.

The causes are debated - global warming; the use of insecticides, herbicides and fungicides; ambient light levels, destruction of natural habitats. The reality is that any one of these would be sufficient to put insect life at risk. In combination, they have pitched insect populations into free fall, along with the birds and animals that depend on them. Where is it all going? We're playing a high risk game of Jenga. If we keep on removing the wooden bricks, the natural order on which we depend will collapse.

More locally the Nature Group has continued to maintain the wildflower area by the Workhouse Lane pavilion - managing invasive plant species. It's a small but valuable resource for pollinating insects. And the Tree Working Group (TWiG) has maintained it's hedge and tree plantings at the cricket pitch, along Workhouse Lane and by the water treatment plant to the west of the village. The plantings have thrived in the warm wet summer but so have nettles and brambles. Our thanks to all those who joined work parties to keep these from overwhelming the hedges.

Times are also bleak for our birds - it is estimated that we have lost 600 million breeding birds over the last 40 years. Again there are many reasons for this. One is our domestic cats. Cute they may be but they kill somewhere between 25 and 75 million birds a year. There are simple things we can do to reduce this risk. These include providing food where cats cannot reach the birds, and collars that are brightly coloured and have a small bell. Some other things you can do are listed at the link below: <https://www.songbird-survival.org.uk/post/blog-6-ways-to-stop-your-cat-hunting-birds-1>

Small steps will not by themselves save the planet but, as they say, every little bit helps. It will be a sad morning when we wake up and there is no Song Thrush to sing and no Peacock butterfly to feed on our buddleias. But that will be the least of our problems.

Jonathan Iremonger



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The Village Hall

It's hard to believe that Autumn is already with us. The pre-school & nursery and the school are back and clubs are booked in for the months ahead.

The large hall and the instantly accessible garden are great for Village Nursery giving lots of space for the children to run around and do many things.

Over the summer the hall has been looking at how to tackle the leaking roof, weary windows, a general lack of insulation and ageing appearance inside and out amongst other things. Money is a key factor in doing anything like this so we are delighted that our good friends at Moviola are holding a Gala Evening on Saturday 23rd November showing a great movie from 1974 when the hall was built – 50 years ago!

Plans can be seen in the small hall - we are always ready to talk through our current thinking with anyone who is interested. We will continue to consult as the plans progress. Please keep ideas coming in as we seek to update the hall after 50 years service to ensure it is somewhere we all enjoy.

Fund raising is always important for the hall, which is of course a charity. The need to refurbish the hall makes securing funds more important than ever. As the village hall car park is used more and more, the hall needs to introduce some

kind of charges to contribute to hall maintenance. There were charges in the past, it looks like we need to reintroduce them.



As for activities, in prospect are Moviola, local arts & crafts, a produce exchange, a free book swap, the return of Family Fundays as well as our wonderful Community Café. There are quite a few parties booked in too.




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We will soon be publishing the date of the Annual General Meeting hoping that as many villagers as possible will be there as we look forward to the year ahead.

Please email your views to chair@eastmeonvillagehall.co.uk so everyone's ideas, thoughts and opinions on the village hall are brought together.

David Pepper

Chair, East Meon Village Hall Committee



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Your Village Needs You!

When we are all so busy it can feel incredibly hard to imagine even having a spare hour to 'give away'... and at the moment the entire village seems to be short of time, short of nice September weather, with roads still full of pot-holes, and wondering just how wet the winter will be this year...

The research out there is multiple that volunteering is GOOD for you!

Four key findings seem to sing out when I had a quick google-search on the benefits of becoming a volunteer:-

1. Volunteering connects you to others
2. Volunteering is good for your mind and body
3. Volunteering can advance your career
4. Volunteering brings fun and fulfilment to your life

Whilst you may think it's a counter-productive argument that volunteering can relieve stress in a time when you may feel your most stressed (young children, careers, running a home, juggling family commitments, health issues, caring for others etc.) the research time and again says that this form of occupation actually brings down anxiety, stress and anger and at the same time improves your mood and connectivity with others.

At a time in your life when you may feel more isolated and less valid as a person becoming a volunteer can be a wonderful remedy to keep the loneliness at bay, increase your socialising, and actually be brilliantly rewarding. We are constantly told that engaging our brain in new activities, learning new things, having goals and being amongst people is one of the strongest factors in keeping dementia and difficult ageing processes at bay.

As an East Meoner you may well be aware there are plenty of groups and projects where volunteers are needed – Nature, History, the village school, the village hall, the Friday café provision, Care Group, Meon Matters, May Fair and the occasional Village Fete – all need supporting, none of these things exist through magic wand-waving!

If you consider any of the above points and think you may have some time to spare please consider volunteering. It's a great way to become involved with village life, learn new skills and you will feel the rewards when you get involved. Do you remember the Little Red Hen children's story where she finds some corn and asks everyone to help her make the bread and no one helps her...? Once she's ground the flour, made the dough, cooked the loaf, suddenly all the animals want to come and eat it – and she's not all that chuffed! Please help make the bread! It'll taste so much better knowing you were part of the process.

CdeL.



Remembrance Sunday

10th November

10:15 Church Service

10:45 Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial

To be Followed by Drinks, Teas, Coffees and Cake at the Village Hall

All Members of the Community of East Meon Welcome



West Meon Music Festival 2024 – round up

The 14th West Meon Music Festival drew to a close on Sunday 15th September afternoon after another four days of brilliant music-making in the Meon Valley by The Primrose Piano Quartet and guests. Very many thanks to all of you who came and supported the Festival.

We had a wide-ranging programme this year, with something for everyone, including the amazing ‘baroque meets rock’ band Red Priest, who played to a packed All Saints in East Meon on a beautiful sunny Saturday morning. Then came Purcell, Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms and other wonderful well known composers, and also some lesser known names whose work deserves a much wider audience. We ventured too into the 20th century, with an American Road Trip, showcasing a variety of American composers, and ending with an astonishing performance of Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue, arranged for piano and string quintet, something you wouldn’t have believed possible!

We were particularly delighted to welcome the astonishingly talented young Lithuanian pianist Gabriele Sutkute for our piano recital on the Sunday morning, and huge thanks are due to our wonderful local Jazz & Latin band, East of Meon, for generously playing our charity concert in The Thomas Lord, raising funds for the Elizabeth Foundation, supporting pre-school deaf children.

For those of you who may not have experienced the festival, do please join us next year if you can! The festival will again take place in West Meon, East Meon & Warnford, from 11th – 14th September 2025. Our evening concerts are candlelit and include a glass of wine. Our daytime concerts feature delicious refreshments too. Do keep an eye on our website www.westmeonmusic.co.uk for information over the coming year.

Sue Scholes

Importance of Being Earnest

Thank you to all who came along on a beautiful sunny evening to picnic in the garden at The Court House, buying wine and ice-creams at the bar, before enjoying an excellent performance of The Importance of Being Earnest by the Rain or Shine Theatre Company. We are delighted that we have been able to add £1625 to the coffers of The Rosemary Foundation to support their much valued work .

George and Clare Bartlett



Parish Council Report

We met most recently in late July and immediately got down to business. Sewerage more like. Or “surface water run off” as we prefer to call it, as we are pretty certain this is the cause of the nastiness. Par for the course, Southern Water does not appear to have retained the section 106 documentation it should have requested from the developers of Penny Mile and The Green to grant them permission to link surface and foul water drains to their sewer. Such is the state of our water industry. So rather than wait, we are going to carry out our own investigations to establish what water is going where. More positively, Southern Water have for the first time have jetted the pipe across the field to the sewerage works and are talking about relining some of our sewers. We wait to see whether any of this temporarily alleviates the outflows. Our continued thanks go to Mike Critchley for his persistent pursuit of Southern Water

We have plans to repair wood on the cricket ground bench, around the War Memorial and along the fence by the Frogmore allotments, and at great pace have replaced the vandalised cricket ground gate. Thank you to the Park Farm team for that.

Our allotment holders are in equally fine form, holding allotment parties and getting stuck into any nearby nettles.

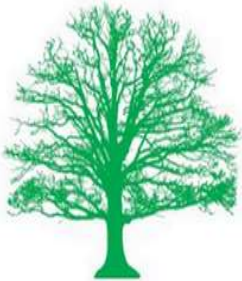
We are delighted to have signed the East Meon Veterans Football Club to play on Sunday mornings, particularly as the Club is keen to take on local players. And before you think you are too young and spritely, veteran in football parlance means 35 and over. And we are looking into a grant to supply children’s football kit for the school.

As you are searching the house for your footie boots, do also dig out your tabard or gilet-jaune, as we are back litter picking in the late autumn once the hedgerows have lost their leaf.

Our equally outdoorsy Nature Group have been busy river fly monitoring in 6 locations along the Meon, in our bid to upgrade the status of the river to be more akin to the Test and Itchen. Whilst the survey results are acceptable, river health would be better with less water run-off from roads and fields. But at least all the rain is allowing TWiG's newly planted trees and hedgerows to thrive.

We continue to fight for our BOATs, both through EHAPT and a subcommittee of councillors representing local parishes. And we are liaising with other parishes on recycling practices. We also understand kerb-side bottle collections will become bi-weekly when bottle banks are removed at the end of 2024. Apparently, we are not limited on the number bottles we can leave out for collection.

So, on that happy note, let's finish here until next time



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History Group Winter Programme

One upside of the weather beginning to turn is that it means the History Group is back with another bumper programme of 7 talks.

We are kicking-off on Monday 21 October (Trafalgar Day) with a talk from Peter Wykeham-Martin on the Eve of Trafalgar! A special thank you goes to Richard Brown for the introduction to Peter and the superb choreography. Similar thanks are extended to Lesley Dampney who has introduced us to the Mary Rose Museum, who are going to talk to us about the build-up to the Battle of the Solent. But the 2024/25 programme is not all about maritime battles and sinking ships. Closer to home we have talks scheduled on Winchester, the Petersfield Dig, the Civil War and Spitfires! So hopefully something for everyone.

So, the dates for your diary are:

Monday 21 October

Monday 11 November

Monday 9 December

Monday 6 January

Monday 17 February

Monday 10 March

Monday 31 March

As usual, we will be meeting in the Village Hall, with the bar opening at 7pm and all talks starting at 730pm.

And for another year we have held our membership subscriptions at £20 per person. Non-members and house guests are again £5 per talk. Our subscriptions go towards maintaining the EMHG Archive www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk.

EMHG's bank details are as follows:

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We look forward to welcoming you on 21 October.

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