

# Meon Matters

*News, Views & Comment  
from East Meon*



£1.00

Winter 2024

Issue Number 223

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



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## **Welcome to this bumper Christmas issue**

We have a feast of festive articles for you to enjoy. A weather special tracking rainfall trends in East Meon. And just in case we don't have a white Christmas, we have some snowy pictures of the village from the last time we had a major drop, way back in 2010. We needed the History Group archive for that! And how about our Get Stuffed feature - 2 fabulous stuffing recipes for you to try this Christmas. And for the highly active, we have reports of an epic charity bike ride and cold water swimming.

And all this is on top of our regular features, including some fabulous school trip reports and notice of some inventive fundraisers for the Church. And if you can make it, do put the Court House Carols in your diary.

This editorial would not be complete without acknowledging the extraordinary contributions of Clare and Annabel who have so skillfully sourced intriguing and amusing articles for Meon Matters for many years now. We wish them well with their new endeavours and it goes without saying we will welcome them back at any time. So if you have ever wondered what it's like working at the coalface of print media - please do think about joining us. As Anna, Nicky and Lesley will testify, you don't have to be called Andrew or Andy to work at Meon Matters Towers (aka the Izaak), although it would be less confusing if you were.

And from all of us here to all of you there, we wish our generous advertisers, athletic distributors and avid readers a wonderful Christmas.

### **About Meon Matters**

We print 4 issues annually - roughly April 1, July 1, October 1, December 7.

Copy deadlines are two weeks before publication. The advertising and editorial contact is:- [meonmatters@gmail.com](mailto:meonmatters@gmail.com). Supplied editorial content format is, Word or plain text.

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## Christmas Calendar December

**Thursday 12th** 9.30 School Christmas Nativity

**Friday 20th** 9.30 School Christmas Service

School Term ends

**Saturday 21st** Court House Carols at 7-8pm

### Tuesday 24th Christmas Eve

16.00 Langrish – Scratch Nativity the Christmas Story brought to life for all the family – come dressed as your favourite character

23:30 Midnight Mass – All Saints, East Meon

### Wednesday 25th Christmas Day

8 am Holy Communion (BCP) - All Saints, East Meon

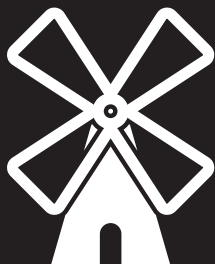
10.30 am Family Service with optional Christmas Communion

All Saints East Meon

**Friday 27th** Moviola - Swede Caroline

### January

**Tuesday 7th** School starts



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## Charity Bike Ride

The latest East Meon Charity Bike Ride took place on 14th September, an event which has been a feature of East Meon fundraising for many years, raising over £48,000 to date for charities, including the RNLI.

The ride has taken place approximately every two years and this year we wanted to top-up the funds to maintain the three defibrillators we have in the village. These are in the Telephone Box outside the Izaak Walton, on the edge of the cricket field by The Forge and on the wall of the Village Hall. We have also already raised funds to place a new defibrillator in Coombe Road, which we hope to complete in the coming months. Fundraising for the defibrillators back in 2021 was a massive community success, with many events raising a total of over £7,000 to instal defibrillators and cabinets in three new locations.



Rides have taken place since the early 2000's and one of the regular riders was Dominic Carney, just about the nicest East Meon resident anyone could wish to meet and who many of us knew and miss dearly. Dom was a big supporter of the RNLI and is the reason some of the funds raised still go to the RNLI.

Maintaining these defibrillators costs money, as a new battery and a set of pads costs a combined £400, but with the funds raised this year, we should have enough for two to three years of ongoing maintenance.

Despite challenging weather in the late summer, it was a perfect day when the riders headed off from the Izaak Walton around midday.

The riders this time included Ron & Wendy Blease, Nick Mayhew-Sanders, Paul Rafferty, Nick & Katharine d'Apice, Mick and Emma Pinner, Kevin & Mary Davies, Mark Probyn, Katie Foster, Julia Cornwell, George Rattray, Richard & Gaye Bartlett, Gary Flynn, Dick Williams, Denis Embleton and Clive Tillbrook.

The ride took in a hilly but scenic route around East Meon with stops at the White Lion at Soberton, The Shoe in Exton, The Milbury's, Raimes Vineyard, The Thomas Lord and back home to Ye Olde George, and finally for a dinner at the Izaak Walton.

Yes, there were a lot of pubs involved as always, but the able Support Crew of Jo Tillbrook, Diana Probyn, Maureen Carney, Jo Waddell, Simon Tillbrook and Jane Webber made sure we stayed (mostly) in the saddle and fuelled with homemade cakes to give us energy halfway round.

Clive Tilbrook



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## Edward Thomas – Our Local Poet

Life choices are rarely as difficult as those faced by Steep based poet Edward Thomas in 1916 in the middle of the first world war. He was 37, beyond military age and had an invitation to join his best friend Robert Frost in America, where he had better prospects of securing a living for his family and developing his career as a poet. In a revealing and emotional talk at the Petersfield Museum in October his biographer Matthew Hollis described how Frost teased Thomas' vacillation on what to do. Hollis convincingly suggests Frost's poem 'Two Paths Diverged in a Yellow Wood' - which has subsequently become one of the most famous and widely loved of the 20th century - was directed at and inspired by Thomas. He eventually decided he had to stay and to fight for the country he loved. Thomas signed up, and was killed in action at Easter in 1917. Matthew Hollis has written a profound book about one of our greatest poets, and gave a moving presentation of his final few years and days. The Petersfield Museum deserves thanks for creating the Edward Thomas Festival and honouring a very special local resident.

Edward Thomas is now regarded as a major English poet. His enigmatic poem 'Addlestrop' often features amongst the public's favourites, but his fame was very much posthumous. In his lifetime he was largely unknown and he only wrote poetry for around four years, previously scratching an uncertain living as a reviewer of others poems, producing travel books and other hack writing. He moved to Steep in the middle of the first decade of the century. Hollis' book about Thomas 'All Roads Lead to France' has rightly won prizes for its insights into Thomas' journey from critic to author and from a fraught and difficult life to his premature death, killed by the shock wave of a shell that left no marks on his body. Hollis' lecture included video of a moving tribute from Thomas' wife Helen, who worked to honour his memory for fifty years after he died.

The local area features strongly in the Edward Thomas story. His very first poem 'Up in the Wind' was inspired by a visit to the pub with no name in Froxfield (or The White Horse, if you prefer). The pub now rightly underlines the connection with a lovely old Edward Thomas bar and a winter visit on a windy night would be a suitable venue for reading the poem - though eyebrows may well be raised if you did. (The pub was revamped a year ago and is now doing splendid food). There are other local landmarks for Thomas fans. The memorial stone on Shoulder of Mutton Hill above Steep is one worth visiting for the view and to reflect on his presence, assuming you can cope with the fierce gradient. The Petersfield Museum has been left his collection of books and its display - and the helpful volunteers - also allows you to try and connect with the man.

Andrew Hughes

## Adlestrop

Edward Thomas

Yes. I remember Adlestrop  
The name, because one afternoon  
Of heat, the express-train drew up there  
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.  
No one left and no one came  
On the bare platform. What I saw  
Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,  
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,  
No whit less still and lonely fair  
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang  
Close by, and round him, mistier,  
Farther and farther, all the birds  
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.



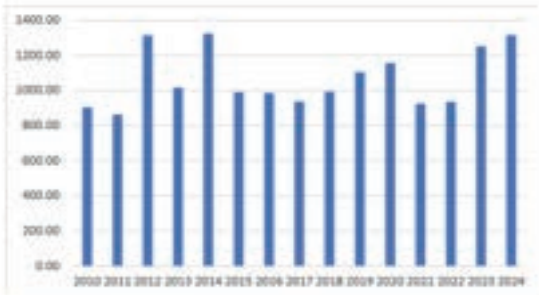
## Weather – Will we Get a White Christmas?

The weather is one thing that reflects on all of us one way or another. Having been asked especially how the rainfall has changed more recently, I thought it might be a good idea to have a little bit of history.

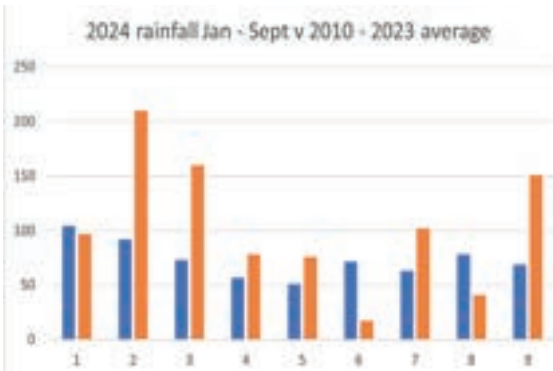


Many of you reading this may not be able to go back as far as I can, as I was a child in the 1940s in Cumbria. I remember so well cycling to school with frost bite on my fingers or so much snow one was unable to get along the road. Then we had four seasons in a year that were predictable. After a cold, wet winter came spring when plants and hedges came to life, followed by a summer of sunshine then a cooler darker autumn when harvest was over and the darker nights came back before the frost again.

When I came to Hampshire in 1958 things hadn't changed too much. Weather wise we still had seasons. Having recorded the weather in East Meon over the past 20 years one can see how things have changed. We have not had lots of snow since 2010, although we may have small cover at times. The rainfall season has changed more and instead of heavy winter rain we have seen much more in the summer months.



East Mean Rainfall in mm. if we have average fall for q4, 2024 will be the wettest



Many of you will be able to remember that in 2023 and 2024 we have had up to five inches in March when previously it would have been less than an inch. Late summer was another wet period which made it difficult for farmers to complete harvest and to sow new crops for next season. It just seems so unpredictable now. If we look back to the COVID period we had much less rain in the summer months and more in the winter. Could this have been partly because there were fewer air flights, so less cloud effect? The other change is the winds seem to be more forceful at times;- we have all experienced this recently.

We used to be happy with 36 inches of rain during the year. We now vary between 40 and 50 – quite a boost. This year we have seen so much growth with shrubs, trees, never seen before. We had a wet spring and then heat early summer, which both played a part.

We live in a most lovely part of the countryside and are able to enjoy the scenery around us but with winter on its way I am not sure I can predict a white Christmas, but best wishes to all.

Frank Moffat





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## East Meon Dippers

Who's up for a Christmas Eve dip ... at Southsea beach? Join East Meon Dippers for a festive frolic in the briny, with seasonal headwear definitely encouraged!

The Dippers have been swimming at Southsea every Tuesday morning since August, led by the infectiously enthusiastic Ally Mitchell. A quick 20 minutes in the sea (reducing to a more manageable 15/10/5 minutes as temperatures diminish!) sets everyone up for the day. "I have been passionate about the benefits of cold-water swimming for some time," Ally says. "The sheer buzz injects a real energy into me. I find on swim days I am a lot more productive and if I'm down or stressed before, it breaks that cycle." Marilyn Hardy adds: "Joining this fabulously skin-tingling, breath-taking, laughter-making group has made a huge difference to my mood and outlook at a time I needed it most." And Wendy Blease says: "The cold effect of the swim isn't like anything else I've encountered and it lasts positively for the rest of the day."

Regular Tuesdays: leave East Meon at 7.45am for a swim followed by tea/coffee and toast at the Southsea Beach Café.

Christmas Eve: leave the village at 9.30am for a 10am swim at Southsea beach. Lots of fun and laughter, Christmas hats encouraged, everyone welcome!

To find out more about East Meon Dippers, call or WhatsApp Ally on 07840 352278

Lesley Hussell



## Halloween

The village - and especially the younger residents – are taking Halloween more seriously each year. Stephen Howard captured some of the fun.





## East Meon Voluntary Care Group

The Care Group has been operating in East Meon for over 40 years. We are here to help senior citizens, the disabled and the temporarily disabled. We have a group of volunteer drivers who take folk from East Meon & hamlets to medical appointments - surgeries, hospitals, dentists, chiropodists, physios. We ask for a suggested donation for the help.

The care group has co-ordinators who work on a rota to take calls from those needing help, and put out requests for drivers. We also have volunteers who visit the housebound regularly. We also run a mobility and post-operative aids store. Equipment can be loaned out on a temporary basis at no cost.

We organise a summer outing for the older members of our community and hold a Christmas Party for senior citizens in the Village Hall, when the Village School Choir come to help and entertain us.

We welcome new volunteers from the Village for any of the above and calls from those that need our help. Please get in touch by contacting the Care Group Co-ordinator- 03300434823, or Chairwoman- Mary Hales- 823074, or Mobility Aids - Jane Brown-823416 or to volunteer for driving or visiting- Libby Swayne- 823560.

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## Court House Carols

The annual village carol service in the Court House is on Saturday 21st December at 7-8pm followed by Court House Punch and mince pies. All are welcome.

The charity this year will be Farms for City Children - which gives groups of children from inner city schools the opportunity to stay and work with animals at the charity's farms in the countryside.

Clare Bartlett would very much appreciate contributions of mince pies. These should be dropped off at the Court House in the days before the event.



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**Swede Caroline** (Cert 15 1h 38 mins)

In this British Mockumentary, the competitive giant vegetable growing world is rocked by scandal when up-and-coming prospect Caroline has her prized marrow plants stolen.

**Friday 31st January**

**FIREBRAND** (Cert 15, 121 mins)

Jude Law takes on the role of Henry VIII in this stylish Tudor political drama

**Friday 28th February**

**THE CRITIC** (Cert 15, 95 mins)

Set in 1930s London, Sir Ian McKellen leads a stellar cast of characters caught in a web of blackmail, deceit and murder

**Friday 28th March**

**CONCLAVE** (Cert 12A, 120 mins)

Based on Robert Harris's acclaimed page-turner, Ralph Fiennes heads an outstanding ensemble cast in this gripping papal election drama

**Friday 25th April**

**PADDINGTON IN PERU** (Cert PG, 106 mins)

Ever wanted to go to Darkest Peru? Or get sticky with marmalade?  
Now's your chance!

We hope we've chosen something for everyone here. Save the dates for your new 2025 diaries and we look forward to welcoming you.

As usual, all the films will be in East Meon Village Hall at 7.30pm. Tickets remain at £6.50 each, and, as well as the big screen and superb quality sound, there's the bar, ice creams, excellent company and sensational films.

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](mailto:eastmeonmoviola@outlook.com)

Looking forward to seeing you - The East Meon Cinema Team

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## Parish Council

A recent Parish Council meeting was held in which residents almost outnumbered councillors! Please do keep coming - your interest and views are most welcome.

If only we could get similar interest from Southern Water who appear to have gone silent on us. Rest assured, it will take rather more than this to deter us.

As mentioned last time, there are repairs aplenty across the village, where we are relying on some combination of help from the Lengthsman and fencing professionals, not to mention some good old-fashioned DIY to keep the costs down and also make sure the village is looking its best.

The Veteran's held their first football match – a 3-3 thriller against Hawkley, and at the time of writing (and risking commentators' curse!) they continue to perform well at home. So well worth a watch.

Our highly active Nature Group are in equally chipper mood, with beavers expected by Christmas and continued progress improving the river, which astoundingly is one of only 200 chalk streams in the world!!

We are continuing to interest HCC in the plight of our BOATS, the playground has passed its ROSPA inspection and BDO have signed off our accounts.

And for the diary conscious, please note we have moved our Annual Parish Assembly date to 28 April 2025. We know you can't wait!

## December 2024 Parish Council

With the intrigue of Elections now over on both sides of the Atlantic, we turn to matters of local democracy. November 18th's PC meeting was a bumper one running to 2.5 hours. First up was the appointment of Richard Downer as a new Councillor, who will take over Andy Hales' responsibilities. We express our deep gratitude to Andy who has provided 5 years dedicated service to this part of village life and was the author of our Parish Council reports. We all wish Andy well.

Footpaths, byways and green lanes: many of them are badly worn and overgrown. Step repairs and foliage cutback will be carried out on the Frogmore Lane footpaths, however, the hardcore on some of the green lanes around Five-Ways is not lasting so the PC is pressing Hampshire County Council to review its resurfacing policy. Frogmore Lane itself is pot-holing again, and we will be asking for a more permanent solution to temporary works completed by HCC. Meanwhile, drive carefully as the leaf-fall is now in full flow and hiding many of the tyre-wreckers.

EM Vets FC have had a good run recently, however, the pavilion has sprung a roof leak which should be repaired soon as and when the leak can be located. We are reducing the height limit of the nearby Workhouse Lane car park to 1.8metres. Previously 2.1m: for various technical reasons, this is now being reduced with some minor works needed to conform it to the new height limit. We are also investigating the possibility of adding additional recycling amenity for the car park area, such as battery recycling and collection of "blister packs" at the Village Hall.

Not doing quite so well is the local wildlife. We think due to the wet summer, the butterfly count was down 50% and the river wildlife is showing a similar struggle. Can we all please remember how sensitive our environment is when eg., washing cars, patios etc and try to keep run-off out of the river so it can recover when the weather improves next year.

In other outdoor activity news, the basketball boards will be renewed shortly and minor repairs to the nearby Village Hall playground will be underway shortly. We are also investigating the potential for enhancing the playground, budget dependent of course. More to come on that hopefully within the context of this budget year. On the Village Hall itself, a comprehensive plan has been submitted to the PC to gain our support, both from a planning perspective as well as financial. The Parish Council will be meeting with the Village Hall trustees to help the PC develop its response.

### **Reminders / Dates for your diaries:-**

Village litter picking. Scheduled for Sunday 26th January, we are looking for as many volunteers as possible. Tea & coffee will be served to keep you warm.

VE Day Thursday 8th May. In light of the recent village celebrations (eg Jubilee, Coronation and D-Day commemoration) the PC feels a much scaled down event would be more appropriate. We are therefore considering the erection of a beacon on Park Hill for this octogintennial reminder of our modern history.

Renewable Energy Presentation. In early March (date to follow) the PC is facilitating an educational session on what efficiencies can be achieved. This will be set in the context of village life and the limitations the age of the typical housing stock in East Meon. It is NOT a sales pitch and the presenters are external consultants that will no doubt provide some useful ideas.

To finish on a series of positive notes, the budget was approved for the year ahead, with a modest 6% increase in the precept recommended, which is well below the peak 11% inflation we saw recently which is now feeding through to our running costs. Westbury House finally has a buyer with approved plans to renovate the site to a modern grand home, with the listed Ice House and walled garden to remain protected and cared for. This is a very welcome development.

## EAST MEON GARDEN CLUB TALK ABOUT THE WINTER GARDEN

The East Meon Garden Club kicked off the Autumn Season with a fascinating talk by Andy McIndoe on The Winter Garden. It was a thoroughly enjoyable presentation with lots of suggestions for what to grow and Andy peppered his presentation with anecdotes, observations and an acerbic wit.



Andy McIndoe is a garden consultant and designer, writer and lecturer with over 40 years experience in retail and production horticulture. His plant knowledge, practical approach and eye for planting combinations are put to good use both in creating gardens from scratch and transforming established gardens. During his long career with Hillier Nurseries he was responsible for the development of the Company's chain of garden centres and for 25 consecutive Gold Medal winning exhibits at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He and his wife Ros welcome visitors by appointment to their 2.5 acre naturalistic garden, Sandhill Farm, Hampshire during spring, summer and autumn.

The winter months in the garden can often be overlooked, but careful planting can help create real drama in the garden at a traditionally bleak time of year. Summer perennials create a stunning burst of colour through the summer and into Autumn. Come the first frost the plants die back, and while some seed heads can look attractive, especially when frosted, careful planning and planting of shrubs, trees and flowers can extend the drama and vibrancy of your garden throughout winter. When many traditional garden plants are dormant, Andy emphasized the importance of creating a structure and then using texture, colour and scent to create a stunning winter display.

Andy advised us on the key plants he would recommend for a winter garden. His first consideration is to create an evergreen foundation to form a background of greenery. Holly and Yew were his top 2 native suggestions. He recommended a pleached hedge of holly to give privacy, security and height at the boundary. He advised that if you were planting for holly berries (which would give an added dimension of colour over winter), there are male and female holly plants, only the females will have berries.

Andy also recommended the dogwood as a star of the winter garden with its bright red stems. He recommended Cornus Midwinter Firepower and Annys Winter Orange. Another essential for the winter garden was Nandina Domestic Firepower (known as sacred or heavenly bamboo - but not related to bamboo and not invasive) a compact shrub with a delicate appearance, low maintenance and easy to grow.

Other recommendations were plants with interesting bark (Acer Griseum - Paper Bark Tree), berries (Holly, Sorbus Vilmorinii "Pink Charm" and Callicarpa with clusters of jewel-like purple berries), winter flowers (Hellebore Hybrida) and snowdrops (Galanthus Nivalis) and for scent Daphne Jacqueline Postill and Christmas Box (Sarcococca Confusa). The winter garden is an opportunity to showcase resilience and artistry through careful plant selection and design.

To become a member of the East Meon Garden Club and enjoy interesting talks and garden visits please contact the Secretary by emailing: [eastmeongc@gmail.com](mailto:eastmeongc@gmail.com) .

Emma Crowley

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## Message in a Bottle

*Way to keep essential personal and medical details to be found in an emergency*

Lions Clubs' Message in a Bottle scheme is a simple idea designed to encourage people to keep their basic personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location – the fridge.

### **What does it do?**

It saves the Emergency Services valuable time if they need to enter a property in an emergency situation. Not only does it help to identify who you are it also identifies if you have special medication or allergies. It is not only a potential lifesaver, but also it provides peace of mind to you, your friends and family by knowing that prompt medical treatment is provided and that the next of kin and emergency contacts are notified.

### **Who's it for?**

Anyone. Whilst it is focused on the more vulnerable people in a community, anyone can have an accident in the home, so this scheme can benefit anyone.

### **What does it cost?**

When ordering one bottle the scheme is free to the public and is funded usually by your local Lions Club.

### **Who knows about it?**

All Emergency Services are aware of the Message in a Bottle scheme. By displaying the green stickers in your home, the emergency services will locate the bottle in the fridge and use the forms inside to ensure you are treated quickly which can save time and save lives.

### **What's in the bottle?**

A form you fill in with your name, medicines, allergies & relatives' contact details, and two green stickers.

### **What do I have to do?**

Fill in the form, put it in the bottle, and put the bottle in your fridge. Put one green sticker on your fridge door and the other green sticker on the inside of your house door.

If you would like a bottle please contact Libby Swayne. 01730 823560.

## Nature Group

2024 has been a very mixed year for the natural world around us. In the spring, our toad patrol rescued 692 toads and 245 newts from the road, moving them close to the pond on Coombe Road where they breed. Butterfly numbers above South Farm were down 50% on 2023, reflecting a wider collapse of butterfly populations across the country. We maintained the wildflower area at the pavilion on Workhouse Lane and this continues to provide a small but rich source of nectar and habitat for insects around the village. The Tree Working Group hedge plantings on the cricket pitch and along Workhouse Lane have thrived, as have the tree plantings in front of the Village Hall and around the water treatment plant.

More widely, if populations of flying insects have been very low - not helped by the very wet year, then slugs and snails have thrived. This was bad news for gardeners but excellent news for wildlife that feed on them, such as frogs and toads, hedgehogs and song thrushes. Sightings of hedgehogs around the village (alive and dead) have been worryingly low so they need all the help they can get.

As urbanisation and intensive farming increase to meet our needs, survival gets increasingly difficult for wildlife, even in rural areas such as our own. There is clear evidence that our gardens can play an important part in mitigating these challenges. Across the country, our gardens cover an area the size of Suffolk. Many support an enormous variety of insects, amphibians and mammals. Of course, paved front gardens, plastic grass and the use of insecticides do not help here. But we can provide rich habitats by growing nectar rich plants, by avoiding the use of chemicals so far as possible, by not tidying flower beds too much, by introducing wood piles and ponds and by allowing a bit of wilding on the margins of our gardens (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden>).

Christmas is a religious festival but also very much a time when we celebrate the natural world. Like our prehistoric ancestors, we mark the point at which the days start to get longer, with the prospect of the new life that comes with Spring. Like them, we take comfort from the plants like holly and ivy that defy the darkness of winter. And we bring them into our houses, whether as symbols of a crucified prophet, wounded under a crown of thorns (holly), or as the frozen tears of a Norse goddess weeping for the loss of her son (mistletoe), or to celebrate in our homes the beauty that nature can bring into our lives.

Have a thought for the natural world as you and your families write your letters to Father Christmas and as you set out your resolutions for the new year. The plants and creatures around you need all the help you can give them after a very difficult year.

Jonathan Iremonger



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## News In Brief

The school would like to thank the many kind villagers who bought items on their recent Amazon wish list, and also to sirfrancismusic.com who played for FREE at the Halloween school disco.

Warnford Snowdrops are stopping the Sunday openings next year to avoid the traffic congestion that has sometimes blocked the A32. In 2025 ticketed visits with set entry times will be available on Saturdays through [www.warnfordsnowdrops.org.uk](http://www.warnfordsnowdrops.org.uk)

Beavers are being reintroduced to the village soon. Watch out for announcements. Meanwhile wild pigs have been spotted in the area.

Litter Picking Sunday 26 January 2025. Meet at the Village Hall at 10am to begin at 10:30am. Hi-Vis Vests and Gloves will be provided on the day/ Refreshments at the Village Hall afterwards.

Sadly East Meon Vineyard has had to abandon the grape harvest because of mildew caused by the wet weather - remarkably this is the only crop failure since 2012. So there will be no Berrygarden for 2024 - but happily 2018 is still available.

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5. **Take notice** - take a mindful moment in the park and pay attention to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes around you.

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## Remembrance Day

East Meon Primary School learnt about the importance of Remembrance Day in their collective worship on Thursday 7th November. They recapped the purpose of Remembrance Day and Mrs Perkins talked to the children about the different perspex soldiers and name tags which had been placed around the school and also in the church.

On Friday 8th November, Father Tony led a Remembrance Service for the school at All Saints Church. Children from Years 5 and 6 read a number of readings and prayers and rang the Mercury Bell as the names of the soldiers from the village who had died in the First and Second World Wars were read out.

On Sunday 10th November, two Year 6 children represented the school at the village Remembrance Service at both the church and by the war memorial, laying a wreath on behalf of the school. The two children carried out this task in a very mature and responsible manner, showing their understanding of the seriousness of this occasion.

On Monday 11th November, the school gathered in the hall and carried out the 2 minute silence together to mark this important occasion.







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## Autumn Half Term at East Meon School

It has been a very busy and exciting first half term at East Meon Primary School. Children returned from the Summer holidays refreshed and keen to get stuck into their learning. They arrived wearing their lovely new uniform with the new school logo, which was designed by one of the pupil's parents.

The children quickly got stuck into their new topics: Voyagers learning about space, Explorers learning about the stone age, Adventurers learning about the Great Fire of London and Discoverers learning about each other, what makes each person special and settling into school. Year 6 did a fantastic job of helping their Year R buddies settle in, reading them books and looking after them at breaktimes.

Throughout the half term, the children have been involved in a range of exciting activities. A group of Year 6 went to Churcher's College for a Quiz Event, children have taken part in Dodgeball, Tag Rugby and Infant Agility Festivals, we have trained up our Junior Road Safety Officers and Year 6 Sports Leaders and every class went on a different school trip. Our children have been busy writing up accounts of their trips and we hope you enjoy reading them.

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## Adventurers' Trip to Wilson Atkinson Farm

On Tuesday 15th October, we went to the Wilson Atkinson Farm. First we went on the tractor and in the trailer it was very bumpy because we were bumping over lots of big and small rocks. I sat next to Evie and Mrs Sims. It was really fun bumping all the way to and from the farm.

Our teacher could not go to the farm because she has a baby in her tummy, so we went with another teacher called Mrs Flood who is really nice.

It was really fun at the farm and I loved it. The farmers names were Ollie and Gary and they told us lots of facts. They have a pet sausage dog who is one and a half years old, she is so cute because she is so small.

Next we got off the tractor. We saw the pigs and one of their names was Peppa. They are very noisy and we learnt some facts about pigs – they like to dig in the soil and they like to eat the leaves from the trees and they love apples which have dropped from the tree. They were in a muddy field with a fence. They had a shelter but they had knocked it over!

After that we went to the cows in the barn and it was very stinky because of the cow's poop! I enjoyed seeing the cows.

Finally we drove past a field of sheep and went back to school.

*Written by Annabelle in Year 2*

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## Explorers' Trip to Butser Farm

On Wednesday 9th October, Explorers Class went on a trip to Butser Ancient Farm as part of our topic on the Stone Age. We had a go at lots of activities when we were there. Our favourite activity was chalk carving. We learnt that you can carve pictures on the chalk and colour them in. If you squeeze a dock leaf its juice makes a paint and turns the chalk bright green, but hazel leaves don't work as well. You can also use charcoal to turn the chalk black. We also did fire lighting, an archaeological dig and explored the Bronze Age, Stone Age and Iron Age houses. It was a super fun day!

*Written by Jasper and Hattie in Year 4*



## Voyagers' Trip to the Winchester Science Centre

Last week, on Tuesday 7th October, Voyagers Class visited the Winchester Science Museum. We went to the science museum, because we have been learning about space recently. We had a busy day learning about our galaxy and much more.

The museum is full of hands-on exhibits over two floors. My favourite part of the science museum was an experience where, when you bit on a straw, you could feel songs through vibrations when your ears were blocked! We also explored the up and down stairs event. I thoroughly enjoyed a machine where when you pumped it, the machine pushed the air up through pipes so that we could see bubbles in different liquids.

Just before lunch, Voyagers enjoyed a workshop delivered by the museum. We learned that silver is the best colour to keep cool and reflect heat. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing white light split to create a rainbow of light.

During the afternoon, we visited the planetarium. A planetarium is a dome that spins, so we could have a brilliant view of space. We learnt that there are millions of galaxies. There is like LOADS AND LOADS! I thoroughly enjoyed the 3D view of space and all the planets close up. Overall, I had an incredible day at the museum. It was lovely to spend a day with all my friends.

*Written by Isabelle in Year 6*



## Discoverers Trip to the Farm.



On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October, Discoverers class climbed aboard the trailer and set off to visit the farm. We were very excited and it was a very bumpy journey!



First, we went to see the pigs. One was called Curly and one was called Peppa. They lived in the woods. They ate apples and leaves and pig nuts. We loved the pigs!



Next, we went to the cows. Two had white faces and the rest were black. One of them had horns. They were eating grass and beet. We liked the cows!



It was very muddy on the farm. We had to wear our coats and wellies.



Then we went to see the sheep. They had different colours to show if they had had their medicine. The sheep lived in the field. The mummy sheep lived on the hill and the lambs lived with their friends.



At the end, we got to meet the farmer's dog. We loved the dog because she was tiny and we could stroke her!

Thank you to the farmers at the Wilson-Atkinson farm for letting us visit!



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## Centre Mosque

On Tuesday 22nd October, Voyagers Class visited the mosque in Titchfield. We had a lovely time learning about the Islamic community and religion.

Firstly, when we arrived on our minibus, we walked across the pathway and garden and we met the Imam who ran the mosque. He told us about why the front of the mosque was facing the direction it was. We learned that it was because the Islamic God, Allah, was there.

Afterwards we went inside the mosque itself. There were two sides: the ladies and gentlemen. We went in the gentlemen's side and went into the main hall. There we found out how the mosque was environmentally friendly and it had solar panels for electricity and even had underfloor heating! The Imam then went on to talk about some of the objects around the mosque. We then learnt about why people, when they came, were given prayer beads.

We then pretended it was prayer time and tried to repeat what the Imam said. He read the first chapter of the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an, and translated it into English for us. Furthermore, he showed us the original and English Qur'an.

When it was time to go back to school, the Imam had one more surprise for us. He gave us chocolate brioches for me and the rest of my class!

*Anon*

## Amazon appeal

The school would like to thank the many generous villagers who donated via Amazon to the recent appeal.



## **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.

Emma Bird, Church Warden

Some future church  
fundraising events;

## Bridge Afternoon and Tea

at Barrow Hill Barns,  
Ramsdean.

Monday 13th January. 2-5pm.

Contact - Jane Brown. 823416  
and Libby Swayne 823560.

## East Meon Desert Island Discs

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Village Hall

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## CHARITY BRIDGE TEA

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## **A Sense of the Season**

I am certain that almost everyone reading this knows about Advent Calendars and has perhaps already opened a number of windows, and possibly enjoyed a chocolate treat behind each one. Rather conveniently this year, the first day of Advent, Advent Sunday, falls on 1st December.

A few days later, on 6th December each year, the church celebrates St Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, who died in about 326.

Despite countless legends about him, Nicholas is something of a mystery. All that can be said for certain is that he was Bishop of Myra (in Modern Turkey) at the beginning of the fourth century. He was buried outside of his city, facing towards the sea. Legend has it that he was imprisoned during the Diocletian persecution of 303/4.

Nicholas is the patron of our friends at Wickham and he is also the patron saint of Sailors, and of children. His legend speaks of him giving three girls a dowry to allow them to marry when their family fell on hard times. He delivered the gifts at night to avoid being recognised – Nicholas is the original Santa Claus – Father Christmas.

Nicholas' determination to remain anonymous in his giving, even dropping the bag of money for the last daughter down the chimney, gives us something to think about. At this time of year, when our minds are pre-occupied with Christmas shopping, presents and January sales, we can ask ourselves for whom we really do all this. Do we truly have others in our hearts?

In past years in my previous parishes, we have collected quantities of mostly brand-new toys for children, who have to spend their Christmases in women's refuges or in homeless hostels - escaping violence and abuse, but with very little other joy. We are launching the same appeal this year at our TOY SERVICE, where anonymous gifts of toys are collected. Please join in the generosity this year and help us collect some toys for children whose Christmas will be in the E C Roberts Centre in Portsmouth, rather than at home. Bring some happiness to those children, and joy into your heart, by giving with willingness. Bring the toys to the Toy Service on 8th December at West Meon, or drop them into any of the Benefice Churches right up until 16th December.

Giving as Nicholas did, anonymously will bring many homeless children such great joy, but for understandable reasons, no water pistols or other toy weapons, which may bring painful memories to mind for some children or their mothers.

On the topic of giving presents, many of us will know the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas” with its litany of gifts from a true love. It is sometimes assumed that the twelve days of Christmas are those leading to 25th December, but this period is part of Advent, in which St Nicholas’ Day also falls, rather than Christmastide.



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However, Christians in the west have traditionally kept Christmas as the season from December 25 until January 6 (the Epiphany). The church calendar today has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (“Candlemas”) on 2nd February.

Next to the yearly celebration of Holy Week and Easter, the church holds most sacred the memorial of Christ’s birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the broader season of Christmas.

More than just Jesus’ birthday, the Christmas season is a time for remembering and revelling in the nativity of Christ, the revelation of Christ to the shepherds (ordinary people rather than the political or Jewish elite), the revelation of Christ to the Magi (the Wise Men or the Three Kings from the gentile wider world), Christ’s baptism by John in the Jordan, and Christ changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. In all these saving events, we know that “the Word is made flesh and dwells among us”.



Certain significant saints' days follow Christmas Day itself and it is quite a challenge to celebrate as they deserve these saints of the Christmas season: St Stephen, on Boxing Day and mentioned in "Good King Wencelas", who first paid with his life for following the Lord in human flesh; St John (27th), the apostle and evangelist, patron of both West Meon and Langrish churches, who was believed to have lived to great old age in profound meditation on the Word made flesh; and the Holy Innocents (28th), who draw our attention to the plight of children in a world where the implications of the birth of the Christ-child are not yet manifest.

How can we keep Christmas not just as a day, but as a season? How about keeping the tree up (and watered!) and shining bright until the Baptism of the Lord 12th January in 2025) or even to Candlemas? Consider singing carols on more occasions and reading the bible readings for each day of the Christmas season. Following the example of St Francis of Assisi, set up a crib and a lovely thing can be is to light a candle (safely) next to it – or several all around it.

When you light the candles, say the prayer of the angels:

Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours! Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all people.  
Amen.

A blessed, joyous and peace-filled Christmas 2024 and a happy and healthy 2025 to you all.

Fr Tony

*For a list list of Christmas Services see [www.meonmatters.com](http://www.meonmatters.com)*

## Meon Matters – Get Stuffed Special

We thought a few seasonal turkey stuffing recipes might be appreciated.

### PARSLEY, SAGE and PISTACHIOS STUFFING with APRICOTS

Enough to stuff a 6.3kg (15lb) turkey

#### Ingredients

3 shallots	2tbsp olive oil
2 cloves of garlic crushed	75g of white breadcrumbs
50g of chopped pistachios	3 finely chopped dried apricots
Grated rind of a lemon and juice of half	2tbsp of chopped fresh and sage
1 beaten egg	

1. Fry the shallots and garlic in the olive oil until soft (not brown) and leave to cool
2. In a bowl add ...the breadcrumbs, pistachios, apricots, lemon zest and juice, herbs and beaten egg. Add the cooled shallots and garlic, season well, combine together and leave to cool.
3. Use to stuff the Turkey or cook separately in a dish or combined to make stuffing balls.

Melanie Lewin

### CHESTNUT STUFFING

225g good quality sausagemeat	2 heaped tablespoons of white breadcrumbs
1 large onion finely chopped	450g of chopped chestnuts
Liver from turkey chopped small	110g of finely chopped bacon
4 tablespoons parsley chopped	50g cranberries
50g Pistachio	Dessert spoon of chopped thyme
¼ tsp ground mace	Salt and pepper

1. Melt butter in frying pan add onion and bacon first cook until transparent and bacon is gold at the edges then add liver for a quick cook.
2. Put all ingredients into a large bowl and mix thoroughly season mainly with pepper if using smoked bacon.
3. If you like it firm add a beaten egg if you like it crumbly leave out the egg.

Sue Atkinson

## Christmas Cocktails from the Izaak Walton

Nothing makes a Christmas drinks party pop like cocktails with friends. At the Izaak we love to make cocktails for the seasons and occasions – including of course Christmas

This time of year, you want evocative aromas, a touch of sugar and spice, and a warming glug of booze. Here are some of our favourites to make yourself – or have us make them for you

### AMARETTO SOUR

Amaretto's marzipan warmth really balances the whisky and lemon juice, making it our favourite Sour cocktail. A chilly dog-walk is the perfect excuse for Amaretto sours by the fire afterwards

Recipe:

- Combine 50ml Amaretto di Saronno, 25ml Bourbon whisky, and 25ml fresh lemon juice with a dash of sugar syrup in a cocktail shaker
- Shake well with ice and strain into a rocks glass or tumbler
- Garnish with a slice of orange and a Maraschino cherry

We like to use Rebel Yell wheated bourbon but Jack Daniels will do at a push

(For the adventurous, include ½ measure of egg white with the other ingredients and shake hard WITHOUT ice to create a foam, before shaking again with ice to cool it down NB: using raw egg is at your own risk!)

### SNOWBALL

A 1940's classic that became a badly-made a 1970's horror cliché. Done right it is a real snow-day treat. The white froth from the lemonade and advocaat gives it its name. The lime juice is essential to cut through the egg and sugar, Drink sitting on a bar stool while flirting outrageously

Recipe:

- In a gin glass, stir 50ml of Warnink's Advocaat, the juice of a lime wedge, and two cubes of ice
- Gently add 150ml lemonade – it will froth up
- Garnish with a Maraschino Cherry on a cocktail skewer

The white froth that gives the drink its name settles quite quickly, so serve soon after making,

## BRANDY ALEXANDER

A Brandy Alexander is a wonderful rich, creamy chocolatey after-dinner drink – invented by Harry MacElhone – founder of Harry’s New York Bar in Paris – as an improvement on the now-mostly-forgotten Gin Alexander

- Combine 50ml cognac brandy, 25ml dark crème de cacao, 25ml double cream in a cocktail shaker
- Shake well with ice and strain into a coupe or martini glass
- Sprinkle with chocolate shavings or freshly grated nutmeg

The secret of a good Brandy Alexander is to go long on the brandy and short on the sweet stuff. It’s a grown-up drink after-all.

We hope you enjoy some of these over the season and are happy to make them for you at the Izaak. The pub is open throughout the Christmas period – check the website or Facebook for our hours.

Most of all don’t forget the Izaak Walton’s Christmas Day Drinks strictly from 12am to 2pm. Perfect post-walk, pre-lunch. And EVERYONE will be there.

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