

Meon Matters

*News, Views & Comment
from East Meon*



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Another summer of extreme weather – did you too lose count of the number of heatwaves? Whilst it has been a pleasure for some, it can be a trial for others. We were blessed with great weather for almost all of our sporting, cultural and fundraising village events, encouraging the usual great spirit of participation and support. But the drought conditions were hard on gardens, whilst hot nights were tough on sleep.

But as always, it is our farming community we think of during the summer. So much hangs on the right growing conditions, followed by the optimum harvesting conditions. A profitable year can be won or lost, not only on the vagaries of the weather but also the dynamics of global market pressures.

In this edition we highlight the farming diversification that can be a lively topic in the Meon Valley. Some residents welcome the fresh energy, services and opportunities it brings, while others worry about its impact on the character of our countryside. Whatever our views, one thing is clear: the family farmers of our valley are managing more than businesses – they are the stewards of the land. Through their care and innovation they aim to sustain the glorious landscapes we all cherish, ensuring the Meon Valley remains both beautiful and productive for generations to come.

Jenny Humphries

Jean Cooke

Our front cover remembers Jean Cooke, who gave so much to the village over many years. The memorial bench on Park Hill overlooking East Meon erected by family and friends this summer is a fitting tribute to Jean. The inscription reads “In Loving Memory, Jean Cooke, 1948 – 2024. Devoted to family, faith and friendship. Take a moment, enjoy the view she cherished, and remember her warmly”.

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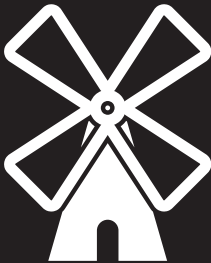
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My Mother Made Me Do It

Our lovely church, All Saints, is a fabulous historical and architectural treasure that most of us are rightly proud of, regardless of personal faith. But its upkeep is also a very significant responsibility and the financial position of the church is precarious. As most of us know the church is now ministered as part of a benefice covering churches from Langrish to Warnford, sharing a part time celebrant and some other costs between the parishes. All Saints has survived – so far - on a mix of donations, legacies and investment income from its reserves.

The need to replace the outdated heating system and likely potential structural repair costs threaten to impose significant new costs – in the low six figures - on the parish. Meeting this challenge has brought out the best in a team of supporters over the past year, and we can expect more effort to come when the final heating and repairs bill are finalised. The 'Events Team' formed earlier this year decided to build on the success of East Meon Arts, an initiative run by Jane Cobley and Kati Whitaker which has generated useful income by bringing a range of musical and theatrical performances to the church over the past three years.

Jane's son Frank Turner, is a very successful solo musician and has sold out venues including Alexandra Palace and the Wembley Arena. With some arm twisting from his mother he agreed to perform a benefit for All Saints. Frank branded

the gig 'My Mother Made Me Do This'. The Dell at Bereleigh, run by Jack and Emily Tyrwhitt-Drake, kindly agreed to act as the venue.



As some who tried and failed to get them will know, 1500 concert tickets were sold in about six hours to Frank's enthusiastic fan base. The event was a big success, with a stand-out harmonica performance by Jane, (who had just tried tequila for the first time in her life), and support acts including Kati's East of Meon jazz band. The churchwardens, Emma and Stuart report a truly impressive contribution of £50,000 to church funds.



But the others had other ideas too. The Church Fete was restarted in June - generously hosted by Rachel Mackinlay - and lots of villagers running traditional fun stalls (we all loved the human fruit machine), some traditional English summer weather (showers, excellent), a band, and more cream teas than could be counted. And the event raised another £4,000 for All Saints.

We now look forward to the Harvest Supper on 25th October, look back at a successful bridge drive, East Meon Arts have more ideas cooking, including a port presentation on November 8th, a Flower Festival is planned for May next year and who knows what else follows (our website www.meonmatters.com will have details). A big thank you is due to everyone who has contributed so much to helping secure the future of All Saints especially Emma Gaisford, Helen Galliano, Emma Bird, Jane Cogley, Kati Whitaker, Stuart Martin, and on the fete Libby Swayne, Clare Bartlett, Clare de Lotbinier, Janes Martin and Brown, and - not least - Frank Turner.

Andrew Hughes

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The Bridge Repair

So why has the A272 been closed since September 1st, and when will it open?

The work is to address 'spalling' – where moisture ingress breaks off bits of brick, which had started dropping onto passing traffic. So there is a lot of replacement brick and also repointing work being done. It's a big tunnel so the six week closure is necessary, but the repair should then last many years. The option of removing the bridge would have created even more work as the amount of spoil and the requirement to make the embankment secure would take even longer. (Though a local retired RE officer reckoned an army crew could do it in a week).

The contractors expect to finish on or before 12th October. If necessary they will be running one way traffic at the end of the job while they finish the facings to either side of the bridge. The company are brick repair specialists doing this type of brickwork repair all over the country. The work team are northerners, with the site foreman from Yorkshire and the rest from Sunderland. They tend to work long shifts to allow the occasional trip home, and are staying in local hotels.

Motorist reaction has been mostly reluctant acceptance, though quite a few ignore the 'Road Closed' signs but realise when they get to the bridge it is – for once – really closed.

So patience please. The new improved bridge will be ready soon.

Andrew Hughes





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Farming Diversification in the Meon Valley

Farming has always been shaped by global trends, but in recent years British farmers have been under increasing pressure. Cereal prices have plummeted due to international over-supply and the economics of meat and dairy production continue to shift. Government subsidies, once a vital part of farm incomes, are being steadily reduced and reshaped following Brexit. Whilst there can be said to be merit in rising environmental standards, these demand ever-greater investment in, for example, slurry pits, machinery and storage barns. Meanwhile the threat of inheritance tax changes makes it harder for family farms to pass on their holdings. Unsurprisingly, some farmers are selling up rather than risking the increasing uncertainty - five local farms are currently on the market.

Yet despite this the Meon valley retains a remarkable community of family and mixed farms who are meeting these challenges with imagination and innovation. One example is Whitewool Farm and Meon Springs, run by brothers Jamie and Will Butler. Their family has farmed the 1,000-acre holding since 1930, and began offering fly-fishing in the 1980s. Over time the Butlers have built a much wider business: visitors can now stay overnight in yurts and shepherds' huts, there are self-storage facilities, corporate away-days and team-development activities, and various art and lifestyle activities in the Long Barn. This kind of diversification is typical of how farms are finding new, controllable streams of income to supplement traditional agriculture.



The Butlers are also experimenting with sustainable supply chains. This year Whitewool Farm drove half a tonne of bulrush heads to Ponda in Bristol, a new ethical fashion start-up that turns the plant into BioPuff – a natural, plant-based alternative to down filling in jackets. It's a small but meaningful example of how farming in the valley is connecting with new industries.

Will Atkinson of Lower Farm is another at the forefront of diversification. He says farming economics have dictated much change over the past fifteen years and predicts only more in the future. Lower Farm has changed substantially, starting with farm tours then the campsite, which opened in 2015, and now including 'Paw Paddock' dog exercise, beaver safaris, and supporting paragliding. .

Storage has added another revenue stream for local farms, and for many farmers self storage offers an obvious use for the older farm building less suited to the new big combines and modern animal husbandry. The experience the Atkinsons have of navigating the National Park and other planning rules, combined with academic training in ecology, has helped Will and his brother build an interesting consulting business with a number of local, and not so local, clients.

Conventional farming continues, with an inevitable melding of traditional approaches and modern insights and technology. The Atkinsons see a future for grass fed meat, though the shift to that feels some time off. On the dairy side of Whitewool Farm, the Butlers have focused for the past five years on improving the soil for their dairy herd. It's easy to destroy soil quality and hard to rebuild it, but they are prioritising biology and long-term stewardship over short-term economics – values sadly not often shared by corporate farming worldwide.

As these and other examples show, diversification is not just about survival. It can be about creating resilient businesses rooted in the land while embracing new opportunities. The Meon valley's farmers may face powerful global forces, but they also have a record of innovation, mutual support and deep care for the countryside they shape and maintain. That spirit will be vital in sustaining the valley's farming future.

Jenny Humphries



Hampshire Countryside Day

The rain held off until the end of the afternoon at the Hampshire Countryside Day held on the Bereleigh Estate, East Meon by kind permission of the Tyrwhitt-Drake family. The fundraising event in aid of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance and The Countryside Alliance attracted local crowds who enjoyed an action-packed, family-friendly day out, including thrilling Inter hunt scurry, gun dog displays, hound parades, terrier racing and the nail biting Chase Me Charlie gate jumping challenge in the main arena. Show visitors also tried their hand at clay pigeon shooting, archery, air guns, and fishing, while many canine companions took part in the fun competitions. The large variety of trade stands provided some enjoyable shopping for visitors stands included many local sellers such as The East Meon Valley Bee Keepers and Dampneys Remarkable Drinks.

The Hampshire Countryside Day is set to return to Bereleigh on Sunday 13 September 2026. “Brilliant day can’t wait for next year.great to see the hounds and other country folk” said one visitor.

Sarah Rutherford





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Dear East Meon Villagers

My name is Hattie and I'm writing from East Meon Primary School because we've all been working really hard this year, but we need your help.

We will be holding a Christmas Fair in December, to help raise money for the school so we can buy even more things to help us with our learning, and we would love to see if you can donate some things for the Christmas Tombola. It could be a box of chocolates, some sweets, some smelly lotions for the bath, some bath bombs – in fact, anything that could be a gift or prize! We can't have any alcohol ourselves, as we are too young, but if you are able to donate some bottles – alcoholic or non-alcoholic – then that would be great, too!

It would be a huge help to the school, because it will mean we can have even more amazing resources and equipment to use in school.

You can bring your donations into school whenever you can, as long as it's before the Christmas Fair.

We hope you can help us!
Love from Hattie in Year 5



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Year 5 Bikeability

At the start of the Bikeability, we had to do lots of training, so we knew what to do. I learnt so many things about riding a bike, like knowing what the road signs mean. We then rode our bikes all around East Meon with the instructor. I really liked going down the roads and I thought it was so much fun! When we finished doing it, we got cool badges and a certificate.

Xander, Year 5

At first, I couldn't ride a bike at all, but at the end of Bikeability, I loved riding the bike! We started by learning how to be safe on our bike. I enjoyed learning about how to take one hand off the handlebars and wave. You need to be able to do that to show when you are turning. I am really happy that I did Bikeability and that I learnt how to ride a bike.

Bea H, Year 5



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East Meon C of E Primary School – Year 6

We are the Year 6 children in Voyagers Class. We are now the oldest children in the school and are starting our final year at East Meon C of E Primary School. When we first came back to school, we met a new teacher, Mrs Symes, who is going to be sharing our class with Mrs Sole. At first, we all felt a bit nervous, as we had a new teacher, new places to sit in the classroom and new things to learn. However, now we are all back, with our friends, we are no longer feeling nervous and we're all happy, excited and ready for the year ahead.

In Year 6, we have some new responsibilities. One of these is being a Buddy. When you're a Buddy, you are paired up with a new Year R child, who we then help to look after at playtime and at other times, as needed, throughout the year.

There are also other opportunities for more roles including School Council, JRSO (Junior Road Safety Officers), being a Sports Leader, monitor jobs within the classroom and generally setting a good example to the younger children.

We have started reading "Journey to the River Sea," by Eva Ibbotson. 'The River Sea' is a name that is given to the River Amazon, as it is such a huge river. We will use the book to inspire a diary entry and a non-chronological report. This will link with our first topic, which is all about the Amazon Rainforest.

There are lots of things that we are looking forward to in Year 6, including going on our Residential to Calshot. We are particularly excited about the idea of water sports and sleeping in a room with our friends. (The adults say that we WILL have to have some sleep whilst we are there!)

Before we leave our school, we will show how much we have learned by completing our SATs. Sadly, we will say goodbye to this school next July, but by then we will be ready for the challenge that a new Secondary School will bring. We will miss our friends here, but we will be taking lots of super memories away with us.

Written by the Year 6 children in Voyagers Class, (supported by Mrs Symes)

Marilyn Hardy of the Well House

There are not many people in East Meon who have done so much to bring good cheer to us all most days of the year. Marilyn is the person who will let you know in good time that you have forgotten your Valentine's card, or who informs your children about St George's day or indeed just tells you that it is spring or autumn as you pass the Well House by the Ye Olde George Pub.

Twelve years ago, Marilyn arrived in East Meon knowing no-one. She had moved back from Spain without fixed accommodation and when she was offered the chance to rent somewhere in the village after four years of waiting, she jumped at it, deciding not even to view the property. East Meon has helped her create a new life with her husband Alan in the Almshouses, where they live and to make many new friends. She loves living here.



Marilyn launched herself into the village by making wonderful cakes and was soon helping with serving teas, becoming a Village Hall committee member and a member of both the WI and a local book group. She loves to cook and as she says: "feed people". When she was living in Spain, paella was her favourite meal. Apparently the women do all the hard work preparing it and then the men cook it. Hence it is called paella or "for her". She had her own catering business for many years before she went to live in Spain and was taught by Richard Bartlett, her tutor when she was qualifying as a City and Guilds chef. They had not seen each other for over 30 years, when they met again one night in the George.

Marilyn and Alan were married by Jane Ball in All Saints Church in 2019. Alan had been in the army for 26 years, ending up as Chief Examiner at the Defence College in Bordon. She is rightly proud of Victoria, her daughter and her two grandchildren, Leo and Georgia.

Her signature decorations started with her first Christmas in her new home, when she thought that she would decorate a little Christmas tree and put it in the Well House. People used to say 'hi' when they walked past and she got to know a great many people in the village.

Marilyn is always keen to learn and she has just embarked on a new on-line course entitled 'Understanding Health and Nutrition' and a water colour class. She has also taken classes in Smooth Jive and of course, she loves watching village cricket with Alan. As a dancer, she says she is a true child of the 60s who loves Motown Magic.

When asked about her most prized possession, she answered without hesitation that it was her grandfather's oak framed shaving mirror that he had carried with him throughout the First War. He had been a Barnardo's Boy, then a bandsman and finally a medic in the war but had come home safely although scarred by what he had been through.

There is no doubt that Marilyn is a doer and that she relishes the company of friends and family but on a free day she shows a quieter side, when she settles down with a good book or develops her new water colour painting skills. She is so grateful to the many friends who encouraged and supported her to try painting. When autumn comes, she enjoys the smell of woodsmoke and the tree colours as the leaves turn.

Nicky Staveley



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Meon Valley Community First Responders Are Recruiting.

The Meon Valley Community First Responders (CFRs) have been very active in the last few months, being first on the scene at various 999 Ambulance calls, including an infant who also required the services of the Air Ambulance and three Paramedics, Cardiac Arrest calls and patients with everything from extreme low (84/63) blood pressure and another patient with extremely-low (0.7) blood sugar levels, in which the intervention of the team and ambulance crew undoubtedly saved the woman's life. We also attended someone with a massive reaction to a hornet sting. The First Responders managed the patient's airway before a crew and paramedic got them to hospital and into resuscitation.

As CFRs, we volunteer our time for free and are trained by the South Central Ambulance Service Charity to respond to time-critical, life-threatening 999 calls in the local area, usually arriving on scene ahead of an Ambulance. These include cardiac arrest, chest pain, breathing difficulties, fitting, seizures, severe bleeding, and stroke.

We are often asked by villagers on what number they can contact the CFRs. As we are volunteers and make ourselves available to respond when we can fit it around other life and work commitments, we are not able to be contacted directly and are only allowed to respond to a patient when dispatched by the 999 control room.

The correct numbers to contact in the event of an emergency are 999 for life-threatening medical emergencies like suspected heart attacks, strokes, severe bleeding, or loss of consciousness.

If one of us is signed-on at the time of the incident and able to reach the scene ahead of an Ambulance crew, we will then be dispatched to the incident by the 999 control room.

You can also call 111 for urgent medical help or advice when it is not a life-threatening emergency. The 111 operator may decide to help arrange an ambulance if one is needed at which time we may also be dispatched to help.

Sometimes we are sent to patients who have fallen and are unable to get up by themselves. This is also covered in our training and the team have access to a device called a Mangar Elk - a powered lifting cushion, which is sometimes used for helping such patients back up and into a chair or to their feet.

In the event you find a neighbour, family or friend who has had such a fall, a very useful app to keep on your phone is iStumble. This app is something we use ourselves when assessing such patients. The app will guide you through a series of questions and prompt you to either call for the emergency services or to potentially lift the patient if it is safe to do so.

Another App that is good to have on your phone is the GoodSam Responder app. This app includes a map, which shows the location of nearby Public Access Defibrillators (PAD). Also, if you are adequately trained in Basic Life Support, including CPR, the app allows you to sign-up to be contacted in the event of an emergency close by.

As of February, East Meon has four PADs, with the latest addition being close to the school at the junction of Temple Lane, Coome Road and Chapel Street. This new defibrillator is in addition to one at the Village Hall, one in the High Street Telephone Box by the Izaak Walton and one by the Forge on the entrance gate to the Recreation/Cricket Field. It is well worth reminding yourself of your closest PAD.

If you are interested in getting more closely involved, we are currently recruiting for new CFRs in the Petersfield, Liss and Bordon areas, so please get in touch with either Jennifer.ham@sca-charity.org.uk or clive.tillbrook@sca-charity.org.uk

CFRs Su, Debbie, Clive or Jennie can also carry out basic life support awareness training sessions at any local venue and would be more than happy to arrange a session with any of the village clubs or associations. These sessions cover: Finding a patient; Alerting the Emergency Services; Assessing the Patient for Consciousness; CPR; and how to use the Defibrillator. We can also do this for business entities, although there will be a charge of £200 for businesses, which forms a donation to the South Central Ambulance Service Charity.

Clive Tillbrook



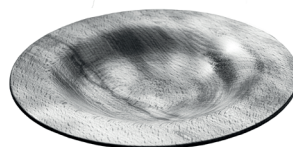
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East Meon Flower Festival 21st – 24th May 2026

Last put on in 2012, next year we are delighted to be hosting another East Meon Flower Festival in All Saints. At the epicentre of the village for nearly 900 years the church is the perfect setting for a beautiful weekend of magnificent floral displays representing all the wonderful groups that make up our village and valley.

We will be hosting a number of fun ticketed events at the same time to entice more visitors – concerts, talks, art, drama, and of course delicious teas. This is a really important fundraiser for the church and a chance to see it in one of its most bestest lights.

We would love to take this opportunity, also, to make the Church Yard look even more fabulous – and ask that if you have a loved one there, perhaps over the weekend of the Festival you might consider adding an extra special bouquet of flowers on the grave?

Anyone who's been involved with a Fete or May Fair will know these sorts of events cannot happen without volunteers!

In that vein we are looking for people / companies to offer their time and / or sponsorship to the programme. In 2012 we had a plethora of amazing local companies sponsoring the project – and once again, cap in hand – if you think you or your company would like to be involved please do not hesitate to contact us!

Please check your diaries and if you think you might have time to spare we will most definitely need your help... if you have any ideas that might enhance the weekend or if you have a skill that might be handy... Be in touch!

We need you!

Thank you so much!

CdeL

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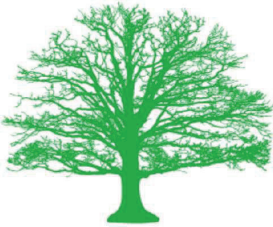


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East Meon Garden Club Annual Show 2025

After what has been a Mediterranean summer (minus the beach and cocktails), East Meon Garden Club held its Annual Show on Sunday 17 August. This is the day when local green fingers, crafty minds, and jam aficionados all come out of hiding to share the fruits (sometimes literally) of their labours. The result? A wonderfully colourful, slightly competitive, and delightfully English celebration of All Things Village and Gardens.

The Village Hall flung open its doors at the heroic hour of 8 am and by 10:30, the place was bursting with bounty: tomatoes, courgettes, dahlias, roses, jars of chutney and marmalade, cake and scones. With over 300 entries across 88 classes, if it grows, glitters or goes in a jar, it was probably on a table.

A special mention must go to the children's classes, where artistic young minds created animals out of fruits and vegetables - we had an elephant and a peacock, boats made from the contents of the recycled bin, jam jars of flowers and scones. Well done to all our entrants.

Our crack team of judges – a mix of seasoned professionals and brave local experts – wandered through the displays armed with clipboards. After much deliberation (and perhaps a quiet scone or two), certificates were awarded and the maths began. With the kind of Excel wizardry that would make a City banker weep, the overall winners were announced by the ever-graceful Jane Atkinson.

Let's raise a watering can to our triumphant cup winners:

- Mary Chaplain – RHS Banksian Medal & East Meon Flower Cup
- Emma Roberts – Best in Show (for her stunning vegetable trug),
Vegetable Cup & Challenge Cup
- Alastair Dudley Williams – Allotment Cup
- Susan Davenport – Novice Cup
- Wendy Cooper – Produce Cup & John Davis Salver for Arts & Crafts
- a phenomenal achievement
- Lindsey Thomson – Edgebourne Cup for her floral arrangements
- Pamela Peacock – Photography Cup
- Fiona Wyatt - RHS Recognition Award for services to the EMGC
- Leo – Children's Cup



Susan Davenport receiving the
Novice Cup



Alastair Dudley-Willams
Allotment Prize



Mary Chaplin receiving the RHS
Banksian Award and East Meon
Flower Cup



Fiona Wyatt receiving RHS Recognition Award

A massive thank you to everyone who entered. Whether it was jam, garlic, or gladioli your hard work and planning made the day what it was. Let's not forget some veg were sown in the depth of winter back in February and chutney bottled whilst some of us were still finishing off the Christmas Cake.

And to the East Meon Garden Club Committee – the legends of logistics – thank you for wrestling tables, stacking chairs, and keeping the whole day running smoothly, you've done the village proud.

Looking ahead, don't forget the next EMGC event: Monday 6th October, 7 for 7:30 pm, Village Hall – "Gardens of the Italian Lakes"
See you there!

Emma Crowley

History Group

Arguably, one of the better things about the end of the summer is the start of the History Group's programme of autumn and winter talks. And for the 2025-26 season we hope we have chosen another wide ranging programme to suit all interests.

We open in October (rather gratuitously) with a talk on Vulcan Bombers. We then delve back in time for our third talk tracing the history of Winchester; followed by a story charting how pre-war Jewish immigrants grew a fledging tobacco business into an enormous business empire. Next we have the Vikings in Sussex, followed by a renowned local author's take on the English Civil War. We finish with some marine archaeology at a sunken Neolithic Suffolk village.

Our talk dates are as follows:

Monday 13 October.	Vulcan Bombers
Monday 10 November.	Winchester
Monday 8 December.	The family who founded a tobacco empire and the Lyons Tea shops.
Monday 26 January.	Vikings in Sussex
Monday 16 February.	English Civil War
Monday 23 March.	Sunken Neolithic Suffolk.

We do hope this programme meets with your approval and look forward to welcoming you in Village Hall on the above dates, as usual from 7pm when we will open a cash bar, with all talks starting at 730pm.

In the meantime, if you would like to sign up for this coming season, our subs are unchanged at £20 per person, or if you prefer £5 per talk (including house guests etc).

Our bank details are as follows:

Sort code: 20-69-40 Account number: 43610209

Many thanks

Andy Hales, History Group

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EAST MEON CINEMA

Autumn Entertainment

We hope you enjoyed the splendid ROMANTIC ROAD at the end of September. Next up, MR BURTON - a biopic of Richard Burton with the incomparable Toby Jones as our hero's guide and mentor. Then in November, East Meon favourite Carey Mulligan stars in the charming THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND - "a warm, perceptive and quietly life-affirming" British comedy. The Christmastime film is still a mystery, but all will be revealed soon!



Friday 31st October
MR BURTON
(Cert 12A, 124 mins)

A gripping account of the back story of Wales's greatest actor

It's 1942 and Richard Jenkins (Harry Lawtey) is at school in Port Talbot, caught between the pressures of an alcoholic father, a devastating war, and his own ambitions. A new opportunity beckons when Richard's natural talent for drama catches the attention of his teacher, Philip Burton (Toby Jones). The young man thrives under Philip's strict tutelage and the guidance of a kindly landlady, Ma Smith (Lesley Manville). But as the acting world comes within Richard's reach, the burden of his past risks holding him back forever.



Friday 28th November
THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND
(Cert 12A, 99 mins)

A big-hearted story on a small west coast island

Charles (Tim Key), an eccentric lottery winner who lives alone on a remote island, dreams of getting his favourite musical duo, Mortimer-McGwyer (Carey Mulligan and Tom Basden), back together. His fantasy quickly turns into reality when the bandmates and former lovers accept his invitation to play a private show at his home on Wallis Island. Old tensions resurface as Charles tries desperately to salvage his dream gig.

Friday 2nd January
Watch this space!

We don't yet know what the Christmastime film is going to be. We'll announce it in November so look out on email and Facebook pages for details. For the moment, Save The Date!

We're sure most of you know the form by now, but if you're new to the village do come along. The films are screened in East Meon Village Hall at 7.30pm on a Friday, usually the last of the month. Tickets are a bargain at £6.50 each, available at the shop, one the door or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/east-meon-cinema. There's a bar, ice creams, excellent company and great entertainment.

If you would like to be kept up to date with forthcoming films, 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

Nature Gets Angry

We worry when our children get angry. But sometimes we should worry when they do not. When the new school year began, I was confronted by a young person who was angry and despairing about how plastic in the oceans was killing the wildlife that he loved so much. There was a palpable sense of not being able to do anything about it. And it's easy to give up in despair. But anger can breed determination to make things better, however little we can do. Being involved in the Nature group is a bit like that. The small things that we and others do are not, in themselves, going to save the planet but they can make a difference.

It's been a difficult summer with the high temperatures and lack of rain. As ever, we won't know for a while how it has affected the natural world around us. Fortunately, the hedges and trees that we planted at the cricket pitch and along the bottom of The Green are well established and the rain came just in time to keep them going.

After the terrible time for butterflies in last year's wet weather, the early sunshine this year saw a boom in the numbers we counted on our "transect" above South Farm. It has been lovely to see Peacocks, Red Admirals and Tortoiseshells like jewels on our garden flowers. But many of their food sources succumbed to the heat early. Hopefully, not too early. We will see next year.

Looking forward, our next big project is the patrol on Coombe Road next spring to rescue migrating toads and newts. The dry summer will have made life tough for them and they will need all the help they can get as those that have survived head back to the pond where they breed.



Earlier this year, I found myself puzzling over rabbits' colouring. There's a lovely colony at the top of the field behind the Frogmore Cottage car park. As they sit grazing, our meat-eating spaniel hardly notices them, so well camouflaged is their mottled brown fur. But once they start moving, up pops this bright white bum. How can that make sense? No self-respecting fox (or spaniel) can miss it. Well, the naturalists' wisdom says that the white

bum is an excellent warning to other grazing rabbits as soon as the first alerted rabbit starts moving. Apparently, a white bum that keeps bouncing up and down also makes it more difficult for the predator to focus on it's potential meal. I guess a few million years of evolution cannot be wrong.

Let me put in a word for household spiders. There's a lot of them around at this time of year and they seem to bring mortal fear and trembling to many a timid soul. First, no English spider will eat you - just as well given that they inject their prey to turn them into a liquid they can ingest. Second, no English spider will kill you, even the rare, venomous ones. But they will eat very large numbers of insects that might kill you (such as mosquitos), that will eat the clothes you love (clothes moths) or that will bring unhealthy bacteria to your food (flies). Spiders can look a bit sinister but perhaps it's time to see them as your allies in life's journey rather than as your enemies.

As ever, if you want to help us with our work to support the natural world then we welcome new members, however limited the time you can spare. Contact us at eastmeonnature.com

Jonathan Iremonger

News in Brief

Village Hall Refresh

East Meon Village Hall say the hall is DESPERATELY needing a freshen up of paint. Unfortunately it is such a big job we don't have the funds to allow this... so we have decided to have a great big village paint up.

Please come down to the hall on Saturday & Sunday 11th & 12th of October at any point in the day with a paint brush and roller and help us make this hall look much better.

We need to do what we can to keep this village hall going with bookings and classes, unfortunately it is looking a little tired. Let's all pull together a community to make our village hall last.

Dell Autumn Hours

The Dell is staying open through to 21st December

Thursdays are now for the grown-ups. From 2nd October on Thursday evenings (6–10pm) for slower-paced, candlelit dinners. The wet-weather spaces - the Tipi, Yurt and Boycie the Bus - seat up to 90, making this a good spot for Autumn/Winter celebrations.

Save the dates: Halloween Feast (31st October), Bonfire Night (8th November), Pizza & Piscos (20th November), and our Winter Solstice Finale (21 December). The space can be hired for birthdays, work doos or festive gatherings. Pre-order pizzas online or email us (info@thedellhampshire.co.uk) for group bookings.

West Meon Health Reminder

The health centre would like to remind users that prescription renewals need to be booked every six months.

Parish Council Update – September 2025

At September's meeting, we co-opted and welcomed Simon Sharp onto the Parish Council. We're now back up to our cohort of nine councillors;- Simon's responsibilities will be posted on the noticeboard and website soon.

Plans to improve the village for residents and visitors continue apace. The improved and more accessible footpath on the green is now complete. This was paid for using CIL money. (What's CIL? See the Parish Council update in the last edition of Meon Matters!) If you're using the Village Hall car park, please don't park in front of the footpath on the yellow hatched area, as this makes our new, accessible footpath far less accessible.

The metal, black and white finger-post signs in the village are looking tired so it's planned from October to refurbish them;- they should look a lot brighter when they're put back up. Thank you to our District/Local Councillor for a grant towards the cost. Also, on the theme of signs, the Lengthsman will be cleaning the 'East Meon' signs at the various entrance points to our village.

A litter picking session will be organised later in the year – if you'd like to join in, do let us know.

The river in the High Street is due for its annual tidy-up on October 23rd when SDNP Rangers and volunteers will be getting themselves wet clearing out excess plants and generally improving how it looks. If you're in the High Street then, do say hello.

Safety for all road users is always on our minds and those of you who remember our Parish Priority Statement (which can be seen on the South Downs National Park website) will recall that reducing speeding through East Meon is one of our priorities. To that end, we are looking to install a 3rd speed sign coming into the village from Langrish to remind drivers of their speed, and to slow down. Hampshire Highways has allocated some money towards traffic calming in the village and are suggesting, among various ideas, putting gate structures at the village entrance points, alongside the 'East Meon' signs, further to remind drivers that they are entering a village and to slow down. Some villages have made these attractive with flower troughs etc.

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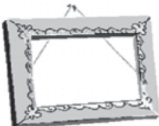
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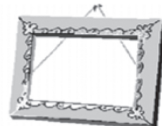
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Two clubs are using the sports pavilion and football pitch. East Meon Veterans Football Club has signed up for another season and we also have the Bowman of Petersfield archery club using the facilities for a trial period.

It's been a very quiet time for planning applications. Just one in the past few months, and no homeowner applications – a reflection of the times, perhaps?

Finally, if you have any questions that you'd like to ask the Parish Council or you just want to find out more about what we do, come along to one of our meetings – the next one is Monday 17th November at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Steve Ridgeon

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Cricket Season - A Great Year

It's been a great year up at the cricket club this year; at the time of writing it's played 22 / won 9, drawn 5 and lost 8, a new captain (Andrew de Lotbinière) and vice-captain (Oli Atkinson) in place, the weather putting paid to only one match so far, although there was the odd soggy moment in the win over the Court House.

36 players have turned out on a Sunday so far this season and there have been 5 hundreds (4 of them for the Vice-Captain and 1 for his older brother James) and 6 other players passed 50 including 3 50s for Josh Haslett.

Bowling heroics have been spread around the team – although special mention should go to Ali Wheeler for his 6-10 against Shirrel Heath and Aaron Rees for his 5-6 against Stonor, Mark Davis also picked up 5-39 away at Lynchmere. Rupert Hetherington was his usual unplayable self and David Blackburn could be relied on to fire it up, get angry and hit the odd 13 year old in the head (“that’s what helmets are for, I’m a fast bowler” he told us), and Josh Haslett who consistently picked up wickets every time he bowled.

The season started with a 10 wicket loss to Petersfield and then a 10 wicket win against Clanfield; winning draws against Lynchmere and XII Men followed up by two losses including losing by 1 run against CYPOS when we were chasing just 142 for victory. A successful 195 run chase against Westbourne was a particularly satisfying win. Three heavy losses against Rioteers, Elsted and Grayswood was then followed by three big wins against Froxfield, CYPOS & Strokemakers.

A new tour to East Sussex & Kent was more successful off the field than on the field (and even then only just).

The highlight of the season was undoubtedly the sixes tournament at the end of June – a huge success, with fantastic cricket won by Petersfield Hockey 6 (AKA the Atkinson invitational VI) who defeated the Park Farm Rangers in a high scoring final.

The cricket segued seamlessly into music, dancing & DJs with the beer flowing and a great turnout from locals and campers to raise lots of money for the club and other good causes in the village. A major big thank you goes to Ian Cook and Tim Lawrence for putting this together.

It goes without saying that a massive thank you also needs to go to all the people who make the cricket possible. To Chis Warren for his groundsmanship, to James Atkinson for his tireless energy and effort around the club, the general grounds team of Tim Clay, Tim Lawrence and Matt Stickland for all the cutting and rolling.



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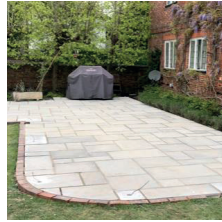
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