

# THE BRIDGE

April 2021 – May 2021

THE PARISH MAGAZINE FOR DROXFORD, MEONSTOKE, CORHAMPTON & EXTON

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# The Magazine for the Meon Bridge Benefice of Droxford, Exton, Meonstoke & Corhampton with Preshaw

www.bridgechurches.org.uk

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**The COPY DEADLINE for  
the next issue of  
THE BRIDGE  
is  
WEDNESDAY 5th MAY**

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A year of Covid restrictions! Who would have thought back in March 2020 when the Prime Minister announced a brief three-week lockdown that we'd now be enduring our third one?

Despite it all our four villages have rallied brilliantly. WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages set up at the start to keep everyone in touch (see page 8) have been used by dozens of people each day, from offering shopping trips and prescription runs for those isolated in their homes, to requests to borrow jigsaw puzzles for bored children. Volunteers have organised foodbank donations too, providing meals each week to dozens of families in need, locally and across the Meon Valley.

Our four pubs have also managed to weather the crisis, despite having had to close for months at a time. As you will read on pages 14 and 15, it's been a struggle for them, but the support of villagers in buying their takeaways has kept them going, and their landlords can't thank everyone enough.

When normality returns, a street party perhaps?

Ian Gilchrist, Editor

*Cover picture: Droxford Church, taken by Stephen Jeffery from Bishop's Waltham. The church roof, as many will know, was hit by lead thieves in January, causing £8,000 of damage. See page 9 for an update on repairs.*

THE BRIDGE is delivered at the start of the months of February, April, June, August, October and December. If you are responsible for village activities, diaries and schedules, please send your write-ups to the Bridge Editor at the address shown above. Copy in Microsoft word is preferred, rather than PDFs which can sometimes present layout problems.

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#### Secretary:

Gill Edmunds 877705

#### Treasurer:

Richard Baxter 877227

#### Gift Aid Secretary:

Richard Baxter 877227

#### Organist:

John Martin 877385

#### Sacristan:

Laura Jerosch 01329 231956

#### Vergar:

James Matthissen 877867

#### 3rd Sunday Services:

Ros Collins 877782

### EXTON

#### Churchwarden:

Richard Pepys 878035

#### Secretary:

Richard Pepys 878035

#### Treasurer & Gift Aid Secretary:

David Frere-Cook 877838

**Organist:** *Position vacant; applications welcome*

**Sacristan:** *Position vacant; applications welcome*

**Vergar:** Bob Miles

### MEONSTOKE WITH CORHAMPTON

#### Churchwarden:

Angela Peagram 878725

**Secretary:** (via Churchwarden)

#### Treasurer:

Elizabeth Ridge 899102

#### Gift Aid Secretary:

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#### Organists:

(Meonstoke): *Position vacant; applications welcome*

(Corhampton): John Martin (am) 877385

#### Sacristan:

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### PRESHAW

**Coordinator:** *Position vacant; applications welcome*

### OTHER DENOMINATIONS

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#### Methodist & United Free Church (Bishop's Waltham)

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# ON REFLECTION



## The new hope that Easter brings

This time last year the weather was sunny and mild, and snowdrops were being joined in the garden by daffodils in bud. Spring was on its way, and Christians were looking forward to the renewed hope, light and life that Easter brings.

There would be the VE-75 celebrations too in May, when we would meet together in prayer to give thanks to the wartime generation, whose bravery and sacrifice was to guarantee us 75 years of largely uninterrupted peace in Europe.

But by June Easter had been cancelled as a celebration, churches had been closed, and the focus of our thanks was now directed towards the NHS and its untiring key workers.

Summer promised greater hope, but the feared 'second spike' then arrived with a vengeance. Who could have imagined that within a year of the first lockdown 140,000 would have died from Covid-19 in the UK, twice the number of UK civilians killed by enemy action in the whole of the war?

The effect of the pandemic has been to cast a dark shadow over the whole world, the pain of which has been quite unlike anything many of us have ever experienced.

For Christians there are biblical parallels here, because the death of Jesus on the cross also brought darkness. It must have shattered those who gave up their livelihoods to follow him; brought utter despair to those who saw how he could help

even more people; and it must have brought profound grief to those who loved him.

We too have tasted times of grief, and some even despair. But there is light ahead. The science and the humanity of our medical professionals is gradually reversing the progress of this dreadful virus through vaccinations, medication and their wonderful care. For Christians, Easter Day, with all that it commemorates, also brings new hope into our broken world. Opening the churches for Easter this year will give us an even greater sense of the open tomb with its stone rolled away.

New meaning is emerging for us after a year of sadness and isolation. There is the real hope of joy and companionship with each other before God.

So when we greet one another with a cheery 'Happy Easter' may we not forget the darkness, but also truly give thanks for the new light and life that redemption brings. May all that we have learned about ourselves and each other, about hope and compassion, never be forgotten, just as God never forgets us, sending his own Son to suffer and die, and rise again for us.

For out of that suffering came The Light of the World. I pray for light and joy for every one of you, and for all those that you love.

**The Reverend Tony Forrest**  
**Rector**

## CHURCH RE-OPENINGS

As *The Bridge* goes to press we are expecting our churches to open from 31st March. Details of services for April and May are on page 24.

Corhampton Church will initially be open as a place of private prayer only. Hopefully services may resume there later in June, when there is a full opening of all churches.

Opening times for private prayer are published on Facebook, the website and noticeboards.

### ONLINE SERVICES

Online services are still being streamed. Please see page 24, or visit [www.bridgechurches.org.uk/streamed\\_services](http://www.bridgechurches.org.uk/streamed_services). Simply scroll down the page and find the date for the service you would like to view. Click on the arrow and it will start the YouTube video. You can also find them by clicking on "On-Line Services" on the front page of the website.

### PARKING ADVICE

There are now three parking signs on the apron in front of the main gate onto Church Green: 'No Public Parking,' 'No Parking on the Turning Area' and 'Disabled Parking on the Grassed Area.'

May we politely ask that the area is only used either on a day when there is a service by those with mobility difficulties, or if you have a heavy or difficult load to ferry into the church or churchyard.

In both instances would you please be kind enough to stay on the grassed area. The turning circle needs to be kept clear for emergency access and for those who find themselves on Church Lane by mistake.

Your help with this would be much appreciated.

**Angela Peagram**

# Royal British Legion Droxford and District Branch Celebrates 100 years



**This is a special year for your local Droxford & District Branch of the Royal British Legion. Whilst the Legion as a whole will be celebrating its 100th birthday, our local branch is even older!**

It was founded on 26th March 1920, meeting in the White Horse Hotel, Droxford, as "Comrades of the Great War". We are thus a year older than the Royal British Legion which commemorates its centenary on 15th May 2021, becoming "Royal" in 1971 to mark its 50th anniversary. The Legion remains the principal national champion for Remembrance, Comradeship and Support for Service men and women, veterans and their families.

It is a matter of record that over 6 million men and women served in the armed forces of the British Empire during the First World War. Of these, nearly one million were killed and two million returned with wounds. More than half of these required lifelong care and support. The rapid transition to peace resulted in considerable hardship for many who had served and fought for a "new world".

By 1921 unemployment in the UK had reached 2 million out of a population of only 37 million, and homelessness was endemic. There was no welfare state or national health service in those days, and it was therefore up to the Service and other charities to step up to help.

Field Marshal the Earl Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (1915-18), was one of the founders of the British Legion and served as its president until his death in 1928.

Lord Haig also instituted the Haig Fund which sought to raise funds for ex-Servicemen and their dependents by offering artificial poppies to be worn by the public in exchange for donations. Growing in abundance on the ravaged battlefields of Europe, the poppy has become a potent symbol for remembrance, new life, and hope.

Thus the Haig Fund is now called the Poppy Appeal and is a major source of funding for the RBL. £106,000 was raised in 1921 and £50 million in 2019. Unsurprisingly, due to the pandemic, there is likely to be a smaller collection for 2020.

Once limited to former Servicemen, membership of the Legion grew to 3 million by 1950. As veterans from both World Wars declined in number, membership was extended



***Poppy wreath laid by the Branch at the Menin Gate, Ypres, in 2018***

to serving personnel and civilians with or without Service connections.

There remain 235,000 RBL members but, reassuringly, the Droxford & District Branch has remained steady at about 100. Many are ex-Service but there is also a healthy mix of male, female and civilian members. Last year the RBL helped some 100,000 Service personnel, veterans, or family members in a variety of ways. Of these about 1,300 who received financial assistance live in Hampshire while many others, including some within the Bridge parishes, have been given other forms of support.

The next RBL meeting will be held on Monday 10th May. The talk is entitled "The New World Order or Disorder" by Doctor Chris Parry CBE PhD, historian and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Swansea. Non-members are always welcome to attend our meetings and details of these are at [www.droxfordweb.co.uk/rbl](http://www.droxfordweb.co.uk/rbl).

Subject to Covid-19 restrictions, talks will either be live or via Zoom. Please contact me at [robmunroscott@aol.com](mailto:robmunroscott@aol.com) for log-in or other details.

**Rob Scott**

# Skate park to be upgraded

Meonstoke and Corhampton Parish Council was lobbied a couple of years ago for the rather tired-looking skate park by the Meon Hall to be refurbished and updated.

Well, as so often, it's taken some time to put a proposal together and secure funding, but we're very pleased to report that a new, improved skate park should be in place before the summer holidays – which, in any case, is likely to be the earliest time that the Covid rules will allow it to be freely used.

We have been granted just over £17,000 from the South Downs National Park Authority, money that originates from the contributions that developers have to make towards play and sport equipment.

Together with the renewal fund that the Parish Council has been building up, we will be investing £30 000 in the facility, which will be rather larger.

It will include replacing the riding surface of the two existing ramps, adding a larger jump/fun box in the middle, and a new separate mini ramp.

The Multi-Use Games Area will still be fully accessible and also available as an occasional overflow parking area when the need arises.

**Footway on A32.** A bid has also been made to the National Park Authority to fund a footway on the eastern side of the A32 northwards from the shop lay-by, to enable the residents of Warnford Road and De Port Heights to reach the shop without the need to cross the



*Oliver Westwood, 12, of Rectory Lane, shows off his skills at the skate park. (Picture used with parental permission)*

busy main road twice.

This will be a longer-term project as we are unlikely to hear the outcome of this round of bids for the Community Infrastructure Fund until much later in the year – fingers crossed!

**Signs replaced.** Finally, we should have the rather venerable (and supposedly 'temporary'!) Meon Hall and Recreation Ground signs at The Pound replaced

with a more permanent solution soon, and the finger post at the top of Bucks Head Hill fully repaired.

And you might notice that the Parish element of your new Council Tax bill has reduced, if only by a very small margin.

*Jerry Pett  
Chairman, Meonstoke and  
Corhampton Parish Council*

## From the Registers

### Funerals

Test Valley Crematorium  
25th January

**J. Gary McGuire, aged 82**

Meonstoke  
10th February

**Graham Lloyd Fielding, aged 83**

Droxford  
18th February

**Jean Iris Newman, aged 90**

# LÔÔK IN

# LIBRARY BOOK-OUT!

I'm afraid I still can't be sure when the Look-In Book-Out Wednesday meetings in St. Andrew's will begin again. However, I'm looking forward to the time when we can meet for a chat and coffee.... there'll be a lot of catching up to do!

*Lorna Allured 877718*

## Droxford History Group

**Outing to the D-Day Museum, Southsea**

**Thursday 27th May**

**Assemble at the Museum Car Park at 10.30am**

**Lunch to follow at The Still and West**

**All subject to any restrictions that may apply at the time.**

**Confirmation of arrangements nearer the date.**

**Olive Hathaway 878768**

## How a year of WhatsApp has brought us all closer

**WhatsApp groups set up at the start of Covid restrictions last March for villagers to share information and keep in touch, have been astonishingly successful.**

Hundreds have used them to swap information ranging from prescription runs and lost cats, to recommendations of plumbers and mobile hairdressers.

Residents have warned of pot holes and road closures; offered shopping trips for isolated people; supported NHS staff with home-baked cakes; recommended tradespeople; asked for help finding lost phones and keys; passed on information about takeaway pub menus and church services; re-homed flower pots and curtains; exchanged local historical facts and photos; put up artwork, funny memes, videos and cartoons; and requested items to borrow, including one for a fairy costume for a man planning a charity walk.

Edd Heller and Sarah Smith helped set up the two Droxford WhatsApp groups, while Steve Clark started two groups for Meonstoke, Corhampton and Exton as well as a Facebook page. Between them the groups have over 500 members.

One villager posted recently: "As one who lives alone, I have to say that just knowing you're all there for us in a time of need has felt like a warm hug. The chat groups have brought friends old and new into my home. I hope that soon I'll get to

meet all those for whom I only have a name."

Sarah Smith told The Bridge, "Our Droxford WhatsApp really has become a means of sticking together, enabling all of us to feel part of the community, with some of us chatting with people we haven't even met.

"We hope that the group continues to welcome new members to the community and provide support for anyone who needs it, and that when we are at last allowed to put faces to names we'll be looking forward to a grand BBQ get-together."

Steve Clark said, "On our two WhatsApps we've had everything from jokes and amusing video clips; recommendations for everything from chiropractors to roofers; horseshoes have been reunited with their owners; plants, cakes and sourdough starters have been shared; and jigsaws borrowed.

"People have done their bit for recycling too.... with unwanted items being given away, or sometimes sold, rather than going to landfill, everything from car seats, televisions, corrugated iron and furniture, to even old copies of The Beano."



## Primroses and Snowdrops

If the present weather is an indication of what lies ahead in April and May, we can anticipate some warm sunny days, ever mindful of late frosts which can affect the blossom on the fruit trees.

The gardens have certainly woken up since the beginning of the year, and have surely brought pleasure to the many who have been avoiding the contact of others.

How cheering it has been to see the primroses push through the soil, and open into those pretty white blooms we all appreciate. And I wonder how many have thought about the wonderful sight of the snowdrops in the grounds of Warnford church, even though the event has been cancelled this year.

Of course, the primroses are not the only flowers in the garden. Tiny cyclamens, crocuses, daisies, hellebores and daffodils are all part of the picture. The delicate tiny purple violets are also visible, as are catkins and blossoms.

The birds are once more noisy in the trees and hedges, enjoying the sunshine and anticipating their nest-building. They respond to the sun and warmth just as we humans do. Bees are already in the garden, so they are already finding nectar from certain plants.

Since April is thought of as a showery month, this song should be in tune with what we might expect.

*"Though April showers may come your way,  
They bring the flowers which bloom in May.  
So if it's raining have no regrets,  
It isn't raining rain you know, it's raining violets.  
And where you see clouds upon the hills,  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils.  
So keep looking for a bluebird and listening for his song,  
Whenever April showers come along."*

**Jackie Hibbert**

# Lead thieves cause £8,000 of damage

Wardens of Droxford's St Mary and All Saints Church have praised villagers for the way they rallied round to save the 800-year-old Grade 1 listed building from further damage after thieves stole lead from the roof, leaving rain pouring in and the church facing an £8,000 insurance claim.

Following pleas on social media for help on the morning the theft was discovered in February, villagers immediately arrived to clear the water from the altar, floor and pews. Others came with tarpaulins to cover the furniture to prevent further damage from a storm that had been predicted for later in the day.

Church warden Bonnie Hamilton told The Bridge, "People were amazing. They included villagers who might not necessarily have had a religious following, but were horrified by the theft, and didn't want to see their church being further wrecked by more rain, particularly as we didn't know how soon the roofer could come out to make the roof secure.

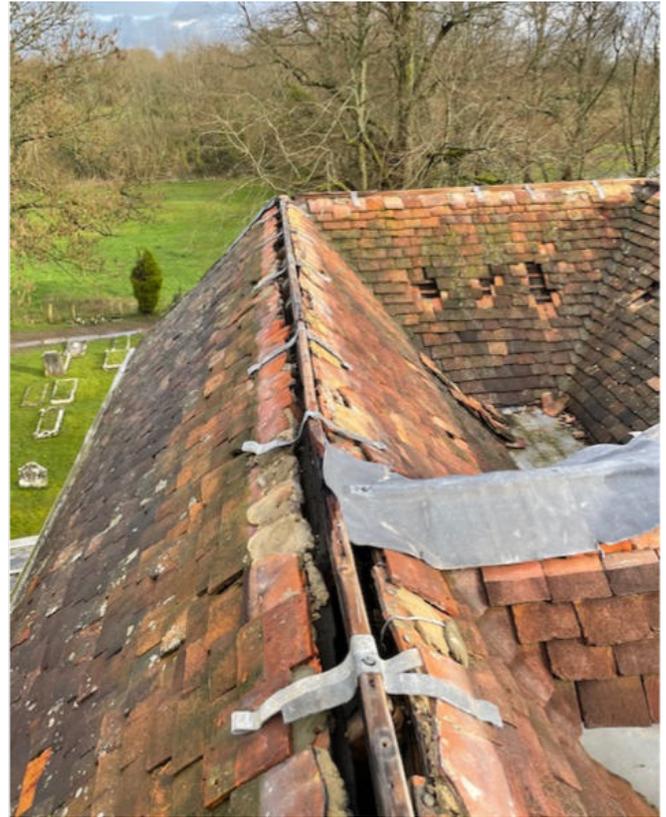
"The damage was really quite brutal, as

the thieves had used hammers to smash some of the lovely Victorian tiles on the roof to make foot-holds so they could reach the lead, which left gaping holes in the ridge line. The noise would have been quite loud, but as the church is set back, unfortunately nobody heard the racket.

"I have to say, though, that our insurers, Aviva, were brilliant, as was

our retained roofer Garry Othen who arrived within two hours of our call and made the roof line secure.

"We are now discussing lead substitute replacement materials with English Heritage, because this is the third time in ten years we've been hit by lead thieves, and if we replace it with more lead like we did last time, the chances are it will happen again."



# IN THE GARDEN

April & May



**Spring started early this year with unseasonably fine weather in late February and early March, resulting in fine displays of spring bulbs.**

However, it is still necessary to exercise caution when dealing with new tender plants raised from seed such as tomatoes and courgettes, or from tubers such as dahlias. They must be properly hardened off by putting in the open on warm, still days, and protected indoors or in a greenhouse overnight.

Do not expose the plants on windy days as the tender leaves can quickly dry out and set the plants back significantly. Planting out permanently should be delayed until danger of frost is past.

**Vegetables** Leeks may be sown into trays or pots, or directly into a prepared bed. Sow maincrop carrots, purple sprouting broccoli and peas, and plant out onion sets. In May sow beetroot and continue to sow salad crops of lettuce, spring onion, radish, rocket etc.

It is a good idea to cover newly sown seed with mesh or fleece until the seeds have germinated, as this prevents birds, cats, mice etc. from disturbing the seeds. Protect potato foliage from late frosts by earthing up or covering with fleece.

**Fruit** Remove all dead and diseased leaves from strawberry plants, cutting as close as possible to the crown without damaging it. Feed with general-purpose fertiliser and put down a good layer of mulch. Put a cloche or polytunnel over early fruiting varieties to ensure earliest possible fruits. Keep an eye open for gooseberry sawfly (any sign of leaves being completely eaten) and if present spray with proprietary insecticide.

**Herbaceous border** Feed and mulch roses. Plant out sweet pea seedlings and sow annual seeds directly into the border. Prune hydrangea *Paniculata* and *Buddleia* very hard, to produce strong new growth this year.

Remember, these shrubs flower on the current year's growth, so they respond well to this treatment every year. In early April hard prune Sage and wall-trained or hedging *Pyracantha*. After flowering in late May, lightly trim back winter flowering heathers. Replant any self-sown *aquilegia* where required.

**Bulbs** Remember that snowdrops and crocus need feeding, and now is the time to give them a feed with tomato or rose fertiliser before the foliage dies back. When the flowers on narcissi and tulips have finished feed them in the same way. Remember to pinch out flower heads when they are over, and to leave the foliage intact for at least 6 weeks so that the bulbs build up energy to produce flowers next year.

**In the greenhouse** Cut back over-wintered fuchsias by about two thirds when the first buds start to show and begin to feed and water them. Take cuttings of dahlias started in compost earlier in the year. Look out for aphids, particularly on over-wintered fuchsias with tender new growth, and eliminate with appropriate pesticide or soapy water.

**Lawns** Now is the time to lay or sow new lawns. Existing lawns should be scarified to remove moss and thatch, and then fed with a proprietary lawn feed. If weeds are a problem in your lawn use a combined lawn weed and feed mixture.

*John Owen*



# Dedication of new Notice Board

The Rector, Rev Tony Forrest, has dedicated the new Church and Community Notice Board at the entrance to Meonstoke.

Tony said, "I dedicate this to the greater glory of God and as a blessing to all who visit this place."

He explained that its purpose is to display information about St Andrew's Church and village activities. "People walking by see a wonderful old church building across The Green, but many may not know what goes on inside it, or the valuable work that our church supporters do in our villages."

"Over time we'll be adding information on it, with a view, hopefully not too far away, to reflecting renewed post-Covid life, when there will be many more events for people to join in with."

The oak notice board was built by Greenbarnes Ltd of Brackley in Northamptonshire, and cost around £2,000.

Of this, County Councillor Roger Huxstep provided £1,000 from his HCC Discretionary Fund, while the PCC and the Friends of St Andrew's and Corhampton Churches (FOSACC) each contributed a further £500.

## Design

The South Downs National Park also supported the project, with Emily Summers and Elaina Whittaker-Slark acting as consultants on the design and content.

Others who gave valuable unpaid assistance included Andy Fielder, Gregor Logan and our Church Green Warden, Nicholas Ridge.

Cllr Huxstep will officially unveil the notice board at the Church Fete on 3rd July, Covid-19 regulations permitting.

Please get in touch with me if you would like to display information about any village activities.

**Angela Peagram**  
Church Warden  
01489 878725



*Dedicated to the greater glory of God*

... and a big thank you to our volunteers for keeping The Green looking so beautiful

What a lovely space the Church Green is, and how lucky we are to have it, and in such an idyllic setting.

But of course it needs constant upkeep, and volunteers have worked hard over the past few months to keep it looking beautiful.

Their work has included:

- Cutting down the Maple tree, with the wood being auctioned off on-line, raising £165.
- Truncating the willow tree that was blown over by high winds last April, and which as a result has now righted itself.
- Clearing the island of intrusive growth of hemlock water dropwort.

In addition, the fence along the path to the Church is being progressively replaced by volunteers, and a contractor is being appointed to replace the broken-down section of the fence between the pub and the main road.

As a result of these efforts the Green looks somewhat de-nuded, but we

are sure that vigorous growth will resume in all the right places, and that it will revert to a former more natural state during the course of next few months.

We also expect to see yellow and purple comfrey, flag iris, purple loosestrife, and many other varieties return in abundance, together with some riverbank wildlife.

Although there is no pot of money to keep the renovation work going (all expenses are paid for out of church funds) 2020 was financially kind to the Green.

Despite COVID-19 and Lockdown, the generous bequests and energetic work by volunteers enabled radical remodelling, and our thanks go to all of them.

However, more volunteers still are needed, so if you would like to become involved please contact me for details.

*Nicholas Ridge*  
Warden of The Green  
[andrewgreen@oakleafcottage.co.uk](mailto:andrewgreen@oakleafcottage.co.uk)

# 'A wonderful facility'

As you can read on pages 22 and 23 the Meon Hall is 40 years old this year. It was a huge village building project.

The foresight and efforts of so many people described in the article, and over the time since then, have provided us in our three villages of Meonstoke, Corhampton, and Exton with a wonderful facility.

A while after the hall was completed I was asked to help the Meon Hall Committee with its day-to-day management.

Over the years the Committee was led by **Andrew Buchanan** and then **John Dobby** as Chairman with Treasurers **Trevor Quarendon**, **Mark Mathews** and **Charlie Fullegar**.

There were many others, too numerous to mention, who have helped focus the continuing efforts of the villagers of Meonstoke, Corhampton and Exton to make the Meon Hall the community success that it is today.

When we are allowed to fully open again, the hall will be its usual smart clean well-kept self, ready to be hired.

So please use The Meon Hall for the huge range of family and group hirings for which it is so well suited, and recommend it to other people.

If you are interested in hiring The Meon Hall please email **Hannah Carpenter** the bookings secretary at [meonhallbookings@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:meonhallbookings@yahoo.co.uk), or if it is urgent please leave me a message on 01489 877916.



## The 200 Club

The evidence of support of the Meon Hall is its annual 200 Club, started over 40 years ago to raise money for the building work. Last year the 200 Club financed a refurbishment programme during the lockdown periods when the hall was closed.

Winners of the 2021 monthly £25 draws were: *February:* Rebecca Evans. *March:* Angela Peagram.

A huge thank you to everyone who has joined the 200 Club in 2021. So far 370 tickets have been sold! Even if you don't win one of the cash prizes during the year, by being a 200 Club member you will have helped the Management Committee to keep the hall all up to date, and well equipped.

With over £3,700 raised this year we have been successful in demonstrating community support for the Meon Hall, so that we can apply for grants and arrange for urgent work and purchases of new equipment.

James Morrice

## Gordon and Jane leaving after 50 years

After exactly half a century living in Droxford, Gordon and Jane Hope are moving from their South Hill home to a bungalow at Calne, near Chippenham in Wiltshire, to be nearer their wider family.

The couple have always taken a keen interest in village life. Gordon's main hobby has been tracing Droxford's history from the present day back to the 14th century, when records were written in Latin on parchment.

Gordon was also Droxford's Neighbourhood Watch chairman for over 20 years, until retiring from it two years ago.

Jane, a former nurse, set up Droxford's first playgroup with next-door neighbour Ros Collins in the 1970s, and later

became a classroom assistant. She also ran the after-school club for five years.

Gordon will be leaving the records of his historical research for others to use in future years, and asks that people

interested in seeing them should contact Stuart Attrill (878500) for access to the paper records. To view the records on-line please go to:

[www.friendsofdroxfordchurch.org.uk/documents](http://www.friendsofdroxfordchurch.org.uk/documents)



# Droxford School's new promotional video

We have finally managed to get our latest school promotional film 'in the can.'

Ben Clowes, a London-based film maker, recently spent a wet and windy Friday with us filming children, teachers, and the school environment, and conducting interviews. The result was this final, fantastic short video using some drone footage we already had.

It is designed to showcase our lovely school to parents present and future. It celebrates all that we do and have done, to ensure our children get the best education we can provide.

It is important to show parents at our linked infant schools – Meonstoke and

Newtown/Soberton – what their child's future junior school will be like.

It is also crucial to promote us as an exciting proposition for anyone interested in applying to our school, as we don't always have the 'footfall' of visitors to our school due the nature of where we are sited, being tucked away in the lovely village of Droxford.



Scan this QR code to watch the video

We feel the video really highlights the breadth and depth of our curriculum, and the wonderful outcomes the children of the school have



contributed towards.

We are very proud of it. It is authentic and genuinely promotes our core purpose: to educate, inspire and motivate in a safe, happy and nurturing environment.

If you have any questions about our school, including school places, and wish to have a friendly conversation, please don't hesitate to contact me via the school office:

[adminoffice@droxford.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@droxford.hants.sch.uk)

**Matthew Dampier**  
Headteacher

## PLANT & CAKE SALE

*Proceeds to go to:  
The Valley Preschool, Community Care Group,  
Meon Valley Orchestra, Meonstoke Toddler Group*

**Please arrive between 10.00am and 12.00 Noon  
(Numbers limit of 30 at any time)**

# Saturday, 22nd May

**In the garden of  
BROOK COTTAGE  
HIGH STREET, MEONSTOKE**

**Donations welcome, please for  
Plants; Cakes; Jams;  
Toys; Books; Raffle;  
This and That**



Coffee, tea, soft drinks  
Free entry to the garden  
If wet, still at Brook Cottage - be prepared!



## No Snowdrop Walk this year, but you can still donate to the cause



Thousands of visitors come to The Church of our Lady in Warnford each Spring to see the stunning display of snowdrops. In fact many just know the Warnford church simply as the 'Snowdrop Church.'

Alas, the pandemic has meant that the Warnford Snowdrop Walks, which have been held each Spring for over 50 years in the church grounds and Warnford Park, have had to be cancelled this year.

Over the years visitors have generously made donations to support the work of the church in Warnford. So if anyone who has visited in years gone by would like to make a donation to the church, this will be gratefully received. Cheques should be made out to Warnford PCC and posted to The Church of our Lady, Lippen Lane, Warnford SO32 3LE.

At a later date there will also be a Just Giving account set up on the Warnford Village Website.

Meanwhile, the 60 or so residents of Warnford and West Meon, who volunteer their time each year to help make the Snowdrop Walks such a success, look forward to seeing you there in 2022.

**Vera Short**

# Cheers, we're surviving!

Sadly 40 pubs a day are going out of business across the country, with many of the closures having been accelerated by the Covid restrictions. So how have our own four hostellers weathered the pandemic storm over the last 12 months?

As *The Bridge* editor Ian Gilchrist discovered, it's been a struggle, but they've come through.

**...thanks to  
takeaways,  
furlough  
and your  
support**



## The White Horse

The White Horse - unlike the Shoe, the Bucks Head and the Bakers Arms - is owned by its brewery, a situation which gave landlord Shekhar Nailwal and his wife Alexandra cause for concern when the first lockdown happened.

They feared the brewery, Hawthorn Leisure, might continue to demand the full rent and high overhead expenses, which could have meant permanent closure.

Happily they reached an agreement, but the couple was also concerned about the risk of contracting the virus, as they were dealing with customers and suppliers on a daily basis..

## Window service

So when pubs were able to reopen in July they decided to stay closed for another three weeks, and instead offer pre-booked takeaway curries during weekends, and Sunday roasts, to be collected through a window.

They used the proceeds of some of these to donate £600 to the Droxford cricket team, of which Shekhar is the main sponsor, and a total of £2,200 for Droxford and Meonstoke schools for their charities. He also donated curries to QA hospital staff.

But why be so generous when, financially, life was surely tough enough for them already?

Shekhar explained, "It was our way of

saying thank you to everyone who had supported us in the past, because running a village pub is very much a give-and-take relationship, and our hope is

that when we can be properly allowed to open again people will come back to us, because local businesses like ours can't survive without villagers' support."

## The Bakers Arms

At the Baker's Arms, owners Adam and Anna Cordery began using the downtime to refurbish their pub, repainting throughout, renovating the windows and toilets, installing new curtains, replacing the front porch and restoring the floors.

Then, after the first three months of lockdown ended in July, the pub had one of its busiest summers ever, helped by the Government's *Eat Out to Help Out* scheme.

"We had to close again in November, but were able to reopen in December," said Adam.

"However, with single households only allowed to dine inside, December was much quieter than in previous years.

"Then came Lockdown 3, which meant our last day of opening was Christmas Eve.

"Still, I'm optimistic, though there is talk of pubs not being allowed to serve alcohol, which will inevitably affect trade. It's a bit of a blunt tool. I can understand the Government not

wanting swathes of people getting drunk in city centres, but having a glass of wine with a meal in a country pub is a different matter entirely.

"So I don't envy the decision makers trying to legislate for the many different aspects of the hospitality industry, but we will happily adhere to whatever's decided.

## Reduced team

"Generally though I'm a 'glass half full' kind of person, and I'm very positive about the future. I'm expecting the lockdown to be over by the summer, and we will adapt to any restrictions in place when we do re-open.

"We'll manage with a reduced team to start with, and hopefully take the rest of the staff off furlough as business improves."



## The Shoe and the Bucks Head

Patrick and Annabel Young, owners of The Shoe, got off to a difficult lockdown start. At the end of 2019 they had decided to expand by buying The Bucks Head, and they spent two months refurbishing it, ready for a grand re-opening in March 2020.

That re-opening lasted just seven days before the first lockdown took place, and they had to close again.

"It wasn't exactly the best time to do it," recalls Annabel, "because just a week after we opened The Bucks Head, the Government was advising people not to go into pubs, which meant we had to close both pubs.

"What didn't help either was that the Bucks Head had relied on walkers and holidaymakers staying at its five en-suite B&B rooms. We'd had lots of pre-bookings for the spring and summer, and suddenly they were all cancelled.

"We were able to re-open both pubs in July when the Covid restrictions were eased, but then had to close again in



November, and then reopen briefly in December, but with all the restrictions regarding drinking with meals and limited numbers.

"This meant losing all Christmas parties, after which a third lockdown meant we had to shut down all over again."

But Annabel and Patrick were fortunate, in that they had already built up a successful pizza takeaway service, and were able to carry on with this, together with takeaway Sunday roasts once a fortnight.

The Sunday takeaways have proved extremely popular – a typical meal being tender roast beef in a rich red wine gravy, with vegetables and a Yorkshire pudding, for £14. These have sold out almost as soon as they have appeared on the pub's website, Instagram, Facebook page and WhatsApp, with around 100 orders each time.

"We decided to offer



takeaways fortnightly because we felt that if we did it every day there might only be a handful of orders, and it wouldn't be cost-effective," says Annabel. "But doing it once every two weeks has been very successful, because 100 takeaways on just one day is better than offering them every day, and just doing ten."

The Shoe has also offered takeaways on occasional Thursday evenings, with beer-battered fish and chips being among villagers' favourite meals.

"One thing we have been very grateful for is the Government's furlough scheme, which has allowed us to pay and retain our staff throughout the period.

"Hopefully we'll have people back in the bars and the rooms by the summer. and meanwhile our grateful thanks to all our customers for supporting us through all this."

## Fitness Classes in Meonstoke



Welcome to Meon Fit. I am sure some of you have seen or heard me outside at the Meon Hall over the last few months.

Having lived in Meonstoke for over 16 years now and bringing up our four children, my passion for exercise has been transformed from a hobby into a career.

Since qualifying as a fitness instructor last year, I am hoping to encourage more and more people, both men and

women, to be able to access and enjoy exercise, build it into their weekly routine, and of course enjoy the benefits from regular exercise.

The positive effects of exercise are endless; the physical health and the positive mental health benefits, becoming stronger in mind and body, controlling body weight, meeting new friends, learning new skills... it goes on and on!

With the Covid restrictions the classes have been adjusted to meet all guidelines, which means that classes are currently held outside in the fresh air (come rain or shine!) and everyone

is at least two metres apart. There is no equipment, and even payment can be done contactless. We will continue to do this until we are advised that it is safe to change things.

The classes are 45 minutes long, giving you a full body workout to build strength, increase cardio fitness, and most importantly to have fun and feel good for working out!

For more information:

Facebook: Meon Fit  
[sarah@stUARTSAILING.CO.UK](mailto:sarah@stUARTSAILING.CO.UK)  
07941 196587 / 01489 878011

**Sarah Stuart**

# Droxford Square resurfacing work to begin after Easter

The resurfacing of the village Square, with a new, attractive and permanent surface, is to go ahead immediately after Easter, on 6th April.

This will enable completion during the school holidays, so avoiding disruption to the dropping off and collecting of children in term time.

There will, however, inevitably be disruption for those residents who ordinarily park in The Square. The Parish Council has explored all possible short-term alternatives.

It would therefore be greatly appreciated if residents who have spare parking capacity within the boundary of their property might consider offering a temporary facility to friends and neighbours who are ordinarily reliant on public parking within the village for the period of the closure.

There are usually a number of empty parking spaces at the Recreation



**Please help the contractors by keeping vehicles clear of the Square by 7am on 6th April.**

Ground for overnight parking.

The cooperation of everyone in ensuring that all vehicles are clear of the area by 7am on 6th April will also assist the contractors to ensure completion within the scheduled ten working days.

- The government's move away from

fossil fuel will mean that at some time in the future there will be demand for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. We are therefore taking the opportunity to install ducting, cabling and the associated equipment for the eventual provision of these in the Square.

This 'future proofing' will entail additional costs, but it makes clear business sense to install underground equipment while the surface is removed, and to negate the need to dig up and partially resurface at a later date when the electrical supply is activated.

- Work has started on improvements to the cemetery, mainly carried out by very willing and enthusiastic volunteers to continue to improve this often-forgotten area on the edge of the village. New paths will be laid in the spring and a full progress report will appear in the next edition of The Bridge, along with details of community involvement.

- Once these projects are completed, attention will turn to the Parish Green (the area between The Square and the Churchyard).

## Rural setting

There is considerable scope for improving this area whilst enhancing its rural setting.

It is recognised that this area is important to residents and visitors alike, and the Parish Council wishes to consult widely, giving all villagers the opportunity to comment. This will be reported on in greater detail later in the year.

As lockdown restrictions are eased over the coming months, we all look forward to seeing our village come back to life and we hope that everyone will enjoy the benefits of these projects to improve Droxford.

*Janet Melson*  
Droxford Parish Council

## DROXFORD VILLAGE HALL NEWS



In line with current guidelines it seems there will be some limited use of the Hall from April 12th, when art classes will be able to take place. Beyond that, wider use of the Hall such as exercise classes and yoga could also begin again.

### Rude Mechanicals

We now have a date for the Rude Mechanicals, on Thursday July 29th, when they will once more be in the Old Rectory garden.

The show this year is Little Lily Harley which is the story of Charlie Chaplin's childhood in Lambeth. For more details visit

[www.rudemmechanicals.co.uk](http://www.rudemmechanicals.co.uk)

### 200 Club

The 200 Club winner for February was Steve Clayton.

If you are new to the village and would like to have a 200 Club ticket for £10 for 10 months, you can pay by cash, or preferably by a bank transfer. Either way, please contact Ian Withers on 01489 877595.

Finally, thanks to the many people in our village who help each other in so many ways. The Post Office with Peter and Paul caters for a multitude of needs for the village, and we are grateful for that service.

*Jackie Hibbert, Secretary*

# Now we can all get a taste of Danny and Vicky's delicious farm produce



For 60 years the Bower family have run the 200-acre Midlington Meadows Farm at Droxford, undertaking traditional farming techniques and sending the produce straight to market.

But now, for the first time, local people can get a taste of it themselves, as co-owners Danny Bower and his wife Vicky have begun offering their meat direct to the public.

And what they produce is, they say, not only delicious but also highly nutritional. This is because for over half a century the Bower family have never used pesticides, insecticides or artificial fertilisers on the land, and the 70 cows and 50 sheep are grazed outdoors all year round, and given no artificial feed.

Danny says, "You can taste the difference between our meats and the ones you buy in the supermarkets because our cows have been grazed naturally on the water meadows, and drunk out of the chalk stream, which is one of the best of its kind in the country.

"The animals just thrive in these conditions. It's as if the meadows have some magical qualities."

## Sustainable

The couple met four years ago on a local farm where Vicky was working. Having a keen interest in conservation and biodiversity, together with several years experience of sustainable agriculture, she began working with Danny on the farm.

Over time she persuaded him that if he sold the produce to the local public the cattle would be assured of a longer and happier life, and the meat would be consumed by people who would appreciate the care that had gone into the rearing of it.

She says, "I was amazed when I first visited the farm by the way, over the years, his family had kept the meadows free from intensive farming and



*Cattle graze naturally on the water meadows all year round*



*Danny and Vicky with pet goat Angie*

unploughed, and left largely to natural devices so that the animals could live as free range and naturally as possible.

"But it seemed a pity to me that in sending the cattle to market to end up on supermarket shelves, all that good work wasn't being appreciated.

"So I thought, why not do the right thing by animal welfare and keep the cattle to the end of their lives, then sell the produce to local people who would be aware of our farming ethics, and

believe in what we do."

Danny, who inherited the farm from his father in 1997, adds, "Before I met Vicky I would buy in all my cattle, mostly dairy about six months old, keep them for a year, and then sell them on and start again the next year.

"But Vicky made me rethink it: that it goes against the grain buying cattle when they're young and low priced, and then dumping them when they're grown. She wanted us to share what we're doing with people living in the locality instead.

## Word of mouth

"So now we're trying to use the markets as little as we can until our sales get up to speed, when hopefully we can stop any that are not going direct to local people. So far we've relied mainly on word of mouth, but now we are starting to promote ourselves more widely.

"And it's very satisfying when someone rings up and says 'Danny, I had some of your rump steak the other night, it was absolutely lovely.' That's what I love hearing."

[www.midlingtonmeadows.co.uk](http://www.midlingtonmeadows.co.uk)

# TWO WAYS TO LEARN TO SAVE A LIFE

Meon Valley Heartstart has launched a new online training programme to teach people emergency life-saving skills which could help keep someone alive until professional help arrives.

Training is provided free of charge to community groups, the general public, educational institutions, businesses, GP practices and other organisations.

The training includes topics such as dealing with an unconscious patient, how to administer CPR and how to recognise the signs of a heart attack.

David Williamson reports:

Little did we know at the start of 2020 what a difference a year would make.

Meon Valley Heartstart's training rate of 5,000 people in 2019 plummeted within weeks as Covid-19 began to take hold and we entered the first lockdown.

Our hugely popular free face-to-face training in emergency lifesaving skills came to a very sudden halt. All planned training had to be cancelled and all promotional activity to encourage people to attend our public courses was put on hold. As a result, donations, upon which we are wholly reliant to cover our costs, took a massive dive too.

We did not rest on our laurels, however. Realising that we were likely to be facing long term restrictions we decided to look at different ways of offering our training so that we could still provide our service, which is so much in demand.

After some trial and error, we are now pleased to officially launch our new training package **Heartstart Online** to individuals and households.

This is a tutor-supported training module that covers all the essential areas of emergency lifesaving skills. Individuals or households who register can, if desired, have an initial one-to-one conversation with an online tutor to learn how the module is structured.

You work your way through the course at your own pace and in your own time – knowing that a tutor is available to provide support, as necessary.

The course materials include videos

with practical demonstrations, and mini quizzes to confirm knowledge and understanding along the way.

At the end of the module a tutor will again be available to answer any further questions and to arrange for follow up activity if required, for example hands-on CPR and defibrillator practice.

For more information email [info@heartstartmeonvalley.co.uk](mailto:info@heartstartmeonvalley.co.uk) or call David Williamson on 07730 148920



[www.heartstartmeonvalley.co.uk](http://www.heartstartmeonvalley.co.uk)



The defibrillator outside the Meon Hall. Another is by Droxford Village Hall.

Are you at home during the day or evening? Do you have a car and are over 18 years of age? Would you like to volunteer for your community?

If so, we need your help! Community First Responders are people who receive training in basic life support (CPR), using a defibrillator, and knowing how to recognise life-threatening illnesses such as strokes, diabetic emergencies and heart attacks. You can then respond to medical emergencies in the community quickly and effectively, potentially saving lives, while an ambulance is on its way.

Or you may be deployed to get someone off the floor who has fallen, or check on someone who has pressed an emergency button, or to a situation where there is a concern for welfare.

You learn where defibrillators are

## Meon Valley Community First Responders Need You!

situated, but there is no need for special training to use one. The instructions appear as soon as it is turned on.

We have four volunteers, one in Knowle village, two in East Meon, and one just outside Wickham, but none in this area.

So if you have 20 hours a month to spare volunteering from home, then please get in touch. More information can be obtained from the South Central Ambulance Service's Website [scas.charity](http://scas.charity).

Or you can contact me, the Meon Valley CFR Coordinator, at [jennifer.ham@sca-charity.org.uk](mailto:jennifer.ham@sca-charity.org.uk)

In previous articles I have mentioned that the River Meon is of international importance, being one of only 200 chalk streams in the world.

Its crystal-clear waters flow the 21 miles from its source at East Meon, through Exton, Corhampton, Meonstoke and Droxford, and enter the Solent at Titchfield Haven.

But we cannot take its beautiful sparkling waters for granted. Sadly it has no statutory protection and therefore it is up to us to preserve and enhance it for future generations. Within living memory its character has altered. Water voles have disappeared and a wide variety of fish and insects have become scarce.

But today, thanks to the work of dedicated volunteers, the water vole has been successfully reintroduced, and increasing lengths of the river are being cared for in a more environmentally sensitive manner, so that the river's life is being carefully nurtured along much of its length.

## Cooperation

Otters have returned, with at least three breeding females detected so far; this too being the result of exceptional cooperation with landowners, carefully monitored water quality, and river restoration.

Biodiversity along the Meon is also being improved. Volunteers have created environments where small fish can hide from predators, and by improving the bankside vegetation it is hoped that threatened insects will once again breed and flourish.

But there is some way to go yet. To give one example, not long ago the quick flash of a brown trout was a common sight in the river, but these days in many parts of the river they are harder to spot.

This is because some parts of the river are becoming silted up, smothering the trout eggs before they are hatched. Those that do hatch then face a fierce battle for survival. At

# Why we must all look after our precious river



*The re-introduction of the vole into the River Meon is proving successful. (Picture: SDNPA/Dick Hawkes).*

both the alevin (tiny hatchling) and parr stage the little chaps are incredibly vulnerable to predators, ranging from fish-eating birds to crayfish and larger fish.

So we must not take the river for granted. For instance it only needs a careless developer or landowner near the river allowing mud to enter, which distributes the resulting silt downstream.

This in turn prevents oxygen-rich water flowing over insect and fish eggs, thereby suffocating them.

## Paddling

What steps can the rest of us take to help preserve this "gem in our midst"?

■ If your child is paddling in the river with a net and a jam jar, make sure anything they catch is returned to the water. Your child may be fascinated by the catch and think

how wonderful it would look in their garden pond. But please don't let them take it home; it's too precious.

■ We can discourage people from discarding rubbish, and particularly plastic bottles, in the river. Plastic degrades over time producing dangerous micro-plastics. These are already adversely affecting marine life (and our diet!).

■ If you see dead fish in the water, or any other signs of pollution, or

anything suspicious such as river poaching, please report it to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

■ We can all keep a look out for dangerous invasive species like mink or signal crayfish (those with big red claws). The current advice if you see one is **do not try to capture** but rather **report**, and locally the best route is via the Wildlife Trust: [feedback@hiwwt.org.uk](mailto:feedback@hiwwt.org.uk)

■ You might also think about joining the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust ([www.hiwwt.org.uk](http://www.hiwwt.org.uk)) to discover more about the mysteries of the river and its inhabitants, and how you can help conserve them.

Let's do all we can to keep our amazing river alive and well!

*Anthony McEwen*

*With acknowledgement to the Wild Trout Trust, and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.*



# Corhampton Church change of dates



**Our plans for events in celebration of 1,000 years of Corhampton Church continue to evolve as do Covid precautions.**

So I hope you will bear with us, and support us when the time comes. As I write this it looks very hopeful that we will be able to return to normal after 21st June, but before that there will be wonderful displays of wildflowers and roses in Corhampton Church: see opposite.

**So this is the current plan:**

**Olivet to Calvary**, originally 21st March, has now been put back a year, to **Sunday 10th April 2022.**

**My Darling Clemmie**, originally 8th May, will now be in the **autumn of 2021.**

**Poetry, Piety and Psyche**, originally 21st May, will now be on **Friday 9th July 2021.**

More information about these and other events will be in the next edition of The Bridge, but in the meantime please look at the Bridge Churches website for any last-minute changes: [www.bridgechurches.org.uk/c202](http://www.bridgechurches.org.uk/c202) should the pandemic continue to affect our plans.

We so look forward to seeing and being with everyone again.

*Angela Peagram*

## WILDFLOWERS AND ROSES

**Corhampton and St Andrew's Churches**



**Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th June**  
**10am to 5pm**

*Enjoy flowers of the countryside in Corhampton  
And a display of different beautiful roses in St Andrew's*

Refreshments in St Andrew's  
11.30 to 12.30 and 14.30 to 16.30



## Selecting a new Bishop

Your prayers are asked for Bishop Christopher Foster and his wife, Sally, as they prepare for retirement.

Prayers are asked too for the Vacancy in See committee, who would like to hear from as wide a range of people as possible with regard to our needs, and the skills we wish to see in the next Bishop of Portsmouth.

## Strategic direction for Diocese

See the latest details on our *Live - Pray - Serve* vision for the strategic direction of the Diocese. Bishop Christopher is chairing a series of meetings at which each Deanery will present their ideas as to what mission and ministry could look like locally.

Find out how to get involved at:

[www.bridgechurches.org.uk/2021/02/latest-details-on-the-strategy-for-the-diocese-of-the-near-and-far-future/](http://www.bridgechurches.org.uk/2021/02/latest-details-on-the-strategy-for-the-diocese-of-the-near-and-far-future/)



## Bishop's Lent Appeal

The Bishop's Lent Appeal once again will focus on the environment and our God-given responsibility for sustaining the world, its resources and its people.

Charities being supported are: A Rocha which helps communities in Ghana to build resilience to climate change; and

the Sustainability Centre in East Meon.

Please make your donations via your PCC Treasurer. For more details about the Appeal, see:

[www.portsmouth.anglican.org/lentappeal](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/lentappeal)

*Angela Peagram*

# WINCHESTER DISTRICT

## COUNCILLOR REPORT - Hugh Lumby (Conservative)



**Winchester**  
City Council

**CENTRAL & UPPER MEON VALLEY WARDS**

### FLYTIPPING

Flytipping is a growing menace. It's also a crime that damages the environment, risks public health and costs all of us to clean up, as fly-tipped rubbish is removed from public land and highways by Winchester City Council.

If you see fly-tipping please do report it, unless you see it marked with a sticker saying it has already been reported. The best way to do this is either by calling the Council on 0300 300 0013 or going online at [www.winchester.gov.uk/apply](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/apply). If the fly-tipping is blocking the road please contact Hampshire County Council at [www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/flytipping](http://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/flytipping)



The Council do investigate fly-tip sites to see if they can find evidence. So don't touch the waste as it may be dangerous. And don't disturb the site as that may damage evidence.

If you do see someone fly-tipping, any details you can take could be useful, particularly any descriptions of vehicles or people involved. But please remember not to put yourself at any risk if you witness an incident. Your personal safety is always more important than anything else.

### LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Winchester City Council has launched a consultation as part of developing its new 15-year Local Plan for the Winchester District. The consultation will run until Monday 12 April. In simple terms, this is all about who can build what, and where.

*Cllr Hugh Lumby*

**Your five Meon Valley Councillors are always happy to hear from you. Their contact details are:**

- Vicki Weston.** [vweston@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:vweston@winchester.gov.uk)
- Hugh Lumby.** [hlumby@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:hlumby@winchester.gov.uk)
- Frank Pearson.** [fpearson@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:fpearson@winchester.gov.uk)
- Laurence Ruffell.** [lruffell@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:lruffell@winchester.gov.uk)
- Linda Gemmell** [lgemmell@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:lgemmell@winchester.gov.uk)

## Former ITN and BBC reporter Rory MacPherson dies

**Rory MacPherson, the former ITN diplomatic correspondent and newscaster, who lived at Steadham House in Droxford for ten years until 2011, has died aged 85.**

Born Ewen Charles Fitzroy McPherson in Stirling, his broadcasting highlights included an exclusive interview with King Constantine of Greece after the abolition of the Greek monarchy in 1973; reporting on the fall of Franco in 1967; and, after leaving ITN in 1979, presenting major current affairs programmes for the BBC.

After retiring from broadcasting he

became a media consultant for clients including the Metropolitan Police, Morgan Grenfell and the Victoria and Albert Museum. He also transcribed and voiced news cassettes for the blind.

Deeply attached to his Scottish roots, he was a stalwart member of the Highland Society, and an elegant Scottish dancer and enthusiastic bagpipe player.

He came to Droxford in 2001 and met and married Connecticut-born Sally Wilson-Young who was then living at Swanmore. He immersed himself in local life, including acting in four



*Sally and Rory*

Riverside Players productions, and tending the church graveyard.

Villagers will remember Sally too, as a keen gardener, bridge player, excellent cook and delightful party-giver. She died from cancer in 2012, after which Rory went to live at the Charterhouse Almshouse in London.

# Many had their doubts, but has proved

**This year marks the 40th anniversary of the completion of the building of the Meon Hall, prior to it being opened the following year by the Duchess of Kent.**

Villagers had helped to build it themselves, by digging out the foundations with tractors provided by local farmers, and filling them in with concrete.

They also erected the steelwork and laid some of the bricks between the steel supports, before handing over the plumbing, electrics and more complex brickwork to professional builders.

The project beat 67 other entrants to win the Hampshire Village Ventures Competition, and received a £100 prize. The judges talked of a "mammoth venture... impressive by any standards... bold imagination."



When Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine learned about it he was so impressed he awarded the village an additional £100 of Government money.

In his book "From Hut to Hall," Meonstoke resident Ian Allured, who was there at the time, records the total cost being £83,000, (over half a million pounds in today's money) a tenth of which was raised by barn dances, barbecues, jumble sales, sponsored walks, quizzes, a cricket match, a fur sale, a brass band concert, a 'novelty hockey match,' and the setting up of the 200 Club which raised £1,402 (£8,800) and is still going today.

## The Meon Hut

The village already a hall. Built in 1919, The Meon Hut stood on the site of the present Meon Hall Cottage in the High Street. As Ian records in his book, it had been extremely popular, with whist drives, dances, a weekly "ladies' night," and discos and pantomimes.

It was in 1976 that the first murmurings of the need for a new hall were heard. The coke stoves had worn out and the replacement overhead fan heaters were proving unsatisfactory, particularly in the winter when pipes would freeze up. In addition the roof almost permanently leaked.

In 1980 it was finally decided to demolish it, and it literally died in a blaze of glory. During the demolition work some debris was being burnt, and the heat caused the felt between the tin roof and the wooden rafters to ignite. Within two minutes the whole structure was on fire, and two fire crews were unable to save it.

**Here, villagers who helped to build the new hall give their recollections.**



**Among the villagers involved with the building were, left to right: David Allen, Adele Glenn, Jill Baker, Pat Oliver, Bruce Horn, Neville Henstridge, Pat Lanham, Tricia Howe and Ian Allured**

I was the Parish Council's representative on the building committee, and it was such an enormous project that it split the village in half, with some people extremely worried, saying it was madness to build such a large structure for so small a village.

But they soon changed their mind, because when we began fund-raising, with fetes and jumble sales, it was amazing how the money just came in.

Moreover, in a way we got to know each other much better. We formed friendships and developed a sense of purpose, just as the village is doing now through this awful Covid crisis.

After it was built the Parish

Council wrote off to Buckingham Palace asking if we could have a royal visit for the opening, not thinking they would say yes, and we were absolutely gobsmacked when the Duchess of Kent agreed to come.

She arrived in a red helicopter and landed on the recreation ground. All the kids dressed up, and everyone who ran a village club or society had their own table in the main hall, and she shook hands with them all.

She was amazing, an absolute poppet. It was a wonderful day and we thought yes, this is the approval of everything we had done, and we were absolutely chuffed.

**Liz Borrow**

# 40 years on the Meon Hall and its worth

On completion of the building, I became the first Chairman of the Hall Management Committee, responsible for its use, upkeep and maintenance.

It was imperative to get the Hall up and running as soon as possible as there were some outstanding debts that needed paying due to delays in receipt of grant aid, as well as the need to finance work for its final fitting out.

It was also discovered that under the Trust Deed at the time we were personally liable for the debt!

With a little arm twisting I was soon joined by Commander James Morrice as Vice Chairman and Captain Trevor Quarendon as Treasurer. With their hard work, and that of the user groups, in fundraising and grant applications (and updating the Trust Deed), by the time I handed over the chairmanship to Commodore Andy Buchanan 'HMS Meon Hall' was in the black, and running full steam ahead!

Lynn Judge

## Thankfully my brickwork is hidden from view!

Rosie and I both helped to lay the floor in the main hall and the crypt, and I did some of the brickwork by the stage. Luckily most of my work is above the ceiling, and can't be seen.

I remember Steve Higgins dropping a hammer between the roof and the wooden lining. As far as I know it's still there.

My dad, John Minors, did a lot of work on the building, and had been invited to meet the Duchess of Kent.

Unfortunately he had a heart attack that very morning and was whisked away in an ambulance and missed it, although I'm pleased to say he survived, and lived for another 20 years.

Roger Minors

## I set it up, and they pulled the lever!

When the idea of a new hall was put to the village some people thought it would be a white elephant. You always get these sceptics, of course, but over the years it has certainly proved its worth.

There was lots of fund-raising to get the project off the ground. My wife made a patchwork quilt and raffled it, and I organised a few dances. The building committee also sold bricks with people's names on them.

Being a farmer I used various machines including my Massey Ferguson digger to help excavate the foundations and concrete the footings. I remember when we did the crypt we poured the cement in from ground level, and the lads below caught it in wheelbarrows.

Then we put the columns in. It was



built like a farm building, with a steel construction with bricks around it.

The first turf was cut by Barbara Curtis, who was chair of the Parish Council, and John Flook, the Mayor of Winchester (pictured above).

We had a ceremony and I set up my digger so that all they had to do was pull a lever and drag the bucket around.

Bruce Horn

## Why they called it The Crypt

In 1978, after Gerry and I had just moved to Meonstoke, we set up an Am. Dram. group, using the old Meon Hut for rehearsals and performances. As the back of the Hut was only a few metres from the River Meon, 'Riverside Players' seemed an appropriate name for the group.

After the Hut was demolished, we looked at the as yet half-built room under the Meon Hall stage for future rehearsals.



The Meon Hut goes out in a blaze of glory

With the room being partly below ground level, the Players were delegated to paint several coats of 'waterproof' on the floor and walls. This being a black coating soon created a dark and gloomy appearance prior to final decorating, and henceforth the room was known as The Crypt.

Over the next year or so the stage became equipped with curtains and lights, enabling us to put on a variety of shows, some winning awards at Drama Festivals. The last Players' production was staged in 2013.

Today we have a hall with the best performance facilities in the area. When we are all able to get back to some sort of normality, could that be the time to once more 'socialise creatively' as a new local Am. Dram. group? Something to ponder?

Paul Hayles

## CHURCH SERVICES DURING APRIL AND MAY 2021

For streamed services, please go to: [www.bridgechurches.org.uk/streamed\\_services](http://www.bridgechurches.org.uk/streamed_services) Anything could change at any time, so please keep an eye on our updates on the Meon Bridge Benefice Facebook page, notice boards, and updates sent by email.

**29th March—10th April:** Available daily - a streamed reflection or simple daily prayer. All on-line Eucharists provide the opportunity to make an Act of Spiritual Communion. It is anticipated that the midweek said 10 am Communion service at Droxford and the said 8 am BCP Communion services will begin again in June.

	Date	Time	Venue	Service	Recording Venue	Recording DTG
	<b>Thursday, 1st April Maundy Thursday</b>	7 pm	On-Line & Meonstoke	A simple Benefice Eucharist	Corhampton	19Mar21 0930
		9 pm–midnight	On-Line Only	Drop in for some time of Vigil	The Rectory	Live Stream( ?)
	<b>Friday, 2nd April Good Friday</b>	1.45 pm	On-Line & Exton	An Hour at the Foot of the Cross; Reflection and Reception of Holy Communion	Corhampton	19Mar21 1100
1	<b>Sunday, 4th April Easter Day</b>	6.30	On-Line from the riverbank	Blessing Easter Fire, Paschal candles & Vigil Eucharist	Church Green, Meonstoke	21Mar21 0600
		8 am	On-Line & Exton	Easter Holy Communion (BCP)	Meonstoke	26Mar21 0930
	<i>Please book places for the 9.30 and 11 am services</i>		9.30 am	Meonstoke	Family Service + HC	
		10.30 am	On-Line Only	Bringing in the Easter Light and Easter Festal Eucharist	Meonstoke	26Mar21 1100
		11 am	Droxford	Family Service + HC		
2	<b>Sunday, 11th April Easter 2</b>	10.30 am	On-Line & <b>EXTON</b>	A simple Benefice Eucharist (NB Droxford Square Closed)	Droxford Nave	Thu 8Apr21 0930
3	<b>Sunday, 18th April Easter 3</b>	10.30 am	On-Line & Corhampton	Holy Communion (On-line CW – Gathered BCP)	Droxford Lady Chapel	8Apr21 1100
	<b>Friday, 23rd April St George Patron of England</b>	10 am	On-Line Only	A Patronal Festal Eucharist for England	Exton	16Apr21 0930
4	<b>Sunday, 25th April Easter 4</b>	9.30 am	Meonstoke Outdoors	Informal ...Unwrapped Service		
		10.30 am	<b>DROXFORD</b>	A simple Benefice Eucharist (NB Droxford square re-opened)		
		10.30 am	On-Line Only	Simple Morning Service + HC St Mark the Evangelist (26th)	Exton	16Apr21 1100
1	<b>Sunday, 2nd May Easter 5</b>	10.30 am	On-Line & Meonstoke	Eucharist (CW)	Corhampton	23Apr21 0930
2	<b>Sunday, 9th May Easter 6</b>	10.30 am	On-Line & Droxford	Eucharist (CW)	Corhampton	23Apr21 1100
	<b>Thursday, 13th May Ascension Day</b>	10 am	Droxford	Simple said Holy Communion (CW)		
		7 pm	On-Line & Corhampton	Festal Eucharist	Droxford Lady Chapel	30Apr21 0930
3	<b>Sunday, 16th May Sunday after Ascension Day</b>	10.30 am	On-Line & Corhampton	Holy Communion (On-line CW – Gathered BCP)		
4	<b>Sunday, 23rd May PENTECOST (Whit Sunday)</b>	8 am	Corhampton	Holy Communion (BCP)		
		9.30 am	Meonstoke	Informal ...Unwrapped Service		
		10.30 am	On-Line & Exton	Eucharist (CW) <i>Please wear an item of red clothing</i>	Exton	7May21 0930
5	<b>Sunday, 30th May Trinity Sunday</b>	8 am	On-Line only	Festal Eucharist (BCP)	Exton	7May21 1100
		10.30 am	Exton	Eucharist (CW)		
	<b>Monday, 31st May The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth</b>	10 am	On-Line Only	Festal Eucharist	Droxford Lady Chapel	15May21 1100

## Wilfrid's opens up again, for one day a week



what good news it is that it can now open for at least one morning a week, and soon two. I for one look forward to its full opening in May.



**Wilfrid's Cafe is now open on Saturday mornings from 10 to 12.30, and is aiming to be back to normal in May.**

We are serving takeaway teas, coffees and pre-packaged light snacks. Unfortunately we are unable to offer our usual home-baked cakes at the moment, but hopefully they'll be back soon.

However, in line with the gradual lifting of COVID restrictions, we will be increasing takeaway days to Fridays and Saturdays from 12th April, from 10 to 12.30, and are planning on opening fully from 17th May. Days and times for opening will be advised later.

**Margaret Wallace**

**Email to The Bridge from Rev Anthony Hulbert:**

*There have been so many disappointments as a result of the pandemic over the past 12 months, and one, among many, has been the enforced closure of Wilfrid's Café for much of the time.*

*It offers so many good things: delicious coffee and cakes, either enjoyed in the churchyard or in the old vestry in the Church, together with service that has always been so helpful and welcoming, and in so doing it has enriched the life of the community, by giving the opportunity for meeting and greeting fellow customers.*

*What an excellent venture it is, and*

## Memories of Maggie

**Maggie Howard, who died recently, came to live at Prospect Cottate, Stocks Lane, Meonstoke, 32 years ago, and played a full part in church and village activities. Her husband Roger has written this tribute:**

Maggie was born in London and attended Haberdashers Askes School for Girls until her family moved to Jersey in 1962. We were married at St Helier Church in 1974, moving to Meonstoke in 1989 with our two daughters, Sarah and Alison.

We both took to the village, where she supported many activities including the Riverside Players and Community Care.

Maggie had a great love of horses and encouraged the girls to participate in equestrian events. A keen churchgoer, she took a close interest in Corhampton Church, and did much to care for both the church and surrounding grounds.

She had an infectious enthusiasm for all that she did, which included working at a school for handicapped children, assisting at Hambledon village school, working with Riding for the Disabled, and acting as Treasurer of the ladies section of Corhampton Golf Club.

Sadly 12 years ago Maggie was struck down with Semantic Dementia, and

gradually deriorated to a stage where she was moved to a care home two years ago. Unfortunately she contracted Covid-19 and died on 14th January.



## An abiding example to us all

One of my loveliest memories of Maggie was through our membership of the Mother's Union.

MU was thriving for many years in the Benefice and we had many enjoyable meetings and outings which we shared with Warnford and West Meon. Maggie kept things together by running her own taxi service, picking up folk who didn't drive.

I so well remember our Christmas gatherings here in Freeland Cottage with the Revd. David Henley, and Maggie choosing a reading or a poem. Maggie was very closely involved in happenings at Corhampton Church.

Even after moving she still came to Evensong as long as she was able.

After the onset of dementia the last few years were not easy for either of them, and thank you to Roger for his deep care of her.

Maggie's illness eventually took her to be near her daughter at a residential home where she subsequently died.

Maggie was a real 'witness to the faith,' an abiding example to us all.

May she rest in peace.

**Pauline Quarendon**

## SOME LOCAL SERVICES & USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### POST OFFICES

Droxford, High Street	878811
Meonstoke Post Office Warnford Road, Corhampton	877374

### STORES

Droxford Stores, High Street	878811
Corhampton Village Stores	877374
Meringtons Stores, Garrison Hill, Droxford	877284
Droxford Antiques, High Street, Droxford	878800

### PUBLIC HOUSES

The Baker's Arms, Droxford	877533
The Bucks Head, Meonstoke	877313
The Shoe, Exton	877526
The White Horse, Droxford	877490

### GARAGES

Meringtons, Droxford	877431
Taylor's Garage Ltd, Droxford	877433

### SCHOOLS

Droxford Junior School	877537
Meonstoke School	877568
Valley Pre-school	878019
Swanmore College of Technology	892256

<b>LIBRARY</b> (Bishop's Waltham)	0300 555 1387
Free Street, Bishops Waltham	

<b>CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU</b> (Bishop's Waltham)	03444 111306
Well House, 2 Brook Street	
<a href="mailto:bishopswaltham@cabnet.org.uk">bishopswaltham@cabnet.org.uk</a>	

### PARISH COUNCILS

Corhampton & Meonstoke	07720 092072
Clerk: Mrs R Hoile <a href="http://www.candm-pc.gov.uk">www.candm-pc.gov.uk</a>	
Droxford	07720 092072
Clerk: Mrs R Hoile <a href="http://www.droxfordweb.co.uk">www.droxfordweb.co.uk</a>	
Exton Parish Meeting: Secretary: Jill Hignett	878450

### WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

<b>Central Meon Valley</b>	
Linda Gemmell (Con) <a href="mailto:lgemmell@winchestergov.uk">lgemmell@winchestergov.uk</a>	
Frank Pearson (Con) <a href="mailto:fpearson@winchester.gov.uk">fpearson@winchester.gov.uk</a>	
Vicki Weston (Ind) <a href="mailto:vweston@winchester.gov.uk">vweston@winchester.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Upper Meon Valley</b>	
Laurence Ruffell (Con) <a href="mailto:lruffell@winchester.gov.uk">lruffell@winchester.gov.uk</a>	
Hugh Lumby (Con) <a href="mailto:hlumby@winchester.gov.uk">hlumby@winchester.gov.uk</a>	

<b>DROXFORD VILLAGE HALL</b>	877631
Bookings: Mrs Terry Crowfoot	

### THE MEON HALL, MEONSTOKE

Bookings: Hannah Carpenter <a href="mailto:meonhallbookings@yahoo.co.uk">meonhallbookings@yahoo.co.uk</a>	
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<i>For details of charges and general information see</i>	
<a href="http://www.candm-pc.gov.uk/the-meon-hall">www.candm-pc.gov.uk/the-meon-hall</a>	

### LOCAL SURGERIES

Droxford	877588
West Meon	01730 829666
Bishop's Waltham	892288
Wickham	01329 833121

### COMMUNITY CARE TRANSPORT COORDINATORS:

(Please ring only between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm)	
Droxford	07977 096586
Exton, Meonstoke & Corhampton	07795 928065

### DROXFORD VILLAGE COMMUNITY WEBSITE

For more information on local events and activities:  
[www.droxfordweb.co.uk](http://www.droxfordweb.co.uk)

### HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES

Adult Services 0300 555 1386  
 Children's Services 0845 603 5620  
 The above numbers are open Mon. to Thurs. 8.30am - 4.30pm  
 The out-of-hours number is 0845 600 4555

### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH - Reporting Crime

**ONLY CALL 999** - if a crime is taking place, or has just happened; if you have immediate concern for someone's safety, including a medical emergency; if you see a traffic collision involving injury or danger to other road users, or if you see something suspicious that requires immediate attention. The more information that you can provide, the better.

**CALL 101 or use the Internet**, to report crimes that are not in progress; suspicious people or vehicles, and non-urgent information such as anti-social behaviour, suspected drug use or damage to property.

**AFTER** contacting one of the above, please **ALSO** contact your street coordinator with details of the report. If not available, try any other coordinator including the Chairman.

### CORHAMPTON & MEONSTOKE

<b>Stocks Lane</b>	Peter Riley (Chair)	07702 863954
<b>Rectory Lane</b>	Sally & Mike Fithyan	877839
<b>High Street</b>	Annie Ward	877831
<b>Warnford Road</b>	Jerry Pett	877633
<b>Corhampton Lane</b>	Janine Casey	877561
<b>Pound Lane, west</b>	Patrick Monger	877161
<b>Pound Lane, east</b>	Linda Foot	877763
<b>Fry's Lane</b>	Charlie Fullegar	07876 524457
<b>Bridgemoor</b>	Charlie Fullegar	07876 524457
<b>Chapel Road</b>	Gemma Radcliffe	877276
<b>New Road</b>	Jenny Liardet	877583
<b>Allen's Lane</b>	Lesley Daysh	877327
<b>St Andrew's Green</b>	Lesley Daysh	877327
<b>Brockbridge Road</b>	Frances Keppel	878774
<b>Millside</b>	Phil Butler	877596

<b>EXTON</b>	Sue Robertson	878545
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### DROXFORD

<a href="mailto:droxfordnhwchair@btinternet.com">droxfordnhwchair@btinternet.com</a>		
<b>High Street</b>	James Matthissen	07914 638082
<b>Sheep Pond Lane</b>	Matt Avison	
	<a href="mailto:mattavison@hotmail.com">mattavison@hotmail.com</a>	
<b>Dundridge Lane, east</b>	Colin Richardson (chair)	07711 058744
<b>Midlington Hill</b>	Charlotte Treloar.	
	<a href="mailto:charlottetreloar7@hotmail.com">charlottetreloar7@hotmail.com</a>	
<b>Swanmore Road</b>	Sarah Smith	878008
<b>Midlington Road</b>	Deborah Hemsworth	07719 987758
<b>South Hill, west</b>	Tony Hoile (dep. chair)	07506 849443
<b>Union Lane</b>	Bonnie Rankin	07977 022363
<b>The Park</b>	Jen Hillman	
	<a href="mailto:jensam.jw@gmail.com">jensam.jw@gmail.com</a>	
<b>The Park</b>	Pennie Brown	878726
<b>Northend Lane</b>	Colin Richardson (chair)	07711 058744
<b>Chestnut Rise</b>	John Whittaker	877788
<b>Mill Lane</b>	Sally Sturt (dep. chair)	07767 301095
<b>South Hill, east</b>	Sally Sturt (dep. chair)	07767 301095

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**Sunday: 7.00am - 12 midday**

**POST OFFICE: Mon - Fri: 9.00am - 5.30pm & Sat: 9.00am - 12.30**



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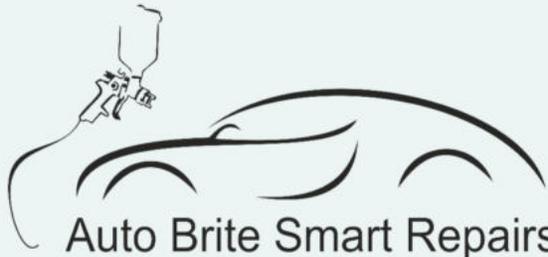
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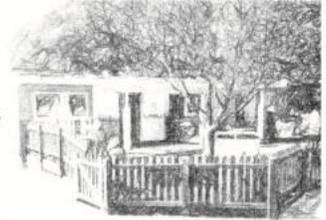
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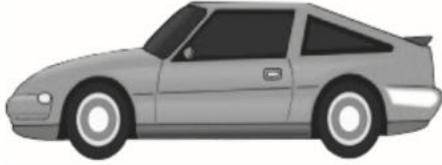
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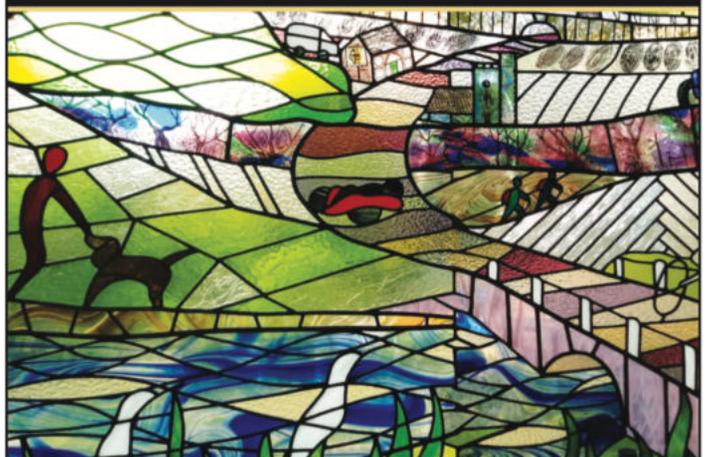
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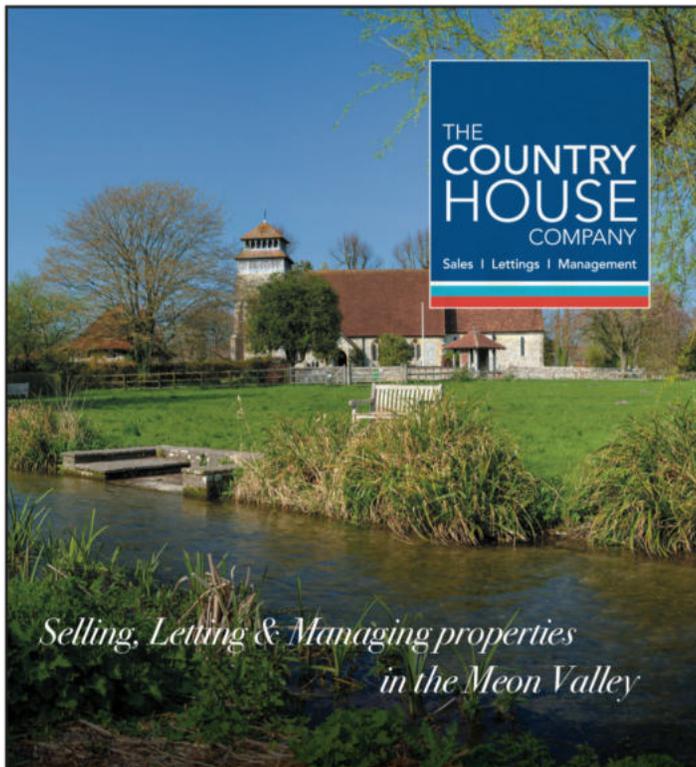
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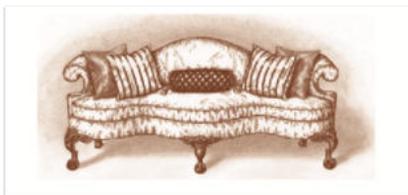
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