

# Parish News

West Meon & Warnford

May 2020

## Living in Strange Times II

I began my letter in April commenting on how quickly everything seemed to be changing and wondering what might be happening by the time you read it. I didn't imagine that things would change even more. I didn't imagine that we would all be locked out of church and worshipping from home – so many things that I didn't imagine. It feels, in some ways, that life has been placed on hold; that we're waiting for the lock down to end and for life to get back to normal. I've been thinking a lot about what 'normal' might look like, what we want to go back to and what we might want to change. I've also been thinking about the ways in which life hasn't been put on hold.

When the lock down came into force, I blithely went through my diary crossing out all the meetings I now wouldn't be able to go to. I was glad to have the opportunity to get back to something that looked like proper ministry – even if my pastoral contact was now via the telephone, email or zoom. Of course, zoom isn't limited to pastoral visits and I'm now discovering that a number of those meetings are reappearing. I might complain about that and I might be frustrated at the locked door at church but the positive side of all this is that



*Julie Kelly*



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we have had to discover new and different ways of being in contact with each other and for church, of worshipping together. I have been really encouraged by the number of people, growing each week, who are joining our services on a Sunday via zoom. It's not ideal and I am longing for the day when we can throw open the doors again...but in the meantime we have a way of 'meeting' together and praying together. I didn't want to record a service for people to watch; I wanted a format that would allow everyone to participate in real-time, to be part of what was going on. As I say, it might not be ideal, but it seems to be meeting a need and it's getting better each week!

The other positive – and there might well be more – to our 'virtual' services are the people who are able to join. When we're not limited by physicality our ability to welcome others also spreads. Easter Day was so different from the celebration of the resurrection that we would usually have, but it was wonderful to be able to share our day not only with people from West Meon and Warnford, East Meon and Langrish but from South Africa and Australia as well. It was very special to see Sue sitting in Langrish worshipping with her daughter and grandson in South Africa which would never have normally been possible. I wonder if there are ways in which we are going to be able to continue to include those unable to join us physically on a Sunday morning?

Life in our parishes also reflects that same on hold/not on hold experience.

You will remember that in December we were very pleased to appoint the Rev'd Mary Jepp as the new associate priest for West Meon and Warnford. She should have been officially licensed on 17th May at a joint service at 10.30am in West Meon but with the restrictions on travel, this has had to be put on hold. You might also remember our Archdeacon, Gavin Collins, writing back in January about how our parishes will be changing. Some of our services over the last few years have been described as joint or cluster services, particularly those Sundays when there has been a fifth Sunday. For the last couple of years, we have had some shared study courses: perhaps the most obvious joint event is the Good Friday walk, when we start at either Warnford or Langrish and walk to the other end, calling in at the other churches on the way.

This has been an informal relationship until last year when we began having conversations about making this more formal. Towards the end of 2019 all the churches were asked if they would like to begin the process of becoming a United Benefice and I'm pleased to say that all the churches agreed.

On the 21st January Bishop Christopher signed a Pastoral Order that came into effect on 1st February extending my licence to include West Meon and Warnford. This means that I now carry legal responsibility for all four parishes. On the ground you will notice very little difference because this doesn't mean becoming one big parish: all four churches will continue to have services; my main responsibility will continue to be East Meon and Langrish, Mary's will be West Meon and Warnford and we will continue to celebrate the unique contribution that each church makes to its community. By coming together formally, though, we can ensure more effective ministry for the whole community, which includes pastoral cover for all parishes for seven days a week and fifty-two weeks of the year; a sharing of resources across all four parishes and avoidance of duplication in services and supplies bought in.

When Mary is licensed it will be as associate priest for West Meon and Warnford, East Meon and Langrish. We will also begin using our new name, 'The Upper Meon Benefice'. As we look

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forward to this next stage of our lives together, Archdeacon Gavin offered a prayer for us to use:

God of endings and beginnings,  
we give you thanks for the life of our churches and  
the faithful worshippers and ministers  
who have served you and the people of our communities over many years.  
Guided by your spirit of wisdom and courage  
help us to take this work forward in new and exciting ways  
that we might all be encouraged to  
**Live** clearly as your disciples,  
**Pray** that many more people would come to know you and your love  
and **Serve** the world around us.  
In Jesus' name,  
Amen

*With best wishes, Rev'd Jane Ball*

## **Easter Reflections on the lessons of Lazarus**

I have spent a lot of time thinking that you have to be careful what you wish for: I have longed for more time at home, to have time to do all the tasks that have been sitting on my desk or round the house and garden and now I have it I really don't want it, particularly when it comes at the cost of losing physical contact with people. I think many of us are struggling with a sense of the loss of 'normal' in all sorts of different ways.

Our Gospel reading on the raising of Lazarus doesn't seem to bring much help. I had a brilliant card entitled, 'The Perils of Resurrection'. It showed the tomb with Jesus standing outside commanding Lazarus to get up and show himself. A speech bubble over the tomb from Lazarus said, 'But I can't, my hair's in a terrible mess!' It might make me laugh, but it also makes me think about how many difficult questions are raised by this story. It seems so hard to hear of Jesus waiting two further days before he went to see Mary and Martha, by which point Lazarus was dead. He seems to suggest that this is a way that God will be glorified - which seems incredibly cruel. And then there's the fact that Jesus did raise Lazarus from the dead: what about others who have died? What about when he dies again?

This all seems rather bleak but the Gospel always has good news in it - even if we have to dig. For me the good news comes in two places. Firstly, the fact that Jesus weeps. This says to me that God is not someone who looks on untouched by what we are experiencing. Jesus is often described as having compassion for the people - compassion meaning 'to suffer with'. God understands and feels what we do. Secondly, we have a part to play. Those around the tomb are told by Jesus to unbind Lazarus. They are not just bystanders to a miraculous event and we are not just bystanders either.

We have our part to play in this current crises, whether that's helping our neighbours practically by doing some shopping, collecting prescriptions, phoning, praying, staying at home! This might not seem like much but we don't know what these small acts of 'unbinding' might inspire in others?

*With love, Rev'd Jane Ball*

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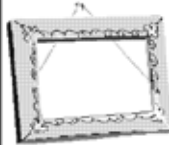
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## West Meon Village Shop

Back in 2006, several public spirited villagers got together to save our village shop. Here we are years later with a shop that is the envy of many visitors to our beautiful Meon Valley. Today, with all that is happening around us in these strange times, the shop is fulfilling its purpose beyond all expectations. While others suffer the delays and exposure of shopping in local town facilities, our shop provides a service taking and delivering orders, helping customers and offering a community service and companionship centre for us all. We, in the valley, are fortunate beyond everything that the busy townships have to put up with. We have the valley, the fields, the river, the chalk streams, the downs and a wonderful degree of peace and tranquillity. In some ways, this must be like the village would have been 60 or 70 years ago. What's more we now have a wonderful new butcher's shop, Buckingham's Artisan Butchery, as well.

The shop has had some bad times in the recent past but once again our benefactors, the Parish Council, Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council have stood by us. Add to that the unstinting efforts of both our paid staff and the volunteers who have kept the show on the road these last fourteen years. The loyalty of our customers and their generous donations and fund raising have been essential to the profit and loss page and overall financial wellbeing of the shop. So, as in the winter snows when business picks up, come rain or shine or COVID-19, we must continue to support our community shop by using it and showing our gratitude to those who have made it all possible in the hard times.



*Flour: 1 per customer at WM Village Shop*

**200 Club:** The April draw took place after this issue of the parish News went to press. Winners of the cash prizes for £200, £100, £50 and £25 will be announced in the next issue. If you are interested in participating, applications forms are available from the shop.

**West Meon Wine Society:** Due to the current social distancing restrictions and uncertain outlook, it will come as no surprise that we have taken the decision to delay the launch of the Wine Society until June or possibly July this year. Meanwhile, we continue to work remotely on developing our website, the selection of wines and the planning of wine tasting events. For more information please contact us at: [wmeonwinesociety@gmail.com](mailto:wmeonwinesociety@gmail.com).

**Home Delivery:** We are able to deliver any goods from West Meon village shop to the elderly and the vulnerable during the Coronavirus pandemic. If you know anyone who would benefit from this service, do please contact the shop on 01730 829310.

*The West Meon Shop Committee*

## From Darkness to Light

I took Freddie out in the pushchair yesterday and as I walked I was thinking about the fact that I have never felt so aware of living through such a historically important time.

I remember the Falklands Conflict happening and watching the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989; much as older people talk about the assassination of Kennedy and as many of us remember where we were and what we were doing when the news of planes hitting the World Trade Centre broke on the 11th September. They all seemed quite distant in many ways, and had little impact on our daily lives, but each in their own way changed the world.

The current COVID-19 pandemic is changing the world in a very different way because the impact on all of our lives is being felt now. This is something that is happening to all of us to a greater or lesser degree. I count myself fortunate that for me the disruption is limited to queuing in supermarkets, having the family spread around the globe and Freddie living with us with no known end point, meetings and pastoral care being conducted over the phone, email or 'virtually', not being able to access church; this all seems fairly minor when I hear the current death rate, see the impact this is having on the NHS and care workers, the farming community, families affected by the virus... the list could go on. And the sun continues to shine.

When I was out walking yesterday I was struck by a similar juxtaposition of human feelings and what was happening in nature. It was another beautiful day full of the joys of spring; cows with their calves, sheep, lambs, ducks and ducklings and even a couple of herons we spotted as we walked, but it was Good Friday, a day when the journey of faith takes us to betrayal and death. Jesus, abandoned by his disciples, dies a criminal's death on the cross. It reminded me of time I spent visiting the Auschwitz extermination camp - a place where so many horrific things had happened that it should have been dark, cold and wet, yet we were there in late July and it was hot and sunny. The buildings themselves looking so innocuous in the sunlight bely the abominations that took place within. Life and death, beauty and horror.

Mahatma Gandhi said, 'While everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, recreates... For I can see in the midst of death, life persists, in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists.' He describes so well what we commemorate and celebrate as we move from Good Friday to Easter Day, from darkness to light.

As much as we might hope for it to happen, we are not going to find ourselves going back to normal, to how it was before but then neither did Jesus. The risen Christ bore the marks of the nails on his hands and feet, the thrust of the spear in his side. Resurrected life is not the same as being brought back to life! We can already see signs of a society and a world that is different; the resurgence of nature without the traffic and pollution, the strengthening of community seen, for example, in the over 750,000 people who have volunteered to be NHS volunteer responders. In the midst of darkness, light persists - or as John the Evangelist writes, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.' (John 1.5) This is what we proclaim on Easter Day.

*Alleluia, Christ is Risen.  
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

*Wishing you every blessing,  
The Rev'd Jane Ball*



## Video Killed the Radio Star?

With social distancing having such a devastating effect on church gatherings one of the more unexpected effects has been the creative use of new technology to keep people in contact.

Zoom video conferencing has been used for groups to worship locally and Louisa Denby has also released a series of Easter worship videos for the Revd Jane Ball on You Tube for West Meon, Warnford and the neighbouring parishes. As well as featuring her organ playing in Langrish church, there are readings and song by the Revd Jane Ball and a mixture of video and still photographs of local churches and scenes by Louisa, Charlotte Denby and Jane.

You can search for them online or access them by retyping these web addresses:

<https://youtu.be/EZSr1L3IJ30>

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## **VE Day 75th Anniversary Celebrations**

# **STAY AT HOME STREET PARTY!**

**Friday 8th May 2020**

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## **There are Worse Places to be in Lockdown**

Our recent enforced spell of staying at home has made it more obvious than ever how lucky the majority of us are in West Meon, Warnford, Woodlands and surrounding areas that we live in a small rural community rather having to face being stuck in a high rise city flat with limited access to open space. The local newspaper article, reprinted below, followed a programme on BBC Radio Solent in April 1981 and shows how little has changed. True, some of the shops and business we had then have now ceased trading. But (if you count the A32/A272 crossroads) we still have two pubs, two multi-purpose shops, sports facilities and, particularly important to remember when we make a noise each Thursday, we are so lucky to have local doctors, health professionals and pharmacists as part of our National Health infrastructure.

Does anybody remember this programme going out at the time and did you speak to the radio journalists? Let us know your thoughts and reflections on living in this area.

*Ed.*

### **'Radio Solent at West Meon - an Envied Village**

Last week's BBC Radio Solent "Happening Now" programme "went out live" from West Meon and, during a two hour broadcast, a number of residents were given the opportunity to express points of view on issues affecting life as it is lived in the village.

With two well-found pubs, both with good restaurants and adequate parking, a post office combining a convenient haberdashery counter and catering for laundry and dry cleaning, a coal merchant, a saddler and ironmonger, two grocery shops, one with a newsagency and the other with an off licence, a butcher's shop and a garage with its own workshop, all within a couple of hundred yards of one another. West Meon is understandably the envy of many another and larger Hampshire village. It is small wonder that folk find it a pleasant place in which to live or that people travel some distance in order to take advantage of its facilities.

It is also extremely fortunate to have available a modern medical centre where, in addition to a regular morning surgery, the doctors and the dispensers are on duty three evenings a week. Skilled craftsmen and artisans live in the village and a lively Sports Club, which is presently engaged on the construction of a splendid pavillion on the Recreation Ground, provides a valuable amenity.

Being a Conservation Area - there are 14 listed buildings in the village and twice that number on the supplementary list- as well as a designated area of outstanding natural beauty, is a double-sided consideration. It means that little is likely to happen to change the essential character of the village. On the other hand, it becomes difficult for young people, born in the village and wishing to remain in it on marriage, to find a home. This does, undoubtedly, create problems. Even so, the National Census at present under way is likely to confirm the continued life of the village school, and recent structural improvements lend credence to the Education Authority's intentions in that regard.

The broadcast made it clear that those whose fortune it is to be established in West Meon are well content to remain there.'

*3/4/1981*

# WARNFORD – 100 YEARS AGO

## Chapter Two

### *A first hand account of shopping in Warnford by a girl who grew up shortly after the First World War*

‘Although we only had one shop in Warnford we had other tradesmen visiting the village. A large number of the villagers did deal almost exclusively at the shop as they only earned about 32 shillings a week for 48 hour, and were only paid fortnightly. Consequently, towards the end of the second week, funds were low so they relied on being able to “book” their requirements at the local shop. International Stores in Winchester used to send a man out by bicycle once a fortnight to collect orders which were delivered on the following Tuesday.

Our house was the first one that Mr Curl called at for an order and I always remember mother having a cup of cocoa ready for him after his 11 miles journey. He would sit at the kitchen table drinking this while writing down her order.

There was also a man called Toby who used to bring a horse pulling a flat cart from Portsmouth each week, selling fish, fruit and vegetables. They would stay the night at the New Inn at West Meon and we would see them trotting back to Portsmouth the next morning with an empty cart.

We got our fish from a Mr Egerton who had a small motor van who came from Bishops Waltham Tuesday and Fridays with fish and fruit. The fish was always nice and fresh and covered up in his van.

One of my special memories is of the coach and four-in-hand which during the summer months was driven through the village by Mr Sam Hardy. He was Master of the Hambledon Hunt at the time, and once a fortnight, I believe on a Wednesday, he came, dressed in hunting pink and top hat and wearing a monocle. The horses were changed at the George Hotel, so on entering the village Mr Hardy sounded his horn to let the groom know he was coming to get the relief horses ready. I am not sure where his journey started from but it terminated in Petersfield.



*Richard MacNee*

If we needed clothing mother usually sent a letter to Landport Drapery Bazaar at Portsmouth stating our requirements and a selection of about six garments were delivered the following Tuesday or Friday by delivery van. We were able to try on and choose a dress – coat – skirt etc and then the van would call in on the following Tuesday or Friday and collect what we did not want. I am not sure of the method of payment, whether we paid the van man or sent the money by post after receiving an account.

Once a year the Hambledon Hunt assembled on the lawns of Warnford Park and all the villagers would attend and partake of the new home baked bread and cheese (also made in the estate cheese dairy) which was provided free to whoever liked to make their way to the Meet. The Huntsmen were given wine to drink before setting off on the hunt.



*Richard MacNee*

I think the main highlight of our year, was the trip each year, just before Christmas, to Portsmouth which we took riding in the van of Mr Seaward from Corhampton. Normally he ran a carrier service twice a week to Winchester, but in December he took Christmas shoppers to Portsmouth. If the van had a full load of passengers the men had to dismount when we came to a hill and sometimes had to give the van a helping hand.

It wasn't a straight journey to Portsmouth; we had to go all round Exton, Corhampton and Meonstoke calling to see if anyone wished anything purchased at Portsmouth. I believe we left home about 9 am and arrived at Portsmouth around 12 noon (for only 20 miles).'

*Andrew Sellick*

(Editor's Note: photographs are obviously from the Red Lion at West Meon. If anyone has old photos of the Hambledon Hunt at the George in Warnford please share them with the Editor for publication in a future edition and I will also forward them to Thomas Carpenter who sourced these photos from Richard MacNee.)

## West Meon CE Primary School

As I wrote last time, the government was considering closing down schools at some point and we had already cancelled joining other schools for singing events at The Anvil and St Johns, Waltham Chase.

The weather had affected several sports events last term and the small schools football team battled wind and rain to practice on village fields, but the match at Langrish was cancelled because of water logged fields.



However, we were very busy in school in the lead up to the lockdown and World Book Day was great fun with some children making their own book characters out of potatoes, as well as our very own listen to reading dog, Dude, courtesy of the Wayland Pratts. Photos on the website.

We also held two science mornings with the children in mixed age groups trying out nine different experiments. They were very curious and excited about the different reactions and potential explosions!

The Sports Captains planned House group races for Sports Relief on the playground, which were great fun.

We started SATs club with plenty of squash and biscuits once a week, but SATs are now cancelled, which is unprecedented.

Our waiting list for some year groups continues to grow, even during closure, and we are nearly full for Year R in September.

We are grateful to everyone in the community who supports us, but we advised older members who hear reading to stay at home before we closed to look after their own health.

During the last week about half of the families self - isolated before the government finally closed us. It was very surreal and many tears shed and with goodbyes including 'See you on the other side' on the final day.

Since then the learning has taken place 'remotely' with work online on the website and Foxes



class trialling Zoom sessions, where the children can see each other and the teacher to touch base with each other. The other classes are running these sessions after Easter and all staff are keeping in contact with children and their families through school gmail.



The school remains open for keyworkers' children and also into the first week of the holidays and we have been supported by Aspire coaching and our Play Therapist Rose. All the staff have continued to work, whether it is planning online work, running activities in school or supporting mental health.

A special mention to Lisa and Paul Jenner, who run the West Meon Hut, who have ensured that hot meals have been delivered to families who need them.

We have seen more villagers than usual as people walk past and stop for a chat, which has been lovely.



It may be that primary schools are opened before other places of work, but we wait to hear final decisions.

Take care everyone.

*Julie Kelly, Headteacher*

*(Photographs supplied by Julie Kelly)*

## West Meon Music Festival 10th-13th September 2020

With so many music festivals and concerts cancelled in recent months, plans for the West Meon Music Festival are optimistically going ahead with the box office due to open on 1st June. The festival is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year with an impressive line up of internationally acclaimed guests joining the Primrose Piano Quartet for eight concerts across four days at venues in West Meon, East Meon and Warnford.



Highlights include clarinetist Michael Collins playing in two concerts with the Quartet on Saturday 12th September: programmes include Beethoven's Trio Op.11 for clarinet, cello and piano and Béla Bartók's scintillating "Contrasts" for clarinet, violin and piano – a work commissioned in 1938 by jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman. Collins and the Primrose will also be joined by Stephen Stirling – one of the UK's leading horn players – in Ernő Dohnányi's exciting Sextet Op.37.

Festival concerts also include two of Schubert's best loved chamber works: the "Death and the Maiden" string quartet on Friday 11th and the magical String Quintet in C major in the festival Finale on Sunday 13th when the Primrose will be joined by leading violinist Jonathan Stone and cellist Kirsten Jensen.

The festival also includes solo recitals by award winning Russian pianist, Roman Kosyakov; cellist Maxim Calver, winner of the BBC Young Musician Strings final in 2018; and guitarist Laura Snowden – described as a "string sensation" by BBC Music Magazine.

Full details of all festival events – which include master classes, schools concerts and a late night folk Hootenanny at the Thomas Lord pub in West Meon can be found at [www.westmeonmusic.co.uk](http://www.westmeonmusic.co.uk).

*Sue Scholes*





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## **West Meon Parish Council & Warnford Parish Meeting News**

**Parish Council Vacancies** – We currently have three vacancies for Councillors. If you feel you would like to contribute and support our village by joining the Council please contact the Clerk (details opposite) for further information.

### **Coronavirus Information**

**Self-Isolation helps stop coronavirus spreading** -Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. This is called self-isolation.

If you are self-isolating **you must**:

- not leave your home for any reason – if you need food or medicine order them by phone or online or ask someone else to drop them off at your home
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home. You can use your garden, if you have one. Any exercise should be taken at home.

Anyone who needs assistance whilst self-isolating should ring the County Council helpline on **0333 370 4000 from 9.00am to 5.00pm 7 days a week.**

**Bonfires** – Residents are actively encouraged not to have bonfires. Coronavirus is a respiratory illness and bonfires could well be unhelpful to those affected.

**Business Support** – Winchester City's website <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/get-help> includes a link to a detailed page covering supports available to businesses.

**Watch Out for Scams** – If you are aware, or become suspicious of, scams taking place in our neighbourhood, please let Hampshire County Council Trading Standards Service know or for further advice please ring Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 2231133.

**Hampshire Domestic Abuse Services** – is continuing to provide help to people experiencing domestic abuse on 03300 165 112 staffed from 11.30am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday.

**And Finally from West Meon** – The next Parish Council Meetings will be held on Tuesday 5th May 7.30 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting via skype and all Parishioners are welcome to join in. If you would like to be present please contact the clerk (details opposite).

**Warnford Parish Meeting** - The next Warnford Parish meeting (the AGM) was fixed for Thursday, 21st May 2020 in the Warnford Village Hall, 7.15 for 7.30pm. Of course, the Covid19/Coronavirus situation may mean it cannot take place. Updates will be posted on the Warnford website <https://www.hugofox.com/community/warnford-village-7802/home/>. Please make sure you have registered (via the website's Home page) for 'Alerts' so that you will automatically be notified by email of any changes. The relevant 'Alert' for Parish Meetings is 'Events'. If the AGM goes ahead, papers relating to it will be posted on the website shortly before 21st May. Please send any Agenda items to the Clerk. WPM hopes all can keep safe and virus-free.

## West Meon, Warnford, Winchester City & Hampshire C.C. Contacts

### West Meon Parish Council

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Environment

Diane Heppell  
Clerk to West Meon Parish Council  
clerk.westmeon@parish.hants.gov.uk  
023 9257 1720

**West Meon Parish Council website**  
www.westmeonpc.org.uk  
e-mail: westmeonpc2017@gmail.com

### Warnford Parish Meeting

Mark Rogers  
Chairman  
chairman@warnfordparish.co.uk  
07712 868858

Lucy Hutchinson  
Clerk  
warnfordclerk@gmail.com  
01730 829598

**Warnford Parish website**  
[www.hugofox.com/community/warnford-village-7802/about-us](http://www.hugofox.com/community/warnford-village-7802/about-us)

### Winchester & Hampshire Councillors

Winchester City Councillors  
Laurence Ruffell - 01962 777236  
lruffell@winchester.gov.uk

Hugh Lumby – 01489 877444  
hlumby@winchester.gov.uk

Hampshire County Councillor  
Roger Huxstep – 01329 833884  
roger.huxstep@hants.gov.uk

### Member of Parliament for Meon Valley

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01962 679920 – Constituency Office  
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## **Froxfield Choir singing for half a century**

Barack Obama said in 2016 that 'if you try to suppress the Arts, then you're suppressing the dreams and aspirations of a people.'

Of course, whilst that is not the intention, the world's attempts to suppress the corona virus has in many places led to the shutdown of the Arts in our towns and villages around the country.

Arts organisations the length and breadth of our countries overnight discovered they could no longer welcome audiences to their offerings, as the lights dimmed in theatres, and the last person out left the solitary ghost light shining, in the hope of welcoming back audience and cast alike at some future date. As the concert halls quietened, dance shoes were put away on the top shelf, museums and galleries locked their doors and orchestras and bands have taken their instruments home to try and keep their fingers and embouchure in trim, ready for the rallying cries of return when it is deemed safe to do so again.

This is no different for the warblers of Froxfield Choir, up at the top of Stoner Hill in High Cross. The village hall is closed and we meet no more on Thursday evenings to sing together. I have had the pleasure of conducting this choir for the last three years. As I drive along the dual carriageways of the A27 from Chichester and then the A3M no less, before following the ever decreasing widths of roads and increasing bends past the outskirts of Petersfield, through the delightful leafy village of Steep, and on upwards, seemingly forever upwards, sometimes even through mists and clouds, as if passing up to the mystical lands of Enid Blyton's Faraway Tree, before finally arriving for the next rehearsal of what must almost be choral utopia. Only this isn't imagined. Even though I still find it hard to believe sometimes, up to 40 voices of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses all converge, week after week, to take part in what scientific research has found to be one of the best recourses we humans can take for our well-being - singing together in a choir.

The choir is approaching its 50 years jubilee - half a century of singing together for fun and pleasure - and we sincerely hope to be soon stretching our vocal chords again in preparation for celebrations planned to mark this. However before we get to that stage we have to wait for the country to be able to meet up safely in person again and start healing the wounds of loss, tragedy and suffering many will have gone through during this time. Hopefully, music and the rest of the artistic world will be able to help in this and then later once again represent 'the dreams and aspirations of a people.'

You'll be very welcome to come and join us at the top of the hill when all of this is over. You don't need to read music, rather just want to join in and have fun performing great pieces of music - and meet lots of friendly people at the same time. We've sung in many different settings, and in the last few years started projects together with other people and groups: guitarist Amanda Cook, Alton Symphony Orchestra, Steep and Froxfield Primary Schools. Each year we sing a Christmas service at packed Privett Church, before returning in June for our big summer concert. We have for the last few years had the delightful tradition of singing in Selborne at Gilbert White's House just before Christmas. Last year, unfortunately, this clashed with a concert we had together with Alton Symphony Orchestra, but we hope to be back again this December for what our singers have described as their start to Christmas! You can get in touch through our website [www.froxfieldchoir.co.uk](http://www.froxfieldchoir.co.uk). Keep safe, stay well and keep (or start) singing!

*Michael Servant, Conductor*



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## Jenny's Garden Centre

I'm not sure how long I can go on pretending I am the local garden centre though I will do my best, but another big thank you to everyone who has bought plants, as I have just been able to send a second £100 to the shop. It is good to feel there is a small contribution one can make in return for all their hard work at this present time.

THANK YOU EVERYONE

*Jenny Jenkin*

## The Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery, Alton

In common with other Museums and Galleries those run by Hampshire Cultural Trust are closed for the duration of the current virus containment. The Trust has set up pages called Culture on Call with features, such as Virtual Tours of some of the collections, and a Quirky Vintage Quiz. HCT is also asking for people to send in their thoughts and creative responses to the troubled times, with a view to collecting them to go on show later. Go to Hampshire Cultural Trust website [www.hampshiriculturaltrust.org.uk](http://www.hampshiriculturaltrust.org.uk) which will have the latest news on possible reopenings.

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Have you been more aware of bird life lately, as human activity is curtailed?

The British Trust for Ornithology runs a scheme called Garden Bird Watch, whereby members are invited to record the birds which visit their gardens week by week, and send the results to the BTO's database. Normally the annual fee is £17, but this is being waived for new joiners during the COVID-19 lockdown. To find out more, and get a window-ledge data sheet, google [bto.org](http://bto.org).

*Jill Line*

## Bottle Full Is Fete's Fate

We have raised £1,605 to replace the Bottle Stall's takings at this year's Church Fete (to have been on 6th June). Mark Wills thanks you for your help, it's greatly appreciated.



## CHURCH FATE 2020

### VIRTUAL BOTTLE STALL DONATIONS

The Church is at the centre of West Meon life and the Fete its main income normally of over £8,000 with £800 from the Bottle Stall.

Let's not let COVID 19 close our church, so this year please drink your bottles and instead make a donation straight to the Church.

West Meon has 749 people (source 2011 census) so as well as your family and the NHS, to keep our Church safe too we can make up this shortfall if everyone in the village pulls together and donates at least **£1 per person in your household via**

<https://www.justgiving.com/collect/Church-of-Saint-Martin-4613496-2202020>

Thank You - The Bottle Stall Team



## WI Report April 2020

Despite the Coronavirus pandemic our members are managing to keep cheerful in these difficult times! We have set up a 'Ramblings' network where members can relay interesting stories, experiences and generally to keep in touch with one another. We all look forward to more W.I.

Ramblings to help us to be positive in the coming weeks. We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the country with a great community spirit with everyone is seemingly prepared to pull together and help each other.

We have decided to postpone all meetings and events up to August this year and we will keep you posted on our plans when we have reviewed the situation later in the summer.

Keep safe!

*Sue Kinloch*

## Diary Dates May

*(Please check with organiser due to likelihood of last minute cancellations or alterations.)*

### Tuesday 5th May

West Meon Parish Council Meeting 7.30 pm. Skype.

### Friday 8th May

VE Day Stay at Home Street Party. Decorate your house in red, white and blue and picnic in your front garden.

### Sunday 17th May

Licencing of Rev'd Mary Jepp (was due 10.30am in West Meon)

### Thursday 21st May

Warnford Parish meeting (the AGM) 7.30pm. See Warnford meeting website for papers prior to date if it goes ahead.



## Parish Directory

### Rector :

The Reverend Jane Ball 823221

### Assistant Rector Designate:

The Reverend Mary Jepp

### Church Wardens for West Meon:

Helena Gomm 829741

Michael Johnson 829105

### Church Wardens for Warnford:

Peter Short 829285;

Andrew Sellick 829161

## Hampshire Farmers' Markets

### All Markets Temporarily Suspended

While the government are still allowing outdoor food markets to continue, safety of the public, our traders and staff must come first and we have concluded that we have no alternative but to suspend operations.

Our producers are open for business and can be contacted using the details listed on our Producers web page:

<https://www.hampshirefarmersmarkets.co.uk/our-producers/>

We thank you for your support.

## Care Group

Co-ordinators: West Meon: Nina Byles 829028/07778 679922; Vicki Fathers 829217; Warnford: Vera Short 829285.

The Parish News is published by the Parochial Church Councils of West Meon & Warnford and delivered free to every home in the parishes.

Contributions by the 15th of the previous month please to:

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