

ANSTEY, BRENT PELHAM & MEESDEN NEWSLETTER

August - September 2021

Diary of Events

Date	Event
Sat 14 th Aug	Meesden Village Barbecue? TBC
Sun 22 nd Aug	Herts & Essex Country Fair, The Park, Brent Pelham
Sat 11 th Sep	Sponsored Bike & Hike – Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust
Sun 12 th Sep	Brent Pelham Harvest Festival and Alfresco Lunch
Mon 27 th Sep	Anstey Parish Council meeting

Editor: David Oxley, 2 Castle Cottages, Anstey / oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk / 07802 733398

Please send your local news to:

Jackie Godfrey on 01763 848732 or rjmo2@btinternet.com (for Anstey)
Martin Hügi brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com (for Brent Pelham).
Mike West mikewest181@hotmail.com (for Meesden)

And, for last minute material, direct to the editor.

A reminder that back issues of the Newsletter are available to view on the Anstey Village website at www.ansteyvillage.co.uk

Following discussions with several readers, the Editor is exploring the viability of returning to a printed and delivered edition as soon as possible. With this in mind, please let me know (by email or text, see above) if you have any advice or suggestions to offer e.g. about possible printing companies we might approach.



Shaoball
"Is that your answer to everything, Catwoman – just sleep on it?"

The next deadline for copy is 15th September

With acknowledgements: Private Eye

GENERAL NEWS & FEATURES

GOOD GARDENING! Topical tips and ideas for August and September

August is often the culmination of months of effort, so do try and find time to sit back and enjoy the garden. However, if you do want something to do, here are a few suggestions for jobs to complete in August and September.

- ❖ Continue to deadhead flowering plants regularly - Dahlias, roses, penstemon, bedding etc. This will help prolong the display well into early autumn.
- ❖ Prune lavender once it has finished flowering. Try not to cut into the old wood as it will not regrow from there.
- ❖ In September, divide congested perennials as the weather begins to cool down and water in the new divisions well.
- ❖ Pot up some mint and parsley for the kitchen windowsill, for fresh herbs through the winter.
- ❖ Order spring flowering bulbs now for planting in the autumn.

Here are two plants I would like to recommend that would add colour and interest to your garden over the next few months.

Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight'

A popular garden deciduous shrub, it grows to about 1.8m in height and spread. The flowers start acid green in colour, then turn a pure ivory before being washed with rich pink. It will flower from July to November. Grow in part shade, moist but well drained soil.



Penstemon 'Alice Hindley'

A useful garden perennial, with large purple-blue showy bells on tall stems. It will flower from June to October. Grows to 75cms, spread 30cms. Grow in full sun, well-drained soil.



Finally, I would like to recommend another nursery worth a visit - Springwell nursery at Little Chesterford, near Saffron Walden. It stocks a large selection of good quality garden plants .

Happy gardening, Wendy Hillier.

For those who have been following the tale of Thomas Dimsdale and his son Nathaniel's historic trip to Russia in 1768, the story continues...

After his return from Russia, he had been elected to be a member of the Royal Society, founded in 1660 by Charles II, and on the express command of George III inoculated Omiah of Tahiti, who had been brought to England from Captain James Cook's great second circumnavigation. Omiah was an interesting character, who on playing a game of chess for the first time lost the game, explaining that he felt it would be impolite to win. Nonetheless, on playing the game with the same person soon after, he won. While staying in Hertford for the inoculation he and Dimsdale struck up a friendship based on equals, an unusual slant on the then current 18th Century view of peoples generally thought of as savages.

Meanwhile, Dimsdale had maintained close links with the Russian Embassy (and in particular with the long-serving Chaplain, Father Samborskii) and was invited by the Empress to visit St Petersburg once more to inoculate Catherine's grandsons Alexander and Constantine. Alexander, who succeeded in 1801 after the assassination of his father, the Emperor Paul, was on the throne during Napoleon's abortive Russian invasion of 1812, while Constantine played a part in the events of December 1825, known as the Decembrist Revolt.

Dimsdale was married three times, his first wife dying in 1744 after five years of marriage, his second lasting thirty years from their marriage in 1746 and bringing ten children. His third marriage, in 1781, was to Elizabeth, daughter of his cousin William Dimsdale, who accompanied him to Russia in 1782. He was 68 at the time, and she was 48. She outlived him by twelve years, dying in 1812.

The sudden change from obscure spinsterhood to having to navigate the customs and procedures of court life of European Courts and that of Russia was not easy. This was highlighted in a somewhat malicious anecdote by a James Walker: '.....the gratitude of his honoured spouse so far got the better of her good breeding, that when Her Majesty entered the saloon, instead of half kneeling to kiss the hand held out with so much grace, she flew towards her like a tiger, and almost smothered the poor Empress with hugging and kissing.' Catherine remarked to Dimsdale that "Madame, son espouse etait tres amable", and to her attendants saying, very coolly "Ces choses arrivent quelque fois."

Elizabeth was a little nonplussed to receive an invitation from the Empress's gardener, John Bush (although she had known him in England), and it was only when she learned that the Empress's physician John Rogerson was also to be present that she could feel at her ease.

Elizabeth kept a diary recounting their outward and homeward journeys, that included an audience had by Dimsdale with Joseph II of Austria, after which he was asked to carry a letter from him to the Empress Catherine. In the pages devoted to the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine she relates that their governess had been instructed by the Empress that the young boys be called simply by their first names, as "Pride would come fast enough without encouraging it". On the 7th September the young princes were inoculated, Alexander having "the disorder very full for inoculation though not one alarming symptom ever appeared, the Baron being naturally anxious until it was over."

Upon their leaving for home, "the Empress upon my bowing to kiss her hand, kissed my Cheek on first going into the room, she said many civil and polite things and several times wished me a good journey." As part of their goodbyes they went to the apartments of the two princes, and while

there were presented with two little outfits designed by the Empress for the children, that are still in the Dimsdale family collection.

In a retired part of the garden of the palace at Tsarskoe Selo she and the Baron entered a small pyramid that had been utilised to contain the bodies of two Italian greyhounds, which the Baron had presented to the Empress, one of which had been called Tom. Catherine had told the Baron that they had been very prolific and seen more of their breed than Abraham.

Elizabeth was an observant traveller, fascinated by the differences between English and Russian life, mentioning among other things the nutritional benefits of freezing food made possible by the extremely cold Russian winter. All of which can be read in Elizabeth's diary, edited and published by A. G. Cross: 'An English Lady at the Court of Catherine the Great.'



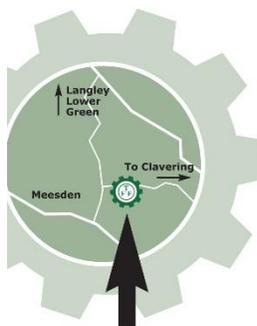
L to R Cilla Swann (nee Dimsdale), Cathy Dimsdale, Wilfrid Dimsdale – Tsarskoe Selo 1991

Elizabeth's other claim to fame is for the first mention of the Doughnut ('Dow Nut') that she had procured from a Mrs. Fordham. This, along with a wealth of detail on 18th Century domestic management and many receipts, can be found in 'The Receipt Book of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale c1800, edited by Heather Falvey and published by the Hertford Record Society 2013.

Wilfrid Dimsdale



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RECIPE CORNER:

BANANA TARTE TATIN

This recipe is a popular Jamie Oliver dessert; baking is a bit more involved than savoury recipes, make sure you use the exact weights and measures. Serves 6

Recipe

60g unsalted butter

150g caster sugar

4 large bananas

¼ tsp ground cinnamon

1 orange

plain flour for dusting

250g puff pastry

optional - crème fraiche

optional - vanilla ice cream

1 tbsp desiccated coconut

Method

1. Preheat oven 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.
2. Cut butter into cubes and put into deep-sided baking tray approx. 19 x 30cm. Place tray on low heat, melt butter add sugar and stir until combined. Continue to cook for about 5 mins or until caramel colour.
3. Peel the bananas, slice them lengthways and lay on top of the golden caramel. Remove from heat and sprinkle over cinnamon and finely grated zest of ½ orange.
4. Dust a work surface with flour. Roll out the pastry to a rectangle shape about the size of your baking tray, 0.5cm thick.
5. Drape pastry over a rolling pin and lay on top of bananas, tucking the pastry around the sides. Prick the pastry a few times.
6. Place tray at the top of hot oven for 25–30 mins until golden.
7. Carefully turn out the Tarte Tatin by placing a serving plate over the tarte and gently turning over. Check one corner to see if pastry is cooked (if not, return to oven for few mins).
8. Serve with crème fraiche and grated orange rind or ice cream with coconut topping.

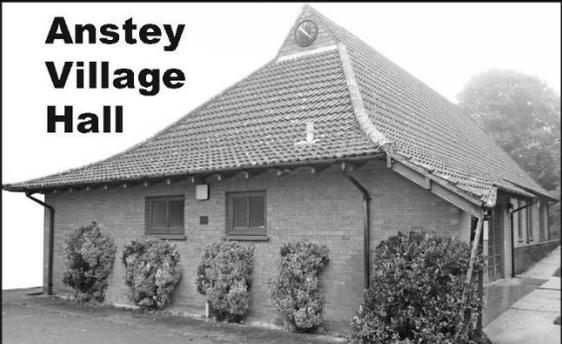
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SIAN'S FUNDRAISER

Alan Neale, of Holly House, writes..

It is a cliché that no parent should ever have to bury their children, but here's the thing about clichés – they have the hard edge of truth at their core.

When Sian passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 18th February 2020, she was 30 years, 7 months and 2 days old. I can vividly rewind to the day she was born on 16th July 1989, when her birth was generally without drama. Shortly after she was born, I held her, and faced her towards a mirror, for her to see herself, and to ever so slightly marvel at my own expression at the sight of this minor miracle. She was quiet, peaceful, content, untroubled and utterly untroubling. She would largely remain that way right up to the point that she died.

Cancer is a sinister, random entity, completely without dignity, humour, reasonableness, fairness or compassion - it lacks anything remotely human, it is without soul. It is a disease about which we still know so little, and it can leave you feeling utterly powerless.

Sian was not particularly remarkable, just like I am not particularly remarkable, nor is Sian's' mother, my



surviving daughter or Sian's husband. There will be many more people in the world who would be classified as extraordinarily brave, resilient and selfless. I don't know any of them, but I did know Sian, and she was, far and away, the bravest, most extraordinary person that I've ever met.

Sian was doubly unfortunate to be afflicted by not only cancer, but a very, very rare cancer, Clear Cell Sarcoma. Much has been done in the fight against cancer, and while it's true that survival rates are so much better than they were 10 years ago, it is still a dreadful killer. Unfortunately, at the moment, Clear Cell Sarcoma is generally incurable, and as far as I am aware there remains no known effective treatment for it.

I know that Sian is not the first person to be taken so tragically early in her young life - not even in this village - and she will not be the last, but it was her wish that we do something positive in her name.

In memory of Sian, we are undertaking a 10 mile walk on Sunday 19th September, from Anstey to Freman College in Buntingford, where Sian was at school before university, and then back to Anstey. In doing so, we hope to raise as much money as possible for The Edward Showler Foundation:

<https://www.edwardshowlerfoundation.com/>

This was set up by the parents of Edward Showler (ironically, a doctor) who was similarly afflicted by Clear Cell Sarcoma, and aims to support medical research into the underlying processes that lead to Clear Cell Sarcoma, with the hope of developing new and more effective treatments.

If you are able to support us, no matter how small, that would be much appreciated. Indeed, if you wanted to join us, you would be very welcome. We have set up a fundraising page where you can donate, and leave messages, which you will find at this address:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/WalkforSian>

If you want to know more, you are welcome to contact Alan at alan.nps@btinternet.com

Thank you

Alan & Sharon (Sian's parents), Cara (Sian's sister) and Lova (Sian's husband)

ANSTEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council met in the Village Hall on Mon 12th July. Minutes of the meeting can be found on the village website www.ansteyvillage.co.uk
The next meeting will be held on Mon 27th Sep.

Several members of the village have approached Anstey Parish Council about the state of the footpaths this year. Many of them are clearly more overgrown than usual, following the wettest May since 1954. The Council have written to local landowners, reminding them of their statutory responsibilities (see below), and encouraging them to be as helpful as they can in this regard. They have also alerted the highways authority to the situation.

Official advice is as follows

Farmers or landowners are required to:

- ❖ Keep rights of way open and useable; this includes providing and maintaining stiles and gates and making sure they are safe and easy to use.
- ❖ Cut vegetation that could obstruct the route (at least 3m is required for bridleways and 1.5m for footpaths, unless they are crossing a field).

However, farmers must not do any work which might harm nesting birds or destroy their nests, especially during the main nesting and breeding season from 1 March to 31 August.

Paths that run on the field edge must not be cultivated and cross-field paths must be reinstated correctly after field operations.

Who keeps the path surface clear?

It is down to the landowner to keep cross-field paths clear from crops other than hay or silage. However, in England and Wales the highways authority is responsible for maintaining the surface of public rights of way and controlling surface vegetation (other than crops).

It is also responsible for steps, handrails, some barriers, drains, most bridges and culverts, stepping stones, fords, signposts and waymarks. Farmers should use common sense to ensure core cross-field paths are walkable.

PLANT SALE

The Plant Sale Ladies are pleased to announce that nearly £1000 has been raised from our doorsteps. The plants available were hampered by the unusual weather patterns we had, with frosts through April followed by a brief heatwave then continuous rain through May. The more tender plantings suffered greatly. The sales tables were enhanced by other contributors dropping off some of their extra plants to help swell the coffers. One or two bits still remain, so keep your eyes out for end of sale bargains.

We have divided the monies between St George's Church and the NHS Staff fund, with £750 already given to the church to help pay for the recent tree surgery on the old beech tree. It is anticipated that £250 will be ready soon to go to the NHS.

The three of us (Wendy, Jenny and Jan) would like to thank you all for your continued support. The gardens of Anstey will no doubt be some of the finest in the County!

Jan Pledger

SOCIAL MEDIA

Email - ansteylink@googlegroups.com

AnsteyLink 'connects local residents to share local information, list items for sale, free or loan, recommend local businesses, services and events, and anything else that may be useful to contact local residents about.' The group is managed by Sarah Cruise – cruise.s@icloud.com

Facebook

The **Anstey and Meesden Community Group** is 'a community group for residents of Anstey and Meesden to share thoughts and a place for local businesses to advertise.' The administrator is Gemma Jacobs.

ANSTEY DEFIBRILLATOR. A reminder that the Anstey defibrillator is located outside The Blind Fiddler, just to the left of the entrance porch. The code to open the cabinet is **3456**

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BRENT PELHAM NEWS

www.brentpelham-meesden-pc.org

Presented by Martin Hügi

Dates for the diary:

Sunday 22nd August – The Herts & Essex Country Fair held at The Park, Brent Pelham

Don't forget that the Herts & Essex Country Fair, Dog and Heavy Horse Show will be taking place this year in The Park, Brent Pelham, SG9 0AT on Sunday 22nd of August 2021.

The Country Fair is a traditional local Country Fair which provides an entertaining day out for all the family.

The beautiful shire horses will be out in force again and the Heavy Horse enthusiasts will be running a range of classes to recognise the breeds of heavy horses which have played such an important role in agriculture in the past.

The main ring events will feature a variety of displays by sheepdogs, gun dogs, foxhounds, beagles, bassets and falconry, as well as a parade of vintage tractors.

This year, we would again like to welcome quality local trade stands - all enquiries should be sent to hertsandessexcountryfair@gmail.com or please call 07968 444 890 / 07841 912 473 for further information.

Also see <https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheHertsandEssexCountryFair/posts/> for updates, information and photos from past years.

Sunday 12th Sept – Harvest Festival and Alfresco Village Lunch

Details to follow..

Helpers needed for the Country Fair

As seen above, the Country Fair is taking place on August 22 this year and as usual we are looking for volunteers to help run the tea tent.

We need strong helpers to erect & dismantle the marquee (a lot easier these days with the Smart Tent), bakers, servers, washer uppers, banker and water fetcher!

So, if you feel that you could spare some time then please let me know. Best baking sellers are sausage rolls, quiches, any type of cake or muffins, open to any other suggestions.

I look forward to hearing from you and all.

Proceeds from the tea tent go to the Village Hall Maintenance Fund. Suggestions for a theme also welcome! :)

Many thanks

Sam Murray - sam@cabco.london

Burglary

Check your security and keep aware. At the start of July a house in the Causeway was broken into. It took place during the daytime and whilst the resident was working in an outside office. Thanks go to a keen-eyed neighbour who gave crucial information about the car and number plate, which swiftly led to the perpetrators being arrested several hours later in a stolen car with jewellery, cash, watches and weapons.

The police charged them two days later for this burglary and another in Baldock that it is believed they carried out the same day. They are professional burglars and are wanted in connection with multiple offences across Herts, Beds and Bucks, all targeting rural areas. It is believed they were disturbed as they often do a very thorough job of removing all valuables from a property.

Police also said that they are often targeting cars, and if they don't take the car will often take spare keys to return later. A reminder to keep spare keys in a safe location.

Facebook page "The Pelhams"

You can find interesting local stories and histories on the **The Pelhams** Facebook page, a place to share local news, stories and images so everyone can see what a beautiful part of the world we live in. Please take a look, join the page and add any stories, pictures or posts.

Pilates continues on Zoom

Pilates continues on Zoom, at 7pm Monday night, for 40 minutes. 6pm on Thursday night. The cost is £3.50 a session if anyone is interested please email Becky at rebecca.ashman@hotmail.co.uk or Hazel at hazelnorris@icloud.com or telephone 777316.

Email addresses

Of course, if you are receiving this by email you will, unless someone has forwarded it on, have registered your email address to receive this as a digital copy. Please do check with neighbours if and when you see them that they are aware of the newsletter being digital for the time being. If they are not and they would still like to receive it they can email brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com and it will be sent on and future digital editions. If you are aware that a neighbour does not have an email please consider printing them a copy, whilst checking with them first, maintaining social distancing and taking hygiene precautions whilst printing and delivering. Thank you.

For the benefit of those new to the village and as general reminders:

Community WhatsApp Group

There is a Brent Pelham community WhatsApp group to share news, information, and informal chat. Open to anyone living in the village and administered by Hazel Norris. Please get in contact with her to be added to the group at hazelnorris@icloud.com

Brent Pelham Facebook page

If you are a Facebook user then don't forget to like the Brent Pelham Facebook page to keep up to date with upcoming events & local news. Fraser Murray sends out emails to the village with general news, these are useful for getting out urgent news, reminders and information quickly. To add your name to his distribution list, or if your email has changed, then send a blank email to frasermurray@me.com with your name and address in the header.

Village hall internet

The WiFi network is BP-Village-Hall and the password is shonk5moat. It's free to use for basic respectful use, and for those 'your-internet-is-down' emergencies. For prolonged heavy use a small, or large, donation would be very welcome, simply post through the letter box at the Village Hall with an explanatory note.

Village defibrillator - As a reminder, the village defibrillator is located near the village hall and post box opposite the church. The access code for the box is **C159X**.

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MEESDEN NEWS

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vegware
community fund

Thanks to the support of Vegware, the raised bed at our village hall now has some Dahlias in bloom and residents are welcome to pick and enjoy the flowers in their own home. Picking the blooms encourages more flowers.



There are also a couple of large hanging baskets still for sale at 1 Rose Cottages. We only suggest a donation of £20 each to cover costs, and any profit goes towards the upkeep of our village hall.



Our villages are lucky to have the support of residents that regularly pick up any litter they see lying around on the road to help keep the village looking beautiful. Anyone that helps with this is welcome to receive some equipment that the Parish Council has recently purchased, that would make the job easier and safer. A limited amount of this equipment, comprising of a long-reach handle, high-vis waistcoat, rubbish bags and a bag-loop is available at the Village Hall, please call Ken on 01279 777 700 if you are interested.



Ken Newstead

Mike West writes..

With such wonderful countryside to ride in, it's perhaps not surprising that we have quite a few children with ponies in Meesden. Here are some of them!

Lydia on "Watson"

Watson was bought as a very novice horse in September 2019 and Lydia has been training him herself, although progress has been hampered by lockdowns. They compete in Dressage, Showjumping and sometimes both on the same day



(Combined Training). Recently completed their first small one day event finishing 7th. They are also active members of Puckeridge Western Pony Club and will be off to camp this summer. To date their greatest success has been in dressage. They are on the area teams for both Pony Club and Riding Club. They came 2nd in the area Riding Club qualifiers, qualified for the National Championships and went on to finish 3rd in the Nationals, which were all online with the competitors filming their tests which were then submitted online to be judged. The results were live streamed. She also finished 3rd in the Under 21yr olds South East Region for the My Quest British Dressage Championships. Well done Lydia! They can often be seen pottering round the roads in Anstey.

Florence Clanfield writes “Hello I have two ponies, Pikelet who is black and white and Peggy! I have Peggy as Pikelet can be a bit naughty! I



love to hack about and go to the pony club. They love polos and lots of cuddles. I love riding

Peggy bare-back, but Pikelet doesn't let me! My favourite thing is to ride on the beach.” Sounds wonderful Florence!

And from Willa; “This is Benji! He is a 14 hand Connemara that I love to event! We do British eventing and pony club. He loves jumping and competing! I've had him for two years now. I'm very lucky as he comes to school with me. He's so cool, I love him.”



Matilda with Digger. Digger recently arrived. Catharine writes, “Like most ponies, he is a real character and he makes us laugh a lot!”

Support for the local food bank

As you may know, the churches in the Benefice have had occasional collections for the local foodbank in Buntingford. Sadly this is an ongoing need, so if anyone wants to contribute on a regular basis (or indeed as a one-off) there will be a collection box in front of Meesden village hall for the last week in July, and then in the last week of each month thereafter. As well as non-perishable food, toiletries and cleaning products etc. are also welcome. Contributions will be

combined with collections at other churches in the benefice and taken to Buntingford.

By way of an experiment, three years ago Jen and I decided to leave an area of grass at the front of our house uncut during the summer, cutting it only once in the autumn. We did nothing else to the grass and simply allowed what was there to grow. The photos show the fabulous wildflowers that have emerged. So far there are 12 different species, including 8 Bee orchids that live in a symbiotic relationship with mycorrhizal fungi.



New arrival!

Marc and Charlotte Etherington, from 6 Rose Cottages, are delighted to welcome Florence Mary Etherington, who was born on Monday 28th June 2021. Whilst it was planned that Florence would be delivered at the Rosie at Addenbrookes, she made an arrival quicker than expected, being delivered on their bathroom floor with Marc carrying out the delivery! Everyone is healthy and well, with Florence's brother and sister, Rupert and Milly, very excited that they have a new baby sister to play with.

VETS

Please remember that the Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS) is still operational in Meesden. Anyone in need of urgent help from someone that lives in the village can phone 01279 260 560 and our Defibrillator is always at hand for a medical emergency. The key code for the Defibrillator box is C159X

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