

ANSTEY, BRENT PELHAM & MEESDEN NEWSLETTER

APRIL to MAY 2017

Diary of Events

Date	Event
Apr 4 th	Village Link – Meesden Village Hall 7.30pm – “St Paul’s Cathedral,” Speaker Martin Coping
Apr 11 th	Village Supper Club– The Woodman, Nuthampstead– 7.30pm.
Apr 20 th	Hormead Garden Club - Hormead Village Hall 8pm – “Cambridge University College Gardens” – Speaker: Rodney Tibbs
Apr 23 rd	Shonk’s Lunch - Brent Pelham Village Hall
Apr 24 th	Anstey Parish Council AGM – Village Hall – 7.30pm
Apr 25 th	A.P.C.M Great Hormead School – 7.30pm
Apr 25 th	Brent Pelham village Hall AGM – Village Hall 7.00pm
May 2 nd	Village Link – Meesden Village Hall 7.30pm – “Soil Sweat and Tears.” Speaker Brian Carline
May 13 th	Plant Sale outside Anstey Church 10am to noon
May 15 th	Anstey Parish Council meeting – Village Hall – 7.30pm
May 17 th	Meesden Village Hall Committee Meeting – Village Hall - 7.30pm
May 9 th	Village Supper Club – The Woodman, Nuthampstead – 7.30pm
May 18 th	Hormead Garden Club – Hormead Village Hall 8pm – “Fuchsia Husbandry” – Speaker Brian Carline
May 6 th	Quiz Night at Anstey Village Hall 7.30pm
May 20 th	Rogation Walk 9.45 am starting at Little Hormead Church
July 9 th	Brent Pelham Village Picnic
July 22 nd	Music on a Summer Evening – Anstey Village Hall

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Please send in your own news to: Jackie Godfrey on 01763 848732 or rjmo@tinyworld.co.uk (for Anstey);
Peter Wrightson on 01279 777435 or peter@wrightson.u-net.com (Brent Pelham);
Margaret Beach on 01279 777195 or moth@sotamail.com (Meesden) or, for last minute material, direct to the editors.

The next deadline is **15th** May 2017



Frankenstein or The Sound of Muesli. *Our drama correspondents Wilfrid and Cathy Dimsdale write: -*

Anyone having spent a carefree evening of joyous entertainment at Brent Pelham Village Hall over the three nights of the run, may have gone home having given only a cursory thought to the gigantic forces at work within this unforgettable production. If readers of this piece imagine for one minute that your reviewers managed to understand every twist and turn of the storyline, they would be under a misapprehension! It was however immensely enjoyable and the greatest fun throughout - for all ages.

We were fortunate witnesses of allusions to: Pilates, John Cleese, Wagner, School Inspections, Florence Foster Jenkins, the Welsh, General Dietrich von Hulsens Halsen (died of a heart attack whilst dancing a Pas de Deux before Kaiser Willhelm II in 1908 wearing a tutu), Public Schools, both boy's and girl's, Oscar Wilde, the Norwegian entry to 2015 Eurovision, The Fly, Americans, Holiday Brochures, Class Stereotypes, Xenophobia, the inventor of the Paper Clip, Julie Andrews, John F Kennedy, Benny Hill, SS GB, Dadaism, Keith Chegwin, The Leader of the Labour Party, The Leave Campaign, The Sound of Music, (no no..... The Sound of Muesli) and, The Shining, to mention but a few.

First and foremost one has to recognise the skill with which Tom Sealy crafted 'Frankenstein or The Sound of Muesli'. Each play he has, over the years, written and directed has been a triumph in its own way. This one was so complex in its themes and stage direction that pulling it off into the success that it undoubtedly was is certainly to his credit as a writer, and of course to his portrayal as Igor, the suave handsome (not overly bright) aide to the eponymous Baron.

Congratulations to the members of the cast for bringing to life their various parts; and, as mentioned in the programme, many of them having to double up. To pick out individuals would be unfair, but here goes. Alison Cossor in her roles of (tweedly clad) schoolmistress and Vampyra (there may be a few little Vampyras appearing in the Times Births columns in future) and Musical Direction. Her memorable solo, with the line:

'I'll sink in my teeth, drink as fast as I can: When I get my hands on my favourite man.'

to the tune of "These are a Few of My Favourite Things".

Rosey Woolcombe as the Blytonesque, and overly excited, schoolgirl. Richard Crookes in his two roles of a frightful schoolboy and Rupert Revel, British Intelligence (an oxymoron). John Hamilton who, playing the eponymous Baron with his faithful offsider Igor, managed to hold together the storyline, if it could be called that, with confidence and authority.

We now come to Maria, in the form of Jan Fox, who not only produced the play but was the Costumier too. What costumes! Vampyra's would be one of the more memorable. All the other costumes were just right, Mandy Parker so confident as the horrible harridan in her fur coat, Krabbe with his most fetching fedora and Stuart Taylor's magnificent overcoat. Jan had two further roles, Chardonnay, the archetypical teenager, and Griselda, one of the three washerwomen. Martyn Downer as Captain von Trapp, immaculately clad with Austrian hat and feather holding down the union between the Muesli and Frankenstein with aplomb. We cannot fail to note the unmentionable 'Member of the Audience', (aka international man of mystery Alec Dybart....geddit) Ted Barclay, who was so outraged at 'cheap xenophobic shots at foreigners' that he reduced Frankenstein, Vampyra and Igor to guilty silence. Amazing!

Kevin Lacey and Stuart Taylor as Krabbe and Milscheflasche entertained us all in their hunt for the von Trapp family, while paying more attention to their grooming and smart attire than would be thought strictly necessary for members of the Fuehrer's unstoppable military machine. The three washerwomen, (Mandy Parker, Jan Fox and Jan Evans), Gretel, Griselda and Gretchen made a philosophical trio whilst doing their washing and planning open insurrection by invading the castle to 'save their men'. Gretel however has less enthusiasm for that than her two companions. The 'suave, handsome aide' seen with bloodstained axe, uttering the words 'Where's Johnny?'

The Chorus, or von Trapp Children, in the form of Barry Allbrook (complete with Lederhosen) with Lizzie (fragrant wife) Barclay, Madeleine Bradshaw, Jen Cresswell, Juliette Hodson, Kate Hurst, David Oxley, Kate Oxley, and Mike West sang many memorable lines, such as 'Frankenstein, Frankenstein, bribed the peasants for Brexit' to the tune of 'Edelweiss'. They were so good we could perhaps have seen and heard a little more of them?

Ann Grimsdale, (who was also prompter), sitting at the back with her lighting and sound desk, had a most challenging set of roles in the production which she carried off with great success. The construction and painting of the scenery needs special mention, helping to make this production so simply excellent. Thanks particularly to **Stagestruck**, who as so often have been an invaluable asset to all our villages, and to this production in particular.

We all wish the missing cast members, Alison Lambie and Anthony Woodall, speedy recoveries, and look forward to their reappearance along with the members of the cast, **plus a few recruits....PLEASE**, in the next production of the Village Players.

New Home needed for Metal Frame Greenhouse 6ft by 8ft approx. **Free** to anyone who will remove – owner too ancient to use anymore! The greenhouse has been dismantled and just needs collecting. Includes a metal bench but some glass missing which could be covered over with plastic sheeting. Please phone 01279 777797. *PS from editors; we removed a greenhouse of the same make recently and have lots of glass left over which would probably fit and to which any one is welcome for free.*

THE ROGATION WALK - SATURDAY 20TH MAY 2017 This is one of the oldest country traditions dating back to Norman times, where the people of the villages were taken round the edges of the parish and with green boughs, usually birch or willow, beat the boundary with them, so that the limits were marked and this information could be handed down through the generations. This walk historically took place in Rogation week. Join us for this most enjoyable event walking all OR part of the route visiting each of the six churches in the benefice. Starting at 9.45 am at Little Hornead Church, we then walk a distance of approximately 3 miles between each village. There is a midmorning stop at Wyddial where Sally Dyake of Home Farm so kindly provides refreshments not to be missed. At Anstey there is a lunchtime picnic stop at the village hall. Light refreshments are available at every church along the route before finishing around 4.30 pm at Great Hornead. **You can join us at any point and similarly leave the route when you wish.** Families, including dogs, are most welcome, the pace and terrain is easy and along field edges and country lanes. For further details, please call Trevor and Fiona Hughes on 01279 777404.

Volunteers needed to listen to children read in local Primary Schools. Can you spare an hour or two a week to listen to children read in a local primary school? **Schoolreaders** is looking for more volunteers in Hertfordshire and Essex to carry out this important role. Reading time for many children at home and at school is often insufficient and one in four children are now leaving primary school unable to read to the required standard. This can have a lifelong consequence. No qualifications are necessary, just a good command of spoken and written English. **Schoolreaders** is flexible and will match your availability to an appropriate, local school. Our volunteers find the scheme incredibly rewarding, knowing that a few hours helping a child learn to read each week can have such a great impact on their life chances. **Please visit the website www.schoolreaders.org to join or call 01234 924111 for further information.**

Would anyone like to share a stall at **Anstey Fair** selling Arts and Crafts made locally? If so please contact Jan Pledger. janpledger99@btinternet.com

Exercise at Anstey Village Hall. There are weekly sessions as follows: *Tuesday evening* - Table Tennis (7.30pm). *Wednesday* - Pilates (8.50 to 9.50am) and Table Tennis (10.30 to 11.30am). *Wednesday evening* - Carpet Bowls (7.30pm). *Thursday* - Yoga (10.45 to 11.45am) New members are always welcome. The first session is free: thereafter, it's just £2 per session (pay as you go). For more information contact oxlevdj@yahoo.co.uk

HELP NEEDED PLEASE We are looking for someone to do the mowing over the summer. It would be for six hours a week. We also have additional outdoor jobs to do if you are interested. An additional one or two hours per week would be needed for this. Please email me or call me if interested. Thank you so much. Tilly Clanfield, Meesden Hall. tclanfield@hotmail.co.uk 01279 777667 or 07770807812

ANSTEY NEWS

www.ansteyvillage.co.uk

Many congratulations to **Jemma and John** from Welspen Thatch on the birth of their daughter **Isabella** on 13th February, a sister for Matilda.

Still missing since the autumn **Sparky**, a white male tom cat with subtle rings around his tail. If he has taken up lodgings with you please let me know. If he decides to stay with you then so be it but I need to know he is alright. Jan Pledger 01763 848242

NEWS FROM ANSTEY VILLAGE HALL

The ever-popular Christmas Dance raised £600, half of which was donated to the Anstey School Minibus Fund.

The Anstey Pop-up Film & Social Club has shown four films so far in the Village Hall:

Florence Foster Jenkins, Eight Days a Week, Ab Fab and The Magnificent Seven (2016 remake). The next film will be shown on April 21st. For more details and to join the mailing list please contact Colin Smith (colingsmith@gmail.com) or Dave Oxley (oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk). Membership costs just £12 per year and allows free entry to all films.

A new 'Forever Active' exercise class has started at the Village Hall: **Zumba!** This takes place on Mondays from 6.30 to 7.30pm. As ever, the first session is free, after which it's just £2 per session, pay as you go. All ages welcome.

There are now seven sports and exercise classes in the Village Hall. Full details are on the Anstey Village website (www.ansteyvillage.co.uk) or contact oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk.

Pit your wits at the annual Village Hall Quiz Night on Saturday 6th May - doors open 7.30pm, quiz starts at 8.00. Tickets £10, including supper - licensed bar. Book a team table for six to eight, or join one on the night. Contact Colin (colingsmith@gmail.com) / tel 849949) or Dave (oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk) / tel 848584).

Music on a Summer's Evening - Saturday 22nd July. Save the date! An evening of live music from Tony Pledger, the Anstey troubadour, and Sky West, the Anstey Fair 'house band,' featuring Alison Cossor (aka Vampyra). More details to follow in the next issue.

Date for your diary: On **Saturday May 13th** in the morning (from 10 to 12) we will be holding our now **annual plant sale** outside Anstey Church (in the porch if wet). Any donations of plants would be welcome to Jan Pledger (848242), Wendy Hillier (848685) or Jenny Goymour (848271). Please come and support. Our proceeds are joined with those of Anstey Fair for village fund raising.

Anstey Parish Council. The Parish Council accounts have been running at a slight deficit annually due to several cost increases. This deficit has been covered by using money that has been carried over for many years. Unfortunately, the previously accrued amount is becoming exhausted and the Parish Council have no option but to increase the annual precept this year by 25%. The Precept has remained at the same level, £3,800 for six years. However, with rising costs, it will be raised to £4,750 this year. The total increase of £950 pa amounts to an additional sum of approximately £6.78 per household for 2017.

More information can be found on the Village Website: <http://www.ansteyvillage.co.uk/parish-council/>. You can also

contact the Parish Clerk, or East Herts District Council if you have any queries.

The Parish Council met on 16th January, their first meeting of 2017. Future meeting dates are: 20th March, 24th April (AGM), 15th May, 17th July, 18th September and 20th November 2017. We would be pleased to see you at any forthcoming meeting, especially the AGM which will be held on 24th April.

Anstey First School At Anstey First School we have had a great start to the Spring Term and the new year! We have been studying all about Space. We have learnt about the planets in our solar system and other celestial bodies, tracked the changes in our moon, created space art and written space poetry and stories. Our pupils have also virtually visited the International Space Station and found answers to the most important questions like ... "How do you use the loo in space?". We are very fortunate to have a visit from one of our parents who talked to us about his career within the space engineering industry. Pupils learnt all about how he designs, builds and launches satellites that help with communications and the internet. During the visit, we saw scale models of the satellite (which in real life is as big as a house!). Mr Corden made an



amazing runway model wearing the special refuelling suit and we handled the extremely durable but extremely light materials used in the build. Outside in the playground, we then launched our own rocket!

During Chinese New Year we celebrated the year of the rooster and learnt all about the Chinese traditions. Children tried Chinese food using chopsticks, wrote in Chinese characters

and learnt some Chinese words. We had fun getting out the Chinese Dragon and parading around the playground.

Anstey took part in the inter school Speed-stacking competition held at Freman College. Our year 3 and 4 pupils competed and our tiny little school came away with a third place for the 3-6-3s. Well done to Evie!!

BRENT PELHAM NEWS

Jean Byrne sadly passed away on January 31st and was laid to rest at St Mary's on Friday March 3rd next to husband Rod. Jeannie turned 80 on January 10th and had lived at The Sticks bungalow for many years, initially with Rod, a retired watchmaker who had looked after the church clock amongst other duties; in fact there is an inscription on the clock in tribute to Rod's restoration & maintenance. After selling her jewellery business in Bishops Stortford, Jeannie joined the Fire Service and remained a strong part of their community after retirement. She was a gifted seamstress, knitter & crafter and even made her own Christmas cards. Jeannie suffered a major stroke in November 2015 which resulted in hospitalisation and a subsequent move to a nursing home. She was a proud, fiercely independent & private person who was very well liked by those who knew her.

Burns Night Supper was superb! A full house at the Village Hall on January 28th enjoyed a fabulous evening of delicious food & fun. Many folk, too numerous to mention, helped with the event but special thanks must go to Fraser & Sam who organised the evening with care & real attention to

detail; to Beth & Tina for outstanding work in the kitchen; to Kristian for the Cullen Skink & to Laird Rod Mc Bell as MC. For those Unfortunates who missed the evening, try to borrow a copy of the January 28th edition of the BP Journal which was printed for the evening. This included articles about local haggis hunters terrified by an enlarged raptor called the Trump Kite, an update on the Brexit threat to Haggis Farming in Herts and a special article on the reproductive management of haggis using ultrasound.

Village Drains Parish Councillor Kate contacted me to say "The Highways Department has at last cleared the drains in Brent Pelham. The Parish Council opened a dialogue with them on this topic in November 2007! The road closures have, at times, been a nuisance but necessary to do the work. Thank you for your forbearance, but if you have found it particularly frustrating please remember the operatives are doing the job they have been asked to; the people you need to speak to are in the Highways Department".

Natter with Nanny Over a cuppa, Nanny told me another story which made history come alive. In 1929, she was six years old, living in Arkley near Barnet and attending her small church school when the teacher, in great excitement, ushered the kids into the playground telling them to look up. There, rumbling through the sky, was the world's largest flying craft, a 731ft long silver spectacle, the R101 hydrogen-filled airship. It sounded, as Nanny described, like a monumental sewing machine and was on its way to France. *FYI, the R101 was one of a pair of British rigid airships completed in 1929 and planned for long distance routes within the British Empire, particularly to Canada & India. Unfortunately, it crashed in France in 1930 killing 48 of the 52 people on board and effectively ending British airship development.*

The Black Horse goes from strength to strength & they have exciting plans for the future. I had a chat with Hugh & Mike and can reveal **Jam Nights** on the **last Tuesday** of every month for musically minded folk to bring along their instruments of choice for a good old knees-up. They are continuing **Steak Nights every Wednesday** - you can get 2 steaks and 2 glasses of house wine for just £25. Starting on **Thursday March 30th** they will have **Quiz Nights** on the **last Thursday** of the month - register your teams, of up to 6, on their Facebook page - £1 per head will be asked but there will be cash prizes & bubbles! As the sun is starting to show its face, they will be opening the garden and plan such things as games for kids (& adults!), a huge bbq pit, an external bar and possibly outdoor cinema screenings. Any questions? – give them a call on 778925.

Village Hall AGM will be on **Tuesday April 25th at 7.00pm** in the VH. This is open to all so do come along and make your views known.

Save the Date! **Shonk's Lunch** is always well supported - a superb village occasion and this year we will be holding it on **Sunday April 23rd** in the Village Hall organised by Kate & Tim. The **Village Picnic** will be on **Sunday July 9th** which doesn't interfere with Wimbledon finals so please come along! And, the **Country Fair** is on **Sunday August 20th**.

The Pelhams Exhibition at Hertford Museum
Discover the history of Furneux, Stocking & Brent Pelham

and the characters who lived there at a "High Streets & Hedgerows" exhibition at Hertford Museum running between **April 1st – June 17th**. It's open from 10am – 5pm from Tuesdays to Saturdays and admission is free. The exhibition includes a wide range of objects, photos & recorded memories of those who made the Pelhams their home. Don't miss this rare opportunity. Contact the museum on 01992 582686 for further info.

And finally ... having compiled the Brent Pelham Newsletter for almost three years, the time has come for me to hand the baton on and a volunteer is needed to take over – as you can see from my efforts, no previous experience is necessary! I will complete the June/July edition, hopefully in parallel with the new person but that will be my last. Please call me on 777435.

MEESDEN NEWS

St Mary's Meesden annual **Blessing of the Crib Service** held on Christmas Eve hosted a record breaking number of parishioners of every age and from all parts of the Benefice. The rendition of "Little Donkey", the arrival of the travellers bringing the Nativity scene and the lighting of the candles ensured that Christmas was beginning in the traditionally true spirit of the season. With this in mind, whilst we celebrated the birth of Christ in a lowly manger, thought was also given to those experiencing homelessness in our wider community. An amazingly generous collection of £746 was taken, which, this year, has been split between St Mary's Church and the Salvation Army.

The Annual Sausage Supper at Meesden Village Hall went off with its usual sizzle at the end of January. It was a happy and sociable evening and everyone was well warmed and sustained by sausages and mash followed by the delicious puddings, all cooked and donated by Meesden cooks. Thanks to all who helped, especially Margaret and Stephen Beach for organising ticket sales. The profit of over £250 was given to the Church and Village Hall.

QUIZ NIGHT SUCCESS. On 4th March Meesden held another very successful quiz night. It was a sell-out evening with teams from Meesden and the surrounding villages keenly competing again! Ann Grimsdale and her team-mates carried off the trophy after a keenly fought high scoring competition. Our thanks to all those who supported the event, which raised over £700 for the church and village hall funds. Thanks especially to Trevor and Fiona Hughes for organising the event, to Annabel Busher for the delicious ploughman's supper, and to Chris and Richard Crookes for running the bar and raffle.

"SPRING IS BUSTING OUT ALL OVER"..... particularly in our gardens. The plant stall is again at my garden gate outside Alma Cottage Meesden. Very reasonably priced for good quality plants. All profits go to help support our 14th century church, St Mary's Meesden. Thank you in anticipation to all my customers and have a blooming time in your gardens this year. Happy Planting"

I also support the **Hare Street and Hornead Garden Club**. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 8.00pm at Hornead Village Hall. We have interesting speakers and complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits afterwards. So do come and have a chat, ask questions and

get free advice. We have a members' Garden Visit in June, and a coach visit planned to The Old Vicarage, East Ruston, Norfolk in July, as well as a Christmas Party (wine and snacks) in November. So lots to look forward to. See you there. *Elaine*

MEESDEN BOOK CLUB We have been reading "All that is solid melts into air" by Darragh McKeon, an excellent fictional account of the very real Chernobyl disaster told from the points of view of a variety of characters as the Soviet Union begins its collapse. We see how shockingly badly the disaster was dealt with through the eyes of a nine-year old piano prodigy, a former dissident journalist now working in a factory, a leading surgeon forced to treat the Chernobyl victims and a teenage boy who lives just ten miles from power plant itself. It was a fascinating read, both in terms of learning more about how the Chernobyl disaster unfolded as well as day to day life in the former communist state. We all thoroughly enjoyed it and would highly recommend it as a gripping and fascinating read. Our next book is The Essex Serpent by Sarah Perry. If you would like to join us to discuss it or help us choose our next book please email jo.vernonharcourt@gmail.com

GREEN FINGERS IN MEESDEN Back by popular demand, we have some more Growing Events in Meesden. Meesden Annual Spud Growing competition (3rd year) Potatoes will be available for this event from the start of April. They will need planting as soon as possible, so that harvesting and judging can occur at the Village Fete on 9th September. Anyone living in Meesden can take part. You can plant them in the ground, in a tub, in a sack.... Just plant your spud somewhere in Meesden, nourish it with whatever fine compost you can find, sing to it... and in 5 months', (rain, mice and voles permitting) you will be harvesting a superb crop. The current record is 26 lbs (11.7kg) grown from a single potato, with the single largest potato 2.4lbs. Entry to the competition is £5 per spud; this will be used to fund a cash prize for the heaviest crop and the biggest single spud. Seed potatoes from an appropriate secret variety will be available from Puddles Barn from April 1st. Contact Jen or Fiona on 01279 777427 to arrange collection.

Grow-a-wellie. There will also be a floral display competition at the Village Fete, on 9th September. For this, you will need to find a piece of discarded footwear-wellington boot, old shoe - and plant it up as imaginatively as you can. Judging will be at the village fete, and for this competition you don't need to live in Meesden. So keep your old wellies, hold on to dad's gardening boot. More information about this competition will be available later.

BROADBAND UPDATE People will remember the presentations given by Gigaclear, a company licensed by the government to provide ultra-fast broadband services in rural communities.

The degree of interest demonstrated was disappointing in Meesden where the sign-up for the service was insufficient for Gigaclear to proceed, and who have now had to abandon the project in this area.

The opportunity therefore to improve the current broadband speeds and reliability has now been missed and we are once again relying on BT to improve the service in time. Some may be interested to hear that Gigaclear also approached Hunsdon recently and within two weeks had sufficient commitment from residents and are already putting work in hand. BT say they are in the process of connecting fibre optic cable to the exchange box in Brent

Pelham and unfortunately not direct to properties. Although this exchange serves Meesden as well, owing to the distances from the exchanges, they report it is unlikely that we shall notice any significant improvement from their upgraded service.

MEESDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN Things are getting busy here at Meesden Community Garden. We have planted the potatoes and onions this month, dug all the ground again to mix in the compost that we put down earlier in the season and have several trays of veg. growing in the heated cold frame that Vegware donations helped us build. The coming weeks will get even busier now that spring is upon us. We have peas and beans to get started in a month or two, and have tomato, beetroot, parsnip, turnip, broccoli and carrot seeds all going in very soon. If anyone would like to help us grow vegetables in the Community Garden here at Meesden, or at a much larger community project in Stocking Pelham, please call Ken on 777 700.



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