

# ANSTEY, BRENT PELHAM & MEESDEN NEWSLETTER

## DECEMBER 2014 TO JANUARY 2015

### *Diary of Events*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b><i>For all the Advent &amp; Xmas Services please see the Church News Insert</i></b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	Village Link - Meesden Parish Rooms 8pm – AGM and social evening
5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Blind Fiddler Supper Club, Anstey – 7.30pm
7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Meesden Village Shop open 10am to 12 noon
9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Village Supper Club – The Woodman, Nuthampstead – 7.30pm
14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Blind Fiddler Quiz evening 7.30pm
17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Carols in the Barn – Sapsed’s barn, Anstey – 7pm – in aid of Milton Children’s Hospice
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Brent Pelham Xmas Quiz – Village Hall – time TBA
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Children’s Xmas Party and decorating tree – Meesden Village Hall – 4pm to 5.30pm
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Meesden Pie and Punch Party – Village Hall – 7pm
21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Brent Pelham Carol Service (6pm) followed by party in Village Hall
2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	Blind Fiddler Supper Club, Anstey – 7.30pm
11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Blind Fiddler Quiz evening 7.30pm
13 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Village Supper Club – The Woodman, Nuthampstead – 7.30pm
15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Hormead Garden Club – <b>Anstey</b> Village Hall 8pm – “Who Dares Prunes” and More about Roses, Simon White of Beales Roses, Attleborough
19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Anstey Parish Council Meeting – Village Hall – 7.30pm
31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Sausage Supper – Meesden Village Hall – 7pm

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

The next deadline is **15<sup>th</sup>** January 2015



## A Happy Christmas and A Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to us All!

# GENERAL NEWS

**Good news for all newsletter readers!** Peter Wrightson has very kindly taken over the editorship of the Brent Pelham news section, so Brent Pelham news is once again back in this edition. We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to **Jane Garner**, his predecessor, who shouldered the responsibility of the post for so long, and in spite of having impossible pressures in other directions. Many many thanks to you Jane.

**The quiz in Anstey Village Hall on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October** raised approx. £1,100 for Anstey Church, which is a magnificent result. Thank you to everyone who came along to support it, and to Edward Burton the quizmaster and deviser. This annual event is proving very popular but the organisers have taken on board for next year the feedback that it would be better to start earlier and make the quiz slightly shorter.

**Good News for Golfers.** Barkway Park Golf Club now has a driving range on the practice area above the clubhouse. A bucket of 30balls can be had from the machine outside the clubhouse for just 2 £1 coins. While you are about it consider a lesson (or series of lessons – 6 for the price of 5) from Jamie Bates, who deservedly has a reputation as the finest teacher for miles around.

**Kind, reliable person needed for after school care** of two girls (8 & 10) in Great Hornead. Own transport essential. Tasks to include: - school collection, cooking supper, supervising homework, transport to occasional activities and light chores. 3 - 6pm, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. More hours available during school holidays. Good rates of pay. Please call Kate on 01763 289258.

**Alison Lambie writes** "I am now settled in at Horseshoes, 19 High Street, Barkway, near Royston, Herts SG8 8EA, tel: 01763 849513, email: [lambie1937@gmail.com](mailto:lambie1937@gmail.com) and would love to see anyone passing – give me a ring!"

**Photos of Meesden.** Village Link is looking for any old photos of Meesden for one of their meetings in 2015. If you have any photos please contact - Wendy Hillier tel no 01763 848685 Many thanks.

**Audley End House** Christmas events at Audley End include Christmas Wreath Making on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10am-2pm; a Carol Concert on Dec 4<sup>th</sup> from 7.30-9pm, & a Victorian Christmas on Dec 6/7<sup>th</sup> open from 10am-4pm.

**Handel's Messiah** is being sung by the Manuden Singers in Manuden Church at 7.30pm on Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup>. Tickets from Annette Farrimond on 01279 777627.

**LADIES' CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENING TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 7-9 PM AT ANSTEY BURY** - with Honey Bee (ladies' clothing, accessories and gifts) and Boxworth Botanicals (body creams, soaps etc) - in aid of Anstey Church. Entrance £2 to include a ticket for entry into a draw to win a prize from one of the stalls, and a glass of festive fizz. RSVP Alison Cossor 01763 848479 email [alicossor@gmail.com](mailto:alicossor@gmail.com).

**East Herts Council's next deadline** for submitting grant applications for **capital building projects** is 16 December 2014. Grass roots organisations and charities in East Herts are encouraged to apply to improve well-loved community assets and facilities. There are grants available to cover the running costs (**Community Activities Grants**) of charities and voluntary /community groups. The next deadline is 16 December 2014. Future deadlines, subject to money being available, are 30 January 2015 and 2 March 2015. Applications from small local groups providing activities/support to vulnerable people are a priority. Up to £500 is available. Go to [www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants) for more details on eligibility and application requirements. If you have any questions about whether your project/service is eligible, please call Claire on 01992531459 or email [claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk)

**GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME** – *If you need a lift to a hospital, or doctor's surgery, help with the shopping, or minor jobs around the house, just give us a ring on 01763 848536.*

**There are two local Supper Clubs:** on the first Friday of each month there is one at The Blind Fiddler, Anstey, at 7.30 for 8pm (please book on 01763 848000): two courses £7.95. The second Tuesday of each month is the turn of The Woodman, Nuthampstead at 7.30pm (please book on 01763 848328).

**A relative of the Coxall family of Anstey** is asking for a copy of the booklet "Anstey" by Olive Cook, which he would like to purchase. Does anyone have an unwanted copy? If so please could they contact Jenny Goymour email goymour@hotmail.com, telephone 01763 848271.

**TED'S TALE - A VISIT TO THE WESTERN FRONT.** In September, Lizzy & I were asked to accompany an expedition to some of the First World War battlefields. This was organised by an old army friend for The Air Squadron who liked to fly off to different places of interest en masse. Last year they flew assorted light aircraft to the Crimea where they visited the battlefields of Balaclava and re-enacted the charge of the light Brigade by aeroplane. They flew down the valley in tight formation with my friend sitting in the back of one aircraft throwing out poppies.

This year all assembled at a small grass strip aerodrome south of Paris. The group consisted of sixty people and thirty three aeroplanes plus my motor car. The aerodrome is the home to the French Historic Flight, a private collection of aircraft ranging from the early Bleriot monoplanes through the rapid improvements in design during WW1. Perhaps the most modern design was a B17F Flying Fortress of 1943. The aircraft included a bright red Fokker Triplane as used by the "Red Baron" Von Richtofen which flew beautifully. There appeared to be no air traffic control and many of the aircraft lacked radios. It is normal practice for two aircraft to be doing independent aerobatics over the airfield whilst others are taking off and landing. One gentleman in a Russian Yak fighter of last war vintage insisted on flying the length of the runway at a height of ten feet whilst upside down. WW1 aircraft were of amazingly flimsy construction, being made chiefly of wood, cloth and thin wire stays placed around a large fuel tank of petrol and an engine that was made progressively larger as the war progressed. They could catch fire easily and the wings were covered in highly inflammable dope. As the engines grew more powerful, a tight turn could cause an aircraft to start revolving around its propeller instead of vice versa so these things were extremely dangerous, even before people started shooting at them. The British did not issue parachutes as they were considered bad for the fighting spirit. The Germans did issue them. Herman Goering twice escaped from a burning aeroplane by parachute. It is difficult to see how anyone could be persuaded to fly in one of these things but the air war was preferable to the trenches.

We left this airfield for Arras and I was fortunate to get a lift in an aeroplane which flew low over the Somme battlefield. Names that one had only read about in history books, Beaumont Hamel, Thiepval, Newfoundland Park now became startling reality. Newfoundland Park is left as a churned up mass of overlapping shell craters and trenches. It is dominated by a monument of a bronze caribou. Here are remembered the men from Newfoundland who died in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme. Some astonishing percentage of the young men of Newfoundland died here, but enough were left to fill more cemeteries around Ypres. We saw the Thiepval monument on which the name of Frederick William Bondfield appears. He is one of two Frederick Williams to appear on the Brent Pelham War memorial. It was a popular combination of names in the late 19<sup>th</sup>. Century because of the popularity of Queen Victoria's son in law Frederick William. He was an enlightened, progressive & peace loving man much in the mould of Prince Albert. It was tragic that he died of throat cancer after only 90 days as German Kaiser. It was more tragic for the World that he should be succeeded by his son Kaiser Wilhelm 2<sup>nd</sup> - an angry young man and a warmonger, largely to blame for the forthcoming catastrophe. We revisited these places by bus and saw where The "Pals Battalions" were slaughtered along with The 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division. On the first day alone of the Somme offensive the British Empire suffered 60,000 casualties, including 20,000 dead, a figure unsurpassed thereafter.

We visited the crash site where Lanoe Hawker V.C died after a twenty minute duel with Baron Von Richtofen. His commanding officer was one Cuthbert Gurney Hoare who later in the war went on to set up training camps to train pilots in Canada. As such he can be regarded as one of the founders of the Royal Canadian Air Force. He did the same in Texas but it might be unwise to suggest that he founded the USAAF. When No 1 Foxway, Brent Pelham was vacated by Judy Hoare, some WW1 medals were found together with a CBE and a CMG. They are engraved on the edge "Brigadier General C G Hoare RAF". He was Judy's uncle.

We also saw the Lochnagar crater. This is a massive mine crater some 100 yards across and 70 feet deep. It was created by tunnelling under the German lines and laying a massive explosive charge as they worked they could hear the Germans counter mining to try to blow their tunnel in. I suspect that the trenches might be preferable. I do not know the tonnage of the charge but when it was blown on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 it was clearly heard in London. A large section of the German line was simply vaporised. Many poppy wreaths had been laid here in memory of those who died. Some of the ranks were not familiar to me such as Musketeer and Freiwilliger (Volunteer). I then realised that the German families have started to adopt the poppy for remembrance also.

Our last base was Wipers or Ypres. This town with its famous Cloth Hall and Cathedral was reduced to dust during the war and has been totally rebuilt. It is a very fine town. We visited Passchendaele where several, mostly disastrous offensives took place. The shelling broke up the drainage system with the result that even unwounded men and mules drowned in flooded shell holes. Siegfried Sassoon wrote of it;

*Squire nagged and bullied till I went to fight  
Under Lord Derby's scheme  
I died in hell.  
They called it Passchendaele.....*

The cemetery that serves much of this area is called Tyne Cot. Like all Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries it is immaculately kept, light, strangely beautiful & uplifting. There are nearly 12000 graves and the wall of the missing remembers 35000. They are from many nations and religions. When the cemetery was first started, the dead still lay where they had fallen and the King who was visiting was asked how he would like them to be buried. He replied "Where and as they fell". One does not argue with Kings and so the initial burials are at all angles with British and German intermixed. The cross of remembrance here, again at the King's suggestion, uses a German pillbox for its foundations. In marked contrast to Tyne Cot was Langemark, now the only WW1 German cemetery in Belgium. In the 1950s the Belgian Government told the Germans that their dead were occupying too much Belgian soil and that they could reinter them all at Langemark. As a result the vast majority are in one massed grave - a rather dark and brooding place as it was designed to be. We did discover the grave of an airman who had shot down the grandfather of one of our party. His arm was amputated as a result by his captors without anaesthetic. He later would become Military attaché in Berlin. The family still have menu cards of various events in Berlin signed by Hitler, Goering and such like.

By chance we also visited Essex Farm Cemetery, a relatively small one with only some 1200 graves. It was here that John McRae was inspired by the sight of poppies flowering on the churned up ground to write the poem;

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Amidst the crosses row on row.....*

This was the origin of the poppy for remembrance. The poem was read out to us, beautifully, by my host's daughter and reduced most of us to tears, me more than most as my great uncle Geoffrey William Barclay is buried there. We laid a cross of remembrance on his grave.

Vimy ridge was finally captured by the Canadians. It is preserved in that the shell holes and mine craters are still there and are, if anything, bigger and more numerous than in Newfoundland Park. It is noteworthy that some 30% of these shells haven't gone off, at least yet. Some mines haven't either and a massive one at Messines went off in 1956. Others of similar size remain lost. The area is dominated by the Canadian monument but beyond that it's clear why the Germans defended the ridge so bravely. From there one can see for some thirty miles across the German occupied zone and its loss was a disaster to them. The Canadians instantly sent forward Artillery observers to call down fire on the retreating enemy. What they saw astonished them. It was as if a gigantic ant's nest had been overturned. For miles there were German columns on the move. It was what the Americans would call a target enriched environment. At this point, despite the hideous slaughter that they had witnessed, the observers declined to fire upon resupply columns or even artillery on the move. These targets were horse drawn and they felt sorry for the horses.

We visited the grave of one unknown airman. The grave is marked as "Known unto God" and it is almost certainly that of Major Mick Mannock. He was a most remarkable man. Most Royal Flying Corps pilots were public school educated. Mannock was the son of a corporal with a fondness for drink who had abandoned his family when Mick was twelve. By sheer determination and skill he rose to be one of the greatest fighter aces. He was a father figure to the young pilots under his command. He was awarded the DSO three times and the MC twice. He appeared to be fearless but someone observed him on leave at home shaking with terror at the thought of returning to duty. He always kept a revolver in his cockpit as he had a horror of being trapped in a burning plane. He seemed to have known that he could not last much longer and one day he broke his own rules and followed an enemy plane down. A machine gun from the ground got him and his plane burst into flames. It is not known whether he was able to use the revolver. His VC was posthumously awarded. The grave beside his is also unknown but of a member of the Chinese Labour Corps.

On our final night, we attended the ceremony of the Last Post at the Menin Gate. We had been advised to get there an hour early which was good advice as it was crowded out. Many children were present and laid wreaths. My host laid a wreath on behalf of the Air Squadron. He was considered to be the most suitable person to do this and to say the words: "They shall grow not old....." He had done particularly well during the Falklands war. His Grandfather was one of the most highly decorated officers of WW1 having answered the call of his King Emperor at the very beginning. Unfortunately his King Emperor was Franz Joseph of Austria. He was therefore on the wrong side. The elder brother saw his duty rather differently; his loyalty lay with his farm men and villagers. He joined the Italian army. He was on the right side. I understand that their enmity was quite amicable. When a new front was added to Brent Pelham Hall about 1900 the architect chosen was one Reginald Blomfield. My uncle Geoffrey William had his room in this wing. Blomfield also made the racquets/squash court where Geoffrey William would play with his brother in law, Edward Dimsdale. Blomfield would go on to design Essex Farm Cemetery where Geoffrey William is buried. Edward Dimsdale's name appears on the wall of the missing on the Menin Gate. The Menin Gate was designed by Reginald Blomfield.

# ANSTEY NEWS

**Congratulations to James and Harriet Lambie** on the birth of their son **Charlie Jonathan Ian** on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, a brother for **Chloe**.

We are very sad to report the death of **Louise Sharpe**, of 7 St George's End, on the 28<sup>th</sup> September. Louise had suffered dreadful health for many years, but endured it with great courage and cheerfulness and was always keen to contribute to village life. Her funeral service was held in St George's Church on the 15<sup>th</sup> October.

**Red Cross.** *Marian Porter writes:* - The Anstey collection raised £40.95 this year, part of Buntingford's total of £602.41 and Hertfordshire's total of £34,900. Thank you to all who donated.

**Village Hall changes - end of an era.** After many years of sterling service the Village Hall Management Committee [Tony Pledger, Tom Sealy, Nick Kirkpatrick and Mandy Parker] stood down from their roles on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October. Great thanks are due to all four and especially Tom, who has been the mainstay of the village hall since its inception in 1982!

The new committee has twelve members and is very keen to maintain the hall as a vital community resource. With this in mind they have recently put in a bid for funding from the Herts Sports Partnership, who are working with the District Council to improve sports and physical activity opportunities for the over 50s in East Herts. We hope to give more details of their programme in a future newsletter. We also plan to distribute a questionnaire to all parishioners, to ask for your views on the village hall and how we could make best use of it. In the meantime, please direct any queries or correspondence to the following:

Chair: Kate Oxley [848584] [oxleykn@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oxleykn@yahoo.co.uk)  
Secretary: Sue Smith [849949] [suesmith7@gmail.com](mailto:suesmith7@gmail.com)  
Bookings: Ruth Hart [829724] [ruth.hart9@btinternet.com](mailto:ruth.hart9@btinternet.com)  
and Annabel Brooks-Ward [849381] [annabel.brooks-ward@omg.co.uk](mailto:annabel.brooks-ward@omg.co.uk)

## Village Hall Outgoing Committee.

Many thanks to Tony Pledger (Chairman), Nick Kirkpatrick (Treasurer), Mandy Parker (Secretary) and most importantly Tom Sealy as Bookings Officer plus Care and Maintenance stalwart, who have resigned their positions after running the village hall for several years. They welcome the large and willing incoming committee with their new and exciting ideas chaired by Kate Oxley. **Tom Sealy** has worked tirelessly for over 32 years of continuous service on behalf of the village in maintaining the engine of the Anstey Village Hall. He has been Caretaker, Chairman, and Bookings officer and has spent many mornings clearing up after wild teenage parties not to mention repainting and fixing all that was required. He will be greatly missed and on behalf of the village, we all thank him hugely for all he has done without complaint or demand of praise. He was presented with some champagne as a small and richly deserved token of thanks. Many thanks also to Tony for organising the drive repairs and heaters and grants and much more and to Nick for his tireless book keeping and bank work.

**ANSTEY CHAPEL** We welcome everyone to join us for our Sunday services. A full list of the speakers can be found on the chapel notice board.

**Harvest Festival** – Thanks to all who gave tins and packets of food for our Harvest Festival. These were taken to the Hertford food bank to help folk who are struggling to buy food at this time. Thanks also to David Tweedale who kindly offered to transport all the food to Hertford.

**Operation Christmas Child** – Members of the congregation, Messy Church and others donated 11 complete boxes plus other spare items, which will go to needy children in Belarus. Many thanks for your generosity. It will mean that some children who may never have had a toy or present in their lives will each get a shoe box full of toys and other useful items this Christmas.

**December Services** – There will be a slight change to our regular pattern in December.

7<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am Service and Communion Ian Merrick

14<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am Frank Pearson

21<sup>st</sup> December 10.30am Carol Service followed by mince pies Ian Merrick

28<sup>th</sup> December No service

All our welcome to these services, especially our Christmas Celebration on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Messy Christmas** will be held at the Chapel on **14<sup>th</sup> December** at 3.30pm. If you haven't yet attended one of these family services, do come and join us for a great time. **January Messy Church** is back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday (25<sup>th</sup>) in the Chapel. **January Services** – 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 25<sup>th</sup> at the Chapel, 18<sup>th</sup> **Joint Service at St. George's Church.**

**Bellringing** in St. George's Church – After many months of silence due to a shortage of bellringers, the bells have started to sound out again, as I'm sure you have noticed! We have two new volunteers, Ali and Liz, and they are doing really well – so well in fact, we may be able to ring for Xmas. If anyone else would like to join us please get in touch with Patricia on 848536.

**Caring for Horses.** *Mandy Parker writes:* - Would anyone like to come and give my horses some love and attention? They are both very well behaved and would love someone to come and play. Please ring me on 01763 848275.

**Free to Collector.** Garden Roller and Garden Lawn Sweeper. Both suitable to be towed behind a garden tractor. Woodside Cottage, Anstey 01763 848242

**Anstey Parish Council** would like to extend their apologies over the absence of a poppy wreath at the War Memorial this year. Although this has always been paid for by the Parish Council, in previous years it was arranged and laid by others. Unfortunately this year due to an oversight, no wreath was organised or laid and we would like unreservedly to apologise for this error. The Chairman wishes to assure parishioners that this will not be repeated and the wreath will be organised, laid and paid for by the Parish Council in future years.

At the last Parish Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the budget for 2015 was agreed and the Precept will remain the same for the forthcoming year. The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at the Village Hall.

You may have noticed that following the playing field inspection in the summer, new swings were ordered and these have been fitted. The clutter bridge and ropes on the train are currently being designed and will soon be ordered and replaced. A fallen tree has been recently cleared and the damaged bench will soon be removed. Two new benches will be installed in the New Year. The Parish Council are applying for an East Herts Grant in December and are visiting a skateboard park soon to gain more knowledge for their plans to install a half pipe ramp in Anstey, hopefully next year.

**Planning Update. 3/14/1263/FP** Yew Cottage planning application has been approved (16.9.14)

**Appeal No. APP/J1915/A/14/2225149** Holly House, Anstey SG9 oBP is now closed. Decision is due in the New Year.

**Appeal No. APP/J1915/A/14/2220854 Land South of Hare Street** Additional 100 Homes Wheatley Homes. Decision is due 6 Jan 2015.

## BRENT PELHAM NEWS

**Welcome** Rafal, Yvonna, Olivia & Phillip Sczpaniak not so much to the village but to 2 Smithy Cottages after their move from 4 Pumphill.

**Welcome** Martin, Katey & Ella-Louise Hugi, on their 3<sup>rd</sup> move in Brent Pelham in quick succession but now at Foxway #1. Formally of Much Hadham, Martin works for the Woodland Trust as a project manager for ancient woodland restoration (South East & East of England) and Katey is a business consultant managing a local bus & coach company merger. Both are qualified Forest School leaders.

**Welcome** David & Maxine Rouse to Foxway #2.

**Welcome back** to the Tripps. John, Jo, Hannah & Emma of Pumphill Cottage are back in the village after a forced absence of 6 months due to a serious house fire.

**Puppy Pawty.** Jane Garner threw a Pawty on October 16th at The Three Tuns for her lovely black lab Jackdaw & friends and managed to get coverage through Express Newspapers - but she wouldn't she, being a successful media person! For nimble fingers, try <http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/524247/Owners-throw-lavish-parties-for-pets>.

**Congratulations** to proud parents Mark & Sarah of 8 The Causeway on the birth of their son Marley-James on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Churchyard Clean-Up** The weather was kind to the 28 enthusiastic participants for the annual War Memorial & Churchyard clean-up which took place on November 1<sup>st</sup>, organised by Richard Farrimond. We all worked hard but were sustained by refreshments provided by Annette.

**Cheese & Wine Evening** On November 1<sup>st</sup>, thirty two villagers became more expert in consuming wine & cheese at a 6 course evening event in the Village Hall, ably organised by Miro (with help from his Mum & James) and run by Toby of The Cheese Plate in Buntingford. The event raised £160 for the Village Hall fund.

**Brent Pelham in The Times of India.** In October, as part of a team of 30, Kate & Tim Hinch and Sarah & Andrew Fryer took a 12 day adventure with Classic Car Journeys through Kerala, driving Indian made Ambassadors - replicas of the Series 3 Morris Oxfords of the 1950's. On the first day, Sarah & Andrew's car was part of a Hindu ceremony to bless the trip - Sarah deftly drove the car over four limes, one placed under each wheel! Another highlight was driving downhill around 36 hairpin bends with signs such as "For free ambulance call xxxxx" or, even more frightening "For free mortuary collection call xxxxx"! For more, go to the The Times of India website and search for "amby-loving"

**Pilates – it's not too late.** *Pilates happens at the Village Hall every Monday from 7 to 8pm. It's led by experienced teacher Becky and newcomers are most welcome whether male or female. If you've never tried it, give Pilates a go. Each class costs £5. Any questions - contact Hazel Norris on 777316.*

**Lest We Forget** This year is the 100th Anniversary of the start of World War 1 and a very moving Service of Remembrance, on behalf of the United Benefice of Anstey, Brent Pelham, Great & Little Hornead, Meesden & Wyddial, took place at St Mary's Brent



Pelham on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The service, led by the Rev'd Kate Peacock, included two minutes silence at 11am following the reading of the Benefice Roll of Honour. There was a Bible reading by Richard Farrimond, Ted Barclay gave an interesting talk on his recent trip to the Western Front and Kate delivered The Address. After the church service, we gathered round the War Memorial to lay wreaths.

**Fasten your seatbelts...** Well done to Sam Benjamin (22) of Borley Green Barn who has recently qualified as a commercial pilot. He was trained at Oxford Aviation Academy, then in Phoenix Arizona to get his Private Pilot's Licence, and finally at CCT in Bournemouth for his Commercial Pilot's License & instrument rating. The next step is a Jet Orientation Course in Cambridge and then apply for a job. Good luck Sam!

**Defibrillator** The defibrillator has been installed in the telephone box outside the Village Hall. Thanks to Ben Biggs for installing it and to the East Herts New Homes Fund for paying for the machine. Training, run by Martin Render, Chairman of the Community Heartbeat Trust was in the Village Hall on the evening of November 11<sup>th</sup>. Martin did a superb job and the 25 participants left feeling confident about using the machine which is in a locked cabinet, the code for which is C159X. If you didn't attend the training, here are links to four video's that will help <http://vimeo.com/91431931> <http://vimeo.com/98530930> <http://vimeo.com/98530065> <http://vimeo.com/90857013> Many thanks to Kate Hinch & Sarah Fryer for all their work to obtain a machine for the village.

**Dog Walking** Miro & others go on regular weekday dog walks which usually last around 50mins starting at 4.10pm. On Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, meet in The Causeway; on Tuesdays & Thursdays at the stables next to Hall Farm House. If you are intending to join, particularly with the nights drawing in, I suggest you contact Miro (07812 174646) to confirm.

**The Phoenix Choir** is formed every year to sing at the Carol Service. Directed by John Tripp, the choir always impresses. John has asked for new members and emphasises that anyone is welcome, irrespective of ability. He says the rehearsal programme will be in good spirit, both musically & socially and wine has been known to be consumed! Call John a.s.a.p. on 777944.

**Christmas Quiz** is likely to be in the Village Hall on Friday December 19<sup>th</sup> run by Dave Bromage & Miro Kurjak. Dave or Miro will confirm but pencil in your diaries.

**Carol Service** at 6pm on Sunday December 21<sup>st</sup> at St Mary's and then the **Christmas Party** is in the Village Hall immediately afterwards. As in previous years, please bring along a plate of snacks or mince pies, cakes, sausage rolls etc. to share. If in doubt about what to bring, contact Beth Featherstone on 777281.

**Fly Tipping** Keep your eyes peeled if you're walking between The Causeway & Whitebarns as fly tipping is on the increase again. Help to clean up if you can or make a note of the number of any suspicious vehicles and report in the usual way through Neighbourhood Watch.

# MEESDEN NEWS

**Report on Croquet Competition.** For the second year running the weather was kind to us and Meesden's Croquet Day was a great success. Sixteen teams battled on the lawn at The Beehive in a closely fought contest won by the slimmest of margins by Kim and Gordon Livings. There were stalls selling plants, books and bric-a-brac and the visitors and competitors dined on baked potatoes, tea, coffee and cakes throughout the day.

Richard and Chris Crookes would like to thank all those who took part, helped and supported during the day. Over £900 was raised which will be shared by the Village Hall and St Mary's Church Meesden.

**The Fox and Beehive: Meesden's Pop-up Pub.** On Saturday 18th October, Meesden's village hall was once again turned into a traditional local pub for the night. The pub had a suitably bustling and jolly atmosphere with a huge number of locals and friends coming to sample its delights. With its usual emphasis on local suppliers, the ale was sourced from the Buntingford Brewery and the excellent white wine from the Hazel End Vineyard in Farnham near Bishop's Stortford. Crisps, nuts and homemade cheese and bacon pinwheels (thank you Jen West!) were all eagerly sampled by customers too. Thank you to all who came and supported it; another pop-up pub is already in the pipeline, watch out for the date. All proceeds to the village hall funds.

**Partying, Tricks and Treats on Hallowe'en.** Much fun was had by all our Mini-Meesdeners on Hallowe'en. ALL of the children in our lovely village turned out for the party at the village hall which started with a sausage supper (kindly provided by the Wainwrights), followed by games galore and finished with some brilliant trick o' treating around the village. Games included the 'Yucky Dip' which involved lots of mess and jelly, apple bobbing, face painting, pass the pumpkin and lots more. Thanks go to all the mums and grandmas who came to help decorate the hall, helped on the night and stayed to clear up at the end. Special thanks to Debbie who provided the excellent impromptu face painting, Annabel for all her spooky decorations and William Murphy for his inventive games and prizes. If anyone would like to volunteer their house for trick o' treating next year then we would love to hear from you. - Sarah Kruszelnicki

**Celebrating Christmas.** We know that Christmas is almost here when the children of Meesden decorate the village Christmas tree. This happy event will take place this year on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December. The Village Shop will be open as usual. All children are welcome to come and join in the fun and to help make Meesden's Christmas tree the most festive one around. Once the tree has been dressed with its tinsel and lights, the fun will really begin with the children's Christmas Party!

The Village Hall Committee have decided to ring the changes this year! In place of the Lantern Carols, there will be a **Pie and Punch Evening** for the adults, starting at 7.00 pm following the Children's Party on 19<sup>th</sup> December. Mince pies, sausage rolls and warming punch will be served. This event is FREE, although donations of sausage rolls, mince pies and red wine will be gratefully received. Sausage rolls and mince pies should go to Catharine at Yew Tree Cottage on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December and red wine to Jen West **before** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December. Also, any donations of raffle prizes will be gratefully received by Annabel at Manor Farm **before** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December. Please come and join us as this event will provide an ideal opportunity for villagers to get together and have a bite to eat and a chat!

Our Blessing of the Crib Service will be held on Christmas Eve, as usual, in St. Mary's Meesden, starting at 3.30 pm. This is always a beautiful Service which encapsulates so well the true meaning of Christmas. So please make this a family occasion and come and join us as we celebrate the wonder of Christ's birth.

**Traditional Sausage Supper.** Thinking ahead to the New Year, you will be pleased to know that, following replies received to the recent Village Questionnaire, we shall be returning to the original format of the Sausage Supper. This will be held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January in the Village Hall, starting at 7.00 pm. Ticket prices will be £8 per adult, £5 for a child under 14, and £20 for a family of four. For these very reasonable prices, you can expect to savour some delicious sausages,

served with creamy mashed potatoes, neeps, and tasty onion gravy. There will also be a vegetarian option. All this will be followed by our usual array of sumptuous deserts. Please note that attendees should bring their own drinks. Although this event does not take place until the New Year, it is very popular and space in the Village Hall is limited. So, to reserve/book your tickets, please contact Margaret on 777195 or email [mth@sotamail.com](mailto:mth@sotamail.com) as soon as possible to avoid disappointment! ***If anyone would like a lift to the hall and back for either the Pie and Punch Evening or the Sausage Supper, please contact Margaret/Stephen on 777195.***

**A Star in the Making!** William Murphy had a clip of him scoring a try in a school match posted on to the internet (he has been playing Rugby six days a week this season at school and for his club). The video clip has been seen by the Scottish Rugby Team. (Will is a fan of the Scottish Team because his Grandmother was from Islay.) Anyway, he had a lovely email from Chris Paterson who is an ex-Scottish International player and is now a coach for the Scottish team and for youngsters. The email was basically offering his Congratulations to Will on the try he had scored and it said *"The desire, effort and skill you showed to tackle, steal the ball and score the try was great. That is exactly what I tell the players I work with to do. Keep doing as you are doing and hopefully one day we will see you doing that in a packed Murrayfield Stadium for Scotland. Well Done again. Chris Paterson"* I am sure all our readers would like to add their congratulations to those of Chris Paterson. We wish Will the best of luck for future games, and we will follow his rugby progress with interest!

**Follow-up on Ted's Tales – "Our Destroyer"** To add to Ted's update on the frigate "Puckeridge", The "Hunt" Class were still active in 1954-5. The frigate "Brocklesby" was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> training squadron based at Portland. I was on the "Grenville" as part of the same squadron. – John Robinson

**Apples.** Whoever the kind people were who left us two bags of apples, may we thank them most kindly! – John and Lily Robinson

**Meesden Village Shop** This is still running every Friday but now between 3.45 and 4.15 pm and we have now moved further inside the village hall to keep a little warmer. But please do not think it is just for children! We have a varied array of goods on offer and if we do not stock what you would like PLEASE tell us! We would love to see even more locals take advantage of having a shop that they can walk to! EVERY week we sell: Sweets and chocolates, fizzy drinks, homemade cakes and/or biscuits, second-hand books, pocket money toys, vegetables from the village garden, (although not as many during the winter months) AND greetings cards. SOME weeks you will find fresh bread, hot drinks and soups to drink in or takeaway, teatime treats (toasties, sausage rolls or hot dogs), seasonal fruit or veg and jams or chutneys. If you have produce you wish to sell or donate, or requests for items to be stocked, please let us know. Or perhaps the shop does not run at a time convenient to you? In this context, our second Sunday opening will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> December from 10.00 am till 12 noon. On this occasion you are in for a treat as fresh coffee, pastries and delicious bacon sarnies will be served, so there's no need to slave over a hot stove for that Sunday morning's breakfast! Please, villagers, come and support us, and see what we have on offer.

**Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS).** We continue to have our VETS available to everyone in Meesden and this system is now operational in Brent Pelham too. Each village operates independently with ten volunteers in each village ready to assist anyone in an emergency. In Meesden one of our volunteers has recently moved so therefore we urgently seek a replacement. Would you be willing to help a Meesden neighbour in need? If so we ask that you allow us to put your phone number (land line or mobile) on our list so that we keep ten volunteers for Meesden? If you can help please let Ken know on 777 700 as soon as possible. Thank you.

**PLEASE BE AWARE OF YOUR SPEED WHEN DRIVING THROUGH THE VILLAGES. THE SPEED LIMIT IS 30MPH BUT PLEASE SLOW DOWN WHEN YOU APPROACH BENDS.** Children, walkers, cyclists, horses, wildlife, and other motorists, will thank you for it.

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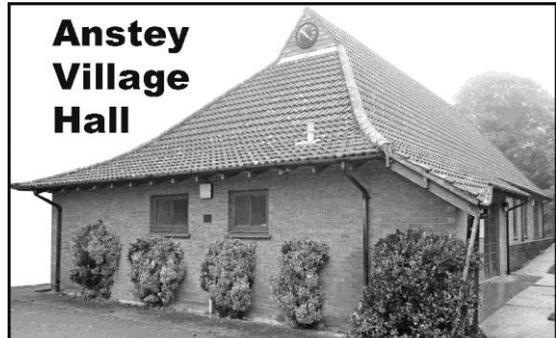
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