

WESTMILL VILLAGE NEWS

Issue No. 2 September 2014

CHURCHYARD ANNUAL TIDY-UP

SATURDAY

**11th
OCTOBER**

10.00 a.m.



Our apologies in advance to anyone affected by a bonfire on the day to dispose of all our tidy up rubbish.

Each year between 20 and 30 people from the Village turn out to give our Churchyard a really good Autumn clean, there will be jobs for boys and girls, and grownups of all ages, who with brooms, rakes, forks, strimmers and wheelbarrows will work together to make our Churchyard look immaculate ready for its winter rest. Refreshments will be available for all workers during the morning. If you haven't been before please join us this year, or if you are a regular to this event please try and encourage a friend or neighbour to join us.

Westmill Churchyard is a place where anybody living in the Village has a right to be buried or have their ashes interred in the Churchyard whatever their religion or beliefs, Church goer or non-Church goer.

The grass in the Churchyard is kept very tidy during the spring, summer and autumn by a team of volunteers who on a rota basis each week using the Church mowers cut round the graves, the work normally takes about an hour, and the rota means that each volunteer is called upon about every 5 to 6 weeks. We have ladies and men in the present team and are always looking for new volunteers.

Any queries please give me a ring:-

Michael Thody

'Sissons' Tea Party

How long does it take to put up a gazebo - without instructions? Well, if you've got three or four 'Westmillians' on the job, not much more than a moment or two. And if you believe that let's just say it was as well we did it the day before!

A grand band of helpers prepared for the Sunday afternoon with much laughter along the way even though thunder and lightning and heavy rainfall on the Friday should have dampened the best of spirits.

Saturday was a bit dull and Sunday morning definitely dawned a bit 'iffy' but the wonderful array of cakes, aroma of freshly ground coffee and the arrival of Freman College Big Band early in the afternoon cheered everyone up and expectation was high.

FCBB were terrific! They entertained all afternoon with only a short interval - it was a bit chilly and probably a lot warmer to keep playing - and everyone seemed to enjoy and appreciate their undoubted talents.

They really made it all go with a swing. What a relief that the turn out, on a not very inviting day, was as good as it was and the 'guesstimate" on the amount of cakes we'd need was almost spot on. Well done to Heather and Alan.

Thanks to those who donated the raffle prizes which contributed to the magnificent sum of £305.70 raised on the day. Rita, Treasurer of the PCC, has asked that thanks be passed on to all who gave their support.



Finally a massive thank you to everyone who gave up their time to help before, during and immediately after the event - two of the volunteers Andrea and Angela pictured left. You all know who you are, and especially to Malcolm and Ana who not only hosted the afternoon but also kept up a continual supply of crockery in and out of the kitchen.

A great way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

WESTMILL ART EXHIBITION



This year's art exhibition was dogged by cold weather and heavy rain but the standard of exhibits was excellent and the compliments were many. We were delighted with the layout this year and were quite reluctant to dismantle it all. The vote for Favourite Painting was won by Wendy Mills for her *Bluebell Wood* with her *Elephant* running as close second.

We sold 18 paintings which was disappointingly fewer than it has been for some years but nevertheless made for a successful exhibition and we were pleased and very grateful for the generous contributions we received and we have been able to make donations to the Greg Trust towards the new playground equipment and to St Mary the Virgin Church.

Our grateful thanks to all the people in the village who become involved in one way or another with the exhibition. It is a strong team which works well together in a friendly but efficient manner - and I think we all enjoy it very much.

Thank you also to all those of you who came to look at and enjoy the exhibition.

We hope to see you next year.

Muriel Parsons and Mavis Backhouse



The Great Church Bake-off 'Experience'

Following my win in the Churches Conservation Trust's 'Great Church Bake-off', Jan (FoWC Chair) and I were contacted by press agencies for information and photos of St Mary's, "We need photos and we want them now!" We were excited and very hopeful that the story of the cake, our village church and the recent roof repairs would be told in Waitrose Weekend and in the Metro newspaper, however neither ran the story in the end due to lack of space! An article did appear in the Hertfordshire Mercury (7th August), the interview for this was carried out over the phone by a very nice young reporter while I was standing in Pickering on holiday. The September issue of 'See Round', the diocese newspaper, also carried the story as they were delighted a member of one of their churches had won. Not quite so high profile but very nice to have.

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In August, it was suggested I might like to enter a cake in the St Alban's Diocese 'Celebrate 100' Bake-off at Keysoe by the diocese press office, however they then invited me to be a guest judge for the competition, which I accepted. The event had plenty to offer on the day despite the English summer weather (rain!) and the competition was just a small part of it. I was made very welcome by Susan Roberts - President of the Mother's Union, Fiona Gibson - curate from St Alban's, and fellow judges, Rev. Jane Kraft and Archdeacon Jonathan Smith. Moments before the winners were due to be announced, the judges still couldn't come to a unanimous decision! The crowd that had gathered were eager to find out and the atmosphere was fantastic. With the worthy winners announced the obligatory photo call was then underway. I'm not sure that I look very happy or if I even have a 'best side' but I



was enjoying myself! Having recently given up my job as a Teaching Assistant I thoroughly enjoyed chatting to the youngsters that had entered and hearing which cake they thought should win. I'm not sure this was strictly allowed but I did find out that one of the cakes was shop bought and then decorated by the child, which assisted the judges in their decision and thus awarded it second not first place!

With the success in the competition, I have decided to try to set up a cake baking/ decorating business from home. I am currently sorting out the food hygiene and safety regulations that I need to comply with. Most of it isn't too bad as being a Home Economist I have completed my food hygiene training many times. The business side of it is a little daunting at present but I am thoroughly enjoying creating the cakes.

My latest creation was for the PCC Afternoon Tea and Big Band event held very kindly in the garden of Sissons.

When I was asked if I would consider donating a cake for the raffle I knew it needed to be, in Mary Berry's words, "a show-stopper"! I hope I was able to deliver this with a 'Summer Tea Party' themed fruit cake and raise as much money for the church possible.



The future holds, two cake orders so far, one Christening and another for a Silver Wedding Anniversary. In November, I have to make a replica of my winning CCT Bake-off St Mary's church cake for display at Cake International at the NEC (7th – 9th) – it took 15 hours to create last time so wish me luck!

Wendy Leaney

Through the Newsletter we'd like to offer congratulations to the Greg Trust for working to provide new and excellent playground equipment for the use of the village and visitors. Raising grants and finding the necessary funding is never easy - as the FoWC and PCC are only too aware - but the job has been done and the result is, as many people have commented, excellent and will be much enjoyed by the children of the village.



Well done the Trustees.

NATURE NUTS!

Like Di I have also noticed very large snails by the football pitch. I believe they are a rare species called *Helix pomatia* and are only found in Southern and central England. This is Britain's largest snail and it is suggested that they were brought in by the Romans as a source of food. I believe it is so rare it has legal protection! Graham Harding



Ed: Wikipedia confirms Graham's belief. "Its common name in the UK is "Roman snail" and it was introduced to the island during the Roman period AD 43–41). In England only (not the rest of the UK), the Roman snail is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 making it illegal to kill, injure, collect or sell these snails" so put away the garlic sauce!

HARRY THE HEDGEHOG

Just a little tale to read with your tea or coffee. Whilst attending my mum's grave down in Enfield the other week I put my hand in my gardening bag to get a hand brush. On a second glance into the bag I thought I saw a hedgehog? On closer inspection that's what it was, fast asleep. We worked out he must have climbed in the bag whilst the garage door was open. Not wanting to leave Harry, as we named him, down in Enfield, we bought him back to Westmill. We had a little releasing party for him with Hilary, Mike and Graham next door and with some gentle persuasion, as he seemed to like the Tesco bag, Harry headed for our conifer where I am sure he continued his sleep. There are not many hedgehogs who can say they have made a round trip of 50 miles in one day!

At least he did not come to a pickle end!

Sue Phipps



Just for future reference!

WESTMILL PARISH COUNCIL

Village Harmony:

The following three issues are continually reported to Parish Councillors, therefore it is respectfully requested that the residents of Westmill take to heart and act upon whichever, if any, they may feel applies to, or affects them.

1. Dog owners, please retrieve your pet's mess. It is particularly unpleasant to tread in. How many have carried out the onerous task of clearing out sticky poo from children's shoes? Also, as we all know, animal excrement can harbour dangerous parasites and pathogens.
2. Speeding in the village. This is especially dangerous, particularly for our elderly residents who feel intimidated by inconsiderate motorists and do not have the confidence to step out and take a walk for fear of being run down. We also have a number of children who may not be fully aware of road danger or as skilled in making safe judgements.

A particularly bad area is the junction at the top of the Village on the left (leading to Munden and Nasty), where vehicles are frequently parked by the kerbside, leaving approaching traffic no option but to drive in the wrong lane.

3. On non collection days, please keep all rubbish bins, (commercial and/or domestic) within the boundary of your property, and not in view of the High Street or side/private roads.

Thank you for your co-operation in these matters, which, we are sure you will agree, will be for the benefit of all.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be in December on a date to be finalised and published. If you have any queries or comments about any issue please contact our Clerk, Melanie Mason or any Councillor.

St Mary the Virgin Church Services:

1st Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Morning Worship

2nd Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

4th Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Rector: Reverend Ian Hill: 274072

Church Office (Part time): 271552

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HARVEST FESTIVAL AND HOLY COMMUNION

To be held in St Mary's Westmill on Sunday 12th October at 9.30 a.m. All donations of non perishable food in packets, boxes, cans, jars and bottles be gratefully received. Donations will then be taken to the Royston Food Bank for distribution to help people in need. Donations can be left in the box at the back of the Church anytime leading up to Harvest Festival.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 9th November at St Mary's Westmill

Please note this year the Remembrance Service will start at 9.15 a.m. and not 9.30 a.m. which is the normal time.

ALL VERY WELCOME TO BOTH SERVICES

The deadline for the next issue is November 30th 2014.

NEWSLETTER TEAM: JAN JAMES, SUE PHIPPS & MELANIE MASON

Thanks to:

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