

News and Views from Three Villages

(Maudlin, Westerton & Westhampnett)

Parish notes

The Parish Council meeting held on Monday 24th April was fairly uneventful save for two announcements.

Firstly, Kate Gill, who has run the parish extremely efficiently over the past years, has decided to emigrate to France on her husband's retirement later in the summer. Kate really has been a first class clerk, ready, willing and able to support particularly me but also has handled all matters relating to the parish with humour and dedication- we shall miss her and wish her and her husband a happy retirement in France.

I am pleased to say that Kate has found a replacement clerk by name Erica Benakova who obtained a degree in business studies in the Czech Republic before coming to this country. She wishes to make a career in Local Government and has already been on courses to learn about the duties of a parish clerk. I am sure that Erica will be a most able replacement.

Secondly I announced to the meeting the launch of a project that will I very much hope will result in the building of a meeting hall in the parish. The basic idea is to build a meeting hall somewhat similar in size and facilities to St Blaze's at Boxgrove. The important thing is that it should not be a church hall, a school hall or a parish hall but that it should be a community hall with the whole area benefiting from the facilities, which will be provided. It is planned that the new hall will accommodate upto 50 people at meetings- any larger functions will take place at the Sports hall at the school.

The idea came out of a meeting at Goodwod House earlier in the year when we were invited by the Duke to discuss with him

how best we could try to obtain and spend some of what is called 'the 106 money' (Community money) which will arise from the planned development in the gravel pit in Westhampnett. We have now had two meetings with the Duke who has been most helpful. We have also met with Louise Beaton of Action in Rural Sussex who can steer us in the right direction for further funding.

I am delighted to say that Mark Porter has agreed to front this project and Claire McLeish has agreed to assist. The basis of a committee has been formed including representatives from the Church, School and Parish Council.

I hope that all parishioners agree with me that this project is very exciting indeed. We have never had a proper meeting hall in the parish and there is a need for one and an even greater need once the new houses have been built. I hope that all parishioners will back the committee and work for the project in any way they can. There is a huge amount of hard work to be done to achieve what I believe will be a very worthwhile objective- a good solid sustainable Community Hall.

Henry Adams
Chair



Goodbye Father Felix & Susan

On 11th May over 60 members of the congregation from St Peter's (Westhampnett) and St Paul's (Chichester) travelled to Brighton to Father Felix's licensing service at the Church of the Good Shepherd, where he is now Priest in Charge. The service was attended by local dignitaries, including the Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex and presided over by the Bishop of Chichester. The evening was very enjoyable and a great success, and thanks must go to members of the congregation in Brighton for making everyone feel so welcome.

It doesn't seem possible that it is over three and a half years since Father Felix arrived in Westhampnett. How things have changed at St Peter's since then! The Church has a growing congregation of all ages, with members coming from Chichester, surrounding villages and of course the Parish itself. On Father Felix's last service (May 7th) well over 100 people attended with six Baptisms taking place - what a way to bow out!

With Father Felix's encouragement, St Peter's now has a thriving Sunday School with over 35 children on roll and a new 'area' has just been opened within the Church to cater for older members of the Sunday school, as space was becoming a growing issue. This area will also be used to serve coffee after the Family Service, which takes place on the first Sunday of each month.

The start of renovations is another of Father Felix's legacies. As I write the Parochial Church Council (PCC) have begun to plan the initial stages of a major scheme to carry out repairs to St Peter's - mainly to the roof and drainage systems. A full fundraising project will soon be launched.

The last three and a half years have been an exciting time at St Peter's, and we have Father Felix to thank for leading the PCC and congregation in a very positive direction.

Father Felix and Susan have become an integral part of the Parish and will be greatly missed. We wish them a happy, rewarding and successful time in Brighton.

Paul Martin (Churchwarden)



Many thanks to Father Felix and Susan who really have touched all our lives in some way or another.

Little did I know when I first met Felix, that he would soon have me helping to arrange Sunday School, organizing barn dances and revamping this newsletter. None of these things I had ever done before, but his kind and gentle (and very persuasive manner!) encouraged me and made me believe that I could manage them.

They are both extremely kind and thoughtful, and willingly returned to our parish for our children's baptism.

I am sure that they will affect the people of the Good Shepherd as much as they have done here, and I wish them all the very best in the future- you will not be forgotten!

Claire McLeish

Dates for your diary



May

Week commencing

22nd

. Church cleaning Week, from 2 - 5 p.m.
(Anyone willing to dedicate an hour or
two can inform Rob or Ann on 784326)

Thursday 25th

. Ascension Day service 6pm

Tues/Wed 30/31st

Churchyard clearing evening- volunteers
welcome. Everything from weeding,
clearing to trimming- **please help**.
Please phone church wardens.

June



Friday 2nd, 6.30pm **Cheese & wine
evening at Longstones,
Westerton.** Tickets £5 to
include first glass of wine.
Raffle in aid of St Peters
Restoration Fund. Tickets from
Ann Kent on 784326

Nature Watch

On this last Wednesday of April, I believe we can safely say that Spring has finally arrived, not just a hesitant glimpse here and there but in full glory. She delayed her coming holding back her blackthorn blossom a full month, little chance of a blackthorn winter now. I saw my first swallow on the 26th March, these early intrepid migrants already having depleted their reserves during the long migration from Southern Africa, would have found our countryside still in the winter's grasp.

Brimstone butterflies, the males resplendent in their sulphur yellow apparel, have been seen about the parish for 3 weeks now and will be joined shortly by the females who are greenish white in colour. Male orange tip butterflies have appeared in the last few days always a sight to gladden the heart, they will waste no time in finding a mate who will lay her eggs on cuckoo flowers or milk maids which are in bloom around our hedgerows in late April and early May.

Red kites are now in residence in parts of the Goodwood estate, reported sightings have been around the racecourse area. Slightly smaller than buzzards with narrower wings and a longer tail, they are worth keeping an eye out for.



The dawn chorus is at its best over the next few weeks with our resident songsters being joined by migrants, such as arden warblers, white throats, willow warblers and chiff chaffs all of which I've heard around the parish in the last few days.

The swifts have yet to arrive, it's usually the first week in May with their scythe-like wings and screaming calls, they hustle around our chimneys and roof tops at lightening speed. They are the true harbingers of spring.

Has anyone heard the cuckoo yet? I haven't....

Bob Holman

W.I.

Unfortunately, we were unable to circle dance in March because we had our meeting in the classroom because of the building works at the school; so we played 'Beetle' instead and had a most enjoyable evening.

Our April meeting was held at Dell Quay Sailing Club, where we had a most interesting talk of the history of the inlet from the sea to Fishbourne.

May is our Resolution Meeting where we discuss the resolution to be voted on at our Annual Meeting.

The June meeting sees a demonstration and talk on 'Reflexology' .

We have had two new members join us and anyone else who is interested, please contact the WI secretary on 01243 786697.

North v South

With the resurfacing of roads in some quarters to revive the idea of a northern Bypass around Chichester it seems apposite to recall the trials and tribulations that finally saw the opening of the bypass to the south of Westhampnett in 1993.

As early as 1967 a campaign had been initiated in Westhampnett to highlight the dangers of the rapidly rising levels of traffic moving through Westhampnett and Maudlin on the A27.

Churchgoers leaving St. Peter's were advised not to attempt to turn across the A27 if they wished to head west but instead to turn left and then up Claypit Lane and follow Madgwick Lane back to the Westhampnett roundabout. Many of the Parents taking their children to and from the new village school, the March in Claypit Lane, whether on foot, on bicycle, bus or car were confronted with the life threatening challenge of crossing a road with relentless torrents of vehicles charging passed at 60mph. There may have been a direct road link between Oving and Westhampnett before the coming of the bypass but Rev. John Brown vicar of St. Peter's, Westhampnett and St. Andrew's, Oving is adamant that the journey took twice as long. This could prove an awkward hurdle as he scurried from one parish to the other to deliver services.

Collisions, accidents and injuries were common. The worst blackspot was the junction of the A27 and the Petworth road at Maudlin. HGVs frequently failed to take the bend spilling their loads and themselves into



the cottages to east of the junction. Henry Wood, never one to look a gift mouth, found employment the brick provided protection Cottage. Henry came as his own scheme'.



horse in the regular in rebuilding wall that little to Two Ways In the end to see this 'job creation

Accidents at this spot would be announced to Maudlin by a thunderous crash followed shortly afterwards by the wailing sirens of the Emergency Services and the inevitable closure of the road. The brief cessation of noise and vibration that these closures brought gave a hint of what a bypass could mean for these villages.

The A27 acted as a North - South barrier within the community. Many residents claim that until the bypass was opened they had no knowledge of those who lived on the opposite side of the road to them.

The campaign for relief from the A27 was initially made up of staff, governors and parents of the March School, the parish council and residents. By 1980's the could draw on support from the parish As the



local the late campaign significant outside of boundaries. campaign

gathered momentum David Pardoe, the Head at the March and Rev. John Brown became key figures.

The Rev. John Brown modestly plays down his significance but his record clearly shows that he is a lifelong activist and well seasoned and often successful campaigner. He was the vicar in the parish from 1963 to 1991 and now in retirement his campaigning spirit has not been blunted. He currently has set his sights on assisting St. Andrew's Church, Oving to win a stay of execution from closure by the diocese. This is not the first time that he has confronted the church establishment. In the 1970's as the stipend paid parish priests became progressively devalued by inflation John Brown with the Association of Clergy successfully fought a campaign for a new deal to put in place a compensation package that would at least allow them to feed and clothe their families and heat their albeit large but often draughty vicarages.

The pivotal moment for the A27 campaign in retrospect seems to have been a terrible accident in August 1990 when Maudlin resident Sonia O'Neill was walking her daughter Emma to school with her son Joshua in a pram. Sonia and Josh ended up under an HGV with Josh pinned under the exhaust and Sonia sustaining very serious leg and head injuries. Fortunately both eventually made recoveries although Sonia, understandably, was nervous of the road and allowed John Brown to escort Emma across the A27 to School.



The accident was widely reported in the protest and led to direct action by the campaign group in September 1990 when

John Brown and David Pardoe organised a demonstration that closed the A27 for several hours. The demonstration took place on the A27 next to Claypit Lane and enjoyed the support of the police, Westhampnett residents and representatives of the Boxgrove and District Conservative Association amongst many other groups. Sadly the eye witness accounts of the Rev. John Brown lying down in the road, although now part of Westhampnett myth, turn out to be an all too credible romantic invention.

The Conservative MP for Chichester, Mike Johnson gave the protest his full support and took a petition for a Bypass with 750 signatures to the House of Commons. The protest called for an end to prevarication over the Bypass and in the short term to have the speed limit through the villages to be restricted to 40 mph, clearer signage on junctions and a pelican crossing at the very dangerous crossing to Claypit Lane. As it had done before the Highway Department took none of these actions but did allow a concessionary footpath along the north side of Stane Street.

However, the lumbering Department of Transport did finally almost break in to a trot and after a Public Inquiry it was announced that the southern bypass would be built by mid 1992 at a cost of £7 millions. In the event it opened in late 1993 at a cost of £11 millions.

The building of the Bypass was not without its problems but its final opening brought significant change to Westhampnett both issues that I will be considering in the next Newsletter. As ever if anybody can spot obvious inaccuracies please point them out to me and any input on the building of the Bypass and its consequences would be gratefully received.

Mark Porter

Meteor jet crash fails to wake baby.



Next time an aeroplane flies overhead rather noisily, spare a thought for this family! As many residents of Westerton will be aware, there is a plaque on one of the Duchess cottages, which commemorates a pilot who crashed there. The plane careed into the garden, where the pilot tragically perished but amazingly, a 27 day old baby, although covered in debris and kerosene from the jet, carried on sleeping!

The accident occurred on February 24th, 1952, at dinner time according to Mrs Merritt who was living there with her husband and five children at the time. She said, "We were all at dinner-our four other children, my husband and myself-while the baby was asleep in the garden. I was bringing in the apple pie and custard when we heard the plane's engines splutter. There was a roar and a crash. Flames shot in through the back door. I screamed 'Bill, the baby'. My husband fought through the flames into the garden. Everything seemed to be afire for the kerosene, which covered the whole place had caught alight. The neighbours came from don't everywhere and I remember any more."

This feature series of to me by Pam anyone else please let me Claire McLeish



was collated from a cuttings kindly given and Ralph Shuter. If remembers this, know.

Ed's notes

As Henry Adams notes in his article, Mark Porter and I are heading up the committee to develop a meeting hall for the community. It is for all our benefit; we envisage it being used for activities such as lunch clubs, birthday parties, possibly even a meeting place for parents and young children as well as being used by the church and the school.

One key member that we need on the committee is an accountant to take care of the funding/financial side. If you would be willing to join us, please let either Mark or myself know as soon as possible. If you feel that you can be of any other help, we would appreciate it.

We are also hoping to run an article next time about the history of the Sunday school at St Peters; I already have some information from Irene Newbold but if anyone else has anything, including photographs I'd be very grateful.

If you have any stories, articles, jokes, photographs or any comments about this issue, please send them to me at claire.mcleish@tiscali.co.uk or 01243 779553 by Friday July 14th. We would also like to encourage regular contributors and would consider adverts.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive a copy, please let me know or I can send one by e-mail.

Thanks once again to **Rolls Royce** for their support in publishing this newsletter.

MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Please remember that members of the Parish Council can always be contacted on the telephone if there is anything going on in the Parish that gives you concern: -

Chairman of the Parish Council 01243 773513	Henry Adams
Vice-Chairman 01243 773897	Guy Knight
Parish Councillor 01243 786109	Ken Franklin
Parish Councillor 01243 782596	Peggy Wood
Parish Councillor 01243 789773	Mark Porter
Parish Councillor 01243 774381	Bob Holman
Parish Councillor 01243 779553	Claire McLeish
Clerk 01243 605814	Kate Gill