

Collingbourne Ducis - Everleigh - Collingbourne Kingston

COURIER

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THE COURIER

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COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Stephen Matanle, Chairman, writes:



It is very pleasing to see that the work on Brunton Roundabout has now been completed. The revised positioning of the roundabout, together with the new signs, bollards, and paintwork, will all work to ensure that vehicles approaching the roundabout from both directions will slow down and respect the purpose of the roundabout.

As I have mentioned before, this is just one of the measures that we have implemented. With the weight of traffic that uses the A338 we will need to continue to think of new and better ways to ensure that speed limits are observed and that vehicles that are driving through CK do so with proper respect for the people who live here.

I am aware that there may be a feeling in the community that any money that is available should be spent on accelerating the repair of the many potholes that blight our roads. I must point out that the funds that we obtain from Wiltshire Council via the CATG are dedicated to capital projects. These funds are segregated from those reserved for highway maintenance. We hope that our efforts to obtain funding support from CATG for the projects that we have does receive the approval of the community in general.

Thanks in no small measure to the interaction that the CSW have developed with the Police, we are seeing a greater presence from them. As an example, during the course of a session on 10th October, a Police vehicle stopped at Aughton Junction for thirty minutes to provide support for the CSW team. During the course of this time, the Police officer stopped two vehicles which were caught at speeds in excess of 40 mph. This kind of support adds a huge amount of weight to the work of the CSW and we hope it will continue.

We do benefit from alert and helpful members of our community who record incidents of speeding and/or dangerous driving. Please be aware that for the Police to act on these they must be corroborated by two or more witnesses. Notifying the police of incidents, however valid they may seem to be, without a second supporting witness will only result in the Police being unable to pursue them further.

As I advised last month, the inaugural meeting for the CK Walking Group will take place on Sunday 24th November. The route is being worked out and will be published on the CK Facebook page ahead of time together with final details of the meeting time and place. I hope as many of you as possible will turn up and enjoy the walk!

Finally, if you have an issue that you would like to direct to the attention of the Parish Council, please do not hesitate to do so. Our whole focus is the betterment of Collingbourne Kingston and we do want to hear from you. Please contact me on **stephenmatanle@yahoo.com** or any of the other councillors and the clerk. You will find their contact details on our website.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on 26th November 2019 at 7.30 pm in the Ruth Fisher Room. All members of the Parish are welcome to attend this meeting.

COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS PARISH COUNCIL

Peter Knowlson (01264 850812), Chairman, writes:

Roadworks – If you have driven through Tidworth in the last couple of weeks you will have noticed that roadworks have commenced with temporary traffic lights in place. Wiltshire County Council are getting the road and bridge area strengthened, this work will be carried out in phases over the next few months. There will also be a new bigger roundabout built by the petrol station in Tidworth, we have been advised to point



out there will be periods of congestion potentially up to October 2020 by the time all works have been completed.

Litter Pick - A date for your diary for those that wish to help; I am planning on organising a village litter pick on Saturday 2nd November. We will meet at the Village Hall for 9 am and finish around midday. We have plenty of litter pickers, gloves and high-vis tops to help you as you go around. We will also provide you with some refreshments at the hall.

Overgrown Hedgerows – Following my note in the last Courier, this is just a note to say thank you to those who have cut back the overgrown hedges which has made the pathways a safer place on which to walk.

Defibrillator – I can confirm that the additional village defibrillator is now in place on the wall of Sarsen Energy in the Garland Estate off Cadley Road. On behalf of the Parish Council and the Village I would like to say a big thank you to Sarsen Energy for allowing the defibrillator to be installed on the outside of their property and for carrying out the installation. I have registered the defibrillator with Southwest Ambulance Service, so they are aware of its location. The code to access the defibrillator in case of emergency only is C159X which is the same as the one located at the Village Hall. The Ambulance Service are also aware of the codes and will let you know on the phone should an emergency arise within a nearby location of the device. I will be looking to organise a demonstration session soon which I will publicise ahead of that time.

New Weight Limit Restrictions – New weight limit signs have gone up in the village which direct vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to use the Tidworth Road rather than Ludgershall Road. This is all due to the restrictions put in place in Ludgershall to stop HGVs using Castle Street. It will mean for HGVs travelling from Andover, that would

usually pass through our village, an extra five and a half miles on their journey as they will need to go into Tidworth first. Only time will tell if this will put some of the HGVs off using this route which will benefit our village or whether it will mean greater increase in tight squeezes around Church Sreet.

Virtual Footpath, Cadley Road – Latest update from Wiltshire County Council is that the work will take place in November although no fixed date has been given to me as yet.

Vacancies - We currently only have five out of eleven Cllr positions filled on the Parish Council and we really need some more help. I am hopeful that I will be able to announce a new Parish Councillor very soon to take us up to six but it is important we increase our numbers in order that we have a greater number of opinions and help to move general duties and future projects along more quickly.

I would invite you to either contact myself or the Parish Clerk to find out more details on becoming a Parish Councillor. You do not need any prior experience just the willingness to get involved. Please contact our Parish Clerk for more details, Phil Gill by email: **parishclerk@collingbourne-ducis.com**

The next meeting of the parish council will be at Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall and is due to take place at 7 pm on Monday 4th November. All members of the parish are welcome to attend.

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

Information about the mobile library service is available online at **<http://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/MobileLibrary/>**

THE VIEW FROM EVERLEIGH

Denis Bottomley (01264 852731), Chairman, writes:

A Harvest Festival service took place in St Peter's Church on Saturday 5th October.

The Church was decorated extremely well

by the Ladies of Everleigh, who arranged stunning flowers. Our vicar, Jo Reid, conducted an excellent service. The children gave a great rendition of the Harvest Thanksgiving and hymns were heartily sung. Harvest gifts were gratefully received and donated to the West House Farm Residential Care Home in Collingbourne Ducis.



Our Christmas Carol Service will take place at St Peter's Church on Saturday 7th December at 5 pm and will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies. More details will follow in the next edition of the Courier.

The village now has a new defibrillator, located by the noticeboard at the junction of the A342/The Street. We are most grateful to the Tidworth Area Board for a community grant of £462.50 to cover half the cost of purchasing this important equipment; the Parish Council provided matched funding.

Last January the Parish Council proposed a reduction in the speed limit from 50 to 40 mph on both the A342 and Marlborough Road (MR) in Everleigh. Consequently, Wilts Council conducted a speed limit review in the spring and concluded that the speed limit on the A342 should remain at 50 mph, and that MR should be split into two parts as follows:

MR South: from the A342 up to and including Coombe Cottages – reduce to 40 mph.

OUR LINK COORDINATOR'S NUMBER IS CD 850807

Please try to give them at least 48 hours' notice to find a volunteer

MR North: from Coombe Cottages northwards – remains 50 mph, and extend this zone by 200 m to the KK tank crossing.

On the financial front, the Parish Council have paid £625 as a contribution of 25% of speed limit review costs of £2.5K. We now need to provide up to 25% of implementation costs of £4-5K, i.e. up to £1,250, and are considering options to meet this requirement.

There are still two vacancies on the Parish Council. No special skills are required, just a willingness to represent and promote the interests of the village. Interested volunteers are asked to contact Phil Gill, the Parish Clerk: Tel **01264 398534**; e-mail **philip.gill101@ntlworld.com**

Finally, the provisional date for our first Parish Council meeting in 2020 is Tuesday 7th January at 7 pm at Collingbourne Primary School. Everyone is welcome to attend. The minutes of our last meeting are available on village noticeboards and the Everleigh web site at **www.everleigh.org**

COLLINGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dan Crossman, Headteacher, writes:

It has been another enjoyable and successful term at Collingbourne School. Despite the rain we have been participating in various sporting activities. Our Year 3 and 4 football team recently travelled to Durrington to compete in a tournament against fourteen other schools. The team performed quite brilliantly: scoring thirty-six goals and conceding only one in their group stage! We then faced Ramsbury in the final and there was great celebration at the final whistle as we won 1-0 to win the overall tournament. The children returned to school draped in medals and certificates, not to mention some big smiles! On an individual note we should mention George,



our superstar midfielder, who has recently signed for Swindon Town. Let's hope he remembers us when he's rich and famous...

It's nearly time for the famous Collingbourne Glitterball! On the 30th November we will all be donning our finest tuxedos and ball gowns for a masquerade ball. The evening will include a three-course meal, a gin-tasting bar, an auction, a live band and even a casino. Tickets are available from the school office although I suspect they may be sold out by the time this goes to print!

We were pleased to welcome Richard Parsons into school this week. Richard works for a charity that supplies Christmas presents to disadvantaged people all over Europe. Our school will be sending forty shoe boxes filled with all sorts of goodies to children in Bulgaria to help make their Christmas a little brighter.

At school we will be making the usual preparations for the festive season with traditional events such as the Carol Service and 'Bun and Penny' something to really look forward to...

COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS VILLAGE HALL DRAW

Jane Crook (01264 850436) announces the winners:

The October draw winners were

£50 J. Godden 21

£25 S. Fergus 178

£10 Bobby 180

£5 Mrs Waldren 245



To be in the draw with the chance of winning, it is £1 a month. Please contact Jane Crook on **01264 850436** for further information.

Our Community Support Officers can be contacted on 101

COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS VILLAGE HALL

David Paterson writes:

Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall AGM, 21st November 2019, 8 pm

You are cordially invited to join us at Ducis Village Hall to celebrate another successful year for the



community hub of Ducis. Please become involved in our continuing planning and development by joining us at this important meeting.

The Hall was built over thirty years ago and the Village Hall draw has been running for longer than that; it all started to raise funds for the Silver Jubilee in 1977. The draw has raised tens of thousands of pounds since then, all of which has been ploughed back into the Hall. We are eternally grateful for the hard work and efforts of the organisers and collectors of the draw.

Where are we going? Like any public building the Hall requires constant maintenance and refurbishment. Our Development Plan includes the new storage extension, renewed CCTV, renovation of the tennis court, a re-vamped bar and new toilets. These are all projects that require funding and support from our community.

COLLINGBOULE PÉTANQUE CLUB

Jan Kenny writes:

We have come to the end of this year's season and it has been a bit of a mixed bag weather-wise! But, we have managed to attract some new members and hopefully more will come next year! Our singles match was played in September with a good turn out and the winner was Keith Bewick; well done Keith. We resume next year once the clocks go forward and look forward to seeing old friends and new faces.



Jim Plenderleith writes:

Our sincere thanks to all who have supported THEFILMPLACE during the four years we have been running. Your support made possible the purchase, with the invaluable help of Collingbourne Ducis Parish Council, of the four metre electric drop-down screen we used for the first time at the October show. This new screen not only improves the image quality of the film being shown but reduces set up and break down time considerably. We will continue to use any future profits to enhance your film show experience.

Showing at THEFILMPLACE on Friday 22nd November is **YESTERDAY** - the touchingly funny and romantic film from Danny Boyle and Richard Curtis.

Jack Malik (Himesh Patel) is a struggling singer-songwriter in an English seaside town whose dreams of fame are rapidly fading, despite the fierce devotion and support of his childhood best friend, Ellie (Lily James). After a freak bus accident during a mysterious global power blackout, Jack wakes up to discover that The Beatles have never existed. Performing songs by the greatest band in history to a world that has never heard of them, Jack becomes an overnight sensation with a little help from his agent Ellie.

Doors open at THEFILMPLACE, Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall, at 7 pm for pre-film drinks and refreshments; the film show starts at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £6 available now from Collingbourne Ducis village shop or by telephoning Jim Plenderleith (CD) **01264 852734**, Robert East (Everleigh) **01264 850449** or James Robinson (CK) **07788 992588**. Tickets will also be available on the door, if not previously sold out.

It is your monthly film show. Please keep giving us your feedback personally or by email to the following: thefilmplacecd@gmail.com

COLLINGBOURNES AND EVERLEIGH GARDENING CLUB

Patti Marsh (01264 850319) writes:

Lynne Derry from the Great Bustard Group came in September to talk about the re-introduction of this amazing bird into our countryside. The bustard eggs were originally obtained from Russia, which meant some intrepid meetings in Moscow to ensure all the necessary paperwork was stamped in the correct order, but later batches came from Spain, where red tape was not as complicated. Lynne showed photographs of how the birds are hatched and explained how they are cared for whilst young before they are gradually introduced into the Wiltshire countryside. They are then free to fly wherever they want. They have been spotted in most of the neighbouring counties and across the channel.



There was interest in paying the Group a visit next spring but in the meantime we shall all keep a lookout for the bustards which have been sighted around our villages.

The October meeting welcomed Nick Gilbert from Romsey and a report will be in next month's Courier.

On Thursday, 28th November, Sara Willman is coming to speak on Christmas Decorations in Ducis Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Visitors are always very welcome.

If you would like more information about the Gardening Club give either me or our Chairman, Pam Haverson, a call on **01264 850609**.

COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Sandra Fisher (01264 850363) reports on the October meeting:



After Wendy Brown, president, welcomed members and visitors, the evening opened with the business meeting, at which apologies were given and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed off. Wendy talked about the previous month's Group meeting and the range of future events, details of which are in the Wiltshire News. She also drew the attention of members to the holidays for next year, one to the bulb fields and the other to the Isle of Man.

The speaker for the evening, Jackie Shearer, was then introduced. Jackie had brought many interesting props with her to illustrate her talk about beekeeping.

She began by telling the meeting how and when her passion for bees and honey began and moved on to explain the work involved through a year, all the time demonstrating with the equipment she had brought with her. Jackie spoke highly of the local Beekeeping Associations which are very knowledgeable and willing to help novices and experienced apiarists alike. Their help is vital as there are no longer college courses available in this area.

Different types of bees were described, with mention also of the dangerous Chinese, or Asian hornet, sightings of which must be reported to DEFRA.

The vote of thanks for a most interesting and informative talk was given by Maz and, after warm applause, members were able to taste some 2019 honey and a few lucky members managed to buy one of the several jars she had with her.

The evening closed with delicious refreshments and a raffle.

Next meeting: 14th November
Speaker: Joy Ricks gives a Thai Cooking Demonstration
Tea Hostesses: N/A Tea and Coffee only.
Hostess: J. Crook
Raffle Prize: M. Cross

Visitors and new members are always welcome. Second Thursday of the month in Kingston Village Hall at 7.30 pm, £4 donation per visit.

COLLINGBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

David Malley writes:

Collingbourne Cricket Club celebrated a promotion-winning season at its annual presentation evening held in October at Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall.

A three-course Moroccan themed feast, a fully stocked bar and a live band were enjoyed by revellers late into the evening. Members of the senior league, Sunday friendly and ladies teams were recognised for their efforts with the usual mix of cups and trophies, followed by an auction that saw a cricket bat signed by England World Cup winner Jonny Bairstow raise £90 for the club. A big thank you to everyone who attended, especially those that helped put together another great night's entertainment.

A date for your diary: the cricket club's AGM will be held on Friday 8th November at 7.30 pm at CD Village Hall. If you'd like to get involved with the club then please do come along.

Also, dates for our winter indoor net sessions will be announced in next month's Courier, so please keep an eye out for those if you wish to hit a few balls during the close season.



COLLINGBOURNE BEERFEST

David Malley writes:



The Collingbourne Beerfest committee is delighted to announce that its first grant applications have been received and approved. Major beneficiaries include Collingbourne Primary School which will receive a donation to support the creation of an outside classroom, whilst the cricket club will use its grant money to complete the refurbishment of the nets as well as invest in additional kit for its new ladies team. Applications have also been approved for local netball team Goal Diggers (requesting funds to purchase new netball posts for the multi-sport hard court area at the recreation ground in CD); the gymnastics club providing after school sessions for the school would like to fund the purchase of some new equipment; and the Monday morning toddler group at CD village hall will receive a cash boost to ensure the youngest members of our community continue to be catered for.

Are you looking to start a community-based project? Do you help running a local club or organisation? If you do and require some additional funding then please get in touch. Email **collingbournebeerfest@gmail.com** for further information and to request an application form.

Next year's Beerfest will take place on Saturday 27th June with our family 'Picnic in the Park' planned for the following day. If you'd like to get involved in the 2020 event then do please get in touch.

COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON CHRISTMAS CONCERT

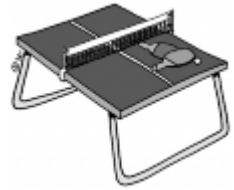
Val Patrick (01264 850345) writes:

As an accompaniment to the recent Village History Exhibition, a book is to be produced in time for Christmas. All profits will go to the Church. Please leave a space in your Christmas stocking. This would make an interesting present for anyone with a CK connection.

TABLE TENNIS 4 ALL

Terry Greenwood writes:

Anyone interested in joining us on Mondays at Ducis Hall 7 pm to 9 pm and Tuesdays/Fridays at Kingston 10 am to 12 pm? You will be most welcome!



We always play doubles, we are non-competitive and enjoy Table Tennis as exercise. We always have biscuits and tea/coffee available. We are not a club more a social gathering. We have four tables at Ducis and three at Kingston. Come along! First session is free and from then on £2.

We can teach you the basics - just turn up with trainers. We have bats and balls available.

If you want any more info please call Terry on **01264 852766**

COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON HARVEST SUPPER 2019

John and Sandra Fisher (01264 850363) writes:

We bought our tickets for the Harvest Supper, went along and enjoyed an excellent evening with very good food, company and wine. We would like to thank everyone concerned with the organisation of the evening, especially those responsible for the meal, spending the evening selling and folding raffle tickets, running the auction, preparing the hall and selling the tickets.

A really good village community event.

Our thanks also go to those who arranged flowers and brought produce to the church making it look very lovely for the Harvest Thanksgiving service, when it is always a pleasure to sing the familiar harvest hymns.

CATS PROTECTION

Martin Bevan writes:

Barclay, last month's mog, is still with us but has someone coming to visit him soon. Hopefully he will be off to his forever home before we know it.



Lexi is about seven years old and came into our care with Barclay and Tabby but is happy to be rehomed by herself. She has recently had a dental. She would be best suited to a family with older children and with a safe garden to explore.

We've recently had our pop-up charity shop in Whitchurch and managed to raise an amazing £2000. Thank you to everyone who donated items and to those who volunteered to help run the shop.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that bonfire night is just around the corner. Please remember to keep your cats safely inside as fireworks can be extremely stressful for them.

Homing Enquiries **0345 260 1501** or **andover.cats.org.uk**

Fund-raising and volunteers **07733 242196** or email **coordinator@andover.cats.org.uk**

Items for resale **01256 892773**

COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Jackie Macbeth seeks musicians:

Do you sing or play a musical instrument? The Collingbourne Kingston Christmas Concert is a chance for local people to perform in a fun and supportive atmosphere. It is being held in St Mary's Church at 7.30 pm on Saturday 7th December. Refreshments will be available. Come and support this village event by participating or as part of the enthusiastic audience. All age groups and abilities welcome. If you would like to be involved or simply to find out more please contact Jackie Macbeth on **01264 850859**

MANOR FARM B&B, COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON

Jackie and James Macbeth write:

After seventeen happy and successful years running Manor Farm B&B we have decided to make a change of direction and are gradually closing the business. We will still be living in the farmhouse and looking after all the guests who have confirmed bookings, but we are no longer taking new bookings. A big thank you to all those who have supported us and our business over the years.

BURBAGE & DISTRICT VIDEO & CAMERA CLUB (BDVCC)

Sonny Hamid (01672 811933) writes:

Another busy month for the Club and its Members.



During mid-September we were invited to present our 'Rare Scenes' project to Members of the Burbage Good Companions. The presentation was a photojournalism project to discover signs of history visible today but which we mostly pass by without knowledge of the history or heritage. On this occasion we presented scenes from Great Bedwyn and Burbage and our work was well received by the audience.

We have been invited by the Head Librarian at Marlborough Library to exhibit the paper prints, which we had used in our Power Point presentation to the Good Companions. The exhibition of our work is likely to start on Monday 11th November for a period of two weeks. It is likely to be extended to include our work from Marlborough as well.

At the October session, Member Phil Leach presented his paper entitled '*Your camera doesn't matter*'. The article demonstrated that good pictures were not necessarily dependent on owning and using an expensive camera, rather understanding ones camera's capability

and developing your own imagination on what goes into making a good picture was the real pathway to producing a good picture.

At our November session, Member Phil Leach will demonstrate how to use post-processing to produce even better results from ones camera. The session will be held on Wednesday, 20th November starting at 7.30 pm at the Burbage and Easton Royal British Legion Hall, Burbage.

We welcome new members from Burbage and the surrounding villages, all of whom are welcome to join us in sharing this exciting hobby or who may seek to develop their camera skills. Please contact Sonny on **01672 811933** or Mike on **01672 810574** for more details.

CASTLEDOWN FM AND HOW I BECAME A BROADCASTER!

Steve Gercke writes:

This last couple of months I have been celebrating fifty years as a DJ and broadcaster.



I ought to say I was very young when I started as a DJ, just Surrey, which met on a Saturday morning. I was never much good at sport, as I have dyspraxia, not that I knew that at the time, but I loved music, so I found myself drawn to a disco being held there. At the time the equipment was very basic, one record player, as it was all 7" single vinyl records and a couple of coloured lights. From these humble beginnings I learnt how to respond to the crowd's requests for music to dance and sing along to. This eventually led to me building my own disco, with help from some friends, which at first, I called Delta Disco and later T. Junction Music.

When I left school at sixteen, I undertook a course in Kent and got my first taste of broadcasting with Nick Page, who later became a newsreader with the BBC. By the end of the 1970's I started writing a

radio script on a band that I have always enjoyed, the band was Fairport Convention. I was living in London and it gave me the opportunity to carry out research for the script by visiting their record company, Island Records, speaking to their Manager and visiting Melody Maker publications to look at their archives.

I was doing this out of an interest in the band and did not really think anything would come of it, which was the case until 1984 after I had moved to Southampton and decided I would send the script to BBC Radio Solent. I did not expect to hear from them; however, I was extremely surprised and delighted when a BBC producer contacted me and asked if I had the music mentioned in my script. I was able to confirm I had and so was asked to go to their studio with the records and my script. I went along and as I entered the building at BBC Radio Solent and waited to go up to the studio, as the door of the lift opened, out stepped David Frost, one of my broadcasting heroes.

When I arrived in the studio and I met the presenter Sibby, I passed my script to him and thought he would be doing the programme, however after doing a microphone test, he said 'Are you ready?' and there I was presenting my first full radio programme. It was recorded, and they got four programs out of my script and it had a mention in the Radio Times. As a result, I was now hooked on radio broadcasting.

Since that momentous start, I have gone on to present further features for BBC Radio Solent, BBC Radio Sussex, Radio Victory, Two Counties Radio and Spirit FM. In addition, I have had the opportunity of setting up and being heavily involved in Charity and College Radio Stations too. Over the years I have had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing many interesting people, to name a few, Cathy Staff, who played Nora Batty in Last Of The Summer Wine, Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin and local man Richard Digence.

When I moved to Collingbourne Ducis eight years ago, I was so pleased to find out we had a local community radio station, called Castledown FM. It broadcasts locally on 104.7 FM and can also be heard anywhere on the internet, mobile phone apps, and tablets, or by going to our website and clicking on 'listen live'. We have all sorts of programmes and mine is a music programme, playing everything from rock to blues and folk to jazz. I have called it Sounds Interesting and it is broadcast live every Thursday between 7 and 9 pm; it includes guests, features and a weekly diary of events informing listeners of music concerts locally and further afield. As a community radio station, all the presenters are volunteers, so if anyone would like to be part of local radio, here is your chance; we need all sorts of help, not just radio presenters. In addition to my music programme, I have just started a new discussion program, Talk of the Towns, again on a Thursday from 2 to 4 pm. We talk about national and local issues, so if you feel you have something to say then we would love to hear from you. This could be to make a comment on the program or to join us in the studio and be part of the discussion. On our first program we had Ann Widdecombe who spoke about her political views and her time on Strictly Come Dancing!

FREDERICK HUGHES MM

Patti Marsh writes - here is the next part of my late Uncle Fred's wartime memoirs:

The Battle at Monte Cassino

After crossing the River Garigliano we were on the move once again in the usual formation, 13 Platoon (my platoon), 14 Platoon and then 15 Platoon. We were on the road heading towards Monte Casino.

The monastery at Monte Cassino was on the highest peak of the surrounding mountains and had complete surveillance of the valley, road and other mountains around it. At dusk we moved up to the ridge, which was to the left of the monastery.

With my binoculars I was able to assess the situation and watch. The Americans had bombed the monastery and some of the bombs had fallen short into the wetlands to the left of the road that led to the mountain. The monastery was later bombed again and destroyed before, I believe, the Polish captured it.

We were brought down from the ridge and moved through the Polish brigade to take over the momentum of the attack.



On moving up the little straight road to the base of the mountain where the monastery was situated we

saw several graves, and I noticed that they must have been the graves of New Zealand lads as they had the fernleaf mark on them. On the left of the road there were the shells of buildings; the insides and roofs had been completely destroyed.

Right at the top of the road it turned sharply to the left and it was here we discovered why no one had the chance of moving up the road. It looked as if the turret of a small tank had been concreted into the side of the road. This obstacle would have had a complete field of fire to anything that attempted to come up the road, or up the water meadows to the right and left of the road.

Lt Gerard (Toys) Norton – Victoria Cross

My platoon was leading up through a valley with a vineyard on the right and a high grassy hilltop on our left. We came under heavy fire from the top of this ridge and quickly dispersed and returned fire.

With my binoculars I could see the fire was coming from three machine guns beneath three small haystacks, about thirty to fifty yards apart, along the top of the ridge.

My Company Commander, Major Bonnie Bailey, a South African, quickly sent 14 Platoon, under the command of Lt Gerard Norton, up to the left and attacked along the ridge, while we gave covering fire. Toys Norton (as he was known) led his men along the ridge and quickly disposed of the machine gun nest.

He was later awarded the Victoria Cross. Toys already had the Military Medal, which I believe he gained in Tobruk. After Toys' brave action my platoon was able to continue pressing forward up the valley.

We never gave our rank or name over the radio. Major Bailey was Sunray, Lt Gerrard Norton was Toys and my code name was Weasel. Also, if we had any casualties it was X, Y or Z. X was killed, Y was wounded and Z was missing, so a message could perhaps be 'One X, two Ys and zero Z'.

Out of the Line – the Bath Incident

One time, after we had been in the front line chasing a retreating enemy, we were given a rest in a small paddock behind an isolated farm with outbuildings.

There were some civilians in the farmhouse, but from what we saw of them, I think they were mostly rather old people, but there were some children, mostly girls under ten years old.

The only things that were growing around us were Olive trees, the usual few white grape vines and some corn on the cob plants. The grapes grown around the house were always the white, sweet variety. In one place I was given a piece of cake, though in fact it was their bread. They ground the corn on the cob down to as small as they

could, and this was their flour. It was yellow, coarse and not very nice, and when she was not looking, I disposed of it!

On an occasion like this, it was safe enough for our 13-cwt truck, driven by Billy Wise, to come up to us. Each platoon had a truck and it stored the kit bag that each man owned. In your kit bag was your second complete set of clothing, your second pair of boots and perhaps a few private things such as soap, razor, toothpaste, pen and writing paper. We were allowed to write home but were restricted to what we could say, such as which country or location we were in. The envelope had to be left open as it was censored by an officer, so there was not a lot you could say, other than you were still alive.

This was the only opportunity we got to strip off and have a bath, albeit, only if it was in the bottom half of a biscuit tin. Our biscuits came in tins approximately 15" x 15" x 24" deep. We were able to obtain an empty tin from the CQMS (Company Quartermaster Sergeant) which when cut in half made two baths. We were then issued with about a gallon of water. Water was always in short supply, especially drinking water.

The drill was to kneel down by your bath, clean your teeth, wash your face and head, and then wash down to your waist. We were lucky as we had a lad in our platoon who had a pair of clippers in his kit bag, so if you wanted a haircut, it was all off or none!

After washing down to your waist you stood in your bath and washed down to your feet.

Most of the lads had had their bath and were busy cleaning their weapons, sorting out their kit bags, writing a letter, or lounging around under the olive trees. I was in the process of drying myself after my bath when a great cheer went up from the lads, and there to

my embarrassment, was a young girl of about fifteen approaching me standing in my birthday suit!

Without lowering her eyes, she pointed to my dirty clothes on the ground, rubbed her two sets of knuckles together, and held up one finger. I assumed she wanted to wash my dirty clothes and would be back in an hour. For a moment of two I thought I perhaps had seen the last of my dirty clothes but within the hour she was back with my laundry all clean and neatly folded. Now came the problem; what could I give her? We had no money, and money to her out in that isolated valley I was sure was of no use to her anyway. I did have a small bar of Lux soap that we had been issued with so I placed it near her nose so she could smell what it was. Her eyes lit up! I could see she was highly delighted with it and ran off.

When all the excitement with my visitor had died down and I had got dressed I got the lads to sit around so I could examine their feet. While in the front line you were not allowed to remove your boots or clothing so if we crossed a river or stream during our advance it meant our feet, socks and boots were wet through and would remain so until we came out of the line. I would look for blisters, sore heels, or anything that I thought required attention from a stretcher bearer, who was always on hand. Also, I could check their boots in case they required changing, and if so, the CQMS (Company Quarter Master Sergeant) would replace them.

I would also get the lads to turn their shirt inside out so I could check down the seams for blue dust, which if found meant they would be replaced by the CQMS and he would dispose of them.

To be continued.

Photo: Men of Polish II Corps moving up for final assault on monastery

SAVERNAKE TEAM LETTER

Rev Michael McHugh, Savernake Team Rector

Dear Reader,



I was greeted the other morning by the sight of Jo, our Team Vicar, with an almost poppy-red head.

You will find about her raising money for Breast Cancer Now on her 'Just Giving' page. Just enter 'revjopink'.

The people around me have been pretty battered by cancer over the last few weeks. I learnt yesterday of the death of a young man who I'd like to think of as a friend after a battle with brain cancer. He joined the ranks of the saints that included a much-loved lady only a month earlier. I follow a heroic little girl and her equally heroic family every day as she fights with leukaemia. I think by far the most difficult is watching a young child go through painful treatments and it is a battle that we have seen more than once over the last few years. Over the years I've grown to watch the odds drop against the evil big C as people who would have died survive and continue to live for many years.

I do not claim to have an answer as to why a loving God would allow cancer to affect people's life this way. But I do believe that my own faith in God is reasonable.

What belief allows me to do is to make sense of the good. The brilliant people who are trying to save a little girl's life or help an adult come to terms with what is ultimately only the inevitable for us all. It does not allow us to explain the bad. It gives a reason for people, independent of their beliefs, to step out boldly to aim to make a difference in the lives of others.

If this is not the message of November and poppy fields, if not poppy heads (revjopink - JustGiving) , what is? When we look at the fallen in

conflict, we see hundreds who willingly embrace the inevitable to improve the lives of all. For this reason we now offer a Remembrance Service in almost every parish in the team.

As we embrace the suffering of both the past and the present, let us do so with gratitude for those who work to alleviate it.

Every Blessing, Michael

ST MARY'S CHURCH, COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON

*Charles Howard (01264 850243) and Nigel Worner-Phillips (01264 850070),
Churchwardens, write:*

It was really good to see so many new people at our Harvest Supper this year, in particular the new organisers who came forward to make the evening such a success. Special thanks to Wendy Brown and Karen Latham and all the other helpers who cooked and donated their time and effort. The best way to keep these village occasions fresh and fun is to have new people and new ideas from time to time, and it was good to see this happen. The evening raised over £1,100 for church funds.



A few dates for your diaries:

The **Remembrance Day** service will be held at Ducis this year by normal rotation between the parishes. It will start at 10.45 am on Sunday 10th November, and wreaths will also be laid at our War Memorial at 11 am the following day.

Our annual **Christmas Festival** in the church on Saturday 7th December will be in a new format this year, and will consist of a

Addresses for the village websites:

CD: www.collingbourne-ducis.com
CK: www.collingbournekingston.org.uk
Everleigh: www.everleigh.org

Christmas Fair running from 12 noon to 3 pm to be followed by an evening of musical entertainment. Full details are enclosed with this edition of the Courier.

Our **Parish Carol Service** will be held at 6 pm on Sunday 22nd December.

And finally, I, Charles Howard have been a Churchwarden since 2005 and it is time for me to step down, although I will remain a member of the Parochial Church Council. I will be giving my full support and assistance to Nigel until my successor is appointed.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS

Churchwarden Tish Leigh (850867) writes:

This certainly is the season of 'mists and mellow fruitfulness'! Our local countryside is certainly looking glorious in all its rich autumn colours at the moment!



As reported in last month's Courier, on Friday 20th September we had our Harvest Supper at Collingbourne Ducis village hall. The final profit for the evening was the fantastic amount of £635.50. This was made while eating delicious food and having a great social evening. The money will go towards the repairs to the tiles on the church roof; to repairing stonework inside and outside of the church tower and to repairing and re-fixing the prentice board which has slipped over the face of the church clock. Hopefully, this work will begin soon, before the winter weather arrives.

Talking of repairs, you may have noticed that the gates to the churchyard have recently disappeared! No, they haven't been stolen! They have been taken away to be repaired and repainted by a kind member of our PCC. Hopefully, they will be back in place, with a smart new coat of paint, before Christmas.

This month sees the annual service of Remembrance, when we remember those from the parishes of the Collingbournes and Everleigh who fell in battle. There will be a short service, in the church, on Sunday 11th November starting at 10.45 am. The service will be led by Revd. Jo Reid and the children from our school will remember those who gave their lives for us. Our church service of Remembrance will be held at St. Andrew's Church on Sunday 10th November starting at 10.45 am Everyone is welcome to join us for either or both of these services.

A few advance notices now as Christmas is now less than seven weeks away! The Phoenix Brass band will be providing the brass element of 'Brass and Carols' at the Tipple Inn starting at 7.30 pm on Thursday 12th December. There will also be mulled wine and mince pies. There will be a candlelit carol service at St. Andrew's Church at 6.30 pm on Sunday 15th December, followed by more mince pies and mulled wine! 'Come to Bethlehem' will take place at 3 pm on Christmas Eve – start sorting out your costumes now! Will you be a traveller to Bethlehem, an angel, an inn keeper, a wise person, a shepherd, a donkey or a sheep? Family Holy Communion will be at 11 am at St. Mary's Church, Collingbourne Kingston on Christmas Day. Please put all the dates in your diary now!

Finally, remember St Andrew's Church has its own Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events - and comment on them! There are also some super photographs! The link is on our webpage or alternatively in Facebook just search for St. Andrews Church, Collingbourne Ducis.

ST MARY'S CHURCH, COLLINGBOURNE KINGSTON

Services in November

Sunday 3rd Morning Worship 9.30 am

Sunday 10th Remembrance Day service at Ducis 10.45 am

Sunday 17th Family Worship at Ducis 11 am

Sunday 24th Evensong 6 pm

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS

Services in November

Sunday 3rd Evensong at 6 pm

Sunday 10th Service of Remembrance at 10.45 am

Sunday 11th Service of Remembrance with the school at 10.45 am

Sunday 17th Family Worship at 11 am

Sunday 24th Holy Communion (BCP) at 9 am

Cover Picture: Typical 17th Century political activist