



Carving finds its new home

This bronze of a parachute and signature, the original carving of which was made on a tree in Hamstead Park in 1944 by Lester Birky, a US soldier, has finally gone on display in the Kennet Valley War Trust Museum at Littlecote House.

The carved signature was first found by former park manager Ben Machen, who traced its creator and raised funds for the bronze casting. Lester Birky is now too frail to travel from the US, but members of his family attended the unveiling of the plaque in May, as did two standard-bearers from his former regiment, the Screaming Eagles.

Elm Farm hosts organic seminar



On 17th May the Organic Research Centre at Elm Farm hosted a one-day meeting jointly with the British Ecological Society to discuss the role and potential of organic farming in biodiversity and sustainable ecosystems. The meeting attracted close to 60 delegates, including leading scientists, policy makers, farmers and NGOs, to debate the critical issues around sustainable farming and land-use. After a morning of papers and discussion, the delegates spent the afternoon visiting Sheepdrove Organic Farm in Lambourn and Tolhurst Organic Produce near Pangbourne to see organic farming practices in action.

A change of ministry

The Rev Julie Ramsbottom, rector of St Mary's, Hamstead Marshall, and minister of the parishes of Enborne, West Woodhay, Inkpen, Combe and Kintbury, will take her last service in the joint benefice on Sunday 3rd July, before moving to a new and smaller parish in Finchampstead. She has served the local ministry for 14 years.

In centuries gone by a new minister for Enborne and Hamstead Marshall would have been appointed by the Earl of Craven, the choice often being a member of his family, but in modern times the recruitment process is handled by the Archdeacon of Berkshire in consultation with the churchwardens of the six parishes. The process seems likely to take some months, during which the Rev Cathy Pynn, as senior priest, will be in charge of the joint benefices.

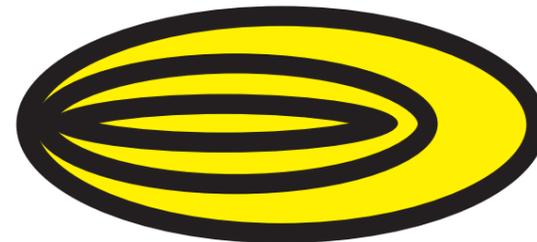
On Sunday 29th May an ancient parochial custom will be maintained with the Rogationtide walk.

Beating the bounds, as it used to be known, dates back before the Conquest. Its purpose was to pass on from one generation to another precise knowledge of the parish boundaries. Such knowledge was important in the days when tithes were owed to the church on every piece of land. The rector and his vestry officials would circumnavigate the parish in procession with their offspring in tow. Memories were fixed at key points on the way by such traditions as drinking beer out of handbells, and bumping the heads of small boys on boundary markers.

These days the exact boundaries are fixed by maps, and are probably unknown to many parishioners. The 2011 walk, which takes all day in full, follows a route from church to church, with services and refreshments on the way. Walkers can join in for as little or as much as they like, and the speed is promised to be gentle.

Head-banging will probably not be a feature.

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The White Hart Inn reborn

Under the new ownership of Stella Coulthurst the White Hart is undergoing a substantial makeover, which will be finished in time for a grand re-opening in July.

Following her purchase in early April the new owner wasted no time in appointing contractors to begin reversing the ravages of nearly a year during which the pub has stood empty.

Stella Coulthurst and her business partner, Stephen Evans, are currently in the process of appointing a manager and a chef to live in and run the White Hart. The pub will open on Wednesday 20th July.

A working partnership of long standing

Stella Coulthurst lives in north Hampshire, having been a resident of Wiltshire and Berkshire for the last 20 years. In 1998 she moved from a high-profile City career in corporate finance into corporate management, with posts at Tetley and Citibank.

Stella owns a black labrador, who will have to learn to be a pub dog, as well as horses, with which she competes in dressage.

Stephen Evans has formal qualifications and long experience in the catering and leisure industry. From 1994 until 2004 he was CEO of Whitbread and Forte companies. More recently he was the chief executive of Chill Factor, an award-winning Alpine ski centre in Manchester.

Stephen Evans also runs his own company, Food That Delights Ltd, a Watford-based catering consultancy.

And the menu?

A menu of regular and special dishes will feature traditional pub food, locally sourced whenever possible, and varied with the changing seasons. Expect to find perennial favourites such as cottage pie, fish and chips, and venison. When the kitchen is closed (the pub will be open for about 12 hours every day) a chill cabinet will offer snacks of cold meat and cheeses.

You too can have your say: visit the website below, and state your preferences.

scenes from the site



The irregular masonry top left of the road frontage is levelled off with the roofline.



Former blind arches in the dining room will be opened and glazed, showing the kitchen.



The open fire will burn again - now without smoking out the bar.



The kitchen is being totally refitted from scratch.

News stories from the Hamstead Hornet are posted and updated on www.hamsteadmarshall.net which also carries detailed information about the village.

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one for your Favourites list:

<www.whitehartinnhamsteadmarshall.co.uk>

What's on in the village 2011

08.00 onwards	Rogationtide walk from church to church: am: Enborne→Hamstead→West Woodhay pm: Woodhay→Inkpen→Combe Join for as long or short a stretch as you want	< www.w-woodhay-and-kintbury-benefices.org.uk >
19.30 Thu 2 Jun	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in the garden at Woodside plant swap and open meeting	Sue Watts 01488 658932
Sat-Sun 4-5 Jun	West Woodhay Garden Show in aid of local charities and all the benefice churches	< www.westwoodhaygardenshow.co.uk >
10.30-12noon Wed 8 Jun	Computer café at Elm Farm all welcome	Cathy Pynn 01488 658243
10.00-13.00 Sat 11 Jun	Hamstead Marshall and Enborne Community Market in village hall - food, crafts, gifts etc	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
10.00-16.30 Sun 26 Jun	Open Day and Dog Show at Dogs Trust, Plumb's Farm stalls, BBQ, tombola, raffle, refreshments & dog show	01488 658391
19.30 Thu 7 July	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall talk on orchids; £5 entrance also covers drink & raffle	Sue Watts 01488 658932
11.00-22.00 Sat 9 July	Food festival, village fete and parish party all day at Elm Farm	Pam Bijack at Elm Farm 01488 658298
10.30-12noon Wed 13 July	Computer café at Elm Farm all welcome	Cathy Pynn 01488 658243
20.00 Mon 18 July	Parish council meeting in village hall all parishioners welcome	Jo Wheeler (parish clerk) < pclerkoffice@aol.com >
10.00-13.00 Sat 13 Aug	Hamstead Marshall and Enborne Community Market in village hall - food, crafts, gifts etc	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
14.00 Sat 3 Sep	Garden Society show details tba	Penelope Lake 01635 48701
19.30 Thu 8 Sep	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall Sally Pointer's medieval makeover	Sue Watts 01488 658932
10.00-13.00 Sat 10 Sep	Hamstead Marshall and Enborne Community Market in village hall - food, crafts, gifts etc	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
20.00 Mon 19 Sep	Parish council meeting in village hall	Jo Wheeler (parish clerk) < pclerkoffice@aol.com >
<i>regular events</i>		
13.30-16.00 Mons termtime	oil painting classes for beginners & improvers	Chris Turner 01488 658587
17.00-18.30 Weds	yoga classes	Inga Craven 01488 658744
weekdays termtime	Little Sunflowers nursery school	Teresa 01635 253201 Trudy 01635 255363

Tents for events

The village hall owns two marquees which can be hired by contacting Sue Watts on 01488 658932. The hire charge is £40 apiece, and hirers are responsible for collection and return.

Parish matters with wine and cheese

The annual parish assembly on 16th May was held in conjunction with the AGM of the village hall management committee. The additional lure of cheese and wine did not, alas, draw many members of the public to attend.

The assembly heard reports from the chairman, Gordon Fisher, and from Anthony Stansfeld, one of the village's two WBC councillors. Continuation of the present parish council membership was confirmed: Gordon Fisher in the chair, John Handy as vice-chair, together with Stuart Morton, Jon Phillips and Peter Benest. The parish precept for 2011-12 (frozen at last year's rate by central government) is £2,750.

The village hall management committee reported healthy finances at its AGM on 16th May. The balance sheet showed £22,014 in the bank, a £3,492 increase on this time last year. Maintenance plans for the coming year include resanding and waxing the floor, replacing the two small kitchen sinks, and an outside tap.

A team of volunteers from Vodafone is coming to clean and paint outside during half term. The recreation field has benefited hugely from fortnightly maintenance by Bob Warwick, and this will continue.

Village hall officers for 2011-12 are: Sue Watts in the chair, Gill Cook as treasurer, Lanie Allen as secretary, and Stuart Morton representing the parish council. The post of vice-chair is vacant. Bookings continue to be handled by Sue Watts, with Peter Chaffey assisting.

Easter market

The Easter market in Elm Farm's new barn was a huge success, with adults, children and stall holders alike having a great time. Children were busily egg-painting and hunting Easter eggs, while parents browsed a wide variety of stalls including new-to-the-market Lulu's flowers, Ilze's chocolates, Ciderniks, Parsonage Farm, the Wood Turners and Roelof & Robins, as well as market regulars Lanie's Preserves, Christmas Farm, Zaytoun, Chris's woodturning, Hasbeen Handbags, Natalie from Phoenix Cards and Cakermaker. The bar and barbecue alongside Sue's refreshments enabled everyone to make the most of the gorgeous St George's Day weather in beautiful surroundings. Stella Coulthurst, the new owner of the White Hart, came along to say hello and to start sourcing local suppliers for the long-awaited re-opening of the pub. The organisers wish to thank everyone who supported the event.

West Woodhay Show

The biennial West Woodhay Garden Show takes place this year on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June. The standard entry fee of £7 grants access to the glorious gardens of West Woodhay House, where there will be around 80 gift and craft stalls as well as the plant-finders fair, comprising specialist nurseries and a vast array of donated plants. Robin Althaus (01635 524346) should be contacted if you have any last-minute plant donations. Other events include a schools competition, children's entertainments, silent auction and an antiques identification service.

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The Dogs Trust at Plumb's Farm will be holding its annual open day and show from 10am on Sunday 26 June. There will be the usual doggy stalls, tombola, a raffle, barbecue and other refreshments, and a 10-class dog show.

Only one village house is currently being advertised for sale: Clareville is with Strutt and Parker, now at a guide price of £535,000.

A fund-raiser held at the April community market raised £120, which has been donated equally between Macmillan Nurses and the local children's charity, Buddies. Sue Watts has expressed her thanks to all who made this possible.

Computer cafés sessions organised by the church are continuing at Elm Farm, the next two being scheduled for the second Wednesdays of June and July. Everyone is welcome to drop in and get free help with computing.

Wednesday yoga sessions in the village hall have resumed at the new time of 5 to 6.30pm. Contact Inga Craven on 01488 658744 for details.

There are no new planning applications in the village, although the appeals allowed earlier in the year for Foxlee Farm and Hamstead Growers are believed to be the subject of continuing challenge by the parish council.

NEWS
IN
BRIEF