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Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the Edington Village News.

This month we have as always a selection of articles including our regular musings from Mercedes and this month Stephen has written about

spiders. We have the second part of a tale of two villages, a factional account of life in Imber plus a review of a book written by a former local journalist. There are also updates from local clubs and organisations as life continues to return towards normality!

For those of you planning to increase your fitness levels we also have a piece of exercise equipment for sale.

- Don't forget we are always looking for articles to publish, we have our regular articles and there is always room for more.
- Remember we are reliant on contributions to make this newsletter a success.

• Send your articles to
newsletter@edingtonwiltshire.org.uk

EDINGTON PLAYFIELD ENHANCEMENT

**Have you heard about the opportunity to enhance the village playfield?
Full details on the village website.**

www.edingtonwiltshire.org.uk

The Parish Council welcome comments from villagers on the proposal either in writing or by attending a meeting on Monday 13th September at 7.30pm. (Venue to be announced by 6.00pm on Sunday 12th September on the village website)

Please note, to comply with current Covid rules please notify the Clerk to Edington Parish Council at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting of your wish to attend and also if you wish to speak at the meeting.



Local surgeries latest

REMEMBER YOU MUST WEAR A FACE COVERING WHILST IN THE BUILDINGS

White Horse Health Centre and Bratton Surgery



Westbury surgery TELEPHONE 01373 828330
Bratton Surgery TELEPHONE 01380 831911

WGP Patient Participation Group Follow-Up to the Article Written in the White Horse News published on Thursday, 3rd. September 2020 The WGP Patient Participation Group (PPG) would like to thank the patients of Westbury Group Practice (WGP) for their comments received in follow-up to the above article.

Many of the comments related to the changes that have occurred over the last six months. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has driven these changes and the safety of both the patients and the staff at White Horse Health Centre (WHHC) and at Bratton Surgery is paramount.

Examples of comments received with replies are as follows:

• **Reception is no longer the friendly, caring, welcoming area that it was.**

WGP has tried to improve on this since the easing of lockdown procedures by the removal of the wooden structure at the Main Entrance. Many surgeries in the area have kept their doors shut and entry is by intercom only so we are very lucky in this respect. WGP keep the situation constantly under review and will tighten up / loosen procedures as safety restrictions allow.

• **Appointments can only be made by telephone – why?**

Again, Covid-19 safety restrictions apply. Footfall to the surgery needs to be reduced as much as

possible and, therefore, there can be no in-surgery booking of appointments. Similarly, at present, appointments need to be triaged to the most appropriate clinician and on-line booking does not allow for this.

• **Why are Urgent Care calls triaged?**

Urgent Care calls are directed to the most appropriate clinician – this may be doctor, an acute nurse practitioner or a paramedic. This may result in a phone or video call, a face-to-face appointment or a home visit.

• **Is on-going treatment provided by the same clinician?**

If the condition to be treated is on-going then, as far as possible, it is overseen by the Doctor at the first point of contact.

• **Why are no time slots given for telephone consultations?**

Delays can occur and the clinicians have found offering either a.m. or p.m. calls is the most efficient use of their time as there are other administrative tasks that their day involves and which, sometimes, can be unpredictable.

• **Are any face-to-face appointments carried out at WHHC and at Bratton surgeries?**

Yes – the Health Care Assistants do 100% face-to-face appointments for blood tests, blood pressure checks, wound dressings and Women's Health. Doctors and Acute Nurse Practitioners will bring patients in for face-to-face appointments if appropriate.

• **Do the clinicians make home visits?**

Yes, again, if considered necessary, home visits will be carried out by Doctors, Acute Nurse Practitioners or the Practice Paramedic. The latter two will report back to the patient's named doctor or Duty Doctor on return to the surgery. There are allocated visit slots every day.

• **Have all services re-started now?**

Yes, all services are up and running.

We would all like things to return to "normal". However, that is unlikely to happen in the





foreseeable future. WGP are following the guidance on Covid-19 safety from NHS England, Public Health England and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The PPG recognises that WGP have done all that they can in these very difficult circumstances and that they have continued to provide all patients with an excellent service. However, it is understood that some members of the community are not as satisfied so the PPG will continue to work with WGP to identify where there is disquiet and, where they are able, we are confident that WGP will make changes.

We continue to encourage patients to use the patient voice email

wccg.wgppatientvoice@nhs.net. to raise

concerns and, equally, to provide the positive feedback that is definitely there in the community as well.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

Dr Edwards & Partners

www.westburygp.co.uk

As the Covid situation eases we will only be featuring the Lavington surgeries news if there is a significant item appearing on either of their websites.



Wiltshire Police

Beating The Scammers By Becoming Online Savvy

A man in his 90s from the Chippenham area was scammed by a bogus police officer who convinced him to withdraw £2,000 from his bank account and hand it to a fraudster courier who came to his home address.

This story is not uncommon. Fraud represents a third of all crime reported in the UK, and as we read every day in the news criminals are continuing to find new and innovative ways to extort money from people - whether that is in person or online.

Technology has never been better, and

fraudsters have never been smarter, so as part of our summer Click or Call campaign, we are highlighting cybercrime and fraud.

Unfortunately, we deal with cases of cybercrime and fraud daily as criminals target our weaknesses in technology, take advantage of our vulnerabilities and of people's good will.

In July this year, a 24-year-old student from Swindon was given a three year community order after being found guilty of money laundering. He was given £250 to pass his bank details on to a gang who were running a sophisticated phone scam. This information was then used to set up nine new bank accounts in his name which received money from an unsuspecting victim in his 70s.

The victim was called by a member of the gang who were pretending to be his bank, Nationwide. The phone number of his bank appeared on his caller display and it followed some previous dealings with the bank, so he thought it was genuine. The scammers told him their system was under attack from hackers and he needed to move his money into secure accounts. .

The victim was persuaded to make the transfers - a total of £21,500 to 18 different accounts.

Earlier this year, we received several reports from across the county from people concerned after receiving phone calls from men posing as police officers and requesting bank details.

The 'officers' said that they had arrested a man and needed assistance with a fraud investigation.

They then asked questions about bank details and in some circumstances asked people to withdraw sums of money.

Police officers and banks will never cold call residents in this way and ask for card or bank details.

There are some simple steps you can take to help protect yourself from these types of crime:

- Your bank or the police will never ring and ask





you to verify your PIN, withdraw cash or purchase high-value goods. They'll also never come to your home to collect your card, cash or purchased items. If you get a call like this, end the call.

- If you get a call from your bank or the police, make sure you know who the person is before handing over any personal details. You can do this by calling your bank (the number on the back of your card) or the police (101) on a different phone line.
- If you receive a call and are asked to call back or are encouraged to call the police or your bank try and use a different line. To get a different line, use a phone owned by a family member, friend or neighbour. This is because scammers can keep phone lines open after pretending to hang up. So, while you think you're making a new phone call, the line is still open to the scammer, who pretends to be someone from your bank or the police.
- Depending on your bank, the security questions they ask may be different, but they'll never ask you to authorise anything by entering your PIN into your phone.
- Never send money abroad to a person you've never met or to anyone you don't actually know and trust.
- Likewise, never agree to keep an online relationship a secret. This is a ploy to get you not to tell your family and friends, who'll see the scam for exactly what it is.

Alongside fraud, cybercrime is also a common method used to scam people out of money.

They target victims using phishing emails in hope that you will open an attachment or click on a link to compromise your electronic device and gain access to your personal information, passwords and account details.

Obvious signs of phishing include:

- Misspelling and bad grammar within the email

Addressing you as "customer" or by your

email address, rather than using your name, and links that lead you to sign into personal accounts.

Always double check the email address that has sent the email, there could be a slight change to make it look like a supplier you regularly deal with or it could be spoofed, and the real email address is hidden.

Please talk to your elderly relatives or neighbours so they continue to be aware and take some time to stop and think and talk to someone they trust before transferring any money or sharing bank details.

If you think you have fallen victim of fraud, please call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or visit www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Alternatively, please report online using the form on our website www.wiltshire.police.uk or call us on 101.

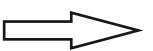
Wiltshire Council

Extracts from the Wiltshire Council latest news.

Wiltshire Council has started an engagement exercise on its emerging Climate Strategy, which sets out how the council - and Wiltshire as a whole - can tackle climate change over the next five years.

The engagement runs until 11.59pm on Sunday 17 October, and people can comment on the draft strategy document, and attend a number of online and in-person engagement sessions to find out more.

At the same time, the council will also be consulting on Our Natural Environment Plan, a Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy for Wiltshire, which looks at the future for Wiltshire's natural environmental assets and how the council, through partnership working, can help protect and enhancement these for the benefit of people and biodiversity.





In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030.

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, said: We all need to reduce our impact on the climate by cutting carbon dioxide emissions, and we also need to begin to adapt to a changed climate.

People can comment on the draft strategy, which covers seven delivery themes: transport; built environment; waste; green economy; energy generation, storage and distribution; natural environment, food and farming; and carbon neutral council.

At the same time, we will also be consulting on 'Our Natural Environment Plan' - A Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy for Wiltshire, which looks at the future for Wiltshire's natural environmental assets focussing on the need to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, halt and reverse biodiversity loss and contribute to the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's residents.

'Blue infrastructure' means water courses such as rivers, lakes, canals, ponds and wetlands, while 'green infrastructure' covers plant life such as fields, forests, hedgerows and parks, and the GBI Strategy will set a clear vision, goals and principle to guide delivery through partnership working. Having a strong GBI will help mitigate against the effects of climate change through nature-based solutions such as, increased water retention in the land to reduce the risk of flooding, maintain and improve biodiversity, and help to provide improved access to the countryside.

Our approach

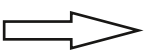
A climate strategy discussion document and green and blue infrastructure strategy overview were presented to Council in February 2021. Significant stakeholder engagement has taken place for both strategies and the Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group has been involved in the process.

The climate strategy document has deliberately been kept simple and succinct to encourage a wide readership. The UK Climate Change Committee estimates that local authorities can influence one third of emissions in their area. This makes public engagement and buy-in from organisations and businesses critical to tackling the other two thirds – as well as advocating for strong government action. This high level strategy sets out our objectives and areas of focus while remaining flexible. As the world around us evolves in terms of knowledge, legislation and policy, technology and the market, we will adapt to take advantage of these opportunities. Detailed delivery plans will be developed, and in recognition that we are facing an emergency, we are already taking action on a number of fronts.

This strategy is built on the currently available evidence base, recognising that there are gaps in understanding and more work will need to be undertaken over time. Technical studies will be commissioned as required to address these gaps.

How the public can get involved
The next step is to consult publicly on both strategies, raising awareness of what the council is doing on this agenda and encouraging communities to do their bit. People can share their views on both draft strategies by taking the online surveys during the engagement period, and there will also be a series of joint online and in-person events covering both strategies that people can join to find out more and ask questions. To join these events, people must sign up online in advance. The full schedule of engagement events is as follows:

- 9 September, 6pm, online launch event with Claire Perry O'Neill
- 15 September, 10.30am to 11.30am, first engagement webinar
- 30 September, 7pm to 8pm, second engagement webinar.





Libraries drop-in sessions:

- 14 September, 10am to 12 noon, Salisbury Library
- 23 September, 10am to 12 noon, Devizes Library
- 27 September, 10am to 12 noon, Chippenham Library
- 7 October, 10am to 12 noon, Trowbridge Library.

For more information about the Climate Strategy see: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/climate.

For more information about the GBI Strategy see: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-green-blue-infrastructure where both the full document and a summary version are available to download.

You can sign up for the online events [here](#).

Your role

To support the consultation and raise awareness of what the council is doing, please do:

- complete the online surveys
- share social media content during the consultation period
- encourage residents to respond to the consultation
- encourage communities to consider a project under the Together for Our Planet scheme

Next steps

Both strategies will be reviewed during autumn 2021 in light of consultation feedback and any relevant changes in national policy (a raft of announcements are expected in the run up to COP26 in Glasgow). The final strategies are expected to be adopted by Council in February 2022.

The GBI strategy will inform the development of new policies in the emerging Local Plan and other council documents such as the Local Transport Plan and set the framework for a new Local Nature Recovery Strategy that will identify biodiversity net gain sites (a new requirement in the Environment Bill).

Edington Parish Council News

For some time now there has been an issue with customers of the Three Dagers complex parking on the road outside due to insufficient car parking spaces within the complex. After lengthy negotiations the Three Dagers company are in the process of purchasing part of the field to the north of the village playfield. The Parish Council have been consulted about undertaking a partial land swap to enable the Three Dagers to build an extension to their car park in the area of the existing skate park and in exchange the Parish Council playfield would be extended to the north of the current path bordering the play field.

It has been agreed that if the council are in agreement there will be no cost to the Parish Council and that all additional costs in the moving of any play equipment and replacing the skate park equipment with other equipment, within a reasonable budget, will be met by the Three Dagers.

Full details of the proposal along with a plan of the changes can be found on the village website.

<https://edingtonwiltshire.org.uk/playfield-enhancements/>

At the August planning meeting of the Parish Council it was agreed that the proposal carried benefits for the village and that after taking into consideration the views of villagers if it was deemed that the move would be of benefit to the entire village the Parish Council would agree to the proposal. The next meeting of the Parish Council is on Monday 13th September will be preceded by a village meeting to enable villagers to find out more about the project and ask questions. Following this meeting there will be the normal Parish Council meeting when the proposal will be voted on.

Remember you can always contact the Parish Council by email parishcouncil@edingtonwiltshire.org.uk



Village Musings

Having just retired, I am now in the position of being able to walk through our beloved village during the day times when others are at work - a great privilege and one which I am still enjoying hugely. And recently on one of these walks, I saw, parked at the "Green" in Tinhead Road, just north of the pond, the Mobile Library! I had not realised that this service was still available in our rural areas.

I went onto the bus and chatted to a really helpful, friendly lady who gladly registered us and gave the timetable for the monthly visits. Apparently, of all the villages that she drives to, Edington has the fewest people attending. I wonder why this is? Often, no one gets onto the bus at our stop. However, I plan on making good use of the service now that I have leisure to read for fun!



There are lots of children's books, fiction and non-fiction for adults, large print and audio books. And they will order anything you particularly want and bring it next time. If you have nothing much to do at 3.00pm on 22nd September, do consider wandering down to the mobile library and having a look. It is really fascinating! And it is such a great service to have in the village.

<https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/MobileLibrary/Library/Round/11>

Mercedes Henning

Future visits to Edington, The Green, Tinhead Road

Arrives 15:00 Departs 15:30

The mobile library will be visiting this stop on the following dates:

Wednesday 22 September, 2021

Wednesday 20 October, 2021

Wednesday 17 November, 2021

Wednesday 15 December, 2021

Wednesday 12 January, 2022

Wednesday 09 February, 2022

Wednesday 09 March, 2022

EDINGTON & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

I hope to be able to tell everyone that we have had our last zoom meeting for the garden club, at least for the time being. To celebrate, the club arranged a garden party held on 12th. August after first being postponed due to rain the week before, it was kindly held in the interesting garden of our chairperson Jacky along with Ernie her husband they were lovely hosts. Members arrived carrying dishes of food to share which sixteen of us enjoyed with a glass of wine. It was wonderful to be able to meet friends in person after such a long time and not a mask in sight, long may this situation last.

The garden club is a friendly group meeting on the first Thursday of the month in the village hall so now we are able, do come along and see what we do. There will be posters round the village with the information before each meeting.

See you in the hall.

Next meeting Thursday 7th October at 7.30pm - Jane Moore will be giving a talk entitled "Colours and Winter structures"



Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP for Edington on his Rural Rides

During the last week of July, I set off on a tour of thirty-two of South West Wiltshire's smaller parishes and villages on what I call my 'Rural Rides' (with apologies to William Cobbett, the nineteenth century pamphleteer).

From Tollard Royal in the south to Bulkington in the north, I set up in village halls - I have so many of these great buildings in my constituency I thought I'd write a book about them when I have time dedicated perhaps to Cobbett – but also pubs, churches, shops and leisure centres. Edington's Parish Hall was my penultimate stop on Tuesday 27th. Thank you to Wendy Pollard for hosting us, particularly for providing the delicious cake. I'm sure the Edington Music Festival was well subscribed after last year was forced online. I enjoyed the opportunity to brief Alec my long suffering researcher on 898 and all that.

I'm regularly in touch with residents in Edington to discuss a wide variety of issues. But, with Covid having halted so much face-to-face interaction over the last 18 months, I felt it was important to get out and about, re-establish a presence, and meet people who might otherwise find it difficult to come and see me.

Across the constituency, the biggest issue was roads - with heavy traffic topping the bill. I can't magic it away, but I can make the issue more



prominent with those who may be able to help. That's how MPs work, and even sometimes change things, using whatever tools we have – meetings, phone calls, tub-thumping, letters and, whisper it, the media.

Spiders of Edington

We share our homes with a creature that creates horror and terror in a lot of us. It is like something from a Science Fiction novel. A creature with 8 eyes and legs, with poisonous fangs and which injects digestive enzymes into its prey so it can suck out its body juices later at leisure.

Of course, I am talking about the humble spider, which we see scurrying around our baths or sitting malevolently in a web in the corner of our rooms.

There are about 650 species of spiders belonging to 35 different families in the UK but only about 12 species have ever been recorded as being able to bite us and these are larger spiders. Unlike in other parts of the world, none of our spiders in the UK have bites that are dangerous or that could cause much harm to humans. The worst bite you can get is similar to a wasp sting. The most common biting spiders in the UK that have been recorded biting us are the Tube Web Spider and the False Widow Spider. Interestingly, both these spider species have been introduced from overseas and so are in fact alien or non-native species.

Spiders differ from insects by having only two body parts and eight legs. They usually have eight eyes although some species may have only six or less. Their fangs are used to inject venom and immobilize prey. In some cases, they are used to chew the prey and mix it with digestive enzymes. Their food is thus digested before it reaches the mouth and can then be easily sucked up.

Most species spin webs to help them catch their prey which are usually flying insects of some sort. If a prey insect is trapped in the web, the trap line vibrates notifying the spider to rush to the web, bite and paralyze the prey and wrap it in silk for later consumption. Spiders are able to spin sticky silk for trapping insects and non-sticky silk strands for walking on. This is how they don't



get stuck in their own webs.

Spiders can also use webs for transport, climbing to a high point and then releasing sail-like strands of silk which get caught by the breeze and carries them away. This is called ballooning. This is how young spiders disperse. Often, they are carried only a few feet, but in many instances can be carried several miles. In fact, many sailors have reported spiderlings being caught in their ship's sails over 1000 miles from land. They have also been detected in atmospheric data balloons collecting air samples at nearly 16,000 ft above sea level.



Orb-like spider web covered by frost in our garden

So, you can see, in reality spiders are amazing animals that should be encouraged into our gardens and homes as they consume a huge number of insect pests every year. It's estimated that across the world, spiders eat between 400 and 800 million tons of insects and other invertebrates a year. Many of the insects they eat are considered pests of food crops, garden plants and even people, so having spiders around is a great natural alternative to pesticides.

In Edington we can find a number of different species in our houses and gardens and the following are a few I have observed over the past few months.



House spider (Del. S.F. Henning)

House spiders are the familiar large, hairy spiders sometimes seen running across your floor at night and occasionally found in your bath in the morning. There are several different species of house spider, which are difficult to tell apart.

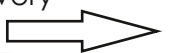
They're all large and brown with very long legs, and spin sheets of webs in out-of-the-way corners. Their bodies can get up to being 16 mm long.



A Wasp spider seen on its web while out on a walk in the countryside around Edington – the females can be up to 15 mm long. They have what is called an orb web and can often be found in damp meadows and grassland.



In the corners of our rooms, we often find the webs of these thin, gangly spiders which are known as daddy long-legs or cellar spiders. They spend most of the day sitting very still, but if disturbed they have two very





different reactions. Some curl up into a ball and try to be invisible, but others vibrate manically in an attempt to frighten you off.



Spitting spider (Del. S.F. Henning)

Spitting spiders are small spiders often found in houses around Edington. They're straw-coloured with black flecks all over the body and legs. They come out at night to hunt insects. When they find a target, they spray it with a sticky fluid that glues their prey to the floor, making it easier for

this slow-moving spider to approach safely and catch it.



Noble false widow spider (Del. S.F. Henning)

Noble false widow spiders are found in outbuildings and homes all year round. They aren't native to the UK and are believed to have arrived in Britain in 1879 from the Canary Islands. They make messy webs in corners, like a house spider. Although they can bite, they are not aggressive and are only likely to do so if roughly handled. The bite has been compared to that of a wasp sting.

Wolf spiders are occasionally observed around Edington. They do not make a web but



Wolf spider (Del. S.F. Henning)

catch their prey by chasing them down. Its body is only about 7 mm long.

The four-spot orb weaver spider can be seen around Edington in tall grass during the summer and autumn. They have four white spots on their back giving them their name.



A four-spot orb weaver spider resting in its web.

There is one group of arachnids that we often see that we might

confuse with spiders. These are the Harvestmen which are familiar to us as a long-legged, small-bodied spider-like creatures that frequent



gardens and houses. They are also arachnids and are related to spiders. They have eight legs, and like spiders they are carnivorous, but the similarities end there. Harvestmen don't spin webs

and they don't produce venom. There are about 25 species of harvestmen living in the UK.

Stephen Henning



A Tale of Two Villages. Part 2

In July, after a Covid restricted gap of 9 months, we finally managed to visit our home in the Touraine, but not without stresses and strains.

Our first challenge was our boat being cancelled two days before its scheduled departure, necessitating a rescheduling of our required Covid pcr tests, this time only available in Shepton Mallet.

The second was on arrival at the check-in, to find that our vet had made a one digit error on the 15 page, £125 health certificate, now required every trip as a consequence of Brexit.

"Sorry we cannot take the dog, there is an error on the form". Finally, entirely at our risk of the French authorities refusing our entry into



France we boarded the boat. Of course the French authorities did not even look at the certificate, so we continued our journey with our "illegal immigrant" dog.

We resolved the issue by securing a new French

passport and "citizenship" for our dog who now will only obey commands in French! Gaining a French passport is a great idea as it avoids completely the need for the expensive Uk health certificates when you travel anywhere in Europe or Northern Ireland.

By the time we arrived, all Covid restrictions in France had been lifted, though 99% of people continued to wear masks both on the streets and in restaurants. Recent rules now require you to produce a "Proof of vaccination status" to enter public venues.

Our village, Cussay, clearly had managed perfectly well without us and our mayor had

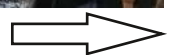
news to share that he/the village had indeed managed to buy our local auberge, La Poivrade, consisting of bar, dining room, kitchen and family living accommodation upstairs for just 79,000 euros. Amazing, and will prove to be a great asset for the village and the proposed new



tenant. New houses continue to be built in the village, locals generally favouring new build for their convenience, and second home owners favouring the picturesque old farmhouse properties. Covid induced home working may well bring back life into the villages of France, which have been in decline for some time, as the young chased the city jobs.

Sadly the Union Jack has now been removed from all the roundabouts and European displays and we had missed all the annual rose festivals and many of the

fun village brochantes and fetes had been cancelled this year, but thankfully have now started up again. Great places to buy new "treasures" to add to the house clutter. Our local Sunday morning market survived the Covid





menace and it was a real joy to once again smell the roasting chickens on the mobile van, pick through the meat and vegetable stalls and listen to the local music, before grabbing a cold beer with friends and neighbours who regularly

gather there for a Sunday morning catch up and the local gossip.

A further regionally funded fun development, la voie verte, was also completed and opened in our absence, a 30 mile section of an old railway line has been converted into a cycleway and walking route alongside the rambling river Claise. A real asset, this is stimulating local tourism and the opening of cafes, holiday lets and water associated sports. It is a

real joy to see the results of the strong social funding in The country.

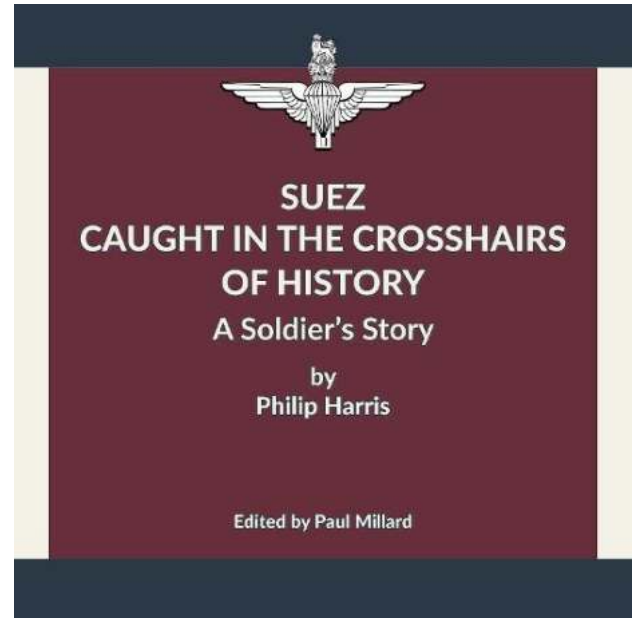


We left France as the corn harvest was well underway and the sunflower fields surrounding the house were coming into bloom, but we left with one more challenge.. as we waited in line to board the ferry, with our French dog at our side, the radio announced that we now had to quarantine on our return for 10 days, oh boy... not a stress-free trip.

Edington Villager.

Caught in the Crosshairs of History – A soldier’s account of the Suez Crisis of 1956.

By Paul Millard



For many, Suez is probably no more than a place where large boats get stuck in a canal disrupting world trade but an intriguing set of notes and papers among the effects of a dear friend and colleague brought to life another aspect of Suez and led eventually to the realisation of a battlefield promise to a dead comrade made long ago.

I met – and came to know – Philip Harris when he was Managing Director of the Wiltshire Times and Chippenham News in the early 1980's. He and I left that newspaper in 1986, Philip to become Chief Executive and Managing Director of the Bath Evening Chronicle and later also of the Bridgewater Mercury and Somerset Standard – me to an agency in London and then into the world of political PR.

We all knew Philip was an avid student of military history and that he had served with the Airborne Brigade during the 1950's. What none of his friends fully grasped was the extent of his military career and the extraordinary role the Paratroop Regiment played in the Suez crisis of





1956 – that is until his death last year when his widow, Esther, found sheaves of notes and typed-up pages in among his effects, notes she had been previously unaware Philip had written.

Alongside, this incredible mix of anecdote, historical reference and political observation she found volumes of photographs detailing the training regimes, the deployment of the Paras to Cyprus and their campaign against the Eoka terrorists and the final “hot drop” into El Gamil Airfield during the Suez crisis.

It was such an intriguing project to begin to pull together part of my friend's past that I knew nothing about that I was persuaded to dust off my editor's pen and help Esther bring together this journal into book form – which she has now had published – and what a privilege it has been to have been involved in that project.

“Caught in the Crosshairs of History” is a personal account of Philip's involvement coupled with his wider observations and historical references and flavoured with a sprinkling of some of his favourite poets.

In January 1956 Philip Harris had been in the army for a year. He had completed basic training with the Northamptonshire Regiment; volunteered for service with the Parachute Regiment and, having served with a Parachute Regiment Assault Battalion for seven months, found himself caught up in the crosshairs of history.

A history shamelessly bedevilled by political indecision and mismanagement. An episode which became an embarrassment to those on the right of British politics and anathema to the left but which could have had a far greater effect on world political structure had it run its full course and which, in any event, had a significant bearing on both the British and French participants

Philip was born in West Ham in 1936 but when the war came he was evacuated to the Bedfordshire village of Wymington, and spent his war surrounded by American Bombers and

British Soldiers – a major influence in identifying his twin ambitions, first to learn to fly and, second, to join the Paratroop Regiment.

His overriding ambition was to fly as an RAF pilot and, with that in mind, he joined the ATC and trained using WW2 flight simulators and in an Avro Ansa. In the spring of 1954 Philip put an application in to the RAF selection board for pilot training – but fickle fate intervened and he failed to be selected for either pilot or navigator training.

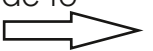
With his pride wounded and in what he described as a fit of pique, he turned to the Army and, in August 1954, volunteered for regular service with the Paratroop Regiment. In the event, he was not called up until early in 1955 and in February of that year joined the Northamptonshire Regiment at Quebec Barracks and became, as he observed:” The lowest form of Army life – a recruit !”

A soldier, he noted at the time, shot for his pay – and the better the shot, the more weapons he could handle, the better the skill level, the better the extras in his pay – what more motivation could a young soldier need? Philip accepted the challenge with customary determination so that, by the end of basic training, he was classed as:

- A marksman with the Bren light machine gun
- A first class shot with the .303 rifle
- Top grade in the use of bayonet; hand grenade and grenade launcher

The Passing Out Parade, in April 1955, was taken by the regimental Colonel in Chief, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester. Philip was awarded “Best Recruit” in Somme Platoon. But as the majority of his peers moved on to join their regiment in Hong Kong, Philip remained at Quebec barracks for NCO training and having passed that was selected for Para training and posted to RAF Abingdon Paratroop training school.

The book is the result of a promise made to: “One day write that book” a promise made to





his friend and comrade killed during the assault. It is a record of his progress through P Company at Aldershot and into the Airborne Division. Of how he saw action in Cyprus and in Suez and of how he took part in the 3 PARA parachute assault on El Gamil airfield in the Suez conflict - the last occasion when British airborne forces dropped in action and the first time since the Second World War on a battalion scale. He was mentioned in Dispatches for his part in that action.

In later life, he often observed that, whatever life threw at you, nothing could ever be as bad as (it was in Suez) lying in a putrid sewage ditch being shot at!

There is little doubt that, had he remained in the Army, he would have built a successful career but he opted instead to pursue a career in newspaper publishing and, on leaving the Army, he joined Westminster Press, then the largest provincial newspaper publishers in the UK.

He worked first at Uxbridge before moving to the Bedford County Press in 1968 where he oversaw the installation and commission of a new, full colour, web-offset press – in the process becoming the youngest web offset manager in Europe undertaking colour printing for a number of well-known publications, including the Financial Times.

Philip moved from the Beds County Press in 1977 to take on the role of General Manager of the Gravesend and Dartford Reporter and completing a further spell at Uxbridge before moving to Wiltshire in 1983 when he was appointed Managing Director of the Wiltshire Times and Chippenham News Group before then moving to the Bath Evening Chronicle as Chief Executive and Managing Director, later taking over the management of the Bridgewater Mercury and Somerset Standard – all part of the Westminster Press Group of which he was a main-board director.

He became President of the South West Newspaper Federation, a Fellow of the Institute

of Management, a member of the Institute of Directors and a Tax Commissioner. On retiring from, the newspaper industry in 1994, he embarked on yet another career in Health Service Management and held various posts in the Bristol Area until he finally retired in 2011.

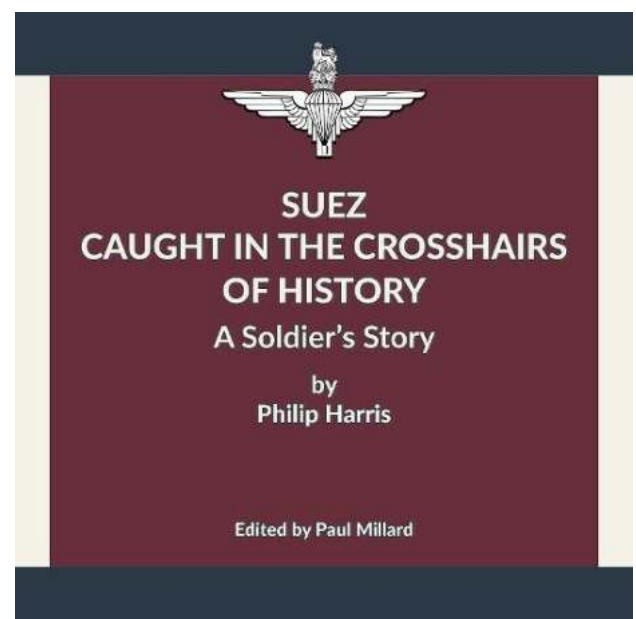
He was an avid student of all military history and although self-effacing and reserved about his achievements, throughout his life he retained an enormous sense of pride in becoming a member of the Paratroop Regiment.

This book is also the realisation of the promise he made to Cpl Graham “Woody” Woods, a friend and comrade who lost his life in the Suez campaign. Woody had said he would write a book about their experiences and he and Philip would spend time in the pub making up bizarre titles for the chapters. When Woody died at the height of the action, Philip promised: “Cheerio Woody – one day I’ll write that book for you.”

Philip James Harris died peacefully in the Royal United Hospital, Bath, in May 2020. His Parachute Wings were buried with him at Bristol Memorial Woodland.

Copies of the book, price £15, + £2.50 p&p can be obtained by emailing paragreen3@outlook.com

Paul Millard





THREE VILLAGES MINIBUS



(TVM)

We are still operating some covid restrictions and ask everyone to wear face coverings (unless,

for medical reasons they are exempt). Any drivers not familiar with our new vehicle and covid requirements will need to have guidance from an appropriate member of the TVM committee.

Regrettably, due to diesel prices and servicing costs having increased significantly and the cost of disinfecting the bus, sanitisers etc., we will be putting up fares for our shopping trips in September. The last rise was 10years ago

so you will see that we do try to keep costs to a minimum. However, these changes will not affect passengers with concessionary passes. All these journeys accept concessionary passes and will return you to your door.

These trips are open to all resident of our villages; we welcome everyone, of any age.

We are hoping to have a Wednesday afternoon trip to Wells; the date to be finalised soon.

Group hire can also now resume if they wish to do so.

We have received a very generous bequest from Margaret Barker who was an active member of the TVM committee and a regular supporter of our trips over many years. We are truly appreciative of this gift.

Joy Fraser (830426)

Shopping Trips starting at Edington on

Destination	September	October	Start Time
Devizes - £3.20	Thursday 2nd	Thursday 7th	9am
Warminster - £2.80	Tuesday 14th	Tuesday 12th	1.25pm
Westbury - £2.30	Every Thursday	Every Thursday	1.30pm
Salisbury - £5.00	Saturday 4th	Saturday 9th	9.30am

Urgent Closure of: Little Court Lane (part), Edington

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that on 13th September 2021, the following length of road shall be closed to all traffic in the interests of public safety to enable Wiltshire Council to carry out replacement of collapsed surface water drain.

Little Court Lane (part), Edington; from its junction with Court Lane to outside Number 4 Little Court Lane.

Alternative route: via Little Court Lane (unaffected length) - Court Lane and vice versa.

The closure and diversion route will be clearly indicated by traffic signs. Access will be maintained for residents and businesses where possible, although delays are likely due to the nature of the works.

These works will commence on 13th September 2021 and are anticipated to be required for 5 days between the hours of 07:45 and 16:30. This Notice will have a maximum duration of 5 days.

For further information regarding these works please contact Wiltshire Council 07771 721257 Wiltshire Council Sustainable Transport Group, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8JN



Edington and Tinhead WI

Septembers meeting is on 14
September 7.30 in the Parish Hall

This months speaker is Richard Rickett on the Amazing Honey Bee. Richard is an excellent Speaker. Those that heard him last year will remember his entertaining and fascinating talk. This time he will be in person with more fascinating facts to delight us with. Guests and old friends welcome

Last month's talk was on Help for Heroes Our speaker Gerry Kneale gave an interesting and informative talk about the work of the charity Help for Heroes.
www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Help for Heroes was founded in 2007 by Bryn and Emma Parry. They were horrified at the conditions which some of the returning troops were subject to and they vowed to help support them by forming their own charity. What a success it has been! The headquarters are at Downton near Salisbury. Help for Heroes believes that all those who serve the country deserve support when they are wounded. Many men and women have to leave their career in the armed forces as a result of physical and psychological wounds. Currently this about four people a day. We heard how many of these wounds are life changing, not only for the individual, but also for their families. In the past year 1,578 lives have been changed for ever due to physical or psychological injury. The charity works to support the veterans and help them recover and get on with their lives. The charity has seen a recent rise in referrals due to the effects of the Pandemic and the effects of the recent afghan crisis .

97% of the income comes from the British public through fundraising events, sponsorship, wills, donations, and collections in supermarkets and at other events.

The pandemic has had a significant negative impact on income with a 30% predicted reduction in regular income .

Edington and Tinhead WI meet every second Tuesday of the month

www.facebook.com

Contact Liz Pike for further information 01380 830684

elizabethdpike@aol.com

EDINGTON & TINHEAD WI

September Meeting

**The Amazing Honey bee
By Richard Rickett**



**Tuesday 14 September
7:30pm Parish Hall**

Visitors welcome

Coffee morning Drop In



Every Tuesday,
10.30 - 11.30 am
in the Three Daggers.
Transport available.



A Village in Wiltshire

A factional account

I was 7 when the soldiers came. They said that the Americans were coming: The grown-ups were given 47 days notice to abandon their homes and their livelihoods.

By Christmas every person and every animal in the Village was gone: Only its ghosts and those in the graveyards remained. We were told that one day we could come back but this turned out to be a lie. A parallel lie was sold to the villagers of Tyneham in Dorset but at least their homes are mostly, more or less, still intact. Our homes simply no longer exist: all razed to the ground and, in their places, skeletal giant lego boxes, with eyeless skulls and toothless mouths. Only the Church and the posh house remain: the Church emaciated, its graveyard unkempt, and the posh house boarded up.

My family had lived in the Village since 1746. For over 200 years it had thrived, well subsisted really, upon agriculture; some crops, but mainly cows and sheep and cart-horses. The farms were tenanted and the cottages were tied for the farm workers. There was the Vicarage, the Smithy, two Pubs, a Post Office and a small village Store but all were tenanted. My father, who had been wounded in WW1, was one of those who mended the carts and tended the cart-horses. His hands always felt like the hard leather of his horses harnesses. My mother took in washing from the posh house and the pubs; her hands were almost always red and raw. Stream and rain water wells for drinking and washing; oil lamps and candles for light; and wood smoke fires for warmth and cooking. Privies and cess pits.

We children went to the village school from age 5 to age 14: we had two WW1 spinster teachers and two of the girls usually stayed on after age 14 to look after and teach the 5 year-olds. At 14 most of us boys worked on the farms but some left to start apprenticeships or train for the Army, and a few of the clever boys went on

to the big school in the town, taking the bus there on a Monday morning and returning to the Village on Friday afternoons. The bus only ran on Mondays and Fridays. I can't remember what happened to the girls but some did work at the posh house or at the dairies and some helped the Land Girls, billeted at the posh house, with gardening and farm work.

Brigadoon is said to come to life once every hundred years. Our Village now comes to life once a year and then in a unique way around the August Bank Holiday Week-End when a fleet of old London Buses take the inquisitive, the curious, the tourists, the historians, some Old Soldiers, and nowadays the village's grandchildren and great-grandchildren across the Plain, now littered with dead army tanks, down to the Village.

I am now 84: I had never previously returned. My son took me. It was a profound shock to walk again in this ancient rural time-warp of nostalgic emotional memories where the only appropriate sound is bird-song. I could only be thankful that my ghost Village is not like those in France, Spain, Poland, Yugoslavia, or elsewhere in which unspeakable atrocities were committed and where, unlike my Village, there is never even the sound of bird-song.

I was 7 when the soldiers came. And yet, on all the other days of the year, still they come, scattering the birds with the noise of their gunfire.

Ex-HAC Veteran

Although I have signed myself as 'Ex HAC Veteran' I was actually a Commander in the RN but, after this, I was for a time a Veteran in the HAC and so my authorship is correct and, for writing about the village of Imber, this carries more credible weight! After leaving the Navy I served for a time as the Lay Administrator of Guildford Cathedral.

*Of course the article does not bear comparison with the authenticity in Joanna Rossiter's book 'SEA CHANGE' but I hope it might trigger some interest in visits to Imber and its church. **Bill Evershed***



EDINGTON ARTS' DOUBLE-HEADER BACH WEEKEND



Edington Arts are offering a mouth-watering weekend of Bach to mark the return of their concert series after the summer.

On Saturday October 2nd at 7.30pm the brilliant Oxford Bach Soloists and instrumental ensemble under their inspirational director Tom Hammond Davies will perform a programme which includes the Brandenburg Concerto No2, in its original for six instruments and for horn rather than trumpet. Look forward also to Cantata no 96, written for the 18th Sunday after Trinity which falls on October 3rd, Telemann's cantata on the same theme, and other jewels.

The following day, Sunday October 3rd, we are delighted to be hosting pianist Libby Burgess' mammoth fundraising tour de force, Project 48. For an hour on Sunday afternoon, starting at 2.30pm, she will play the 24 Preludes and Fugues from Book One of the Well-Tempered Klavier. This will be the first leg of her Wiltshire stop; her aim is to perform all 48 pieces in 48 performances in the 48 counties of England. She is raising funds for musical charities; Help Musicians, Live Music Now, Future Talent and Youth Music.



Tickets for the Oxford Bach Soloists on 3rd October are £20/15/10 as usual, and £10 for Libby Burgess on Sunday. There will be a 10% discount if you buy a combined ticket for both concerts and Edington Angels will have their 10% discount on top. 18 and under are free.

Either email sue@edingtonarts.org or ring Chrissy on 01380 831256 to secure your seats.



Four Villages Link

Latest News

We held our Annual General Meeting in July and revised our constitution in keeping with Charity commission requirements

We currently have 27 members of whom 19 are drivers and our financial position is sound. A presentation was made to Margarete Lara who has resigned as a co-coordinator after 9 yrs splendid service. She will be replaced by Jacky Pike maintaining our team of four.

We have recently received a generous donation from the Edington Village Fair Raffle of £80 Thank you very much Edington for your support.

If you would like to join our team of volunteers, as a driver, or to help someone at home, or assist Link in any way, we would like to hear from you. Do you need assistance? We provide transport to essential appointments such as to the dentist, hospital, shopping - just ring 07852256939.



Edington What's On Diary

Date	Time	Event Title	Description	Venue	Other information
13 September	7.30pm	Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council meeting	Note - the Parish Council meeting may be held at a later date, to be confirmed. Check for details on the village website.	TBC	Please note, to comply with current Covid rules please notify the Clerk to Edington Parish Council at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting of your wish to attend and also if you wish to speak at the meeting.
14 September	1.25pm	TVM shopping trip to Warminster	Cost £2.80	Pick up around the village	Book seat at the Post Office
14 September	7.30pm	WI meeting	The Amazing Honey by Richard Rickett	Parish Hall	Visitors welcome
22 September	3.00pm - 3.30pm	Mobile Library	Monthly visit of the Mobile Library	The Green , Tinhead Rd	
2 October	7.30pm	Edington Arts - Oxford Bach Soloists	The brilliant Oxford Bach Soloists and instrumental ensemble under their inspirational director Tom Hammond Davies will perform a programme which includes the Brandenburg Concerto No2	Edington Priory Church	See Edington Arts website for more details
3 October	2.30pm	Edington Arts	Libby Burgess' mammoth fundraising tour de force. Project 48. For an hour on Sunday afternoon, starting at 2pm, she will play the 24 Preludes and Fugues from Book One of the Well-Tempered Klavier	Edington Priory Church	
7 October	7.30pm	Gardening Club	Jane Moore will be giving a talk entitled "Colours and Winter structures"	Parish Hall	

For these and future events please check the village website for more details.



This month's bargain

Hybrid unisex folding bike.

Accessories available. Only two years old and still in excellent condition. Serviced and checked over by the cycle shop in Devizes. Gears and brakes in good working order. New comfortable saddle. Upgraded pedals and handle grips. Suitable for moderate exercise on and off road. Spare off roading tyres. £75.00. Contact Howard on either 01380830946 or 07890750161.



Contacting us

Email the newsletter at newsletter@edingtonwiltshire.org.uk by phone on the Edington Parish Council help line on **07933143021** (available 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday) or via the village website www.edingtonwiltshire.org.uk

Small ads/swaps

We are giving readers the opportunity to advertise any items that they want to sell or swap. If you have something to sell or swap that you would like advertised in a future edition please either hand your advertisement into Pauline at the post office or email it to the newsletter, deadline 1st of each month.

Future editions

We welcome your comments on this new venture, please send them to the address below. If you would like to contribute an article to a future edition of the Edington Village News please email us with details of your article and we will contact you.

newsletter@edingtonwiltshire.org.uk

Deadline for articles 5th of the month.

Sharing the Newsletter

We are still hearing about villagers who say that they haven't heard about this newsletter, next time you speak to any of your neighbours and friends why not ask if they are receiving a copy and if not inform them that they can register for an emailed copy through the village website or send an email, the address is below. If they are unable to receive an electronic copy a paper copy can be obtained from Edington Post Office or perhaps you could volunteer to print out a copy for your neighbour.

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically please visit the village website www.edingtonwiltshire.org.uk/newsletter and enter your details or email newsletter@edingtonwiltshire.org.uk and you will be added to the mailing list.