

Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE

Community news
- Graham Owen (obit)

Hort Soc News

St John's Church

The Bull updated

Villagers past & present
- Dave Cox fondly
remembered

As I write we're coming out of lockdown. Pubs, restaurants, shops and more are beginning to open up fully again, mirroring the unfurling of the ferns, leaves and flowers on our country lanes and paths. Lets hope it lasts this time and we're able to enjoy a little more normality, over the summer at least.

Despite this good news, the decision has been taken to postpone the **Village Fete**, scheduled for 26th June 2021. The fete takes a huge amount of effort to organise over a number of months, and when the committee had to make the go/no go decision there simply wasn't enough certainty that it would be able to go ahead.

However, we're hoping to get some smaller events going in the summer and have planned a **Fun Day** for **11th September** - so get the date in your diary now.

You may be wondering what happened to the promise of **Ultrafast Broadband**. Well the wheels grind extremely slowly but we're hopeful to be able to share good news by the time of our next newsletter (early September).

The **Community Association AGM** will be on **13th July at 8pm**. This year we're hoping to go "hybrid"; that is have the option to be in the hall or to log in remotely via zoom for those who are unable to be there in person.

Every adult resident of Bellingdon & Asheridge is entitled to vote at the meeting, there's no obligation

to get involved (turning up doesn't mean you'll get lumbered with organising next year's fete; unless you want to of course!) and its your annual opportunity to find out what BAACA has been doing, both to maintain and improve the hall and to foster a sense of community. Plus there will be drinks and nibbles!

And finally, if you've ever thought you could do a better newsletter... now is your chance. The current editor has been in post for five years and would be delighted to hand over the reins. Help also sought with the website and associated social media. Some experience would be an asset.

newsletter@bellingdon.com

Helen Valvona

Graham Owen 1929-2021

Graham Owen, who has died aged 92, was a resident of Bellingdon for 43 years and will be particularly remembered for his 55-year presidency of Chesham 1879 Tennis Club, reputed to be the oldest in the country.



Image: Graham with some of his many proteges

Playing well into his 80s, Graham's greatest achievement was coaching generations of youngsters at the club, almost up to the end of his own tennis career. Countless players benefitted from his expertise, including his son Jeremy who played at county level. Members still compete for the President's Cup, donated by Graham, in a tournament held in May each year. He was also a member of the Chesham, Amersham and District Sports Council.

Born at Ton Pentre in the Welsh valleys, Graham was employed for more than forty years by BT and its predecessors British Telecom and the General Post Office, retiring from senior management in 1989. He and his wife Frances (Fay) moved from Chesham to the village with Jeremy and his sister Sarah in 1978.

Graham will be fondly remembered by many for his endearing sense of humour which never failed to bring a smile to his friends and neighbours. The Owen family loved Bellingdon and took huge pleasure from their village surroundings, their garden and, over the years, a succession of Dachshund dogs.

A memorial service was held in the couple's garden on April 25th, led by humanist celebrant Paul Woodstock. Tributes were read by family and friends from the worlds of tennis and amateur football, where Graham was a referee. He will be hugely missed.

With thanks to Fay Owen and Ken Ives

Horticultural Society

The **Early Summer Show** on 3 July in Trinity Baptist Church upstairs in the Baines Hall (to some extent dependent on Step 4 of the Covid roadmap going ahead as planned), open to the public at 2.30pm.

The **Annual Show** in Bellingdon Village Hall on 4 September (open to the public at 2pm).

Tracey Ryan

St John's Church

We have started to return to our normal Sunday morning services at 10 am in St John's Church. The services are shorter than usual and slightly different in order to be Covid compliant - there is no singing, for example. It is lovely to see each other again!

You are most welcome to join us - numbers and social distancing permitting. If you would like to do so get in touch with Tim Yates at tim.yates3@btinternet.com.

Tim Yates, Minister for St John's Bellingdon

The Bull update

Since over 130 local supporters of the The Bull publicly demonstrated their support for its retention as a public house in November 2009, the community has waited patiently, through two public meetings with developers, a change of ownership and a make-or-break planning committee meeting in February 2018 for work to start to allow for the eventual re-opening of our village pub.

Now under the ownership of the Matthews family, owners of the brickworks in the village, the first phase of the development, the construction of the superb new eco-build nursery was eventually completed last



year allowing the popular Village Nursery to relocate from its temporary premises in the old pub.

Unfortunately Covid put a necessary brake on the plans for development of the pub itself, including extensive renovations and a rear extension to provide a restaurant, but we are pleased to be informed that the owners are currently drawing up the necessary budget and considering a few minor design changes and are hoping to start the work, pandemic permitting, later this year. We can only hope that 2022 not only brings full relief from Covid but the reopening of this valuable and well-loved community asset.

Save the Bull Group

Villagers past and present

Dave Cox - fondly remembered

David Cox was born on 7th April 1934 in one of the cottages in Hawridge Lane. John Page's dad Ted used to have a farm here and this was more commonly known to family as John Pages Lane in later years.

The family moved to Ramscote lane in 1935 after Grandad Harding gave up some land so that they could build a 4 bedroom bungalow. This cost the princely sum of £400.

He was related to Grace Martin who lived at Bonderlea and Alice Potter who lived at Johnson's Farm. As these

were his aunts the family connection goes back over 100 years to the village. Johnson's farm was originally owned by Grandad Harding.

David moved back to the family home in 1987 after the death of both parents. This is still owned and lived in by family members.

Always keen to involve himself and family in village activities, they used to help at the fete by setting up a petting zoo and organising pony rides for the children.

Dave, and latterly younger members of the family, looked after the village playing field and children's play area, keeping the grass and hedges tidy.

If you wanted to know anything, he was the person to go to as he knew pretty well everyone in the village, most of what was going on and could always be relied upon for advice and guidance on matters of local interest.

Dave told of the time during the last war when a Bomber crashed in the fields between Two Gates Lane and Bank Green, now commemorated by a plaque, and the local bobby had to warn the boys not to raid the crash site for mementos. He also pointed out a bomb crater in the field to the left of Two Gates Lane, behind the village hall.

A genuine 'character', Dave was involved in a lot of daft escapades done over a lifetime. One that I recall was seeing Dave, in the process of carrying out a local removal with grandson Martin, and deciding to recline at leisure in the armchair on the back of his open truck with Martin driving, doing his royal wave as they went through the village.

Never one for health & safety, Dave actually managed to get run over by his own tractor in 1995 and, despite a long stay in hospital, happily lived to tell the tale and getting Tommy (the old family horse) to bring him home whilst laying drunk in the cart behind. Try doing that these days!

He worked for Chesham Urban District Council council as a dustman for most of his life and was also a gritter driver during the winter. Managing to overturn a new truck whilst working for the council, he complained that it was because the road had not been gritted properly but vigorously denied that it was his stretch of road!

He was always available to help around the village with odd jobs such as gardening, mowing and



removals in his spare time and could always be relied upon for the latest gossip and anecdotes.

Coming down Amersham Hill one day he had to give way to the fire engine and said "some poor bugger has got fire", arriving home 10 minutes later to find that it was his house in Nashleigh Hill and the dog would not let the fireman in! Fortunately it was only a chimney fire.

Later in life, despite finding it difficult to drive following his accident, he could be seen going around the village on his mobility scooter so as not to lose touch and was always sat at the front for the annual carol services at Huge Farm.

The tradition of service and involvement in the community is continued by the Field family. Amongst other activities, son-in-law Alf chairs the village hall committee and the family continues the proud tradition started by Violet Cox, David's mother, of house-to-house poppy sales throughout the village.

Anne Coney, who set up and ran the local Riding for the disabled charity at Bank Farm for very many years, offered this recollection:

"David worked for me for over 45 years when I lived at Bank Farm. He was someone I could trust and call for help at 3am and he would turn up smiling. He always called my daughter Julia 'Julie' and on occasions would pick her and her sister up from Berkhamsted School in his old van, replaced each year with another which would also fail the M.O.T.!

He was a big man and the only person I know who was driven over by his own tractor and was alive to tell the tale and a proud grandfather who would always have a grandchild, usually scantily clothed, with him in his truck. Near the end of his life he would pop in for a chat and a cuppa and be licked to death by my border collie Max.

It was an honour and pleasure to call him my friend. Going to the crematorium in his old pick-up just confirmed his love of life and fun. Hope this helps to put a picture together of this exceptional man.

The world is a richer place for characters like Dave and for those of us lucky enough to have known him, he is sadly missed.

With thanks to Alf & Sally Field and Anne Coney

USEFUL CONTACTS/INFO

Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Assoc

www.bellingdon.com

www.facebook.com/bavhall

www.twitter.com/bellandash

contact@bellingdon.com

Local Police Community Support Officer

CheshamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

The New Grapevine:

<https://cholesbury.com/the-grapevine/>

Details of clubs, events and village news, including hall bookings: www.bellingdon.com
Please send comments, questions and ideas for future articles to the editor at newsletter@bellingdon.com

The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity or length.

This newsletter is produced on behalf of the Trustees of the Bellingdon and Asheridge Community Association (BAACA).

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