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From the Editor's Desk

What an eventful late summer it has been, dominated by the sudden but not unexpected passing of Queen Elizabeth II. She was able to enjoy the magnificent 70th year Jubilee, but was clearly becoming very frail. And getting caught up in the appointment of a new Prime Minister in early September showed how her health was deteriorating. Nevertheless, she continued working till the last.

The national political scene has been dogged by the continued internal wranglings within the Government. This to such an extent that we all now face a lengthy period of financial pressures, the like of which we have never before experienced. The services of the Local Council, and the help and assistance provided by local charities will continue to support those less well off, as we face the continued pressures created by the terrible war in Ukraine.

And here we have seen recent losses, particularly of Quiz Master, John Braybrook, who has given such a lot to the community. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mary and also with the families of others who have recently passed on. We remember them fondly.

The Sudoku page and diary of weekly activities will be restored to the February edition.

IAN DRAPER, EDITOR - NOVEMBER 2022

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH ELIZABETH II

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MUMS AND TOTS

This term the children have been exploring colour through their senses and play. Each week we have focussed on a different colour. The sensory activities have included playing with yellow lemon rice, blue squidgy jelly and colour mixing with playdough. The children have tasted different fruits and vegetables each week to match the colour studied.

They have decorated biscuits, made buzzy bee scenes, and even had a visit by some



tortoises. Everyone had fun at rainbow week, where they painted rainbows, made rainbow fruit cups, sorted rainbow objects, and played with the rainbow parachute.

In the next couple of months, we will be continuing with the colour theme. The children will have the opportunity to create a firework scene, paint a teddy bear picture, play with toy pigs in mud, have sensory fun with shaving foam and pasta, and complete some fun Christmas crafts. On the 30th November, we have booked Barbara, from *The Spotted Chicken Ceramics Studio* to come and hold a workshop, where everyone will have the opportunity to create something special for Christmas using hands or footprints.

We always welcome new faces.

Please get in contact and come and join

us, whether you are a parent, grandparent or someone who wishes to volunteer.

TINA NESBITT

SYRESHAM ART EXHIBITION 2022

The Syresham Art Exhibition took place over the weekend of the 15th and 16th October in the village hall.

We attracted local artists to display their artwork which totalled over 160 exhibits. All art mounting boards were filled, including the new additions and the hall looked exceptional.

The medium ranged from oil, through water colour, acrylic, pastel, mixed media, ink and bleach, pencil print, acrylic spray paint and wax to photography on varied media.



Prices ranged from £15 to £9,999* so covered most people's pockets (*and a little more).

Sales were good but we fell a little short of the 2019 and 2021 levels. However, the raffle and teas plus catalogue sales were very good. Having tea and cake whilst reviewing purchases or contemplating buying were a definite bonus. Overall, we made some £460 for the village hall.

Thanks to all the artists and the village hall organisers and helpers who yet again put on a super event.

We feel sure this event will continue to be a successful attraction in the village.

MARY TURNHAM

BROWNIE REPORT

We have had a very enjoyable start to the term and are looking forward to our meetings in the lead up to Christmas.



Our term started with the sad news of the Queen's passing and we renewed our Brownie Promise.

"I promise that I will do my best, to be true to myself and develop my belief, to serve the King and my community, to help other people and to keep the Brownie Guide law".

The girls have certainly kept to many of the words they made in the last few weeks. They helped undecorate the Chapel after Harvest Festival and box up all the produce for delivery to the Hope Centre in Northampton and they

also waited on tables at our very successful Jacket Potato

night, raising £200 for Children in Need.

We had fun collecting conkers and making

pictures with leaves and flowers and had a good laugh when we dressed each others chins up!!!

Just before half term we had a Spooky Night of games, crafts and broomstick racing!



In late November we are taking part in Parliament Week! I signed up for this activity months ago. Should be interesting!

If you have a special interest or hobby that you could share with the Brownies please do get in touch.

Thank you to parents and villagers who support us throughout the year in many ways. **WOL (PAULA)**



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ELISABETH GRAY

Adrian, Eileen and Chris Gray, of 25 The Pound, extend their sincere thanks to their friends and neighbours for the flowers, cards and messages of sympathy and support they have received following the sudden death of their daughter/sister Elisabeth. They have been a great help at a very difficult time. Thank you.

ADRIAN GRAY



NEWS FROM THE RECTORY

This time of the year, I am reminded of that beautiful poem by John Keats – *To Autumn*. It begins:

*Season of mists and
mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the
maturing sun;*

The poem then celebrates all of the signs and sounds of autumn; the leaves falling, the fruit in the hedgerows and apples on the trees; the sound of the robin singing – often the only bird you hear in autumn and through into winter.

Autumn feels like a time to say goodbye – goodbye to the green of summer, the warmth of the sun, the flowers and bird song – and often to repeat our goodbyes to those we have loved and lost, through our



season of remembrance at the beginning of November. On All Souls Day, on the 2nd November we will remember those who have died and we continue to miss, then on Remembrance Sunday we think of those who died in wars. In addition, this year we continue to remember Queen Elizabeth – this edition of the Syresham Times carries memories of her and her reign over the last 70 years.

This year I will be saying goodbye to my fulltime ministry as a parish priest and moving on to retirement and no doubt a new life of a slightly gentler service to the Lord. So, it is a time of memories and goodbyes for me also.

Although my time here in the Astwell Benefice has been short, I have enjoyed living here and serving you all as your parish priest. However, my body (and my mind!) is telling me it is time to slow down – the last few years have been very stressful; losing my husband at the start of Covid, moving home and jobs and dealing with all the issues around continuing a Christian presence during the lockdowns and afterwards, and I am finding it very difficult to maintain the full-on rate of work that is involved with running a Benefice of 5 parishes. So, I shall be leaving at the end of November and retiring to my home in Northumberland for a rest.

My last Sunday is on Advent Sunday – 27th November, where I will have two final services, a 10.00am, Benefice Service at Helmdon and a 6.00pm Advent Carols Service at Lois Weedon.

It is actually a fitting Sunday to end fulltime ministry, as it marks the beginning of the new church year – when we look forward to remembering the birth of Jesus at Christmas. So a good time for new beginnings for me and the churches here in the Benefice.

God bless and good wishes to you all for the new chapter in the church life in this Benefice.

THANK YOU

Thanks to all those who helped us celebrate harvest and raise £200 for the Disasters Emergency Committee

The **United Act of Remembrance** will once again be at the Stone opposite the pub at 10:50 on **Sunday November 13th** with a collection for the British Legion.

We have our **Christmas Fair** in Church on December 3rd.

Look out for news about Christmas Services. These include a small **Christingle** 3:00 pm on Christmas Eve and another open to all at 4:30.

REVD DIANE

SHARED USE PATH—

Positive News

Representatives from SNATRA attended the recent HS2 liaison meeting. An officer from the Department for Transport joined the meeting and confirmed that the Active Travel Route between Brackley and Silverstone will become a reality.

The overbridge carrying the A43 over the railway line will include a reduced



width shared use path of 2.0 metres. The links at either end of the bridge to both Brackley and Silverstone will be constructed in accordance with LTN 1/20 at 3.0 metres wide. The active travel route will be segregated from the highway ensuring a safe means of travel for all users. The members of SNATRA would like to extend their thanks to all those who have actively supported us in this journey.

DAVID CRANWELL AND STEPHANIE BRACKPOOL

BREAKFAST CHURCH

In September we studied the story of *Jesus Feeding the 5000* and in October we looked at the story of *Jesus Healing a Blind Man*. We have had fun sticking and colouring to create a display,



found hidden fish in the chapel, and used lots of colourful sparkly treats to decorate chocolate to

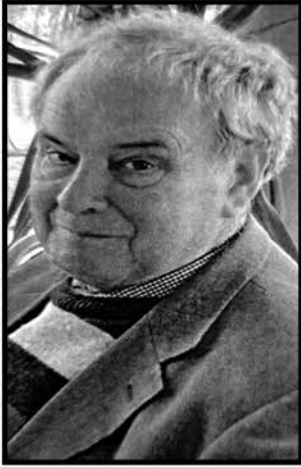
represent the excitement shown by Bartimaeus when he realised he could see! **AMELIA NESBITT**

JOHN EDWIN BRAYBROOK, 1943 TO 2022

I feel very honoured to say a few words about our late departed friend John Edwin Braybrook.

Where to begin? As Dylan Thomas memorably wrote, *'to begin at the beginning'*. John was born 79 years ago in Warkton, near Kettering. As a boy he was very keen on model trains,

he had a Hornby train set, and was an



avid trainspotter, an early example of his signature enthusiasms. His family took him all over the country just to say he had spotted certain train numbers.

Educated at Kettering Grammar School, he went on to train as a teacher at York Teacher Training College, and gained a Certificate of Education. An early teaching post was in Knutsford, Cheshire. Perhaps this was where his lifelong devotion to Manchester City was formed?

Returning to this part of the world, he taught at Grendon Underwood School in Buckinghamshire, and eventually after retirement from teaching he worked for three years at the Royal Mail in Brackley.

Many of us can imagine what it was like to be one of his pupils. Picture the scene, this time at our village hall. We file in and sit at our desks, all chatting away facing the front of course, with our genial quiz host. Cards were posted

around the room with the subject matter of each round on them, not that that gave much of a clue to the questions, one of John's ways of teasing us and making an entertaining evening so enjoyable. Eventually he brought us to order. At the very start he set the ground rules of behaviour, "No arguing with the question master. My decision is final." On those very rare occasions when his answer was actually wrong, there was much merriment enjoyed by all. At the end of the evening's entertainment, he awarded bottles of wine for the winners and a real wooden spoon for those at the bottom of the class. For many years he had his able classroom assistant, Mary, to check the papers and count the marks. Quite a team!

Which leads us neatly to the next chapter in John's life. We all know great husband and wife showbiz pairings. Well here in Syresham, we had John and Mary. Seldom was one spoken of without reference to the other.

They first met living in the Brackley area. John famously had a thing about clothes. When he asked Mary out for a first date she replied, "*I'll go out with you - but only if you wear different clothes*". John was in a 70's track suit!

Their wedding was the stuff of nightmares, scheduled for a Saturday in January. The Registrars worked weekdays only 40 years ago, so the wedding was scheduled to a Monday.

On the preceding Friday, they went to Middleton Cheney to collect the cake in winter weather. Snow drifts forced them to abandon their car at

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Farthinghoe (after another vehicle hit them), and walked to Brackley in a snowstorm. The adverse weather and train disruptions, meant they had to cancel their going away.

Theirs was 'a marriage of true minds' says Sonnet 116 'An ever-fixed mark'. And for 40 years it proved to be so - with the added joys of family, Steve, Ilka, and grand-children, Constantine and Patrick. And close relatives, sister Mary and brother Richard.

Our community comprises approximately 900 villagers most of whom, live out their lives privately. Some movers and shakers on councils and committees, and the likes of Ruth, Mike the postman, or George with his charity sales or another Mike, the village pantomime dame, stand out, and are well known because of what they do for others. John was one such.

Best known as the village quizmaster there was much more to John than just that. He was a man of unwavering faith. In these more secular times he remained a regular attendee at church and supported St James in many ways. We are singing his favourite hymns today.

He would knock on doors for a donation for the church fete bottle stall, which together with the proceeds of his quizzes over the years raised thousands of pounds. He often assisted Mary with the church Agility Dogs event. John and Mary had a lifelong love of dogs.

But he was more than merely a lay

member of the congregation. He was a polymath with wide interests and enthusiasm for many things including historic church buildings in this part of England and further afield. He ran many church visits for the History Society, and every so often he would weave a church question into his repertoire of specialist knowledge, designed to separate the true expert from the well-informed. John would also dispense his wide local knowledge by organising council sponsored walks, notably in Towcester and Brackley. They were always well attended.

John taught geography. The geography of the British Isles was another of his passions, and again he weaved obscure place name questions to catch the unwary quizzer. He loved our country and its countryside. It was part of his deep sense of Englishness. Locally he would walk the dogs, together with Mary, for miles. They were great walkers. He loved English eccentricities – he and Mary were keen Morris Dancers. He loved English composers - amongst them, and Vaughan-Williams of 'Lark Ascending' fame was a favourite. His quizzes were often littered with questions about the great composers. But John wasn't a square.

With pop music quiz rounds, we oldies could relax a little because John's likes extended to the greatest rock and roll years 50's, 60's and 70's. Again, his knowledge of the subject was encyclopaedic. Our generation could answer those questions, the younger ones had more difficulty. It helped even things up, another example of the

subtle secret of the success of his evenings.

And then, there is "Man City".

Manchester City was not a private passion. A black day for John would be losing to Liverpool. 'I would cross the street to avoid John,' one told me 'on a day of a trouncing by Manchester United!'

John was a people's person. So the word 'kind' crops up in many of his tributes, but he was no mere cypher. He was complex. In private - shy and serious - yet in public confident and self-assured. He enjoyed words. His speech was usually measured, he was not one to 'lose it' in anger, though he could on occasion have phrased things a bit more diplomatically perhaps.

John wasn't a grey person. At times he could be black and white, some say 'forthright', and on occasion 'crusty', but always without malice. Brenda told me he greeted her arrival at church one day - she was wearing a red top and a black skirt saying 'You look like a post box'. That was John - the sartorial critic. Unprompted he said 'that's a terrible shirt,' one villager reminisced; and added 'every now and then I wore one he liked, and he would express his admiration'. John was not a very practical person. His cooking improved over time as he cared for Mary; she noted that the smoke alarm was gradually called on less, as time passed.

Since he left us, so many people have

given him the sought-after accolade of being 'such a nice man'.

One says 'he was a special man - so sensitive beneath that shy exterior'

'He always made me laugh' says another. Humour and wit was very important to John, a keen fan of Morecombe and Wise, Yes Minister and Dad's Army. His droll sense of the absurd illuminated many a conversation or opinion.

'There is now a great gap in the village and a gaping hole in the church', says one tribute. 'He is sorely missed' says another.

I am sure John's abiding faith will echo that of another recently dear departed who averred '*we shall meet again*'.

I give my grateful thanks to those villagers and friends of John Braybrook who contacted me with expressions of their loss and anecdotes about him. Thank you.

Always interesting and interested, at times irascible, loving and loved, today we say - '*au revoir John*' and thank you.

ROB DIXON



Following a very enjoyable day trip to the Malvern Spring Show in May, the Society enjoyed a talk by Martin Catton on 'Herbs and their Uses'. Recommended to us by Banbury Herb Centre, Martin told us how we can find and use wild herbs. The following month the Society 'made history' by being the first organisation to have a Zoom talk on the large screen in the

village hall given by Adrian James, a garden photographer, whose work is used in magazines and advertising. In July we enjoyed an afternoon of 'bubbles and nibbles' in the Pocket Park, with a quiz kindly organised by Lyn Fiske.

Garden designer Maria Ellis gave a talk in August, with information on 'Planning a Garden Border'. September saw a very welcome return visit by John Gibson who spoke about 'Making the Most of Your Bulbs'. Our October meeting featured Tony Clear, a gardener from Banbury who worked for many years at Brook Cottage Garden and he spoke about the garden through the years. Sadly, Brook Cottage Garden is no longer open to the public and even more sadly, has been allowed by its new owners to become overgrown.

Our meeting on 16th November will be a floral demonstration and practical session with a Christmas theme by Wendy Wesley and her helpers. It has been some time since Wendy came to show us all how to make decorations for our front doors in the form of a Christmas Tree. We all had a great time and we very much expect this session to be equally enjoyable.

Our final meeting of the year is normally a Christmas Lunch. However, we are changing it somewhat this year and will be have Christmas Afternoon Tea at the Bell Plantation Garden Centre in Towcester.

The Annual General Meeting in January, will also feature a fun gardening quiz. If you are interested in joining the Club, we meet on the third

Wednesday afternoon of the month at 2.30 p.m. in the village hall. New members are always welcome.

CHRIS MUNSEY

RAY GEE 1951—2022

Our Dad, Ray Gee sadly passed away on 8th September after a long and brave battle with cancer.

He was born on 1st November

1951 in Syresham to Harold and May and was the youngest



of three brothers. He attended the Village School and then went on to Magdalen College School in Brackley.

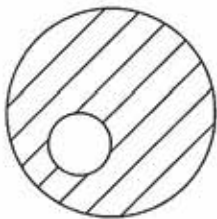
After leaving school he worked at Brackley Sawmills for many years, before working for Hawkins and Salmon and eventually moving to Cheshire. Dad met our Mum Angela (nee Inns) whilst working at the Sawmills. They were married in 1971 and celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary last year.

Family was very important to Dad and he was happiest when we were all together, especially at Christmas which was his favourite time of the year. He loved being Grandad to Alyce, Callum and William.

Dad loved all sport and enjoyed playing football for the village team, although his favourite sport was cricket—he loved watching cricket, and played for the village team for many years and was an excellent

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bowler until a leg injury stopped him playing.

He was involved with the Sports and Social club when it opened and used to help out behind the bar. Dad was always first to offer if anyone needed help and while we were at school in the village, he'd supply wood if we were making anything and provide the lorries for May-day floats. Dad worked with wood all his life and was always making things like tables, benches, bits for the garden and most recently a dolls house for Mum.

We remember all the amazing holidays we had when we were younger especially camping with our uncles, aunts and cousins. Then there were our legendary days out when we would get to the end of the road and Dad would say 'left or right?', and we would never really know where we were going until we got there! He will be dearly missed by all of his family and friends. **CHRIS,**

ANTONY, DEBBIE AND NICHOLAS

SYRESHAM CHURCH BLACKBERRY

FAYRE AND DOG SHOW

Thank you to everyone who came and enjoyed our recent Blackberry Fayre and Dog Show, it was great to see so many people enjoying the afternoon sunshine, with a wide variety of stalls, games, activities and delicious food on offer - there was something for everyone. The dog show had the most fantastic turn out, we were delighted that so many of you came with your pooches, it was fun seeing them all, tricky to judge, but great to watch!

We raised a brilliant £1,436. Thank you so much to everyone who helped, We really appreciate your support. **LISA DIMBLEBY**

FRIENDS OF SYRESHAM SCHOOL

We are all getting excited again. Towcester Young Farmers will be hosting a charity bonfire and fireworks party on **Monday 7th November at Kiln Farm, Pimlico**, in aid of Syresham School. Gates open at 5.30p.m with fireworks at 6:30 pm (approx.) £5 entry or £15 for a family ticket. Please pay on the gate. Strictly no sparklers allowed. There will be hotdogs, bar, tuckshop. Please come along to support this great community event.

A new school year has begun, and Fundraising activities kicked off over the holidays with the blue tokens at Tesco's in Brackley. People very generously popped their token into our box and we will receive funds to go towards cooking equipment in the school. We still had the back-to-school feeling when 24 parents headed to the Dilraj in Towcester for a brilliant curry night. The food was delicious and judging by the volume there was much chatter going on. Film night is a firm favourite with the children and 68 of them sat down to watch Sing 2 and have the full cinema experience with popcorn and ice cream. Christmas is just round the corner! Watch out for all the festive activities at the school.

SARAH EAMES, FOSS CHAIRMAN



**Village Hall Art Exhibition
2022**



**Syresham Climate
Change Fair Sept 2022**



THE LONG WALK, WINDSOR



'HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'

Portrait by Jeff Stultiens unveiled on 26 September 2003.

The painting was commissioned by Oriel College, the oldest Royal Foundation in Oxford. The Queen is Visitor to the College and the commission marked Her Majesty's long and supportive association with Oriel over the fifty years of her reign.

An old member and benefactor of Oriel, Mr George Moody, who matriculated in 1932 and who celebrated his 90th birthday in March 2003, generously met the cost of the portrait.

Artist's statement:

I was given six sittings with The Queen between February and April, totalling about six and a half hours. In these sessions I began two smaller paintings from life, both intended to provide information and experience for a further, much larger work.

I was a temporary resident of Syresham caring for my late mother Kate. I spent many months in the village looking after her during her final years. I like to think she would have been proud to know that I portrayed the Queen, but sadly she died three years before I received the commission.

JEFF STULTIENS

THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER....but have they?

In the past Syresham could provide for most of our needs without travelling very far at all. For example at one time we had two very good butchers, one of them delivering milk to the whole village.

We had a petrol station in Pimlico, and you could get car repairs in the village.

It wasn't unusual for your GP to do a house call and it was certainly easier to make an appointment.

Syresham used to have access to a regular public transport service, our bus would take you to the centre of Oxford or Northampton and also the towns and villages in between. What an environmentally friendly way to get to work, attend hospital, visit friends, go to the theatre/cinema etc. A village bus service would make it possible to link up with national bus services.

Hopefully, we are all aware of the urgency of living in an environmentally sustainable way.

Maybe it's time to cut down on our over reliance on cars and take advantage of the public transport service that passes so tantalisingly close to Syresham.

If you agree with me that we need to see the return of our bus service, please join me in writing to *Rt. Hon. Dame Andrea Leadsom MP, Victoria House, 138 Watling Street East, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 6BT*. The more people who urge our MP to support an improved bus service, the more chance we have of getting one.

CHRIS BENNIE

ABILITY BUS TRIPS

My friend Ann and I regularly use the **Ability Transport Bus** the locally run minibus service available in Syresham, (last advertised in the August Syresham Times). It provides free trips (for Bus Pass users) to many places such as Bicester, Burford Centre,



Cotswold Wildlife Park, Stony Stratford and Bourton on the Water,

and Buckingham to name but a few. For some trips (outside Northants) there is a fare payable but we find this an amazing service for the village, for all ages, and a great way to get out of the village and meet other people.

The drivers are very helpful and friendly and you get to meet the regular users from other villages. It is so easy to book trips and I would really recommend anyone thinking of having a few days out to get on board!

On 18th October we went to Moreton in Marsh where there are specialist shops, antique shops, and a market, and some very nice tea rooms. The fare was £20.00, it being a longer trip and out of the South Northants area. Picked up in the village at 9.45a.m. and after a full day, we were dropped back in High Street around 3.30pm.

The first Wednesday of the month sees a regular journey to Banbury, and the last Friday takes us to Bicester where there is also a market.

GILL FOX

SYRESHAM GEMS

On the 9th November, Syresham Gems will be welcoming Shaun Todd who will be telling us all about the History and Etiquette of Afternoon Tea. and who knows there may be a little bit on offer. Syresham Village Hall - 7.30 pm - all welcome.

On 14th December, to help get us all in the swing for Christmas, The Gems will be presenting *FORDANTE*, a critically acclaimed Light Classical Ensemble, along with Vanessa Murby. They will be performing a mix of light classical pieces together with music from the movies. Ideal for music lovers who enjoy lighter, accessible, easier listening classical music. Some of their reviews are "Spectacular, Mesmerising" "Best concert I have ever seen".

Wine, soft drinks and Nibbles will be available in the interval.

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO EVERYBODY, PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR FULL DETAILS.

JUDITH SHAW

SYRESHAM CLIMATE CHANGE FAIR

We are extremely pleased to report that Syresham's first Climate Change Fair held in the village hall on Friday 23rd September proved a great success. The fair was organised by the Parish Council's Climate Change Committee with the aim of making our residents aware of their own carbon footprint and showing how every member of our community can play an important role in reducing the damaging effects of Climate

Change.

Experts were on hand to chat informally with residents; to listen to their concerns and give advice on what we can all do to help deal with this very important issue.

Members of the committee worked extremely hard to contact relevant organisations and to arrange for representatives of these organisations to take part.

We received great support from Climate Action – West Northants (CA-WN) who play a major role in climate activism in our local area. Others taking part were the Woodland and Wildlife Trusts, Ability Northants, The Green Machine, WNC Waste and Recycling, Greenpeace, Northants Beekeeping Association, SNATRA, Timms Organic Farm and Swallows Nursery. St James' Church brought along their recycled greetings cards and Anglian Water, South Northants Volunteer Bureau and Daily Bread sent along information and useful 'freebies'. A number of residents also brought along their EV's for display.

We felt that it was very important for the children of our school to take part and were delighted when they produced a great display of work on the subject of Climate Change. Some 40 of the children came along to the Fair where they took part in the Treasure Hunt, visited the stalls and talked to the stallholders and gave their ideas and suggestions on what they felt we can all do to help 'save our planet'. They were all interested and inquisitive and it was a delight to see.

Our committee will very shortly be meeting to discuss all the ideas and suggestions made by residents and the children, and to plan a programme of action, which hopefully will include another Climate Change Fair next year.

We would like to thank all those people who came along to the Fair, all those who helped and supported us and all the stallholders who took part.

However, if you have any ideas or suggestions on this very important topic, we would be delighted and receive them and discuss them at our meeting.

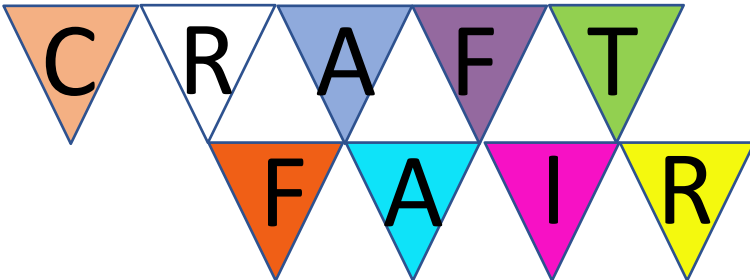
Please contact the Parish Clerk on parishclerk@syresham.com

CLLR CHRIS MUNSEY

WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS

Hello my name is Becca Pratt and along with my husband Ian we moved to the village with our children Isobel (age 12), Cara (age 10) and William (age 7) and our dog Pip (Springer spaniel).

We moved in back in June to Longmeadow Farm. So newbies to the village! William started school in the village in September in year 3. Our middle daughter  Cara has one year left at Brackley Junior School and our eldest Isobel is going into year 8 at MCS. We look forward to meeting you all in the near future. **BECCA PRATT**



Sunday 4th December – 10am until 2pm
Syresham Village Hall, NN13 5HE

Lots of local crafters selling their lovely
crafts and gifts, just in time for
Christmas!

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

The Climate Change Fair organised by the Climate Change Committee of the Parish Council proved a very successful event and we would like to thank everyone who supported it. The committee will be looking at all the comments and suggestions at their next meeting and considering how we can act upon them. A longer report is included in this copy of the Syresham Times.

The Parish Council is pleased to report that we have received funding for replacing the fence on the left side of the Swingfield. Part of the fencing has already been replaced, thanks to the generosity of Mr Les Hawkins and the Parish Council wishes to express their thanks for this. It is also the intention of the Parish Council to upgrade the remaining wooden equipment in the Swingfield and to install an inclusive swing.

Following the upgrade of streetlighting, the Parish Council is making some considerable savings on the cost of electricity. We hope to have further detail next time.

Following comments made by residents, the Parish Council is putting an additional dog-refuse bin on the Sports and Social Club field and we kindly request all dog walkers to use the bins provided. Please do not use the blue bins in the village hall car park, they are in fact salt bins and should not be used for any other purpose.

Further requests made by the Parish

Council are asking vehicle users not to park on the verges at the entrance to Whistley Wood and for Tree Protection Orders on the trees in the village that meet the necessary criteria.

We are very aware that in this present economic climate there are many people who are struggling to pay heating and food bills. If any of our residents are experiencing hardship, please consult the West Northants website www.westnorthants.gov.uk that gives details of the help and cost of living support available. If you are not able to access the website then please give West Northamptonshire Council a ring on 0300 126 7000.

However, we advise all our residents to be aware of potential fraud and scams circulating which are offering support with the cost of living. Please be extra vigilant at this time and if you think you may have fallen for a scam, contact your bank immediately and report it to **ACTION FRAUD ON 0300 123 2040**.

Ability Northants, which is supported by the Parish Council, provides a very useful community bus service which some of our residents already use. Not only do they provide a service to local towns, but also a service for trips out and to schools and colleges. If you would like more information, please contact them on 01327 604123 or admin@abilitycic.org.uk

Finally, just a reminder that if you have any issues you would like the Parish Council to consider and discuss, please contact the Parish Clerk – parishclerk@syresham.com

CLLR CHRIS MUNSEY

QUEEN ELIZABETH II 1952 TO 2022



THE QUEEN'S FINAL JOURNEY TO WINDSOR CASTLE

Following the announcement that Operation London Bridge was taking place, (the long term plan for the Queen's funeral), and the success in publishing villagers' experiences of meeting HRH The Duke of Edinburgh last year, it was decided to follow up with articles and accounts of experiences suggested by residents who have had some connection either with the Queen's funeral or with meeting her and members of the royal family in recent years.
Editor

With the news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had passed away, came the call to Thames Valley Police's mounted section that 'Operation London Bridge' was underway; our role in which was to escort Her Majesty's cortege along The Long Walk in Windsor Great Park to Windsor Castle, her final journey home before internment in the King George VI Memorial Chapel.

I have been a reserve rider with the mounted section for 6 years, and during this time I have been part of the team that escorted her Majesty at Royal Ascot Races and have provided security deployments for state visits.



These have always been high spirited events where the crowds are excited to cheer and



wave as the carriages clink their way up the racecourse from the Golden Gates. I have ridden Luna, our Normandy cob chestnut mare, on many occasions. With her flaxen mane and tail, and weighing in just shy of 900kgs, she is hard to miss and a great police horse.

This would be a totally different assignment from policing riotous football crowds, accompanying the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, or policing the Henley Royal Regatta.

The Mounted Section left Milton Keynes where its horses are stabled on the Monday after the announcement of the Queen's passing. We provided high visibility patrols throughout the week where we engaged with members of the public attending Windsor to pay their respects.

Saturday arrived, and at 4.00 a.m. we carried out a full ceremonial rehearsal. Our role within the procession had 4 of our horses at the front leading and 4 at the rear, me included, preceding the cavalry. Even at that time of the day there were members of the public already lining the route.

Monday came and we were given a pep talk by our leadership, informing us that not only were the eyes of the people lining the long walk upon us,

but also an estimated 5 billion people would be watching from around the world too (always good to know when steadying nerves!).

The procession formed in silence and with a sombre atmosphere we moved forward. The next 50 minutes of my life I will never forget. The hearse carrying our Queen came into my view, as it turned onto the long walk. It was at that point for me that the enormity of this historic moment truly sank in. The sound of the cavalry's foot officers' boots striking the floor as they slowly marched; the slow and muted ripples of applause from the thousands of people lining the long walk as their Queen passed them, and the clinking of the armour and ceremonial tack from the mounted cavalry as they moved ahead of us.

As we passed through Cambridge Gate and moved up towards Windsor Castle, the Queen's Fell pony Emma came into sight. It was at this point my emotions overwhelmed me and a few silent tears rolled down my cheeks.

To be part of escorting the Queen on her final journey home was an honour I shall never forget.

RUSSELL IRWIN

THE ROYAL HANDSHAKE

I met HM The Queen in 1987 when the company that I then worked for, Beacon Publications PLC in Weston Favell, won The Queen's Award for Export Achievement. I was one of three representatives of the company selected to attend. Many distinguished people were in the line-up as I shook hands with Her Majesty, the Duke of

Edinburgh, Duke of Kent etc., and Margaret Thatcher also Nigel Lawson and at the reception afterwards. I was looking forward to a few words with Her Majesty. She might have asked me which export markets we operated in or something individual, but no, I was a victim of the 'directed handshake', whereby the donor hand silently steers one's right hand to the left to the next hand in the line-up. She was smaller than I had expected her to be, but very gracious.

MALCOLM ORR-EWING

THE KING AND I

In the mid-nineties at the South of England Show, I was invited as sponsor into the judging ring for a class of beef cattle. My employer was a well known steak house chain, and this was deemed to be good publicity for us.

The judges were discussing the characteristics which distinguished one animal from another, when a man came running up to us announcing, "*The Prince of Wales is coming this way!*"

And a couple of minutes later, the crowd hushed and followed by two detectives, HRH strode towards us.

We exchanged suitable greetings and he turned around to look at the cattle.

"I suppose you're all judges," said he. I plucked up courage. "No sir, I am the sponsor." He turned round and looked intently at me. "My company is a well-known steak house chain," I added. He smiled and replied, "I suppose you must be Royal Angus Steakhouses?". "No Sir!", yet again and added, "We are much more royal than that. *We are*

Beefeater Steakhouses!"

He laughed and we talked about the restaurant business, a topic that probably rarely cropped up in royal circles?

So, I invited him and his wife and (then) young family to be guests at one of our restaurants, saying "I would be honoured to arrange a very private visit". He said he would have to consult his diary— and left.

A few weeks later John Major stood up in the House of Commons to announce that Charles and Diana were separating.

PRINCESS ANNE AND OUR CAT

On another occasion we were sponsors for the Windsor Three-day Event Horse Show, - in the Princess Royal's domain.

Princess Anne is all that her reputation promises. Very professional, astute, down to earth and the most pleasant company. I was on her steering committee that met several times in Windsor Castle, and she came to know and address me by my first name. After one meeting, she quite unexpectedly invited the committee to stay and have dinner with her. I was asked to sit next to her. What a diplomat! The most pleasant evening was a blur, although I did notice that she ate very frugally. Dining with Royalty is a good reason for being late home!

The Show went off very well. I recall meeting Barbara Cartland, and a familiar TV commentator whom I cheerily greeted as "Dorian" (Williams) only to be sharply rebuked, "its Brookes – Ward" (Raymond). Oh dear what a faux pas!

The Princess later invited us to a private dinner at a night club in Windsor. Gill sat next to Anne, and I became aware that they were deep in conversation about vets'

bills. Anne said she always studied the number plates on the vets' Range Rovers as they entered Gatcombe to get some idea of the size of the bills to come! It wasn't long before I realised Anne was innocently talking about her horses; but Gill was talking about our cat! I steered the conversation in a new direction. What a night! Happy days!

ROB DIXON

MY DAY FILMING THE QUEEN'S FUNERAL

I am a freelance, professional, broadcast camera operator and most of my work these days is to film sport for various companies including BBC, ITV etc and anyone else who will hire me!

I was commissioned by the BBC 25 years ago, for the Queen's Funeral. I have had frequent security checks and surprisingly, despite numerous speeding and parking fines, I was considered a safe bet.

On the day, we all heard the sad news that Her Majesty had passed away, I was at home. With the give-away image of Huw Edwards on BBC News, dressed in a sombre black suit with black tie, as protocol dictates, it was inevitable there was only going to be one announcement from Buckingham Palace, confirming that the Queen had died peacefully at Balmoral Castle at 3.10pm on Thursday, 8 Sept 2022.

At 3.25pm my phone rang and a recorded message, sounding very much like a Pathé News voiceover, began with "London Bridge

Calling”, and went on to confirm the sad news and remind me that I had agreed to work with London Bridge to record the week’s events.

I was surprised at how quickly this happened after the news was announced. But in retrospect, it was a huge challenge to find over 100 camera operators for the week’s events to be filmed and it needed to be sorted out quickly. London Bridge had been organised in precise detail for over 25 years, most of it in conjunction with the Queen’s ideas of how she wanted the funeral to be planned, including camera positions.

I was booked to work on the official BBC filming crew.

When there is a large event to be televised, one company becomes the ‘Host’ and provides all the pictures for the world. The BBC was the ‘*Host Outside Broadcast*’. Host coverage is quite normal with large events such as Olympic Games, World Cups and large music events etc. All the countries around the world, take the pictures from the host and use them in their own coverage sometimes adding their own cameras, and their own presenters.

The larger countries such as the USA, construct their own studios and bring an alarming number of presenters, who are not quite as laid back as our own Huw Edwards and certainly louder!

Having a Host Outside Broadcast, ensures that the coverage is standardised and, exactly as the Queen wished it to be.

There were several BBC Outside Broadcast (OB) units. We covered The Mall, past Buckingham Palace up Constitution Hill to Hyde Park Corner. There were 5 other Units covering all aspects of the funeral, including Westminster Abbey, Westminster Hall and Windsor Castle, plus all the routes in between. Hence why so many Camera Operators were needed.

It is always challenging to get on site. For us this was just inside Canada Gate, opposite Buckingham Palace. You may have seen the impressive ornate Gold Gates—gateway to Green Park. This was our base for the next week and where our OB units were parked.

In my 47 years of working in television, I have been involved in some large operations, Royal events, Cup finals, Wimbledon, Rugby and Football World Cups and large musical concerts, but I

have never seen quite so many OB trucks in one place! It seemed every country had its own OB unit consisting of several trucks, with its own cameras, not to mention all the usual individual British TV channels. There

were scores of units everywhere!

It was a haven to meet old pals that I hadn’t seen for years. We soon got down to what we do best—serious moaning! The collective noun for a



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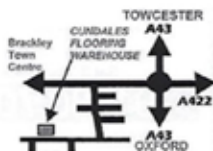
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PROPRIETOR: RUTH MARY GROVELL

group of camera Ops is normally known by other departments, as a *'whinge of camera ops!'*

The first moan was about the classic 'catch 22' situation regarding entry passes. As you can imagine, security was high priority, and I was told by one of many fluorescent jacketed stewards, that I needed a special pass to get in. I asked where the passes were and he said, "In there, mate," pointing to the OB area. I asked, how could I get my pass if I needed a pass to go in? He had of course heard this before, and wasn't very forthcoming. I was joined by several colleagues, all accosting the unfortunate security guard, who was never going to let us in without a pass, *"more than his job was worth!"*

Eventually, one of our production secretaries was at the gate armed with passes and all was well in the world. Except the water urn for coffee was cold and not working! Cue next round of moaning! They look after us and we need looking after! They work very hard and are the most important people on the site!

I was pleased with my location on The Queen Victoria Memorial, (the QVM). I was absolutely central to Buckingham



Palace. I was going to film the first sighting of the coffin, emerging from Buckingham Palace on its way to Westminster Hall in procession to lay in State. I had to focus on the coffin and gently zoom out panning right on its way around QVM. However, my camera was flanked by two splendid lions in front of me, facing the Palace—the lions' posteriors were facing me. The Victorian sculptor, had included the most splendid set of testicles, anatomically correct I dare say, but unfortunately they faced my camera, if I happened to pan too far right! I was told not to show the lion's testicles in the same shot as the coffin! Otherwise we could end up in the Tower of London! This somewhat worried me and I spent the day practising avoiding the lion's tackle. You just don't think of these problems, until they are pointed out! Although I'm sure such things would not have offended the Queen! Still, protocol always wins with Royal occasions!

The day before the real event, we rehearsed the coffin route, at 4.00 a.m. before the general public were up, with various people from the Palace acting out the procession, so not only could we rehearse with our anchor/commentator, Huw Edwards, but also the 500 members of the military, who would accompany the Queen's coffin. We were also responsible for filming in the evening, the arrival of the various dignitaries, who were invited to the palace by our new King Charles III so it was a very long day!

My location was perfect, the very same position the world's press wanted and

they would do anything to get that position! In fact, many were already lined up in front of my camera when I arrived at 7.00am. Several Palace security people, protected my camera position, and four burly men appeared from the Palace gates with a platform. They plonked it down amongst the photographers and I stood head and shoulders above them!

The next day, we filmed The Queen's coffin coming out of the palace for real *no more rehearsals!*

I nervously waited several hours before, on my camera, practising avoiding the banned anatomy of the lion statue. I discovered that the lions faced inwards and so when I saw the nose of the lion come into my frame, it was time to stop panning!

Soon we were 'live' to the world and Huw Edwards was elegantly talking in my ear, spilling out many facts about the pictures we were providing to him. It is always a bit nerve wracking when we go 'on air' and the anticipation of my pictures going around the world. I settled in and waited.

I zoomed in through the open Palace gates and settled on the famous arch below the royal balcony, waiting for the coffin to appear and the start of the procession. The British Army's most senior infantry regiment, in their distinctive scarlet tunics and black bearskins, lined up in front of the Queen's coffin, which meant I could see nothing, except a mass of black bearskin hats bobbing in and out of my frame, as they began the procession.

I panicked for a moment as I couldn't see the coffin at all and our director,

Simon, was saying, "Where is the coffin??" I heard him repeat with a fluster in his voice. Then suddenly, I briefly caught sight of the crown on top of the coffin, glinting through the bearskins. It quickly got lost again and then as the soldiers marched forward, black horses came into view. They belonged to the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, responsible for pulling the gun carriage carrying Her Majesty's coffin. I quickly focused onto the gleaming crown, and followed it as the horses left my frame. This pleased our director very much and he resumed his normal calm self. "Coming to you, Keith!" and my red lights went on in my viewfinder, indicating I was 'live' to the world.

We always have commentators in our headphones, so we can react to what they say and vice versa. I heard Huw Edwards pick up on what my camera was filming and described the scene. I gently zoomed out to reveal the whole coffin and I heard Huw Edwards say "This is the last time Her Majesty will leave Buckingham Palace, through the archway she has travelled through, so many times over the years."

At that point, I was not showing the archway, and so zoomed out a bit more to reveal the archway he had described. I was the only camera that could see the coffin at this point and so Simon kept on me as I picked up the royal family, solemnly walking behind. I let them walk through my frame and then Simon directed me to catch up with the coffin. I panned right slowly and felt compelled to zoom into the crown on its purple velvet pillow.

Once I thought the audience had seen the crown, I zoomed out again and heard Simon exclaim, "Don't forget Keith!" I knew what he meant! The lion's nose came into view on the right of my frame and I froze my camera movement and let the royals walk through. Simon thanked me for my shot and another camera took over and that was my job over for the day! No unmentionables seen and I escaped a night in The Tower!

I resumed my camera position on The QVM for the procession from Westminster Abbey to Hyde Park Corner where the coffin was transferred to a hearse and driven to Windsor Castle for the interment.

Once in place on the day of the funeral, I detected the increase in security. There were more armed police on the Palace roof and specialised bomb squad police climbing down into the drains outside the Palace gates, where there is a huge network of underground tunnels.

We were all called in by the BBC at 6.00am. This was the BBC's paranoia to make sure we all got there ready for filming at 10.00am! I stayed in a hotel, booked by the BBC, at Tower Bridge— a short tube ride to Buckingham Palace. Even at 5.00am the tube was crammed with visitors there to witness the historic day. Unfortunately, they would have been too late, as The Mall and every other advantage point, was packed from the day before, with people claiming the best views by camping out all night.

I arrived on my stand at 7.00am after

a welcome bacon sandwich at BBC Catering. The Funeral service began at 11.00am at the Abbey, and the procession was due to leave at 12.15. It was a mile long and it took an hour before the coffin arrived at Buckingham Palace for that last journey. I was to frame a perfect central view of Buckingham Palace and let the queen's coffin pass by with the royal party behind. It was not a difficult shot to do, but I appreciated its high significance.

As the funeral cortege passed, I couldn't help but shed a tear or two. It was a very emotional moment. I have since seen my shot many times on various news programmes and I feel honoured to have been part of the largest outside broadcast ever in the world and unlikely to be .

My final post script to this article, is to explain that in these unusual broadcasts, you very often mix with well-known people who are also wandering around in the same space as everyone else. My claim to fame arose when I was visiting the portaloos and as I was standing there minding my own business, I became aware of someone standing beside me! (It's a chance to have a chat with your mates when in this situation!) I looked to my right, to see who had joined me at the trough. It was none other than Sir David Attenborough! I just had to say 'good morning' and he wished me a 'good morning' back in those unmistakeable tones we all love and know so much. It made my week! Not many, can say they had a pee with David Attenborough!

KEITH WATTS



DAVID COSBY

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