

Eastington Community News

April / May 2013

Nº. 138

When I first came to Eastington in the mid 1980s, I was told "nothing much ever happens here." I'm not so sure that was really the case, but it certainly was the perception of many at that time. There is certainly a lot going on today, and for those prepared to take part and make a difference there is opportunity for even more. This publication was started to give all people living in our Parish a flavour of what's happening about us. I hope you will find some interesting things within these pages, and feel some inspiration to take part or to comment.

Looking back to the late 19th Century in Eastington, Steve Mills brings us an interesting insight to 'Crime and Disorder'. Back in those days the canal had brought big changes to our Parish over the hundred or so years that it had been working. Most of you will be aware of the ambitious Stroudwater Canal restoration project, and may regularly pass the 'Western Depot' at Chipmans Platt where works are coordinated. Ken Burgin reports on progress to repair and upgrade Eastington canal locks. An opportunity beckons to reconnect our section of the canal, under the railway, to the already restored 'Ocean' and Stroud sections beyond

Eastington Youth Group (EYG) introduce their plan for the proposed playground and park. We look forward to hearing more about Stroud Youth Football Club's proposal to expand facilities for their teams at our Community Centre. Maybe there can be some organised sporting activities for children of Eastington too. Look out for meetings to discuss the above proposals on local notices.

I am delighted to introduce Andrea Durn as newly appointed Clerk to Eastington Parish Council. It is really good to find another local talented person for this role as there is so much to be done in this very busy Parish. Andrea will begin early in April, but for the time being please continue to direct EPC enquiries to eastingtonparishcouncil@gmail.com

The process of the Stroud District Local Plan [so called Core Strategy] continues to bewilder those of a logical disposition. Well researched new data and clearly presented solutions by local people, respected professionals and some district councillors, have been ridiculed by certain other councillors. SDC planning officers dig in ever deeper and tighten their grip on their out-dated and flawed plan. They concentrate their efforts to further increase the proposed size of their commuter-centric New Town 'West of Stonehouse.' We can only hope that the democratic process of elected councillors will prevail and survive against such stubborn opposition.

A recent Planning Appeal for 'Box Road, Cam', was allowed against SDC. In it, the Planning Inspector was particularly critical of SDC planners and claimed they had failed to deliver enough homes; that has set a precedent, and has resulted in a frenzy of planning applications by developers. It is in this climate that Bathurst Builders submitted an application for 30+ houses south of Swallowcroft. Their proposed density is even greater than Bradestones Way and the towering town houses will dwarf the existing bungalows and brazenly intrude and dominate the open countryside amenity beyond. Your District Councillor and DSS Action Group write more on these things inside. Further information @ www.keep-eastington-rural.co.uk/

Meanwhile, there is hope that 'localism' will indeed enable residents' voices to shape the future of our Parish, in place of Developers and Planning Officers motivated by other interests. The recently surveyed Parish Plan collected your views and has been summarised in past issues of ECN. The final format of the Parish Plan will be published this summer. To strengthen your opinions, Eastington has now committed to publishing a Neighbourhood Plan. Such a plan will give strong direction to the type and place for future development of our Parish, and you will be hearing more about this process during the year.

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Next Deadline: All articles by Friday 24th May 2013 please!

Next Delivery: Friday 31st May 2013 please!

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S NEWSLETTER

Local Plan

Several meetings on this have taken place since my last newsletter. The last Planning Advisory Panel had recommendations for housing allocation. It was stated that the recommendations were to instigate debate and discussion. The feeling of myself and my group on the report was that it was *as if the last two years had never happened and that all of the consultation results had been ignored*. The report had only two options in it, the first included a lot of houses in the Nupend/Nastend area, and the second was for even more houses in that area. It became apparent during the meeting that officers had been in dialogue about development outside the present proposed housing site that would open up even more land. This basically reinforced my, and many others, long held opinion that if you start building on this site it will be almost impossible to stop and a new focus for the Stroud District will be created. My response was a bit terse and short to say the least. One of the responses to my comments was "please talk to us and tell us what you think/want." I thought a lot of us had been doing just that for years. I considered the report to be in the 'there is only one way' category. I said that we would not be accepting the report and would look to see if a consensus opinion could be found on housing numbers and possible balanced housing allocation for the district. The Chairman of Stroud Constituency Labour Party and the leader of SDC's Labour Group issued a press release on the position as we saw it. I do not have room to include all of the release but some of the main points are:

'The latest SDC report (March 6th 2013) states the housing requirement up to 2031 as a minimum of 9620 dwellings with a reserve provision for up to 11500 dwellings. This figure will be reviewed to accommodate information from the 2011 census, or any other relevant data. We believe that there is now sufficient information to revise these figures downwards to a planning figure of 8350 new houses by 2031.'

'For a Local Plan supported by the majority of residents in Stroud District we say that;

- Housing needs to be re-assessed in view of more recent data including employment prospects in the district.
- The Land Supply re-calculated to take account of revised housing need.
- The current arguments for a concentrated strategy point more to extensions of existing towns and villages rather than a new very large settlement West of Stonehouse.
- A development plan for Sharpness and Berkeley should be carried out now.
- There should be a more thorough investigation of housing needs and infrastructure improvements in smaller rural settlements, so that a contribution is made to the overall need for future housing and employment from these areas as well as the proposals for larger housing areas.'

The statement also recognizes that because of the wholesale changes made to planning laws by the government the ball is very much in the developers' court and local authority powers are now very limited in what they can and cannot do, and more open to legal challenge if it is viewed subjective decisions have been made.

Housing

Much work is going on in housing. Tenant services continue with the catch up repairs with new bathroom/kitchens and estate improvements. The sheltered housing review continues. This is not without its problems and the tenant's representative body, USAP, has disagreed with some of the processes being followed. This has led to a rather unfortunate state of affairs in the relationship of the representative body and council officers and some councillors.

Welfare Reform

Council officers are much involved with this. It is just not the so called bedroom tax; there is a raft of changes with the move towards Universal Credit. You may have heard or seen in the press much on this. I expect to be very busy working with residents who will be affected by these reforms.

Ken Stephens March 2013

The Eastington Housing Battle

DSS has had a very busy time over the last few months. Who is DSS? - *Don't Strangle Stroud* are a large group of people; the core supporters are around fifty. These are the folk who are readily available to help in a variety of ways. They have done so on many occasions over the last fifteen months, since our community was threatened by plans prepared by our local District Council to overwhelm our Parish with large-scale housing development. You will remember that the proposal was to build between 1,000 and 1,500 houses West of Stonehouse, on land to the left of the A 419 as you travel to Stroud.

Swallowcroft

Our Parish is seen as an easy target; it is close to the motorway, and a local landowner has many fields he wishes to develop. A recent planning application adjacent to Swallowcroft is another example, with plans for thirty one houses on just over an acre of land. This is a ridiculous proposition driven by greed. We will have to accept some development in our community but this density of housing is like that closer to inner-city London and makes no sense here. **You have the opportunity to object on the Stroud District Council (SDC) website (www.stroud.gov.uk) and you should take that opportunity.**

Consultation

On the 13th of December 2012 Council Officers presented to the Planning Advisory Panel the outcome of the consultation on the Core Strategy that ended in March 2012. SDC had nearly 2,000 responses to that consultation. Around 1,700 of those disagreed with the SDC approach. 1,500 were on standard proformas, largely because the almost impossible electronic questionnaire encouraged the use of proformas. Officers of SDC, who were unhappy with the opposition to their proposals, determined that the analyses that included the proforma response were '*quantitative*' results. They stated that if these proforma returns were removed, the data then presented a '*qualitative*' result, which was largely in support of the SDC's approach. The number of supporters for the SDC approach was around 140, of which almost 60 were developers. In addition this figure included organisations such as the County Council and substantial landowners in the area proposed for development. All the data presented was indeed *quantitative*, presenting some as *qualitative* was simply an attempt to manipulate the data to influence councillors at the meeting. A complaint to the chief executive of the council, seeking an explanation for this behaviour, has so far been unsuccessful.

Housing Numbers Increased Again

On the 5th of March the Planning Advisory Panel met again, this time to consider areas for development. The consultation response seemed to have had no influence at all on the proposals put forward by Officers, which were supported by the Chair of the committee, Dennis Andrewartha. The number of houses suggested in the original consultation for various locations around the District had all been **reduced** and the West of Stonehouse had been materially **increased**. There was no written explanation for this approach, and when challenged by councillors the verbal explanations were far from clear. In essence, the West of Stonehouse option required far more houses to fund the necessary additional infrastructure: somewhere between 2,000 and 2,500 (rather than the 1,000 to 1,500 originally proposed). The bridle paths, that in last year's consultation were to be protected, were now being designated as main roads into this vast "New Town". One Bridle path leads onto Oldends Lane, and the other over Black Bridge Bridleway and onto the Stonehouse /Gloucester road. Other than that the new development remained totally disconnected from Stonehouse.

The Politicians' Support

Last March DSS were accused of scaremongering when it circulated a map showing the likely development. Today's reality is that this first phase map was a considerable *underestimate* of the proposal. Obviously the Lib. Dem. councillors, under the leadership of Dennis Andrewartha, were hugely supportive of this proposal. To some extent they were supported by John Marjoram from the Green Party. No one from either Labour or the Conservatives spoke in favour. Chris Brine (Labour Stonehouse) and our own Ken Stephens spoke vehemently against. Andy Read (Independent Labour) proposed reinstating the Officers' artificially reduced numbers for other areas (such as Hunts Grove), which achieved widespread support. Keith Pearson (Conservative Leader) argued strongly for the currently agreed

housing range (9,350 – 11,500) to be removed and only a single, lower figure, to be used. The Conservatives have supported a lower number of houses for the district since last summer and continue to advocate that. Labour now also appears to be considering a lower number. Dennis Andrewartha (Lib. Dems.) appears determined to support this officer view of higher numbers. Without these higher numbers, West of Stonehouse is not viable. It seems impossible for them to accept this for reasons that are not clear.

Maps showing the extent of the West of Stonehouse option, and its complete isolation from Stonehouse, were made available at the Planning meeting (see DSS web site). They were an eye-watering display of silly planning, completely understood as such by the vast majority of councillors present, with the exception of the Lib. Dem. councillors who stood resolute and isolated.

The Parish Engages

Our own Parish Council has engaged the services of a planning consultant, Ian Stuart, who lives in our district. He has used the latest census information and the Cambridge Employment Model to assess housing need, suggesting a lower figure of 8,350. This contrasts with the SDC approach of using out-of-date Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2008 projections. These have been largely rejected across the country by planning authorities and have been consistently inaccurate as forecasts. Indeed the consultant SDC used to support this approach was also employed in North Somerset where he dismissed successfully the DCLG information as *no longer relevant*. Unfortunately Dennis Andrewartha and planning officers simply cannot accept any information, however compelling, that reduces the housing requirement; to do so would make the West of Stonehouse development no longer viable.

Cross-Party Support

The good news is that the publically stated position of the Conservatives is that they want to reduce the numbers and do it based on sound, reliable and up-to-date information. Labour now appear to want the same thing. However Labour is part of an alliance where the Lib. Dems. want higher numbers of houses than the evidence base suggests, so we can now expect much behind-the-scenes negotiation. What is also clear from the last meeting is that Labour will not support the West of Stonehouse option, a position that they have consistently adhered to, because they can see that the proposals do what DSS have said for the last twelve months – IT STRANGLES STROUD AND STONEHOUSE. The Constituency Labour Party and SDC Labour group has issued a joint statement which supports the housing numbers put forward by Ian Stuart. The evidenced housing number suggested by Ian Stuart is very similar to that submitted by the Conservative group last summer at a Council meeting which at that time was rejected by the Alliance. With new information it appears the two largest groups have come to the same conclusion in different ways. We must now hope this consensus between the two largest parties enables the right decisions for our district.

Officers' Intransigence

Officers now suggest that the newly proposed 2,500 houses support a new railway station at Standish Junction, effectively closing Stonehouse station and probably Cam station too. There is no business case prepared, and no evidence that the number of rail passengers will increase to support an additional station. Indeed no work at all has been undertaken to assess the possibility of opening a new train station. Distributing the same number of passengers over four stations (including Gloucester) instead of three seems somewhat foolish. This new station would cost the developer £8 - £11 million, and in addition require an upgrade to the Oldends Lane level crossing, because trains would be moving more slowly and therefore the barriers would be down for longer. Remember, Oldends Lane is the other exit road from the proposed new development. It seems strange that the Local Councillor for Cam (Dennis Andrewartha) is supporting plans with no substance, which if realised, may well close his local railway station. It would appear that the overwhelming desire by some at SDC for a West of Stonehouse option is clouding judgement.

Community Group Don't Strangle Stroud – Daniel James

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS' CHURCH, EASTINGTON

One of the 'Cotswold Edge' Parishes

(Eastington, Frocester, Haresfield, Moreton Valence, Standish and Whitminster)

Our mission is: to show God's love for His people, and nurture His people's love for God



Dear Friends,

As you may be aware I have been fortunate enough to be granted a sabbatical this year by the powers that be in the Diocese, and this means that I will be away from the benefice for three months from May to July inclusive. This is a great opportunity for me to take a break from parish ministry, and to relax a bit, while at the same time pursue ministry in a different form.

Any of the children currently at the three schools in our parishes, and any others who have passed through them during the fourteen years I have been here, will be able to tell you that when leading assemblies in school I like to tell stories based on the bible. So far these have been ones other people have written, and I have been using them ever since I was ordained twenty-three years ago. While I am away I am intending to try my hand at writing some myself. It could prove to be a disaster, but hopefully not!

When I was called to the ministry I always felt that God wanted me to make the bible accessible, understandable and relevant to people – and this includes children as well as adults. Most of what seems to be around today storywise seems to be getting shorter and shorter. So my challenge is to make them around fifteen minutes long and interesting for primary children. I'm also hoping to put a bit of commentary with them, to give a bit of explanation to aid understanding. I expect to learn a lot, and hope I produce something worthwhile, so I would be most appreciative of your prayers.

Where is this going to happen? The plan is to go round the country in our caravan with my wife Angela, and our dog Barney, while leaving Angela's daughter Alyssa 'Rectory and Maggie (our cat) sitting'. We should be away for about 2 months before returning home, then will be away in Rome, then Turkey, and all the time reading, writing and re-charging my personal batteries.

While I am away most of the churches will be either cutting back on the number of services, or changing the type of service they hold, and there will be a number of clergy and others who have kindly agreed to cover these services during my absence, and I am very grateful to them all. At time of writing there are still 11 services that need someone, but I am hopeful that they will be filled shortly.

Unfortunately Angela Reeder, who was going to be doing the lion's share of the covers has not been well, and is awaiting a knee operation at some point while I am away. It is frustrating for her, as she was looking forward to it.

Paul Seaward (Churchwarden at Whitminster) has kindly offered to edit the SPAN for the June, July and August editions – so watch out in next month's edition for any changes to deadlines for copy etc. I will still be producing May's edition, and hope to have some letters ready for when I'm away! I'll do something in advance for the ECN.

Yours in Christ,

Rector: Revd Richard Amys, The Rectory, Millend Lane, Eastington, GL10 3SG.

Email: richardjramys@aol.com. Tel/fax 01453 822437.

Day off – Saturday. (Mobile 07796 956050)

Services in April and May

<u>7th April</u> <u>2nd of Easter</u> (p897 - white) Acts 5.27-32 & John 20.19-31 (p898/900)	<u>14th April</u> <u>3rd of Easter</u> (p901 - white) Acts 9.1-6 & John 21.1-19 (p902/4)	<u>21st April</u> <u>4th of Easter</u> (p905 – white) Isaiah 63.7-14 & Luke 24.36-49	<u>28th April</u> <u>5th of Easter</u> (p905 – white) Revelations 21.1-6 & John 13.31-35 (p909/10)
10.45am Holy Communion (Angela Reeder) Wed 10th 7.30am BCP Communion	10.45am Holy Communion Wed 17th 7.30am BCP Communion	6pm Sung Evensong Wed 24th 7.30am BCP Communion	10.45am Holy Communion Thur 1st 9.30am BCP Communion (Angela Reeder)

<u>5th May</u> <u>6th of Easter</u> (p911 - white) Acts 16.9-15 & John 14.23-29 (p911/3)	<u>12th May</u> <u>7th of Easter</u> (Sunday after Ascension Day) (p919 - white) Acts 16.16-34 & John 17.20-end (p919/21)	<u>19th May</u> <u>Pentecost</u> <u>(Whit Sunday)</u> (p922 - red) Acts 2.1-21 & John 14.8-17 (p925/6)	<u>26th May</u> <u>Trinity Sunday</u> (p927 - white) Romans 5.1-5 & John 16.12-15 (p929)
10.45am Holy Communion (John Hunnisett) Thur 9th 9.30am BCP Communion (Angela Reeder)	10.45am Holy Communion (John Hunnisett) Thur 16th No Service	6pm Sung Evensong (MS) Thur 23rd 9.30am BCP Communion (Angela Reeder)	10.45am Holy Communion (Sue Phillipson-Masters) Thur 30th 9.30am No Service

All services are taken by the Rector unless stated otherwise

Things I've learned from my children

When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh," it's already too late.

A six-year-old can start a fire with a flint rock even though a 36-year-old man says they can only do it in the movies.

Certain Lego pieces will pass through the digestive tract of a four-year-old.

Marbles in petrol tanks make lots of noise when driving.

The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy.

It will however make cats dizzy.

Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.

The Push

A man and his wife were awakened at 3 o'clock in the morning by a loud pounding on the door. The man got up and went to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, asked him for a push. "Not a chance," said the husband, "it is three o'clock in the morning!" He slammed the door and returned to bed. "Who was that?" asked his wife. "Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answered. "Did you help him?" she asked. "No, I did not, it is three in the morning and it is raining cats and dogs out there!" "Well, you have a short memory," said his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and should be ashamed of yourself!" The man sighed, but did as he was told. He got dressed, and went out into the pounding rain. He called out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?" "Yes," came back the answer. "Do you still need a push?" called out the husband. "Yes, please!" came the reply from the dark. "Where are you?" called the husband. "Over here, on the swing."



**OUR CHURCH HAS A
LEAKING ROOF.
IT NEEDS
YOUR HELP
TO GET IT REPAIRED.
JOIN THE FRIENDS OF
ST. MICHAEL'S.**

To find out how you can help, read on:

**Come to the THIRD MEETING of the
Friends of St. Michael's
IN CHURCH on
WEDNESDAY 24th APRIL 2013.
At 7.30pm**

The main objective of this meeting is to elect a Committee to organise an event with a broad appeal to launch the "Friends" to attract as many as possible to join the scheme and to raise funds to repair the roof.

DO PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY

The previous meeting decided that membership of the scheme would be by subscription at a rate of £15 per annum (Concession rate £10) or £20 for a household of 2 or more people. Subscriptions are already coming in with cheques being made payable to Eastington PCC Friends account. Joining forms are available in church or can be obtained from me (Robin Harris) by email to robin@harrisnestings.fsnet.co.uk or phone 01453 823433 or just send a cheque to W. R. Harris, The Nestings, Nupend, Stonehouse, GL10 3SP with details of your name, address, email address if you have one, and phone number.

By becoming a friend you will help to provide the resources both human and financial that will ensure that this outstanding example of a Church that has evolved over many centuries is conserved, maintained and enhanced for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals and for the enjoyment and remembrance of future generations.

You will undertake to offer whatever talents you possess to support fund-raising activities to further this objective.

Robin Harris

THANK YOU

Kate Taylor and family would like to thank everyone for their good wishes and support during the illness and subsequent loss of Andrew.

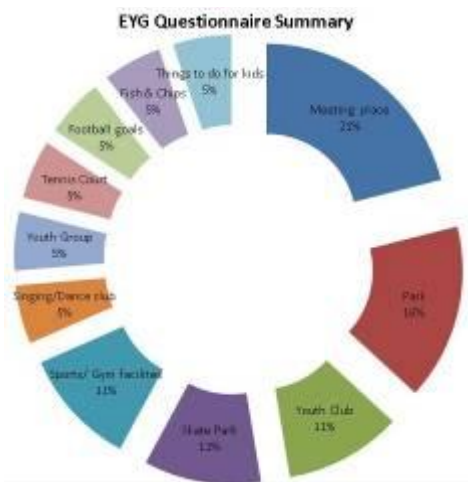


EASTINGTON YOUTH GROUP

Community Park Project

EYG has been running for nearly two years now. In that time young people have been given the opportunity to take part in many events, including sports evenings, day trips and craft sessions. In addition to this a youth bus has on occasion visited the village, providing an environment where youngsters can 'hangout' and chat about any issues with peers and experienced youth workers.

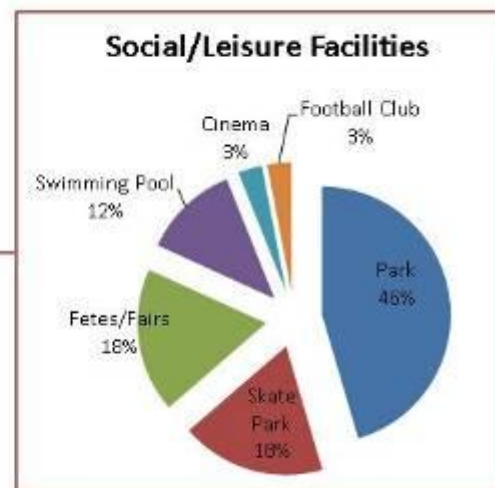
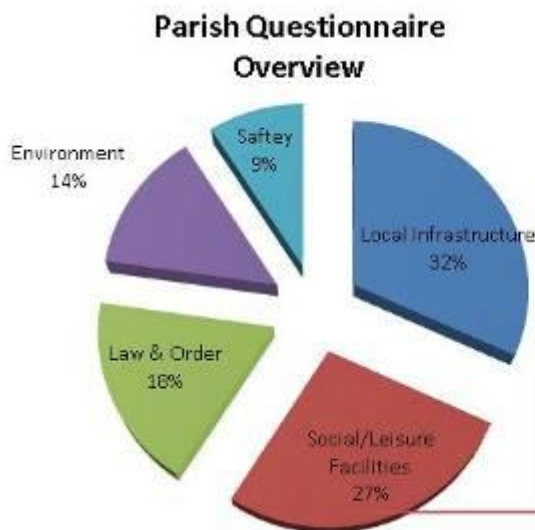
It's important to mention, that our young generation have also contributed to the community when called upon; litter collecting, apple picking and path digging. They have done so with great enthusiasm and gusto.



Two years ago members of the community were invited to a meeting to discuss the issues and needs relating to youngsters. Under 18's were asked to write down what they felt the community needed to improve facility for them.

The result was biased towards a meeting place and park. When quizzed to the notion of a meeting place it was clear that this did not need to be a youth club, just a space where older teens could meet and call their own.

Given the state, position and size of our current park it seems only natural that a new and considered facility will serve the community well.



The Park Brief

- Contain equipment to suit age groups 2-5, 6-12 & 13-16.
- Offer a challenging and safe environment.
- Provide an interesting setting for families to enjoy.
- Provide shelter/ area for older teens.
- Include some fitness orientated equipment.

Community Park Project

The proposed site is on Parish land adjacent to the allotments. The current gate access from Snakey Lane to the allotments will be maintained.

The park will be fully fenced off with pedestrian and service access provided.



After trawling through many catalogues, a budget figure was set for the equipment of £50,000 with an additional figure of 20-30K to cover insulation and ancillary works.

To date, we have received one quote and proposed plan. This initial plan gives us an idea of what could be and how robust our budget estimate is.

The brief can be met with this plan, and be further enhanced with additional features, such as planting trees and raised flower beds.

To lower costs EYG would organise and undertake some of the ground works (digging out the soil from eastern side of mound), installation of any additional fencing and laying the access path.

Two more quotes are required, and then we start fund raising in earnest. EYG have already received and raised some funds but now need to aim higher.



[Right] Illustration of possible park
(Not to scale):

Central sheltered area for general use; parents have good visibility.

Teenager shelter [top right corner]

Trim trail [Top centre] may be replaced with outdoor exercise equipment.

An event will be held in the coming weeks at the Community Centre, where a larger plan of the park will be on display. (The date will be advertised via posters and fliers, shortly).

This will be an opportunity to have your say, and offer support (both will be greatly received).

All youngsters (2-16) will be able to nominate their favourite play equipment from pictures presented on the day. The results of this will go some way to influencing what goes into the park.

Crime and punishment!

By Stephen Mills

In another of our occasional series harking back to life in the village during the Victorian period, we look at some instances of crimes that took place and how the offenders were dealt with. In an era when life could be very hard for many ordinary villagers, there were always a few individuals who were drawn into a life of crime. Mostly it was petty theft, sometimes simply out of desperation, although in a few cases, as described below, it extended to stealing cloth from the village mills. This was a valuable commodity and any loss hit mill owners and workers alike. It's surprising what lengths mill owners and their workforce went to in order to apprehend the miscreants. When caught, offenders could be sure of a harsh punishment. Now, read on...

Eastington Parish Magazine, September 1893

"I fancy, John, your memory takes you back to a time when our parish was not as honest and peaceable as it is now?"

"Ah yes, sir, some sixty years or so there were some notorious characters about, and the cloth made at the mills being a very high price, there were many attempts made to steal it".

"And wasn't there some place down by the Severn where such plunder was received and made away with?"

"Yes, so you mean old Master Brinkworth. Yes, his house was like a rabbit warren for places to conceal things, and then vessels passing gave him a good chance to get rid of them. The clothing [cloth making] was then carried on by Messrs. Hicks Brothers. I well remember two lots that was stole. The first was, I think, from Churchend Mill. It was two pieces of black broadcloth. They were taken up to Alkerton Farm, then in the occupation of old Joseph Burley, who had the barn full of corn.



You're nicked!

When the corn came to be threshed out, the cloth was found. I saw, to my surprise, two farmhouse men carrying down a piece of black cloth each, rolled up in an unfinished state. On enquiry, we was told that they had just found it in the barn under the corn. There was two notorious characters who was judged of the affair, but no one could prove it. Soon after, they was convicted at Gloucester for housebreaking at Frampton and sentenced to seven years transportation.

It was not very long after before there was a robbery at Millend Mill, a blue cloth, stolen from the brusher shop occupied by James Howell and Thomas Richards, which was hidden in the old oak tree now standing at the top of the Great Ham. It was taken from there off to Birmingham and sold. At the time, there was one Job Andrews, constable of the parish. He was at once despatched off to Birmingham by stage coach, and met the two young gents with the spoils in their pockets. The coachman pulled up the horses and lent the constable a chain, who immediately chained them both together, then took them back to Birmingham, well secured them, and brought them home here. They were then committed to Gloucester Assizes for trial. One of them was transported for seven years and one was acquitted. "

"Did this sort of thing go on long, John?"

"Well yes sir, some years. In October 1832, the late Mr Hooper [Charles Hooper, mill owner of the time] took to the business, and several robberies took place, but he was very determined in putting it down."

"Well John, when we last met you were talking of the late Mr Hooper and of his energy in putting down those mill burglaries. Didn't he once lay hold of a notorious thief very early in the morning?"

"Ah, that was Bird; he was a notorious fellow, and no mistake. Yes, that was one morning, when he had broken into Millend Mill in the night, and then lay down to rest among the soft wool and overslept himself. Mr Hooper happened to be early at the counting-house, about five o'clock, and one of the pressmen coming also early to work, ran up and told him Bird had just been seen leaving the mill. Mr Hooper had his little black pony just at hand, and he jumped on it at once, and rode all round telling the workpeople not to come to work but make a circle round and try to cut Bird's escape off. Oh yes, I well remember seeing the crowd out in the meadow by Churchend, and when Mr Hooper rode back, there was Bird standing in the middle of them, wet through and looking miserable enough. Mr Hooper asked who found him first, which proved to be James Underwood, one of the weavers, who discovered him in a ditch up at The Leaze [Eastington Park]. Mr Hooper gave James a coat cloth, I can remember, Bird was sent for trial and was sentenced to fourteen years transportation".

"I expect that put a stop to such troubles for some time?"

"Well yes, of course, so far as Bird was concerned; but there were others, the Merretts, I remember, and it took a little while before such robberies quite came to an end.

I well remember one evening I had been to Whitminster to see my sister off by coach, when two men overtook me and entered into conversation. I found out they had come out of Gloucester Goal, and could tell me of two prisoners they had left there, convicted of stealing cloth at Eastington. They said they could tell me where the cloth was hid, from what they had heard. I asked them if they would tell it before my master. They said they would. I went straight to Mr Hooper's house at Alkerton and told him. Him and me walked to Cambridge that same night and found the men at the Lion. They told Mr Hooper it was hid in Grove Leaze. Search was made the next day, but I can't clearly remember whether it was found. Perhaps you can remember, sir, the remains of a decayed piece of fine cloth being found by the gardener behind the kitchen garden wall at Eastington House some thirty years ago or more?"

"Yes, that I can John; just part of the lists were left to show what it had been. That was perhaps the very last attempt, and did the thief no good. Let us hope better principles will prevent such things ever happening again".



Severn Vale Rotary Club would like to organise an Open Garden Event in Eastington in June 2013

This would be an opportunity for anyone to open their garden to the public for about 3 hours on a Sunday afternoon, from 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm, the dates we are considering are either

2nd, 16th or 30th June.

A charge would be made to the viewing public and this money would be put towards local and Severn Vale Rotary Club charities and projects.

We would like about twelve gardens both large and small to be open. If it works well this year we would anticipate it becoming an annual event.

There would also be the opportunity for a local group to supply teas to the visitors, bringing further revenue to the village.

A similar scheme has been running for several years at Frampton on Severn and has been very successful; and we thought that Eastington could also benefit from a similar event.

If you would like to be involved with this, and/ or learn more about it please contact

Mike Naylor on 01453 828682 or David Greenfield 01452 740126.



Eastington Methodist Church



Day Time Bible Study

Are you missing out?

Here are some of the comments from those who, regularly, attend the day time Bible Study.



"I enjoy Tuesdays. I enjoy the hymns."

"I enjoy the company, and have made friends. People have accepted me as I am."

"Since coming I have become less angry about the past."

"I really enjoy these times together."

At the moment, around 11 of us meet at the Church, every Tuesday in term time. We've recently been looking at well known hymns. Finding out about their author and reading the Bible passage that they're based on. After Easter we will be starting on a new series of studies looking at how God worked in the early church after Jesus returned to heaven.

The study is preceded by a snack lunch at 1pm, which some attend, and others arrive at about 1:50pm.

It's a time of fellowship, encouragement, sharing, and learning from God's Word. We also pray for each other, and often share how God has answered our prayers. We finish before 3pm.

So, if you're free lunch time on Tuesdays, why not come along?

Don't miss out any longer!

If, for any reason, you can't make this, there's also an evening Bible Study at Pike Lock House, at 8pm on Tuesday evenings. And for young people, there's the Youth Alpha group at 7:30pm at the Church on Monday evenings.

Are we missing out?

EMC is a very active village church with many groups covering virtually all age groups and across a range of activities. We also go out into the schools at Eastington and Whitminster to act out Bible stories.

There are many ways in which we could expand what we already do and serve our community in new ways but in order to do this, we need more people to get involved. We could do with your help!

Whether you are great with kids, can look after buildings, inspire youth, have musical talents or are willing to visit people and help them – please get in contact and you can become part of the team!

EASTER and beyond

On Good Friday we have a service at 10:30am.

Some of the young people are attending a sleep(!)over from the Saturday lunchtime through to the end of the 11am Easter Day service and will be taking part using their acting and/or dancing and/or musical abilities to add to the celebration of Christ's rising. *(It only dawned upon us later that the clocks are going to change so we are going to lose an hour of what little sleep we might get – aaargh!)*

There is a day trip to Spring Harvest Christian Festival at Minehead for young people on Tuesday 2nd April but no KonGreg8 on Sunday 7th April as the leaders are staying at Spring Harvest. The next KonGreg8 will therefore be at 6pm on Sunday 5th May - visit www.kongreg8.org.uk for details.

Ken & Beck Burgin 01453 827414

www.EastingtonMethodists.org.uk





There has been a flurry of activity at Eastington recently in preparation for the re-gating of Blunder Lock. The oak gates built and installed in 1992 reached a state of decay which rendered them unusable in less than 20 years (left).

Preparatory work has involved the removal of the old gates and the clearing of accumulated rubbish in the bottom of the lock, including a moped and a bicycle. Newtown Lock (below) was cleared out at the same time but the gates on this lock are still in good condition.

The current programme will see the installation of a brand new set of bottom gates made out of FSC (sustainably grown) ekki, a very durable tropical hardwood. These are expected to arrive in May and the work is being carried out by Hargreaves, who are based near Rochdale, at a cost of somewhat over £30,000.

The top gates are being replaced by a set of refurbished ex-Thames gates. These had been sitting in the top of Pike Lock for many years but were slightly too tall to be used there. The main frames of these gates are made out of greenheart, another tropical hardwood, and although already very old, it is expected that these will last until the full restoration of Phase 1B from the Ocean Railway Bridge to Saul Junction.



The Trust is very grateful to Tim Wyatt who allowed access to the locks across his fields and also helped lower the replacement top gates into the top end of Blunder Lock using some of his farm equipment.

The completion of this current work will once again see the Eastington stretch navigable from the slipway near Pike Lock to Bonds Mill Bridge. The work is being paid for by the Stroud Valleys Canal Company which is the charity set up to maintain and run the canal and which has a long lease on the canal from the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation.

Network Rail have a scheduled closure of the Bristol - Birmingham line in two years' time and they have suggested that this would be an excellent time to have the missing bridge put back in at the Ocean at Stonehouse. The only slight issue is that this will require something of the order of £1.5 – 2 million to be raised to make it happen. It is undoubtedly a really good opportunity not to be missed either as part of the full Phase 1B project or as a stand alone quick win. Either way, its completion would soon link Eastington to the long length of canal already under restoration on the far side of the railway.

Eastington is the home of the Trust's Western Depot and volunteers meet there on Mondays and Wednesdays with gangs working either locally or moving to various restoration or maintenance projects up and down the canal. It is also the main distribution point for log sales. The depot has good toilet and other welfare facilities together with an office. New volunteers, whether experienced or not, are welcome including people able to assist with the Health & Safety paperwork and other site administration tasks.

Updates on the wider project can be found at: www.cotswoldcanals.com and www.cotswoldcanalsproject.org

Ken.Burgin@pikelock.com



Eastington Community Centre

www.ohmg.org.uk

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Thinking of starting up a new club?

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- ◆ Veranda area
- ◆ Fenced play area

The Committee is always looking for new members with new ideas and energy. If you would like to get involved in a local group that is committed to improving the facility for the benefit of people in the Parish please do get in touch.

Mondays: ZUMBA! 7.30-8.30pm

Tuesdays 7-8pm & Fridays 12-1pm: QiGong Health Training

Thursdays: YOGA 8 - 9.30pm

Contact Vanessa on 828557 for a friendly chat and more information



DO YOU PLAY or HAVE YOU PLAYED CRICKET?

Eastington Cricket Club requires players of ANY standard for the 2013 season, with most Saturdays (league) and friendlies on Sundays, midweek days and midweek evenings. We play and practise at Owen Harris Memorial Ground.

Any standard/ability is welcome, to keep our club going.

Please contact Steve Gallagher on 01453 791209

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Fri 12-1pm Eastington

Join Today!
Call 01453 826501

Energy Health Tai Chi Qigong classes relocated over two years ago to the Eastington Community Centre and we are now in our forth consecutive term. We hope this shows the unique and exciting ways we teach to improve your health with simple, effective exercise and holistic medical techniques.

Since beginning over four years ago with just three students Energy Health has taught hundreds of people how to live a healthier and more energetic life using the gentle but profound practice of Tai Chi Qigong.

At present there are students who are fit and healthy but like the ease of classes to keep their health in top form. Other students have chronic conditions that range from Osteoporosis, Arthritis, Mobility Restrictions through to Anxiety and Depression. All have the same goal of better health.

Energy Health have now gone even further to help you improve your health by giving you FREE access to all classes so you can choose when and where each week to suit you daily needs! We believe this is an amazing offer and one we are proud to promote to the NHS, GP's and local council health programs.

How do you join?

Just book your ten week course by April 22nd choose your main venue and this will give you ten weeks sessions at just £6.50 each, then you can attend all other available classes FREE of charge!

This could mean you could pay just £2.16 per session and access up to 30 classes.

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Energy Health Tai Chi Qigong classes are also a registered activity with the NHS 'Change for Life' Campaign. So now you have more choice to get fit and healthy.

In just ten weeks you can experience what Tai Chi Qigong can do for you then if you wish to continue there will always be a place available.

The summer terms are some of the best too! On Tuesdays we get to train during the sunset and Thursdays and Fridays as the sun peaks! what more could you ask for while improving your health? Nature at its best!

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We have had a very busy term so far, lots in store for everyone for the next few weeks ahead – please read on.....



World Book Week

We celebrated World Book Day on March 7th and all that week the children were invited to dress up as a character from their favourite book - we saw some fabulous characters, Rapunzel came along together with Buzz Light Year and a scary spider! We aimed to encourage children to enjoy listening to stories together both at Playgroup and at home in preparation for school and their future interests.

Comic Relief Week!!

The week commencing 11th March we helped fundraise for Comic relief and the children and staff wore their pyjamas and donated £1 towards this great cause – we also made cakes and biscuits to sell in our Playgroup ‘Bake Off’ to raise more money for people more unfortunate than ourselves.

Pamper and Treat Evening



We are having another pamper evening which will be held on 26th April at the Eastington Community Centre in the evening. Again there will be lots of treats for all including beauty treatments, manicures and pedicures, massages and threading (eye brow tidy!). We will also have our tarot card reader again who was very popular so please come along and treat yourself, all money raised will go towards our next project which is based upon playing outside, digging, planting and growing seeds and the equipment needed for this.

Isn't it time we deserved a treat and some good company?? Last year our pamper evening was such a success so please come along!!!

Topics for the half term

For this half term our theme was about ‘Our Community’. We looked at different buildings and who lives and works in the village, looking at the world around us, occupations and different ways of life.

We also had a role play shop and a school and we looked at numerals, counting and quantity to numbers. The children have also shown an interest in pets so we had a vets area and to support this we bought some new story books about ‘people who help us’ and ‘which animal would make a good pet’ – lots of ideas came forward, from dogs and cats to spiders and snakes!!

Our playgroup offers care and education for all children from 2 ½ years to 4 years 11 months in a well established community based group.

We offer your children a safe and stimulating environment in which they can grow and blossom into self confident, self reliant and positive little people.

Our ultimate goal is to enable the children to have fun, explore and have the freedom to express their individuality, while forming the basis of their education.

We currently have a few spaces left and operate 4 days a week offering full and half day sessions. We accept government nursery vouchers and other types of employer supported childcare vouchers.

If you would like more details please contact Mandy Owen, Playleader on 07977 342 742

email eastingtonplaygroup@eygloucestershire.co.uk

or visit our website www.eastingtonplaygroup.wordpress.co.uk

EVENTS AROUND THE DISTRICT

Nailsworth Festival 2013

Nailsworth Festival is celebrating its 30th birthday in 2013. It all kicks off with the family fun of Festival Saturday on May 18th in Mortimer Gardens, Nailsworth (behind the bus station) where you will find street entertainment and lots of interesting market stalls and activities.

The programme runs from 18th to 26th May and promises a very full programme of entertainment and activities to appeal to everyone. You can choose comedy (Clever Peter), choral singing (the renowned Bristol Gasworks choir), theatre (Bristol Old Vic theatre school are back with 'Moonfleet'), classical (the Galliard wind quintet), jazz and poetry at Egypt Mill and our own local star Mike D'Abo with his Mighty Quintet, who will stir happy memories from the 60s in a concert at the Carol Embrey Suite in the Forest Green Rovers stadium. The festival ends with the Nailsworth Youth Showcase, a celebration of young performers from the area.

There are also a number of children's events and walks and workshops including drumming, weaving and researching your house's history.

Go to www.nailsworthfestival.org.uk for full details or get hold of a festival brochure from the Town Information Centre (where you can also buy tickets), the library or any of a number of shops in the town.

Tim Hughes, Publicity, Tel: 01453 836993

Transition Stroud is good for you

A healthy, balanced diet is important but not always easy to achieve. Transition Stroud suggests an answer. Grow your own! You get excellent, healthy, cheap food and plenty of enjoyable exercise.

Local gardeners who grow their own food will be opening their gardens and allotments in July 2013 for people to come and be inspired. The growers will be available to talk about their work and some will host workshops on gardening subjects.

If you have a garden or allotment that grows edible food, herbs, flowers or trees and would like to join us in opening in July this year please contact admin@transitionstroud.org. To find out what gardens are already opening please have a look at our website on www.edibleopengardens.org.uk – maybe see you there!

Lakefield School PTA fundraising event



CAR BOOT SALE

Sunday 12 May 2013

On the Perryway, Frampton-on-Severn

Cars set up from 8.30 am

Gates open 9.30 am

Sellers : £7.00 per car; £10 per trailer/van

Free entry for browsers/walkers

Hot refreshments available

Finish at 1.00 pm

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Village Shop, Intersound Guitars, Dursley, 01453 860047/860329.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

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Gloucestershire County Council Switchboard	01452 425000	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk Email: customerservices@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Stroud District Council Switchboard	01453 766321 Out of Hours 01452 532467	www.stroud.gov.uk
Report an issue: Flooding; Potholes; Overgrown trees or hedges; Blocked drains; Hazards on road; Traffic light not working; Issues with public rights of way	01452 425000 08000 514 514	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit
Flood Prevention; Food Safety; Pest Control; Pollution; Dog Warden	01453 754478	Email: environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk
Recycling/Refuse Collection	01453 754424	www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/environment/waste.asp Email: recycling@stroud.gov.uk
Planning	01453 754442	www.stroud.gov.uk/planning Email: planning@stroud.gov.uk
Energy Efficiency Advice: Severn Wye Energy Agency	0800 500 3076	www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/environment/energy.asp Email: energy@stroud.gov.uk
Social Services Helpline	01453 760500	
Emergency Numbers:		
Gas Emergency Line	0800 111 999	
Electricity Emergency Line	08457 331331	
Severn Trent Water – leak or blocked public sewer	0800 783 4444	www.stwater.co.uk
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111	
Environment Agency	08708 506506 Incident hotline: 0800 807060	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Floodline	08459 881188	www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline
Highways Agency	0300 123 5000	www.highways.gov.uk ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk
Other Services:		
Neil Carmichael (MP for Stroud)	01453 751572	Email : neil.carmichael.mp@parliament.uk
Police (Non Emergency)	101	
Fire (Non Emergency)	01452 753333	
Flooding:		
Flooding caused by blocked highway drains and road gullies	08000 514 514	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk
Flooding caused by blocked public sewer	0800 783 4444	www.stwater.co.uk
Flood Prevention	01453 754478	Email: environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk
Floodline	08459 881188	www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline

Call the **Environment Agency's Floodline** on 0845 988 1188 for simple, clear and quick advice on what to do before, during and after flooding in bad weather. You can find more details on the Environment Agency website <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>

Health and Welfare Services:		
Stroud A&E	01453 562200	
Gloucester A&E	01452 394518 /394324	
Stroud & District Citizens Advice Bureau	08444 111 444	www.StroudDistrictCAB.org.uk
NHS Direct	0845 4647	www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
GP Out of Hours Service	08454 220220	www.gloshealthservices.org.uk
Guide and PALS	08000 151548	Health, Social Care and Disability information service in Glos
Victim Support Helpline	0845 30 30 900	www.victimsupport.org.uk/
Childline	0800 1111	www.childline.org.uk
National Drugs Helpline	0800 776600	www.talktofrank.com
Drinkline	0800 9178282	
Stonehouse Royal British Legion	01453 825076	prawl39@btinternet.com
Other useful numbers:		
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	01452 528491	www.grcc.org.uk
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	01452 383333	www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk
Stroud Valleys Project	01453 753358	www.stroudvalleysproject.org/ for info regarding the conservation of the local environment
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