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# **CHIRK HOSPITAL CIRCLE OF FRIENDS.**

Chirk Hospital Circle of Friends continues to fund raise for your local Community Hospital and earlier this year were delighted to see the completion of the new car park which has greatly helped to ease parking problems around the hospital. This was funded completely by the Circle of Friends with the help of a legacy left by a grateful patient and also with money raised from fund raising events which are on-going. The Flower Festival held in June at St Mary's Church and which was to commemorate the 70th anniversary of VE Day with the chosen theme of 'Peace' was a wonderful success with visitors to the festival coming from near and far to view the beautiful displays which had been arranged by local groups and individuals. Sincere thanks were given to Mrs Hilary Spragg for master minding the event in a highly skilled and dedicated manner, and thanks also to the Church Wardens of St Mary's Church together with the Vicar Rev Matt Wilkinson for all their help and support given. The 3 Day Flower Festival concluded with a Songs of Praise Service which was very well attended and a total of £1,000 was raised which was divided between the Circle of Friends and St Mary's Church. Following on from this the Hospital Fete and Craft and Produce Show was held on a bright Summers Day in July which was also well supported by the community. Thanks are given to Llangollen Silver Band for their excellent and foot tapping music which filled the air throughout the afternoon and also to the Border School of Dance whose dancing skills took everyone's breath away - they were fantastic! Thanks also to McDonald's of Chirk for all their generous support given to the Circle of Friends with their donation of heat resistant paper cups and plates and also a donation received as a result of a raffle held at the restaurant. An amazing total of over £1,400 was raised at the fete so a big thank you to all who came along and supported this event.



The Circle of Friends has now resumed its regular Rummage Sales at Chirk Parish Hall and the next one will be on Saturday October 10th from 10am -12 noon with lots of bargains up for grabs plus mouth watering refreshments! This will be followed on Saturday November 14th with a Christmas Craft Fayre also at Chirk Parish Hall from 10am - 12 noon and anyone wishing to book a table is asked to contact 01691 773642 or 01691 772321.

The annual Tree of Light will be taking place once again this year when you can remember a loved one by having their names placed on the tree and which will then be read out at the special Carol Service taking place at the hospital on Wednesday December 9th at 3.45pm. You can place your loved ones name(s) by filling them in on the special forms which you will find at Chirk Health Centre and Chirk Hospital and other local places still to be announced and placing a small donation in the collecting tins available or by calling 01691 772321 or 01691 773642. All donations will go towards the Hospital Scanner Appeal which is ongoing due to the current scanner needing replacing in the very near future..

The Band entertained the crowds in Oswestry Park on 2nd August and 16th August as part of the council's Music in the Park Concerts. The Band selected a mixture of audience favourites including showing off some of the soloists within the band. We received high praise from the field we were even lucky enough to have the sun!

The Band were honoured to be asked to play in the procession of the funeral of Joey Smout Sr, a much loved and respected member of the St Martins Community who sadly passed away over the summer. Joey Smout Sr was the father of our own percussionist Joey Smout Jr and so the band were very proud to play When the Saints go Marching In to accompany the family and friends to the Church on the day.

On the 20th September the band travelled to Cheltenham to take part in this years Nation Brass Band Championship Finals, This is the third time in three years the band has attended. After all 19 bands had played, the band was placed 3rd overall. The band dedicate their performance today to Joey Smout Snr. Joey was a massive supporter of the band throughout his life with 5 of his children playing in the band.



This ones for you Joey

Our final competition of 2015 will be in Wychavon on 31st October. The competition rewards the best entertainment programme and so no doubt our musical director Wayne Ruston is already planning to play what will wow the crowds and hopefully bring yet another trophy to St Martins.



Kris Davies and Phillip Morris of Kapatol Competition Promoters

Trombone section led by Ryan Higgins then Alun David, John Thomas.  
Tuba players are Nick Boyle, Simon Parry and Ian Mair.





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# Friends of Ifton Meadows



You might not think that Ifton Meadows has anything in common with the extensive area of Richmond Park in West London, but both sites feature a swathe of acid grassland – an area of rough grass with few nutrients that attracts ground nesting birds such as the skylark.

Naturally, such areas are maintained by managed grazing but where this is not practicable, such as on Ifton Meadows, humans have to take a hand if this nationally important habitat is not to be lost. To this end we aim to have 1/3 of the skylark mound mowed each autumn, with the cuttings removed to prevent enrichment of the soil. By mowing a different third each year we help to maintain the acid balance of the grassland and continue to provide the right conditions for the ground nesting birds

Another asset that Ifton Meadows and Richmond Park have in common is fungi. Our talk and walk in September will have informed us of the extent and variety of these. (This article was submitted before the talk took place.) We doubt we will have found as many as in Richmond – they have over 400 types – but nonetheless fungi are ecologically important here too. The mushrooms and toadstools that you see on the Meadows are the “fruiting bodies” of an underground system. As well as spreading the fungi through the dispersal of their powdery spores, fungi provide food and habitat for numerous insects.

Please try not to damage these delicate growths and remember that Ifton Meadows is a Nature Reserve.

One problem that both Richmond Park and Ifton Meadows have in common is the threat from dog fouling. To quote from the Richmond Park website –“Please don’t spoil someone else’s day and pick up after your dog....Dog fouling alters the nutrient levels of soils and can affect the survival of rare flora and fauna.” Please remember that dog fouling on the Meadows is not only unpleasant for other visitors but also potentially ecologically damaging. It is dog walkers’ responsibility to keep dogs under control and clean up after them.

Another job that needs doing to maintain the acid grassland on the Meadows is to clear the encroaching scrub. If this is not done the site will lose some of its biodiversity.

The task needs a group that will assist us with removing the birch saplings that are springing up through the grass. This would be a massive task for the current small band of regular volunteers, but could be achieved relatively quickly if an organised group came to help. Any offers?

To find out more about acid grasslands, visit [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk), and look at national plans for them.

Meanwhile, enjoy Autumn on Ifton Meadows – you are welcome to pick blackberries and sloes.

Forthcoming events:

October meeting will be on 22nd at St.Martins Community Centre 7.30 p.m a week later than normal all welcome. November meeting will be on the 10th and will also be the AGM.

Green Gym will be on Sunday 11th October meeting at Colliery/main entrance 1.30p.m. Please note that Novembers Green Gym will start at 2 p.m. on Sunday 8th November later than normal because it is Remembrance Sunday. These dates are dependent on the weather so if in doubt ring 01978.710327 for confirmation.



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# Bank Top—St Martins

**There were 18 camps in Shropshire during World War II, holding Italian and German prisoners of war (POWs).**

Many of the camps have been destroyed leaving hardly a trace of their existence. However, one at Nesscliffe, today used as an army training camp, still has many of its original buildings.

A former POW camp in St Martins near Oswestry is also practically complete, with the prisoners' quarters now being used as an industrial estate.



Phil Fairclough from Telford has always been fascinated by the camps and the men who lived there. He has written a book about them, yet to be published, and has also written many articles about the war and its impact on Shropshire.

A couple of years ago he met up with two former prisoners of war who had been interned at Bank Top at St Martins. They said the place looked a little bleak compared with what it was like when they were there. They said they had cultivated little garden patches outside the huts and grew flowers and tried to make it as homelike as possible.

St Martins housed 600 prisoners and was a satellite camp to the large establishment at Mile End near Oswestry where 2,000 men were based. The idea of the smaller camps was to make it easier for the men to go to work on nearby farms and Ifton Colliery. Many POW farm workers ended up living with the families of the farmers they worked for.

Mr Fairclough said initially, many of the POWs held in the UK were Italians. It was only after the end of the war that Germans arrived in large numbers, before being repatriated. At the peak

there were 402,000 POWs in the UK in 1,000 camps. The POWs were paid for their work, but not very much. The government charged the farmers Agricultural Wages Board rates to have a prisoner, so they didn't come free. They got about £4 a week. That's about 75p.

Half was paid in a token with the number of the camp stamped on it and they were allowed to exchange that token only at the prison shop for things like toothpaste and cigarettes and things of that kind. The

other half got paid into a bank account, but not in England. The bank account had to be in Germany which they could access when they were demobbed, when they were finally released. Some never claimed it. It was just left there.

Although the war ended in 1945 it was not until 1949 that the last POWs were repatriated. Some of their homes now lay in the newly formed East Germany and many decided not to return, preferring to settle permanently in Britain.

One man who stayed was Theodor Terhorst. He had been a paratrooper before being injured in a jeep, stolen from American soldiers in France. He was taken to the Channel Islands - treated in a hospital on Jersey and then sent to Guernsey to man the German garrison there.

The German POW who stayed. He told Phil Fairclough they were cut off from the retreating German army and could not get any supplies. They were starving and resorted to killing and eating seagulls, pet goats, rabbits and even a military police dog. On arrival at Mile End he weighed about five stone and was put on a special milk and white bread diet to build up his weight. He was later sent to work on a farm near St Martins and eventually married the farmer's eldest daughter, settling down and establishing his own building business in the village.

*Continued on page 35*

Continued from page 34

Once the German POWs had left, Bank Top became a European Voluntary Workers Camp. Something which Phil Fairclough had not previously realised.

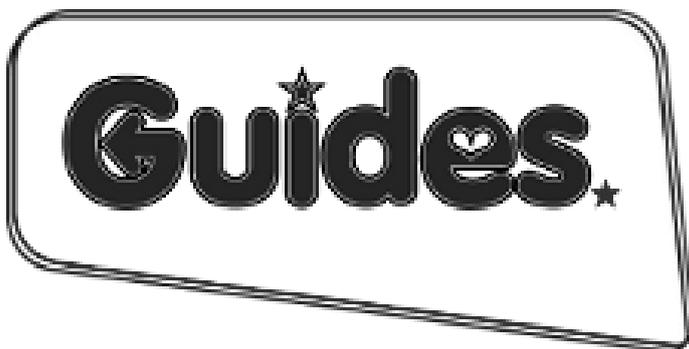
It was Bruce Raybould, who runs his engineering business from the hut which used to be the Italian chapel, who said workers from all over Europe had come to St Martins. Many had settled in the area, married local women and brought up their families in Shropshire.

Mr Fairclough said the country needed more workers: "The government was a little bit unhappy when all the Germans went home because it lost them nearly half a million tough young men who were giving very valuable labour to this country.

So they advertised round displaced persons camps and labour exchanges in continental Europe and 100,000 people were invited over. They were called European Voluntary Workers and often they were put in the camps the Germans had just vacated."



When the camp finally closed it became a chicken farm and is now part of the Brynkinalt Estate owned by the Hill-Trevor family. It has recently been refurbished and is now used as light industrial estate.



Twelve Guides joined with other Shropshire Guides and Scouts at The West Midlands Showground for the 2015 Lynx Camp.

The first day was very windy and putting up the tents was a struggle but they went up and stayed up for the whole camp.

There was some rain but not enough to dampen anyone's spirits.

There were lots of activities that the guides took part in - too many to mention, but the favourite was I'm not a Celebrity get me out of here! The canoeing and Zip Wire were enjoyed also

One of our Guides, Katie Joseph made her Guide Promise at the Lynx camp and she was presented with her badge by County Commissioner Clare Shinton.

We say goodbye to Maya, Hannah and Emily but they have plans to keep within Guiding in other ways. We wish them all the best in the future

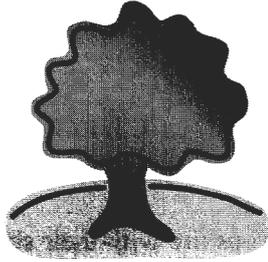
Also, a former St Martins Guide, Megan Phillips was presented with her Queen's Guide Award by Gill Slocombe Guiding's Chief Commissioner at the Lynx camp. This is the highest award in Guiding and extremely hard work to achieve.

Well done Megan

St Martins Guides starts the autumn term on

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September at Ellesmere Road Methodist Chapel

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## AUGUST

St Martins W.I. did not have a meeting in August. Instead about 15 members and friends went on a coach outing to Stoneyford Cottage Gardens and Nursery. We enjoyed a conducted tour by the owner who had started the garden 30 years ago, and this was followed by a nice lunch. Some members bought plants from the nursery. The trip was

greatly enjoyed.

## SEPTEMBER

On 1st September we held our meeting and our Autumn Show. We also celebrated the W.I.'s 100 anniversary with a celebration cake and wine. Our Centenary Recipe Book was displayed and sold for the first time.

Our President Shirley Willis welcomed everyone and we sang Jerusalem. Pam Doyle thanked Shirley on behalf of members for the special effort she put into the 100 yrs celebration, making our cake and steering the recipe book to completion. In turn Shirley thanked all those who contributed to and helped put together the recipe book. She thanked also all those who took part in Oswestry Show, photos of which were on display in the room. A presentation of Centenary W.I. badges was made to all members. Our speaker was Mr Andy Jones talking of his memoirs of serving on the Royal Yacht Britannia. He gave us some insights into the grand banquets that took place, and the Heads of State and famous people he served aboard her. He also gave us details of the fabulous silverware and precious objects used in the banquets. He had many happy memories of his time serving the Royal Family. He was thanked by Jean Lunt. The presentation to the winners of cups for our Autumn Show was as follows:- **Preserves Cup** to Isobel Banham, 2nd Paula King, 3rd Joyce Sands. **Cookery Cup** went to Ann Sadler, Joint 2nd Jean Lunt and Isobel Banham, Joint 3rd Shirley Willis and Rita Jowett. **Floral Rose Bowl** to Morfydd James, 2nd Shirley Willis, 3rd Ann Sadler. **Vegetable and Produce Cup** to Joyce Sands, 2nd Ann Sadler, 3rd Sheila Buchanan. **Handicrafts Rose Bowl** to Rita Jowett, 2nd Jill Doughty, 3rd Morfydd James. **The Margaret Taylor Vase** for best in crafts was won by Rita Jowett. **The Challenge Cup** was won by Ann Sadler. **The Overall Winners Cup** on total points went to Joyce Sands, 2nd Ann Sadler, 3rd Isobel Banham. Total of all entries was 133.



Our next meeting will be on 6th October in the Miners Institute at 7.30 p.m. The speaker will be Penny Vingoe, showing us how to make Christmas Crackers. Visitors are welcome.



**Our BIG headlines this month are that we have awarded the second grant from our BIG Grants Scheme, Local Trust have approved our budget for the next twelve months, and we have fundraising opportunities available for local community groups.**

The Three Parishes Big Local Partnership, the group of volunteer residents managing Three Parishes Big Local, has awarded the second grant from the BIG Grants scheme to the local Community First Responders (CFRs). The local CFRs are two volunteers, based in St Martins, who cover the whole of the Three Parishes Big Local area and beyond. The volunteer CFRs provide a valuable service in this rural area, often the first to arrive in response to a 999 call for an ambulance, providing medical assistance and support until the ambulance arrives. The CFRs applied for funding from our BIG Grants scheme towards the cost of replacing the car that they use to provide this service and the Three Parishes Big Local Partnership has agreed a grant of £5000.

The Three Parishes Big Local Partnership has also awarded Community Chest grants to:

**St Martins School Sports Centre** towards the costs of a large inflatable for use in the swimming pool for out of school activities.

**Weston Rhyn Under 19s Football team** towards the costs associated with setting up and running a new youth football team.

**Qube** towards the cost of purchasing a mobility scooter for local residents to hire for short or long term hires.

In the last issue of Village Life we announced that we are producing a 2016 calendar showcasing the winners of our “Postcard from my village” competition. We still have some opportunities for local community groups to help envelop, label and deliver the calendars in October and November this year. This is an ideal opportunity to raise funds for your community group or organisation as we will make a donation to any group that helps us. If you can help with enveloping & labelling or delivery in part or all of the area, please contact the Big Local Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

All the postcard entries that we received for the competition are now part of an exhibition that is touring the schools, churches, community centres and library in the local area. To find out when the exhibition is in your village, contact Bridget or Andy on 01691 656882 or check our Facebook page, 3PBigLocal or the news page on our website [www.big-local.org](http://www.big-local.org).

On 18<sup>th</sup> September, the Partnership received confirmation from Local Trust, the organisation that manages Big Local across England, that the proposed projects and budget for the next 12 months have been approved. The projects that we have started since September 2014, including Community Chest Grants, BIG Grants Scheme, local credit union service points and supporting car sharing will continue. The Partnership is also working on new projects including projects to support local business and enterprise, especially new business start-ups. We would still like to hear from anyone who has any ideas about other projects that could be funded as part of the Three Parishes Big Local Programme.

Following the positive feedback that we received from the people that attended the free “First Aid at home” training that we organised in June, we have organised 2 more courses on the following dates:

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October. 3pm – 5pm. Weston Rhyn Village hall  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November. 3pm – 5pm. Gobowen Playing fields pavilion.

These two part courses are free to attend and all the courses are open to any residents of the Three Parishes Big Local area. For more information, or to book a place on one of the courses, please contact Bridget or Andy on 01691 656882 or email [info@big-local.org](mailto:info@big-local.org).

If you have an idea or would like to get involved with 3 Parishes Big Local, to keep up to date with the latest 3 Parishes Big Local news, or for more information,



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