

Vol 42 | No.7

FREE

CLOPHILL SPOTLIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2020

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A word from the Editor...

Welcome to the September issue of Spotlight

I hope you all had a great summer and kept busy, despite the lack of events going on.



This month we have 2 requests for volunteers from the village. The Parish Council is looking for volunteer councilors, short by 3 people (see page 4 for details).

Also Spotlight is looking for a new Distribution manager, see page 2 for details.

We have an interesting article commemorating VJ day in August 1945, in place of the series about Clophill's Serving Survivors of WW1, which will return in the October edition.

And finally, don't forget you can join the Parish Council meetings now from the comfort of your own home, via Zoom – see page 11.

Best wishes, Elaine



The magazine staff

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Deadline for articles is 20th of the month

You can also read Spotlight online
www.clophillspotlight.co.uk

SAVE YOUR SPOTLIGHT

New Distribution Manager wanted for your local village magazine

"We are looking for a new Distribution manager for Spotlight. Someone to co-ordinate the collection and distribution of the magazine to the team of distributors."

Can you help?

For more information please contact Elaine on
07918 975823 or **editorial@clophillspotlight.co.uk**



**Going...
going...
gone?**



Spotlight relies on volunteers to keep going.

**If you don't want to lose your village magazine
– please think about whether you can help.**

Come into the Garden

with Kate Gardner



September is often regarded as the start rather than the end of the new gardening year and now is a good time to take stock of the successes and failures and to make plans to ensure that next year will be the best ever. Also, if you are starting out from scratch you will have plenty of time to prepare the ground whilst planning your dream garden or allotment.

Many of us have found or renewed a love of gardening this year and as a result there has been a huge increase in many first-time gardeners finding they do indeed have a green finger or two.

Fruit and vegetable growing has been incredibly popular this year and with the soil still nice and warm and wet from the recent rains, there are still plenty of seeds that you can sow to extend you home grown edibles into the autumn and beyond.

Keep cutting courgettes regularly as they typically will finish fruiting towards the end of the month. If you dice them up and freeze them they are ready to add to your winter recipes.

Remove any green tomatoes left on your plants and place them in a sunny spot to ripen.

Now we have shorter, cooler days it is the perfect time to sow the seed of the Oriental vegetables such as Mizuna and Pak choi. They will germinate quickly and are hardy enough to withstand the cold of winter and will provide a steady supply of fresh leaves well into the Spring of next year. Also make a sowing of hardy winter lettuce and spinach. If you have some early season peas you can sow these into pots and use them for pea shoots, or overwinter them ready for an early crop of peas next year.

If you have apples or soft fruit you will have noticed an increase in wasps as they are attracted to the ripening fruit, especially windfalls. Wasps are the gardener's friend because they are major predators of aphids and caterpillars at this time of the year, so encourage them rather than deterring them as they are a key predator insect.

But its not just about the edibles, September is the perfect time to sow hardy annuals for early flowering next year. You will get bigger, better plants which can flower a good six weeks earlier than those which are spring sown. For example, briza, bupleurum, calendula, centaurea, poppies and scabious can all be direct sown now. Remember to keep them weed free as they germinate. Sow a pack of Viola 'Heartsease' and these will be in flower in about eight weeks' time, right through winter.

Hunt around your borders for self-sown seedlings of hardy annuals and biennials, such as English marigolds (Calendula), honeywort (Cerinthe) and honesty (Lunaria), where you've had them earlier this year. If they are overcrowded where they've sprung up, transplant them, spacing them 12in (30cm) apart. Or create a line in a cutting patch to harvest flowers next year.

The wallflowers are now available from many garden centres so get these planted in now as these spring-flowering biennials need to get their roots down well before flowering. That's also true for your spring bulbs if you want a cracking show of colour in the spring.

Fancy trying something new then why not plant a layered pot of bulbs, known as a "bulb lasagne", for your doorstep, with the largest and latest flowering bulbs at the lowest level (with at least 6in of soil/compost below the bottom of the bulb) and early flowering, smaller bulbs on top. Excellent combinations are crocus above early tulips, or try an early grape hyacinth on top, with a late tulip below. Top-dress with grit to keep the pot looking good through winter.

Happy Gardening

YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU!

Clophill Parish Council should have 10 councillors, but at the time of writing this article, only 7 people have volunteered. You could make a difference in the community by joining the Council.

Clophill Council needs to recruit more councillors. Could this be you?

What is the role of a councillor?

You will represent the views of all residents within the parish and deliver the overall vision. As part of your council, you will have responsibility for running local services, which include:

- open spaces
- play areas
- allotments
- grass cutting
- and potentially much more

Councillors decide on how much to raise through the council tax, called Precept, in order to deliver these services. Councillors are involved in influencing and shaping the long term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of life and the environment in your Parish by working to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent, bringing about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies. All parish councillors are volunteers and receive no payment.

How much time does it take?

We usually meet once a month for the council meeting to which members of the public are also invited. In addition to regular meetings Councillors are required to give time for 'ad hoc' meetings e.g.: to discuss planning applications that the council must give its opinions on. Correspondence is also circulated via email to councillors for review.

Are you eligible?

To be a councillor you must be a UK, Commonwealth or EU citizen, be at least 18 years old and be an elector of the parish or; in the past 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the parish or worked in the parish. If you're not eligible you can still volunteer to help in one of our working groups so please contact us.

Still interested?

Contact James Stirling (Clerk) on 01462 887226 for an informal chat,
or email clerk@clophill-pc.gov.uk.

Remember this is YOUR village! Be part of it's future!

Parish Registers for September

1820

Burials

Sep 16 Mary Webb, widow
John Goodhall

1870

Marriages

Sep 03 Joseph Bowler, 19 to Hannah Manton, 19
Samuel Hall, widower, 24 to Mary Ann Webb, widow, 26
Sep 15 Frederick Brittain, 29, tailor, to Julia Bell, 29
Sep 17 James Dunham, 21, shoemaker, to Sophia Payne, 20
Sep 24 Thomas Lincoln, 20 to Rose Clara Mann, 21

Burials

Sep 12 Ann Mendham, mother of Rev. John Mendham, Rector
Sep 22 Samuel Roberts, 28, accident

1920

Baptisms

Sep 15 Victor Douglas, son of Ernest and Elizabeth Johnson, engineer

Marriages

Sep 06 George Stacey Hales, of full age, accountant clerk from Wolverhampton to Kathleen Eveline Christian, of full age
Sep 25 Bruce William Huckle, 23, Maulden, to Bertha Eliza Bone, 26

1970

Baptisms

Sep 27 Richard Gregory Pearce

Burials

Sep 03 Susan Josephine Thomson, 1

Sign up for the Walk to Remember 2020

Get together with family and friends to celebrate someone special this October on the Walk to Remember 2020. It's being organised by Sue Ryder St John's Hospice, which cares for people with life-limiting conditions as well as supporting their families.

Ellie Burke, Community Fundraiser at Sue Ryder St John's Hospice, said: "Due to uncertainties in the current situation, we have sadly postponed our Starlight Hike this year, but are excited to announce our new event, Walk to Remember 2020."

You can walk any day throughout October or join hundreds of others across the country for our official walk day on Saturday 17th October.

Choose your distance of 5K or 10K, your start and finish line and a route that means something to you, to raise crucial funds or make a donation and help us continue to be there when it matters. Sign up for free at: www.sueryder.org/walktoremember

Contact the hospice's fundraising team on 01767 642 412 or stjohnsfundraising@sueryder.org





Fundraising Team of St Mary's Church

People need help in so many ways and so does the Village Church

In October we are planning to hold a community

Auction of Promises

We would love to hear from you if you are able to offer a 'promise'. This could be a service to help someone e.g. dog walking, shopping, baking, gardening, DIY, knitting, sewing, ironing, collecting prescriptions, dog grooming, beauty treatments – the list is endless
Or

if you are a tradesman or business and can offer a service.

You can register your offer by contacting juliebenson@talktalk.net or 01525 860497 during September. Julie will co-ordinate the pledges and compile a list of offers with a reserve price.

This list will be published, and the silent auction will run during October by sealed bids or email.

People will be asked to bid for the service via Julie who will then put the two parties in touch with one another.

The fee paid will be donated to St Mary's Church.

It should comply with Covid-19 restrictions, reach the wider village community and provide a service; as well as raising much needed funds for St Mary's Church.



Please help and support



Carolyn Cranswick Co-Ordinator of the Fundraising Team.



Did you know there are free on-line training courses available at Future learn. www.futurelearn.com The training is free - you can stop go and pick up at a time convenient to the learner, modules are bite-size and there is a lot of choice.

Claphill Preschool News

Hello everyone, we hope you have been enjoying your summer of ever-changing weather. We invited our leavers bubble up for Friday gardening and outdoor play throughout the summer and it was lovely to spend some time with them and their parents; albeit in a socially distanced way, having missed so much time at the start of the summer term. They have had much fun harvesting the spinach and carrots from the allotment, watching how tall our sunflowers grow and seeing the pumpkins get bigger and bigger. It has been really great to see that, in the face of adversity, they have triumphed in their confidence and resilience, they have adapted and thrived. We wish them a fantastic start at all their new schools and thank them for the wonderful gifts we received especially our wooden green man totem.



Going up to preschool has allowed us to further improve our outdoor area (as usual!). We have been developing our gravel pit repurposing pallets to create digger storage space, and we have also used pallets to make a new play house. We have managed to swap some of our trikes and scooters for pedal tractors, much more appropriate for our outdoor preschool!

We are looking forward to our new term, welcoming back our children and meeting all our new children and their families. It has been very important for us to ensure we keep everyone safe while still ensuring we keep the children's wellbeing our priority.

It has been challenging but interesting to find creative ways to manage the current situation that means we can all be safe but get the most from preschool. Our move to be outdoors as much as

possible was always the direction we were heading but the current situation has just accelerated this move. We are very lucky that our staff and families have embraced the move so confidently.

We have made a virtual tour with staff that will be on our website, and found it was a great way to show who we are and what we do that parents can share with their children. It means everyone can see all the staff in a time when it's not so easy to meet everyone face to face.

Many thanks to our parents past, present and future for their patience and support and to the Village Hall Committee for their continued commitment to preschool. Now let's get outside!

Roasted Courgette Soup with Peas & Basil

INGREDIENTS Preparation time 15 mins Cooking time: 45 mins Serves: 4

- 950 g courgettes
 - 1 leek
 - 4 garlic cloves
 - 2 tbsp olive oil
 - 750 ml vegetable stock
 - 200 g frozen peas
 - 75 g parmesan (optional)
 - 20 g fresh basil
 - 4 tbsp cream (or milk)
- For the croutons:
- 1 ciabatta roll, 1 tbsp olive oil and 2 tbsp pine nuts



1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan) / 350°F / Gas Mark 4.
2. Trim the ends off the courgettes and slice them into rounds about 1cm thick. Place on a baking tray/roasting tin. Trim the ends off the leek and slice into rounds of a similar size. Place on the baking tray along with the garlic cloves (still in their skin), then drizzle everything in the olive oil, season with salt and black pepper, and toss everything together until fully coated in the oil.
3. Roast the veg for 40-45 minutes, stirring/turning occasionally, until soft and golden brown (but not too charred).
4. Meanwhile, make up the vegetable stock with boiling water in a heatproof jug, then tip in the frozen peas and set aside to let them thaw.
5. When cool enough to handle, squeeze the flesh out of the roasted garlic cloves and discard the skins.
6. Tip the roasted vegetables into the blender or food processor, along with the stock and peas, most of the parmesan and basil (keep a little of both back for garnish), and the cream or milk. Blitz to a smooth purée then taste and add salt and black pepper as required.
7. To make the croutons, cut the ciabatta into cubes, toss in the olive oil and bake in the oven for 5 minutes until crispy. Roughly chop the pine nuts and scatter over the croutons and cook for a further minute until starting to brown.
8. Serve the soup with a sprinkle of basil and parmesan, topped with the croutons and pine nuts, and with a swirl of cream.

Clophill Community Care

Over these past Covid-19 saturated months, naturally, folk have been wary of going to medical appointments, although they have been very much supported by Clophill Covid-19 Support volunteers; who have shopped and collected prescriptions for many Clophill residents who have been isolating and shielding.

This is to inform you that Clophill Community Care has now resumed its normal function mainly that of transport – as we now have a stock of relevant PPE. This ensures that the client has a facemask if they don't have their own, and that when they sit in the back of the car, there is a disposable seat cover to shield them from any lurking bugs. The driver will also be using a face mask. So, it is all very safe.

The number to ring if you need any sort of help is our

Clophill Community Care discrete line - 07791 773705.

Letter to the Editor...

To all you dog walkers out there. Firstly, I would like to thank the majority of you for picking up your dog mess. For those of you who don't, you know who you are! This is for you.....

(words to twinkle twinkle little star)

Please pick up your dog poo,

I don't want to get it on my shoe.

A side effect of Covid and lockdown,

Seems to have stopped some dog walkers bending down.

Please pick up your dog poo,

You know it is the right thing to do..

All attempted humour aside. Please pick up after your dogs. It's not the nicest job I know, but if you have a dog it is what you have to do. Walks around the fields behind the village have become less enjoyable as instead of looking at the scenery I am having to play dodge the poo more and more. There is a phrase "don't poo on your own doorstep" so please honour this and keep our village nice.

Isn't this Zoom technology wonderful! I suppose it is scary too in some ways, but being able to see and chat with friends and neighbours, live, via a flat screen, to me is just brilliant. Such a meeting happened on Tuesday 28th July at 7.30pm when, once again, your Parish Councillors gave of their time, expertise and concern to matters pertaining to the village.

The meeting started with a question from the public regarding grass cutting. The Clerk stated that the current contract ends in December, after which CBC will take it on in 2021.

Councillor Paul Duckett reported that £40 million was available in **business grants**. 4,000 applications had already been received with 20 new ones coming in each week. 240 discretionary grants have also been made. There have been 14,000 households across the borough which have been helped with **tax payments**, this number is up by 1,000 since the start of the year. As to how **CBC monies** are faring – they are in a good position, due to excellent planning at its set-up, as well as prudent borrowing at the beginning of the Covid outbreak. CB Councillors continue to work well, several crossing to help out in other areas. Greensand Country (run by CBC) is aiming for a '**green**' borough by 2035 and it is heading well in that direction.

Councillor Mark Smith also highlighted the available grants and the deadline, adding that each Councillor had £1,000 **Covid funding** for distribution. He stated that the local '**Good Neighbour**' schemes were doing a really good, supportive job.

Councillor Mike Blair noted that some areas in the Borough needed workers to help with the widening of footpaths, perhaps cutting back hedges, to make more space to **enable social distancing** in these areas. He also added that **fly-tipping** was still an issue and discussion followed as to the possible reasons for this – perhaps people not realising that a 'spot' had to be booked at the Tidy Tip; perhaps not having a relevant 'tipping licence' for a van; perhaps just laziness and lack of concern for the local environment. All comments will be passed back to CBC.

The Clerk reported that:

1. Even though he was chasing information about **The Green**, there was nothing from CBC to date.
2. He has received a quote of several thousands of pounds for the installation of a power supply for lights to be put on a **Christmas tree** on The Green. He had also had a much lower one which also included a hole in which to place said tree, but it might not be able to be completed this year, due to the high demand for new electricity supplies. This item will be put on the agenda for the next meeting for further discussion and for a vote to be taken. The position for the tree is to be discussed with the potential contractor.
3. **The signage in the Townshott allotments** was looking tired and needed replacing (this was agreed).
4. **The land by The Flying Horse** – the Clerk had chased the team about tidying it, with a suggestion that tree management might be needed as well.

Clophill Parish Council

Continued

5. There is to be a meeting at the disused churchyard next week to look at the site and discuss the upkeep.
6. Contact has been made with the owner of the **Readshill Quarry** who is not in a position to replace or repair the wall.
7. The street lighting contract has been changed from SSE to EON.

Subjects 'for consideration' covered:

- i) **The Lakes.** Councillor Walford noted that it was expected that the land transfer would be completed in September, the transaction having been delayed a bit due to the current Covid situation. There was discussion over a limit on the ability of any developer to 'build up' after application to build, or amending the already built houses on the site: namely, there should be a limit on the height of any building, noting that nothing had been done to stop this practice in Jacques Lane, resulting in a very poor skyline. This had been asked of CBC, but nothing had been heard back to date, Councillor Duckett said that he would remind CBC.
- ii) **Play areas.** The risk assessment had been circulated prior to the meeting, noting that there was not enough staff to enable the areas to be sanitised as they should be these days, but suitable signage had been installed to encourage sensible usage of the equipment.
- iii) **Signage at Townshott.** This had already been discussed, but it was noted that a company has been approached to supply a replacement and the Clerk is to organise it.
- iv) **Councillor roles** and responsibilities. The Chairman stated that it wasn't possible at the moment to review these properly given the low number of Councillors. Councillor Mantini was thanked for his tireless work on the housing assessment part of the Neighbourhood plan and the submissions were to be sent in for review. He said that he still need help with some parts of the document before it was completed and any help would be gratefully received.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday 15th September at 7:45pm.

Zoom Meeting ID: 841 1062 6934 (for members of the public, via Zoom).

Julie Benson

Planning

CB/20/02390/EB

Location: Land at Conifer Kennels and Land on the West side of The Causeway
Proposal: Overhead Electricity Notification: Installation of HV pole and stay arrangement.

And

CB/20/02391/EB

Proposal: Overhead Electricity Notification: Erection of a LV pole and stay with overhead Power lines. **No Objection**

CB/20/02241/NMA

Location: Land West of Jacques Lane
Proposal: Non-Material Amendment to planning permission CB/17/03228/OUT – (Erection of 8 dwellings and formation of vehicular and pedestrian access with associated landscaping) - Plot 1 - Window amendments including insertion of rooflights and a Juliet Balcony Plots 2, 3 & 6 - Garage roof pitch amended. **Application Withdrawn**

CB/20/02241/NMA

Location: 19 High Street
Proposal: Conversion of The Granary barn, into a residential dwelling, complete with single storey extensions. **OBJECT**

CB/20/01392/LB

Location: 19 High Street
Proposal: Listed Building: Conversion of The Granary barn, into a residential dwelling, complete with single storey extensions. **OBJECT**

CB/20/02110/FULL

Location: 27 Cainhoe Road
Proposal: Single storey front extension incorporating replacement of garage roof. **SUPPORT**

CB/20/02082/FULL

Location: Land rear of 12 Back Street
Proposal: Erection of proposed 4 bedroom detached dwelling and associated garage/storage barn including proposed landscaping and access alterations. **OBJECT**

CB/20/02091/FULL

Location: Warren Farm, Warren Lane
Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory and the construction of a proposed two storey extension to the side and rear of the property and associated internal alterations. Additionally, the demolition of the existing stable and outbuilding (annexe) and the construction of a replacement annexe. **OBJECT**

Clophill Heritage Trust Update

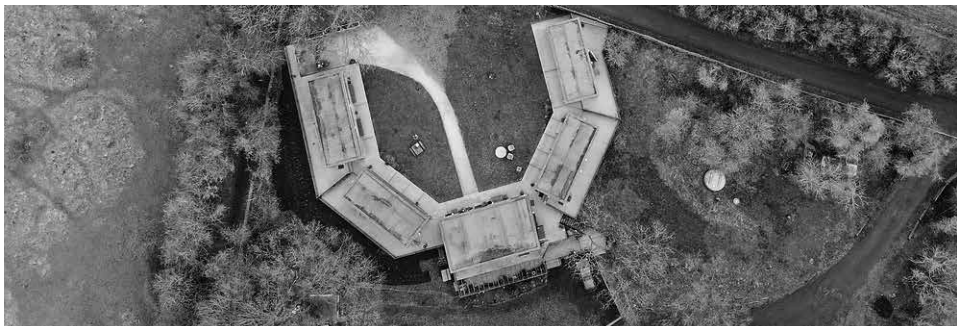
We are happy to announce that The Eco Lodges are now open again for accommodation hire – we are offering full site packages to ensure exclusive use of the lodges, kitchen and outdoor space including the BBQ. Many family groups have taken advantage of this to spend some much-missed time together, while still able to socially distance where needed. The four accommodation lodges sleep a maximum of 17 with a central kitchen and communal room The Nest. For all enquiries please call 07935 911207 or email info@ClophillEcoLodges.co.uk



On Saturday 3rd October we will be having an outdoor day to help move the grounds around the Eco Lodges & Old Church into the next season. Join us for an hour, or all day, and help clear the meadow, collect seeds, harvest, plant, cut and trim various areas of the site. A great way to spend a few hours with friends, outdoors while still socially distancing – plus of course we will be providing tea, coffee and homemade cake to keep you going! We have varying levels of tasks from very easy to more strenuous and you can choose what you would like to do on the day. If you would like to join our small group and spend an enjoyable afternoon outdoors, please let us know by calling 07935 911207 or emailing info@ClophillEcoLodges.co.uk

For any students who are taking a year out or for those who are still furloughed, we are always looking for volunteers to join our small group and help with various tasks around The Eco Lodges and Old St Mary's Church. If you would like to spend a couple of hours a month with us, please get in touch!

It is with a very heavy heart that we have had to cancel most of our events for 2020. We have contacted everyone who had tickets booked, but please check your email as some events (such as the foraging workshops) have been changed into foraging walks. There are spaces available on these and you can book tickets at www.ClophillEcoLodges.co.uk/events Sadly, our Pumpkin Festival **WILL NOT** be going ahead this year. We will have a small supply of locally grown and harvested pumpkins available to buy and collect on Saturday 31st October. Please see our Facebook Page or our website for more information.



St Mary's Church News



As previously announced the church is open for quiet prayer every Wednesday from 11.00am to 4.00pm. We are delighted that some people are availing themselves of this. Services resumed on Sundays at 10.45 under strict arrangements, including no singing! We are hoping to resume Holy Communion services this month. This will be advised on our website.

About 20 people gathered around the War Memorial to commemorate VJ Day. The flag was lowered as Martin Dunn played the Last Post and the 2 minutes silence was observed followed by Reveille as the flag was hoisted. Finally the Church bells rang out. It was a quiet and respectful ceremony.

Warden Abbey Vineyard, Old Warden

Open Day and Wine Sale, with Local Food and Crafts Sunday 13th Sept 11- 4pm. We are making changes this year to comply with Covid 19 guidance. Please check our website nearer the time for the latest situation and entry details. Advance booking may be required. Come and find out the story of the medieval vineyard and abbey, and how we care for the vines all year round at this community run project. In addition to offering tea and cakes we hope to have all our regular stall holders with us, including BBQ and ice creams.
www.wardenvineyard.org.uk

Village groups

Beverley Court	860920
Brownies	https://enquiryym.girlguiding.org.uk
Clophill Community Care	Duty Contact 07791 773705
Clophill Heritage Trust	Ali Bradbury 07894 710001
Clophill Preschool	Imogen 07765 887868
	Chris 07936 006381
Clophill St Mary's C of E Lower School & Nursery	Emma Topliff 860206
Clophill Toddler Group	Hannah Compton 07535 705711
Clophill United Charities	Richard Pearson 861110
Conservation Group	Brian Adams 862297
Flower Club	Gillian Hill 860539
Friends of the Cheshire Home	Sue Pearson 861110
Funzone After School Club	07903 167493
Greensands Community Choir	Luke Howard 07975 520085
Indoor Carpet Bowls	Tony Meredith 860754
Messy Church	Victoria Higgins 07920 568861
	victoriajhiggins@hotmail.co.uk
St Mary's PTA	Julia Skelton 07774 993973
Scouts and Cubs	www.scouts.org.uk/get-involved
Tea and Chat	Anita Errick 860695
Village Hall Booking Secretary	Marilyn Browning 07821 643936

Useful numbers

Gas (Emergency)			0800 111999
Electricity (Emergency)			0800 7838838
Emergency Fire/Police/Ambulance			999
Water/Sewage (Anglian Water)			0845 7145145
Telephone	(Customer Services) 150	(Faults)	151
Highways Department (Central Bedfordshire Council)			0300 3008049
Benefits Agency (Bedford office)			01234 361500
Registrar's Office (Births/deaths/marriages)			0300 3008089
Rail (Enquiries)			0845 7484950
Buses 01234 262151	(Link A Ride) 01525 840511	(Flittabus)	01582 406561
Luton Airport			01582 405100
Swimming	(Flitwick) 01525 717744	(Robinson Pool)	01234 212479

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Central Beds Offices (Chicksands)			0300 300 8000
Mid-Beds MP		Nadine Dorries	01462 811992
Central Bedfordshire Councillors		Michael Blair	01525 404513
		Paul Duckett	07988 184061
Clophill Parish Council	(Clerk) James Stirling	clerk@clophill-pc.gov.uk	01462 887226

HOSPITALS

Bedford (North & South)	01234 355122	Admissions	01234 261150
		Appointments	01234 359012
Luton & Dunstable			0845 1270127

DOCTOR'S CLINICS

Ampthill	(Houghton Close) 01525 300898	(Oliver Street)	01525 631395
		(Greensands)	01525 631390
Shefford	Enquiries 01462 818620	Appointments	01462 810034
Barton 01582 528700		Flitwick	01525 715300

POLICE

County Police HQ		Non Emergency	101
Ampthill Station			01234 841212
			101

CHURCHES

St Mary's Parish Church		RECTORS POST VACANT	
	(Church Warden) Rosemary Ilett	mandrilett@onetel.com	01525 860274
St Francis RC Church, Shefford		Ian Gordon	01525 860875
Clophill Methodist Church		Jim Davies	01525 860829
Baptist Churches (Ampthill) Doreen Gibbs	01525 862424	(Maulden) Ian Crawford	01525 634325
		(Shefford) Hazel Arnold	01462 812564

SCHOOLS

Clophill St Mary's C of E Lower School & Nursery	(Headteacher Mrs K Bingley)		01525 860206
Harlington Upper School , Harlington			01525 755100
Preschool	clophillpreschool@gmail.com	(Chris) 07936 006381 or (Imogen)	07765 887868
Redborne Upper School , Ampthill			01525 404462
Robert Bloomfield Middle School , Shefford			01462 628800

Celebrating a WW2 Survival story from VJ Day – 15th August 1945



Henry William Mosser - father of Sue O'Neill, The Old Forge, Clophill

Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) on the 15th August each year is the day on which Imperial Japan surrendered unconditionally in World War II, in effect bringing the war to an end. Whilst it had major global implications, its effects were keenly felt closer to home - for one Clophill resident, it brought her father safely home after over three and half years of captivity at the hands of the Japanese.

When war broke out HW Mosser was living in north London and worked on the fire tenders for the Edmonton Fire Brigade. He then joined the RAF as an Engine Fitter (Fitt II E, Aircraftman First Class) on the 14th November 1940.

He was posted abroad in August 1941 to RAF Seletar, an air force station in Singapore, home of 205 and 100 squadrons. He was a member of the 151 Maintenance Unit.

The Japanese started to bomb the airfield on the 29th January 1942. Four days later, 151 Maintenance Unit were evacuated to the island of Java, Dutch East Indies (modern day Indonesia). The Unit failed to reform successfully, and as the Japanese took Java, it rapidly turned into every man for himself. Allied resistance in the Dutch East Indies ceased on the 7th March.

HW Mosser's Japanese Index Card of Allied Prisoners of War, a copy of which was sent to his wife, shows his date of capture as the day after. He then became part of the 'Java Party 5C' POW working party, which was eventually shipped to Singapore around October 1942 with about 4,000 other POWs from Batavia (modern day Jakarta). The transport ship, the Kunitama Maru, was torpedoed a year later by the SS Capelin, an American submarine.

HW Mosser was documented as arriving at the notorious Changi Prison on the 23rd October 1942. Fortunately, he avoided incarceration there for an extended period, instead shipping out on the Kamakaru Maru to Japan on the 28th November 1942 with 2,200 other POWs on board, for Nagasaki. The Kamakaru Maru was also sunk by an American sub, the USS Gudgeon, in April 1943.

On arrival in Nagasaki, HW Mosser was sent to the Fukuoka #3-B POW Camp, one of a number of camps around the Nagasaki area, near the city of Yahata. Yahata was a large industrial town nicknamed the "Pittsburgh of Japan". The POWs were made to work at the adjacent power plant.

It was only on the 15th August 1943 that the message finally got through from the Japanese to the British and on to his wife that he was alive, as a POW in Japan. It had been 558 long days since his unit had disbanded and fled Singapore. His wife then posted a note in the local paper that read:

Mrs. Mosser, of 2, Durham-road, Edmonton, wishes to thank all friends and neighbours for kind enquiries. Her husband A.C.I. Harry Mosser is now reported a prisoner of war in Japanese hands after a silence of 15 months.

The long victory was felt earlier in Fukuoka #3-B than some other camps, as given their proximity to a heavily industrialised area, they saw the first American B-29 bombing raids over Japan, when Yahata's steel works were attacked.

The camp commander (Major Rikitake) was not as evil as some, protecting his charges and attempting to provide with medical supplies and food, where possible. However, this did not stop some of the low-ranking men from abusing their positions.

The camp was also inhabited by an American Marine TS Kirk. He built a pinhole camera and took the only photos taken inside a Japanese POW camp. They were unpublished for over fifty years.



The power plant, with the prison camp in the foreground

The atomic bomb that fell on Nagasaki on the 9th August was far enough away (65 miles) not to be an issue for those at Fukuoka #3-B, though rumours of a massive bomb started to circulate, and the soldiers guarding the camp became noticeably friendlier.

Japanese surrendered soon after on 15th August 1945, but the camp was only liberated on the 13th September. From that point B-29 bombers started dropping food and supplies.

HW Mosser then had a long journey home. He was picked up by the escort carrier HMS Speaker in Nagasaki harbour, having been taken through 'ground zero' to get to the ship. Speaker dropped the rescued POWs off at Okinawa, before another aircraft carrier, HMS Glory, took them from Okinawa via Manila to Vancouver, Canada, arriving on the 26th October 1945. He then travelled by rail across Canada and the US, likely to New York, before heading home.

HW Mosser was recorded as having been released from the RAF on the 20th December 1945, having served in the RAF for 1,862 days, 1,285 of which were in captivity. Assuming he travelled to Singapore by boat around Africa, his round trip from Edmonton, N18 will have been in excess of 30,000 miles, and he was likely one of only a few thousand people who had circumnavigated the globe at that time.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Mike Pearson (son of Richard and Sue Pearson) who is now living in Singapore, for his research and assistance in finding out more about my Dads time as a prisoner of war.

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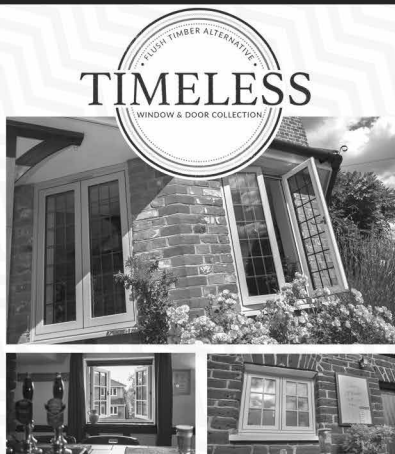
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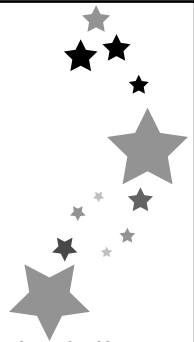
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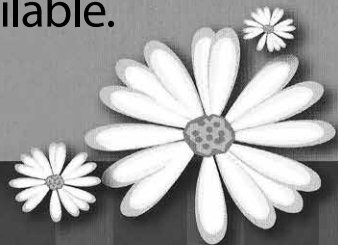
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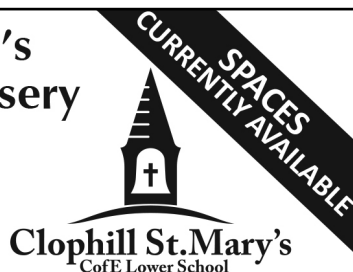
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