



The Wheel

5th April - Italian Night

12th April - Curry Night

19th April - Quiz night

21st April - Easter Sunday.

Wheel Inn will be holding a competition for kids

26th April - Steak Night + Live Music

**4th May - Reggae/Ska Festival
for James' Birthday!**

**Contact: 01233 712223
info@thewheelinnwestwell.uk**



THE WESTWELL EYE

194

April

2019



Lamb taken by Val Butcher.
'Habiba' Nada and Jonathan's
puppy.
Maya Angelou - p13



1st, 15th + 29th April

5th April

9th April

9th + 23rd April

19th April

1.30pm Art Group - all welcome

10.30am Coffee in The Wheel

11am Book Club - The Wheel - p13

7.30pm Players

7pm Quiz - The Wheel

April 2019

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
4 5th Sunday of Lent 8am Holy Communion 3.30-5pm Messy Church parish hall	1 1.30pm Art Group 7pm Fitness	2	3 NO Fistssteps -	4 Re.F.T. 9.15am Pilates	5 10am Iona Eucharist 10.30 Coffee Wheel	6
7 Palm Sunday 11am Iona Eucharist	8 7pm Fitness	9 Book Club - p13 7.30pm Players	10 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	11 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 7.15pm WI Meeting	12	13
14 Easter Sunday 11am Family Eucharist	15 1.30pm Art Group 7pm Fitness	16	17 NO Fistssteps -	18 Re.F.T. 9.15am Pilates 7pm Seder Meal p12	19 10am Good Friday Service	20
21 2nd Sunday of Easter 11am Eucharist	22 7pm Fitness	23 7.30pm Players	24 10am Fistssteps Chair Class 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	25 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates	26	27
28	29 1.30pm Art Group 7pm Fitness	30 May 1	2	3	4	

From the Editor's desk...

This issue of The Eye is very full and there are one or two very interesting features, particularly one by Frank Bortoli about a Polish fighter pilot who is buried in Westwell cemetery, see pages 9,10 and 11.

Another interesting piece is the book club article on page 13, followed by the poem below. Make sure you are on the Electoral Register by 12th April if you intend to vote in the Borough and Parish elections – see page 14.

If you would like to help decorate the church for Easter please get in touch with Penny Knatchbull – see page 13.

Carolyn Thorneloe ✍

When my bones are stiff and aching
And my feet won't climb the stair
I'll only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair

When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

Maya Angelou

contd. from page 13.

On Aging (*American spelling*)

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need you chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!

The views of any contributor to this publication may not necessarily be those of the editor and team, nor can the Westwell Eye accept any responsibility in connection with any companies or organisations mentioned or any advertiser.

Correspondence to: Carolyn Thorneloe, Gaoler's Retreat, 5, Faversham Road, Lenham, Maidstone, Kent ME17 2PN. Tel: 01622 859376, Email: westwellye@gmail.com

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Useful Contacts

Telephone Numbers

Age UK	642094
Ashford Volunteer Bureau	633219
Bees (swarming)	
Andy Bithell	740650 / 07933892413
Borough Councillor:	
Larry Krause	01233 643497
CAB	626185
Carers Support Group	664393
Childline Freephone	0800 1111
Cinema	0871 2208000
Citizens' Advice Bureau	626185
Cruse Bereavement Counselling	878225
Doctors (Charing)	01233 714490
(Hayesbank)	624642
Dog Warden	01233 330340
Hospital (William Harvey)	633331
KCC Community Warden for Hothfield, Charing and Challock, Dave Beckley	0797798199
CROP	01622 851200
Library (Ashford)	03000413131
(Charing)	713177
MS Therapy Centre	01227 470876
NHS Direct	0845 4647
NSPCC	0800 800500
Parish Hall Booking	01233 712016
	doriscackett@btinternet.com
Parish Council (clerk, Sue Wood)	623902
Pilgrims' Hospice (Admin)	504100
(Patient enquiries)	504112
PCC Secretary (Heather Lister)	712981
Police (rural matters only – crime should be reported on 101 or 999)	07980978202
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Solicitor (Thorneloe & Co.)	01622 859416
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Water Supplies Queries	0333 000 0002
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Westwell Community Website:	
http://www.westwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/	

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Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

What are Urgent Treatment Centres?

The name, Urgent Treatment Centres, might be new, but the work is not. We will all become familiar with the abbreviations UTC in the next few years, as it is mandatory that they are operating everywhere by the end of 2020. So what is new about UTCs? Urgent and emergency care has until now been provided in various ways in a number of places. These include by practitioners, A and E departments, minor injury units, walk in centres, GP Health centres and 111. By the end of 2020 it is planned that all of these will be replaced by UTCs which will be open for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. They will be GP led and staffed by GPs, nurses and other clinicians who will have access to simple diagnostics, and in some centres, X-rays. Patients who use UTCs will have initially been referred by a GP, or have contacted the 111 service or the ambulance services. It will also be possible to use UTCs without a prior appointment. UTCs will relieve the pressure on A and E departments. It is currently estimated that 40-60% of patients who attend A and E could be effectively treated at these centres.

There is a National requirement to have a UTC on each of the main hospital sites in East Kent. At present the Kent and Canterbury hospital has one, and QEOM has one underway, but it is still to be decided what will happen at The William Harvey site.

There will also be a number of UTCs within the community.

UTCs will provide care for sprains, broken bones, wound infections, minor burns and scalds, minor head injuries, back pain, cuts and grazes, foreign bodies and bites which include human, animal and insects. Following referral to a UTC the maximum waiting time should be 4 hours. These centres should enable A and E departments to concentrate on the more serious cases. They should also co-ordinate some of the functions of the 111 service, the out of hours services, and some GP appointments.

I would be interested to receive any comments you have on this article. Please contact me by email at kcht.governors@nhs.net or write to me at the Governor Support office The Oast, Unit D, Hermitage Court, Hermitage Lane, Barming, Maidstone, Kent ME16 9NT.

John Fletcher Public Governor-Ashford

Planning applications.

The following was refused by Ashford Borough Council:

18/00876/AS The Old Forge

The following were supported by the Parish Council and a decision is awaited from Ashford Borough Council:

19/00139/AS & 19/00140/AS Crouchers Manor, Westwell Lane

The following will be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council:

19/00185/AS The Workshop, 7 Leda Cottages, Maidstone Road

Change of use of land to residential and extension to existing workshop

19/00136/AS Oakover Nurseries, Maidstone Road

Removal of condition 31 on planning permission 16/01387/AS restricting occupation [that the first occupier of the site after redevelopment should be Apta Terracotta]

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Borough Council Elections

Hello, I'm Larry Krause and as your Conservative Candidate for Downs West my goal is to seek your vote for me (again), then help me form more Community Partnerships to make life better for the people of Boughton Aluph, Challock and Westwell as well as the wider Borough.

Since moving from Australia in 2001 I have been busy, most importantly marrying Reverend Sue. We are now both semi-retired so my sole focus is on representing the people that have elected me to office. Having served on my local Parish Council for over 12 years I was responsible for bringing Super-Fast Broadband to a rural village whilst also negotiating a great local project that now funds even more projects and amenities. In 2015 I was elected to the Borough Council and currently serve as the Council's Representative on Charity Boards as well as Council Committees in order to better serve the people of Ashford.

Our Borough is fortunate to have many local facilities not least William Harvey Hospital and the Designer Outlet. I know which I would rather visit but both need attention in terms of traffic management and parking, especially the HGV's. The HGV parking trial clamping has been a success and we must ensure it continues.

Super-Fast Broadband is like "oxygen" is to us, it is vital to businesses and householders alike and there is no such thing as too fast. By working together, we can make sure this service improves in speed and reliability for everyone.

Fly tipping is anti-social and must be stopped now! As your Borough Councillor this is another of my ongoing projects.

Make your vote count on 2nd May and allow me to keep working in Downs West making things better for you! Should you wish to discuss anything with me I can be contacted on email larry.krause@btinternet.com or by phone on 01233 643497. Thank you for your support over the last four years and I look forward to serving the people of Downs West in the next term.



1st Charing Scout Group



Spring is such an important time for us. The winter doesn't stop us getting about. Ten of our senior cub scouts took part in a night hike. They had to navigate using maps and compasses and cope with rain and low cloud on the Downs. Not a single mistake!

We are now planning more outdoor activities. April sees us taking part in the Spring litter pick, selling programmes and teas at Charing Races and our St George's Day Parade.

gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk **Terry Lister**



WESTWELL WI

This month we were transported back to the 17th Century by Viki Faulkner, assisted by husband Dougal, who told us of life in the 1600s. Viki, dressed in peasant costume of the time, also talked about how they re-enact the lifestyle of those times at various Civil War Battle events, where she is a trader in period costumes. She had brought a range of handmade items of costume to show us - men's, women's and children's, as well as a selection of weapons used by Dougal on the battlefield. However, the pike used by Dougal in battle as a pikeman is 16ft long so we only saw a smaller child's version. He did wield his sword on stage!

Viki also told us of the origins of many customs we still follow today. A handshake began as a means of showing someone you were not carrying a weapon. A gentleman walking on the right of a lady was so that he would still be able to draw his sword with his right hand without risk of injuring her.

Members were reminded of forthcoming events –

Race Night 10th May

Afternoon Tea at London Beach 23rd May

Croquet 7th June

Day-trip to France 2nd July – this is open to friends, family and others.

We were also reminded that Westwell WI is hosting the next Group Meeting at Westwell on 26th June and we were asked to bring items to that meeting for a Bring & Buy Stall. Also, the competition for this meeting will be a photo or other image of a stain glass window, A4 size, so your entries will need to be brought to our own April meeting to be judged as to which will represent our WI at the Group Meeting.

The competition of a candle brought a range of styles. The winner was Marilyn Warner with a lovely red and white sculpted one, second was Angela Osborne with a sculpted rose candle, and Liz Jamieson was third with a bottle of red wine which was in fact a candle.

Anyone wishing to know more about any of the above or the Westwell WI and what it means to be a WI member should email Catherine at westwellwi2015@gmail.com

Marilyn Warner

Next Meeting:- Thursday 11th April

Speaker:- Katie Bewshear – **Chocolate**

Vote of thanks:- Sue Starkings

Hostesses:- Tracy Shaikh, Angela Osborne, Jean lester

Competition:- Cookery – a chocolate muffin

Speed Monitoring in the Village

You may have noticed the speed monitoring equipment that was installed a few weeks ago to record vehicle speeds coming into and out of each of the four access roads into the village. The data was recorded over a week, and the results were fairly reassuring, in that the mean average speeds at all four sites was comfortably less than 30 mph, (and on the Challock Lane was as low as 20mph). However, the Parish Council is mindful that our lanes are also used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and so we will continue to keep an eye on the situation to ensure the roads through the village are not becoming unsafe for such shared use."



April on Hothfield Heathlands

Spring was in the air as soon as the first brimstone butterflies were seen on the margins of woodland and thickets in February, with a red kite, one of the kings of the food chain, patrolling high above. The pale yellow brimstone was probably the first owner of the name butterfly. A powerful flyer, it can be seen almost all year and hibernates among ivy leaves from November to February. Through March and April brimstones are the main pollinators of primroses as they hunt for early nectar.

Something else is permanently in the air and features in the management plan for the reserve. To maximise conditions for the fragile specialist plants adapted to survive in nutrient-poor soil and bogs, more invasive species are judiciously (and vigorously) removed, smothered, grazed or bashed. These include not only birch producing millions of seeds, New Zealand pond weed introduced possibly by some well-meaning member of the public and bracken with mile-a-minute rhizomes, but nettles, brambles, cleavers (goosegrass) and the grass Yorkshire fog, which all thrive on an invisible threat.

These species easily absorb the excess nitrogen caused by emissions from transport, power stations, farming and industry, which is still being deposited from the air and in rain, despite the drop in pollution levels due to tighter controls. Nitrogen increases the vigour of these species, which outgrow and swamp the rarer plants that can only survive in nutrient-poor soils, the vigorous species are all important in their own right, in the right place, providing shelter and food for insects and animals, part of the food chain crowned by birds of prey such as the red kites. Warden Ian Rickards says: "We need to be careful that these plants don't dominate in areas where we may lose important species. Quite often it is the grasses that really benefit from this additional nutrient load, species like Yorkshire fog will quickly dominate a landscape and are very hard to control as grazing and cutting will often only encourage them".

The 2017 report, We need to talk about nitrogen by sister charity Plantlife concluded that the continuing destructive impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition on plants and ecosystems is one of the greatest challenges facing conservation: 90 per cent of all nitrogen-sensitive habitats in England and Wales, such as Hothfield Heathland, receive higher levels of nitrogen deposition than they can tolerate, with the consequent decline in nitrogen-sensitive plants. Conservation and health organisations continue to lobby for coordinated national and international strategies to reduce pollution that also kills thousands of people. Locally they work to protect reserves from potential new sources of nitrogen pollution. Everyone can help by reducing car journeys and the use of artificial fertilisers in gardens.

Hothfield Heathland is open to everyone; trails are signposted and shown on entrance maps, along with the location of livestock. The noticeboard down the main slope from the Cade Road car park gives recent wildlife sightings. Please keep dogs in check, especially around children and animals, and away from the heather and undergrowth to avoid disturbing wildlife. Please clean dog mess, including in the Triangle compartment. For email alerts on location of livestock, contact Ian: ianrickards@kentwildlife.org.uk or 01622 662012.

Volunteer task days are April 9th and 23rd, all welcome.

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Westwell Community Watch Scheme

Police: Can you Help ? Following a serious crime in Westwell Village on the evening of 6th March Ashford Neighbourhood Watch have advised that officers are investigating an aggravated burglary. Anyone who has information is asked to call Kent Police on 01843 222289 quoting 46/43263/19. The Police have issued the following details:

Designer bags, jewellery and watches were stolen. Seven watches have been described as :

A stainless steel Breitling for Bentley watch with a black face; a stainless steel Frank Muller King Conquistador watch with a red face; a black steel chronograph Uboat watch; a stainless steel Panerai, a stainless steel chrome Rolex Daytona featuring a white face; a Cartier Ballon Bleu watch with a stainless steel and gold strap with a diamond bezel; and an IWC perpetual calendar big pilot featuring a rose gold case with a brown leather strap. The first man was described as a slim white man, 6ft tall, and dressed in black with ski mask covering his face. The second man was also a slim white man, around 6ft tall. He had dark brown eyes, and also wore black clothing. Both spoke with eastern European accents.

In particular police are interested if anyone saw a white van in or around the area at the time.

Westwell Parish News

Overnight Lorry Parking Enforcement and Clamping Trial. This experimental trial started on 30th October 2017 and will expire on **30th April**. The enforcement has helped everyone along the A20 between Drovers and Charing and also the business case to expand the Ashford truck stop which opens 200 additional spaces on April 1st making a total of 500 spaces. KCC and ABC are planning the consultation that is necessary before the enforcement arrangements can be made permanent, but this still needs an ok from the Department for Transport. If the consultation happens it will be in **April and residents need to comment**. Look out for more information on Westwell Events, Westwell Facebook and SLRA news.

New houses next to The Wheel. Preworks to clear some trees and reposition phone lines has started. Hard-standing for deliveries onto the site and foundation works may begin during April if Openreach finish their work. The Parish Council is liaising with Baxter Homes so that all work runs as smoothly as possible. Any questions contact Sue Wood on 623902.

Welcome to Westwell Parish to all those receiving Westwell Eye for the first time. This is your monthly parish magazine delivered free by volunteers house to house across the parish.

If there is news you want to put in it, or a business you would like to advertise contact the editor Carolyn Thorneloe on 01622 859376. or email westwellye@gmail.com.

Shorter notice events in the parish and reminders come from Westwell Events.

Sign up to receive them by emailing: westwell.events@gmail.com.

Parish and Borough Elections will take place on **2nd May**. There will be a poll for Westwell Parish Council if there are more than 9 candidates declared on **4th April**. Look out for an announcement on Westwell Events. You need to be on the Electoral Register by **12th April** to vote on 2nd May. If you are not sure if you are already registered call ABC Electoral services on 01233 330402.

Godinton House and Gardens



Plant Fair

Sunday May 12th, 11am - 4.30pm

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Letter to the Parishes

It might never happen (but if it did God might do something amazing!)

About six years ago a cheery fellow, seeing my sad face, said, 'Cheer up love, it might never happen!' I rounded on him and said, 'It did! My husband just died.' I have no idea what the poor fellow did at that point but I must have made him feel pretty awful. It wasn't a helpful comment in the state I was in but I could have dealt with it better.

However, despite my feelings at the time I have discovered that even when really awful things happen that is not the end. That out of the devastation and disaster can come new life, real joy and happiness.

At the time of writing I have no idea whether Britain will have left Europe or not. There is a feeling that it might never happen but whether it does or it doesn't we face a fairly unknown future. Our NHS, education, transport, and social services seem to be all in disarray. We live in very uncertain times. So how should we approach the future?

Jesus's first disciples must have felt confused, upset, beside themselves with worry, wondering what the future would bring after their friend had been arrested and crucified. They were not only dealing with grief and feeling let down by the one person they thought would conquer their Roman oppressors who was now dead, they were also felt themselves to be in personal danger because of their association with Jesus.

How quickly things changed! Once they realised that God had raised Jesus from the dead and that life would be different and that Jesus had conquered death and would be sending the Holy Spirit they started to put things into perspective and life was worth living again.

The joy of Easter is that there is new life after death.

Whether it happens or not let us pray for new life after Brexit! One way or another God will be with us and THAT is where we need to put our trust.

Revd. Bobbie Appleton 

Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning. Scottie

Flowers. Lent, No flowers until April 20th

Brass. Suzanne Pier



Etc

Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at The Wheel, Friday April 5th from 10.30 - 11.45am. All welcome.

WAGS – Westwell Art Group

April 1st, 15th, 18th.

Book Club March 2019

This month's discussion was on Maya Angelou: any work by this famously prolific writer and renowned political activist. Some of us read one of Angelou's biographies and others her poetry.

We began with comments from Celeste who had recommended we read Angelou. She read the poem 'OnAgeing'. Angelou's writing is simple yet profound and analytical. A favourite was 'Mom and me and mom' about her relationship with her mother. Angelou had one brother and they grew up living with their mother or grandmother. She started working when still a teenager and worked as fry cook, sex worker, nightclub dancer and performer, cast member of the opera Porgy and Bess, coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and journalist. She lived in different countries and strove to learn the language of each country she lived in. She worked with Dr Martin Luther King and knew Malcolm X. She became a poet and writer after the death of Dr King and wrote screenplays and then started writing her very frank memoirs in seven volumes.

She was very well regarded and these biographies are taught in some schools in the US. She is also remembered for her poem 'On the Pulse of Morning' which she recited at the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.

Our next read is Jonas Jonasson's 'The Hundred Year Old Man Who Jumped out of the Window and Disappeared'. **Tuesday April 9th.** And In May 'The Memory Garden' by Rachel Hore, and for June Khalid Husseini's 'A Thousand Splendid Suns'. **contd. on page 2**

Charing History Society - 11th April And So To Ted - A History of Teddies and other Bears.

Speaker Melanie Gibson-Barton

A fun talk of Bear Essentials to appeal to arctophiles and bear lovers! Originally inspired by a teddy bear that brought comfort to its owner during the Battle of the Bulge.

Calling all Flower Arrangers

Please can we gather in the church to decorate for Easter on **Good Friday, April 19th, at 2pm.** The more of your own flowers and greenery the better but not essential. Thank you in advance to those who can come. If you haven't done flowers before but could give some of your time, I'd love to hear from you, regardless of experience.

Sarah Stevenson

07871098933 / 01233 712486

sarahjuliet@btinternet.com

Charing Gardeners' Society

We have two events this month. Wednesday 15th May 7.30pm in the Church Barn. A floral art demonstration and hands-on workshop. Containers etc and plant material provided but bring your own if you would like to. Try your hand at whatever style suits you. All welcome. £3 for non-members includes a cuppa. Raffle, plant and seed stall for which contributions always welcome.

Our first visit is on Sunday 26th May at 2pm to the gardens of Churchfields and West Court Lodge in Postling, both in the National Gardens Scheme but opening especially for us. A car-share trip, entrance £6, refreshments available after the visit. Contact Margery Thomas on 01233 637705 if you plan to go.

Check out our Facebook page for news and photos of recent events and for further information about the society see: <http://charinggardeners.org.uk>

Parish News

Westwell Church Services for April

www.g7benefice.org

Friday 5th

10am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 7th: 5th Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion

3.30pm Messy Church - Parish Hall

Sunday 14th: Palm Sunday

11am Iona Eucharist

Thurs 18th: Maundy Thursday

7pm Seder Meal - Charing Heath

Memorial Hall

Fri 19th: Good Friday

10am Good Friday Service

Sunday 21st: Easter Sunday

11am Family Eucharist

Sunday 28th: 2nd Sunday of Easter

11am Eucharist

Holy Week Meditations

Mon 15th, Tues 16th, Wed 17th April

7.00 – 7.30pm – Holy Trinity Charing Heath

Every Tuesday

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

FUNERALS

Kathleen Joan Snoad died on January 14th aged 94. Her funeral took place at Charing Crematorium on February 6th.

*May God enfold Kathleen,
in his tender love and care.*

Family Church in April

Messy Sunday 7th April 3.30pm. Join us to celebrate spring and to learn more about Holy Week. crafts, activities, a story and tea for any children accompanied by an adult. Parish hall. All Age Service is on Easter Day **Sunday 21st April**. 11am and will be an informal communion and feature an Easter egg hunt, finishing with coffee and cake. This month the coffee collection is for the Ashford Family Nursery.

The Palm Sunday Service will feature the

giving out of Palm crosses. At the end of the service, about midday, we will break for coffee and cake and then start the Annual Church meeting. see below

The Passover Seder

In a departure from our usual custom, this year on Maundy Thursday you are all invited to a 'Passover Seder', a meal in which we reflect on the Exodus from Egypt, the setting free of God's people, an act which for Christians finds resonance in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This will be a proper meal, based as closely as possible on the food eaten by those celebrating the Passover. The great story of salvation is told through the various elements of the meal and through the blessings given at various stages of the meal.

Tickets will be available soon in all G7 churches. A ticket is essential for catering purposes but there is no cost to you. We will invite donations on the night to help towards the cost. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Lilies for Easter

Would you like to remember a departed loved one by buying an arum lily bloom as part of the Easter decorations in the church? I think this is a beautiful St Mary's tradition. It costs £5. Please contact me before April 15th (if I haven't already spoken to you before then).

Sarah Stevenson (tel nos. p13)

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Don't forget to come to the Annual Meeting for your parish and hear all the news from last year as well as plans for next year. Come with your comments and your questions. We would love to hear from you.

First we will elect Churchwardens for the next year. Everyone who lives in the parish, church goer or not can vote for the churchwarden of their choice.

Sunday 14th April – in the church, after Morning Service (Approx. 12noon)



Westwell Players

Players have thoroughly enjoyed the play readings and outings to the cinema and the theatre over the cold winter months. We continue to have our social evenings every second Tuesday and everyone is welcome to one of these. We enjoy coffee or tea with some exciting biscuits and would love to see someone new coming through the door although we have had some response, we would still love to have some more, our next show is to be a pantomime to be staged on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 21st, 22nd, 23rd. We have yet to choose our panto, --- will it be something tried and tested or something a little more up to date and modern? Why not let me know what you would like to see, if as you read this and you are planning to come and support us? My e-mail address is:- Maryanne@uwclub.net and my telephone number is 714241. I look forward to hearing from you. The other excitement we all await with baited breath is the grand movement from Pilgrim's Way to the Playing field of our new container. This will happen very soon with bells and whistles sounding and outriders at the ready; so look out for a very large object making its way down Gold Hill ready to be filled with all our wardrobe and props and scenery that is in another container just off the A20 at the moment. As I write this I feel that Spring is at last just round the corner with all its promise of happy sunny days to come, I cannot wait!

Mary Anne Pitt 714241

Josef Dygryn – One of the Few - Forward

Over the years as a long-standing inhabitant of Westwell I have visited the village cemetery and been intrigued by the military headstone there and what was the history behind it. It did seem as if it was being tendered for as often military paraphernalia would appear there.

One day I decided to research who this individual was. The name on the gravestone said Josef Dygryn, assumedly of East European decent. The article below I found and lays out his life and history. He was buried in Westwell with full military honours not something the village would probably have been aware of and not a common occurrence. I don't know what the definition of an Ace Fighter Pilot is, but I think he was regarded as one in a lot of military records with his seven direct hits on the Luftwaffe. There were other Eastern Europeans especially Polish fighter pilots who fought for this country as depicted in the film "Hurricane" a true story of their plight. Having been honoured as the top fighter squadron in the country during the Battle of Britain the government of the day saw it fit to deport them back to their home countries after the war even though some of them had nothing to go back to.

Many had family members murdered by the Nazi's yet they were given no recognition by the Government of the day as was the case more recently with the Gurkhas. I would have thought that anyone who was prepared to put his life on the line for this country should at least be given the right to remain here.

If you are ever in the cemetery do go over to the light grey military gravestone and pay your respects to someone who gave his life for our freedom. **contd pages 10 and 11**

Frank Bortoli



Josef Dygryn – One of the Few continued

Josef Dygryn
6th March 1918 to 4th June 1942

Josef Dygryn was born on 6 March 1918, in Prague, the 6th son of a unmarried mother and following an unhappy childhood he was raised by his aunt. He attended the local school and on leaving started a apprenticeship as a mechanic.

During this time he developed an interest in aviation which led him to volunteer for the Czechoslovak Air Force which led to him attending the Czechoslovak Air Force VLU training base, at Prostějov, between 1937 to 1938 where he took a course in instrument flying.

By now Josef had now reached the rank of Svobodník [RAF equivalent of LAC]. On 14 June 1939 Josef, armed with a gun and accompanied by another pupil Antonín Vendl, escaped, on foot, from Czechoslovakia into Poland soil as they did not want to antagonize neighboring Nazi Germany. Instead, the Czechoslovak Consul in Paris had negotiated with the French Government that the steady flow of Czechoslovak military escaping to Poland could be brought to France.

When he arrived in France he served in several squadrons until the French capitulation when he escaped with other Czech pilots by boarding the ship 'Ary Schaeffer' on 19 June 1940 and escaped to England. The ship reached Falmouth, Cornwall, on 23 June 1940. In England he joined the RAF, with the rank of Sergeant, and was sent on a Hurricane conversion course at 6 OTU based at Sutton Bridge. On 14 October 1940 he was posted initially to 85 Squadron, based at Church Fenton, and 14 days later to 1 Sqn. at Wittering.

However, it became apparent that he needed further training to bring his flying skills up to the required standard. During the period between 29 October 1940 when he wrote off Hurricane Mk 1 N2433 when trying to land as a result of setting the aircraft flaps in the wrong position and a few days later, on 13 November, he wrote off another Hurricane Mk 1 [P5187] again whilst attempting to land. Following these accidents, he was sent for further training to Central Flying School at RAF Upavon on 27 November and he returned. He stayed with 1 Sqn. until September 1941 during which time he showed himself to be a very effective night fighter.

On the night of 10/11 May 1941, he undertook three sorties, with Hurricane IIa [Z2687] from RAF Redhill, when the Luftwaffe were bombing London during the Blitz. He first took off at 00:15 and was patrolling over London at 5500m when he saw a He 111 which he shot down at 00:35. He returned to Redhill at 00:58 and after being refueled and re-armed he was back in the air at 01:35 and he shot down a 2nd lone He 111 near Gatwick at 01:50 which crashed at Gore Farm, Gillingham, Kent.

Later that night he encountered a Ju 88 North East of Biggin Hill as it was flying towards the coast. He attacked, at 03:25, and firing from a range of 25m, the Ju 88 was hit and an engine caught fire and began to rapidly loose height. Josef continued the attack and the Ju 88 finally crashed into the sea South of Hastings. Josef returned to base for more fuel and ammunition but was refused permission for a 4th sortie that night. For a pilot whose flying skills some had doubted only a few weeks before, this was a remarkable achievement.

In the following weeks during daylight patrols over the English Channel and Northern France he increased his number of kills. On 16th May, whilst patrolling above Dungeness he shot down one Me109. On 21 May, again at Dungeness he attacked and damaged another Me 109. On 18 June he shared in the shooting down of a He 59 floatplane. The following day, while escorting 23 Blenheim bombers on a raid to Béthune, he shot down another Me 109 which crashed into the sea near Boulogne.

On 5th September 1941, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal. By the end of the year, he had achieved the greatest number of enemy 'kills' for Czechoslovak pilots for that year. His total number of kill against the Luftwaffe was seven.

He continued to serve in 1 Sqd, along with some other Czechoslovak pilots until 23 September 1941 when he was posted to 310 Czechoslovak Sqd. RAF who were currently based at Dyce, Scotland whilst undergoing conversion from Hurricanes to Spitfires. From here, on the night of 3rd-4th June 1942, seven aircraft were sent of at different intervals to attack the German airfields at St. André d'Eure, Evreux and Chartres-Fauville. Amongst those pilots were 3 Czechoslovak pilots – Karel Kuttelwascher, Otto Pavlů and Josef Dygryn. Josef was flying Hurricane IIc [Z3183] and his orders were to patrol in the vicinity of Chartres-Fauville. He did not return from this patrol and the exact reason is unknown. Kuttelwascher reported on his return flight that there had been fierce flak activity seen around the port of Le Havre. It is presumed that Josef's plane crashed into the English Channel as a result of being damaged by this flak.

On 8th September 1942, the body of a unknown RAF pilot was washed ashore on a mined beach near Worthing, Sussex. The body was badly decomposed, had no id tags on it and the only visible marks on the tunic was the RAF pilots' badge and 3 medal ribbons. The body carried an Astra type 1915 revolver, which had the names of 'Doris', 'Noel', 'Paddy' and the RAF badge engraved on the grip.

This revolver and the medal ribbons enabled a positive identification on the body to be made. On 7th September 1941, Josef married Doris Gwen Emily Reeves at Caterham, Surrey. She was a 20-year-old ACW2 WAAF, stationed at RAF Kenley. Shortly after they married, Doris contracted tuberculosis and was taken, for treatment, to the TB Sanatorium, at Lenham, Kent. In late January 1942, Doris died suddenly from TB and was buried, in an unmarked grave, at a small graveyard at Westwell, Kent. Her untimely death caused Josef to become very morose and introvert. A year before he has bought a revolver from someone in a pub who had served in the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, he always carried it with him and vowed that if he were shot down over enemy territory, he would not be taken prisoner but would try to get back to England. This acquisition became his new passion and he now spent most of his free time engraving its grip. Josef, had etched out a silhouette of a dog sitting under a tree, the RAF badge and various other pictures on the side of the grip which he then filled with copper and silver. He also engraved the names 'Doris', 'Paddy' – a nickname that his wife was known by – and 'Noel' – the name of the family dog. The revolver was well known and admired by Josef's RAF comrades. Without this positive id, it is most likely that he would have been buried with a headstone marked as being that of an unknown pilot.

On 14th August 1942 Josef was buried with full military honours at Westwell, Kent in close proximities to his wife's unmarked grave.