

Roll of Honour 1914 – 1918

As part of the village's marking of the Great War and in honour of their memory, we record the names of those who are commemorated on the West Meon War Memorial from that war and who fell in the current month.

24th April 1917 Frederick William BUFFEY
Lance Corporal, 15th (Service) Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment (2nd Birmingham Pals) aged 32.
Died of Wounds on 24th April 1917, during the 2nd Battle of Arras.
Buried in Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Bruay, Pas de Calais, France.
Frederick was born in West Meon and was the eldest son of William and Lucy Buffey.

29th April 1917 Frederick George NEWELL
Private, 1st Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment, aged 20.
Killed in action, near Albert, France.
He is buried in Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France.
Frederick was born in Branksome, Dorset and was the son of Allen and Mary Newell.

16th April 1918 Frederick Hope GREEN
Private, 59th Bn. Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), aged 23.
Killed in action, south of Ypres, Belgium.
No known grave - Commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainault, Belgium.
Born in Fareham, Frederick was the only son of George and Sarah Green. Sarah was widowed and in 1907 she married Charles Dickaty, of Slys Farm, Bramdean, Hampshire.



Robinson Crusoe: the family panto

West Meon Theatre's first panto for three years was a family affair. Three Towns were on show: Bethany as a charming and confident Robinson Crusoe; Hazel as assistant director and Costumes and then on stage as Jackie Boot (pew!); and the expert Chris on lighting and sound. Three members of the Willcox family were named in the programme, director Paul also playing an oil slick, a theatrical first. Two Forsyths and two Williams took to the stage.

And then there was the young, tapping, growling, sword-swinging, funny-fishy chorus – from miniscule to a bit bigger, future stars all. It included two Boyes, two Butlers, two Wells and three Wannells. Clever casting this, as it guarantees mums to do the costume changes and keep the little darlings quiet when they're not on stage being cute.

The actors had to work hard with a rusty script lubricated in places with local references. Manfully (is this PC?) they did so and share the credit for giving their all. Dame Darren Butler (Christie Crusoe) stood out. He relished his role, was teasing, saucy and a hit with the audience. Terrific. Best cameos were Helena Gomm (Queen), a convincing carnivore on stage, and James Forsyth excelled as Man Friday, witty and ironic.

The audience did as it was told, groaning, laughing and yelling on cue. A comic highlight: somehow the tiny Fairy Detergenta (tiny Clare Swinstead) managed to disperse the big Demon Oyslick (big Paul Willcox) with a tiny stream of almost invisible bubbles. Wow, that must have been lethal stuff! Folk got the idea and giggled anyway, because things like that happen in panto.

Much thought and effort had gone into the set design and paintings, masterminded by Alison Butler, and it showed. The costumes dazzled, in some cases literally. Suzanne Hall's programme hit just the right family tone.

Finally, the irreplaceable Theo. He not only composed and arranged the score, he played the music live; made announcements; bantered with the actors; crashed electronic cymbals to confirm that a joke (however gut-grindingly corny) had been told; and laughed louder than anyone at every joke at every performance, a feat of epic proportions.

Peter Moore

