

Researching the history of Church Street



Church Street from Great Missenden High Street

A Great Missenden resident recently asked about the history of her house in Church Street. *The Source* approached local historian Jill Pateman and this was her response.

“Unfortunately, numbering only came in well after the First World War making research into the old cottages in Church Street difficult. Many of the original numbers have since changed so the old census records list hundreds of people who lived in Church Street, without identifying which house. Letters from the army during



Looking back towards the High Street

WW1 to families in Church Street, even those telling them of the death of their menfolk, were just addressed with the recipient's name, ‘Church Street’. The postman and telegraph boys simply knew.

When Jill Pateman was researching the men from Great Missenden killed in WW1, ten men had lived in Church Street. She was only able to identify two of their houses and that was because she found family members who knew them.

Equally, in property sales, the houses were not identified. Adverts would say



Church Street - High Street junction almost as it is now

‘4 cottages in Church Street for sale’. The poorest streets in Great Missenden were Church Street and Back Lane. Families of ten or twelve were living in damp two-bedroom cottages, which were considered slum housing at the time. Back Lane, behind Wrights on the High Street, is where there was a squalid village Workhouse in the early 1800s. An Inspector said it was one of the worst he had ever seen!

The only history website that allows a search by house from census records is Find My Past. However, even this only gives Church Street (don't be deceived by



Earlier view of Church Street - High Street junction

the number on the left of each entry on an old census record - this was the Schedule number, not the street number). It is easier to identify houses by house name, which is often the case with larger houses in the village, although house names have sometimes been changed.

Much can be found about Church Street and Great Missenden in general by reading old newspapers, as local press reporting included great detail, being the only form of mass communication and entertainment at the time. The best resource is The British Newspaper Archive website and Find my Past has a link to it.”



The Chilterns Walking Festival

The 13th Chilterns Walking Festival will take place from 18 May to 2 June. It features over 50 walks to share the stories, landscapes, heritage and beauty of the Chilterns in the spring.

The only walk in HP16 is ‘Midsomer Mayhem meets Chiltern Charm: Great Missenden to The Lee circular walk’ (5201) on 1 June. Free.

But there are many more walks nearby in Amersham, Chesham, Hambledon, Chinnor and beyond. Here is a flavour of what's on offer:

**Farm walks:** Meet the farmers and learn about nature-friendly farming in the Chilterns. You are able to see parts of the farm not normally open to the public, and see and hear first-hand the difference that this sensitive farming approach makes to

wildlife.

**Explore the beautiful Chess Valley.** There is a family-friendly night time walk along the River Chess to spot wildlife as the sun sets. Or a Sarratt circular walk taking in the watercress beds and lots of heritage features.

**Chilterns from dawn to dusk.** An early morning skylark walk to hear the joyful sounds of the skylarks near Shiplake. Or at the other end of the day a sundown saunter around Maidensgrove Common following ancient tracks.

There are guided nature walks around nature reserves and special habitats, and a chance to meet the rangers and volunteers who care for the wildlife. Plus History & Heritage, map reading courses, historic garden tours, mindfulness walks, and much more.

Listings are now live, see [www.chilterns.org.uk/walkingfest](http://www.chilterns.org.uk/walkingfest)  
To keep updated join Chilterns Walking Festival facebook page.

Prestwood Evening WI

During the first three months of 2024, Prestwood Evening WI has travelled In the Footsteps of Shackleton to Antarctica, and enjoyed the amusing Guns to Roses experiences of Catherine Jones who started her working life as an army officer and then became a best-selling romantic novelist. In March, the members prepared for the busy Easter period by having an Introduction to Yoga and Meditation. What a varied programme! It meets on the second Tuesday of the month,

at 7.45pm in Prestwood Village Hall. Please contact [jenny.street44@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.street44@gmail.com), to find out more about its meetings and activities.



Prestwood Evening WI

Supporting local hospices

2023 was a challenging year for Speen Helping Hospices (SHH) probably reflecting financial constraints. Selling tickets was challenging and it was the Golf Challenge at Burnham Beeches that considerably increased the donations to the four hospices.



SHH fundraising events

However, by drawing from their first 2024 event, the Pub Style Quiz Night, a total of £18,000, that is £4,500 to each hospice, leaves a small amount in balance to cover costs.

Many thanks to all in Prestwood and surrounding areas who bought tickets, danced, quizzed, shopped, sang and ate at the events of 2023. This group initiative has been going for many years and would hope to continue with your support.

The Annual Christmas Market raised £2,746 and the Christmas Hamper raffle

£500. The carol singing in Speen raised £605 over two evenings. Perfume sales including Tom Ford and Estee Lauder donated by the brands' owners was over £3,000.

SHH would really welcome your engagement - fundraising events ideas, helping to reach more neighbouring Chiltern Villages through a good contact or the source of a raffle prize. Sponsorship for a local fun run, bike race or other event is another way to help raise more for the local hospices via SHH.



To get involved with the SHH Committee contact the Chair, Gráinne Suter: [grainnesuter@googlemail.com](mailto:grainnesuter@googlemail.com) or 07778803260.

For further information, please go to [www.shh-shop.org](http://www.shh-shop.org)

Prestwood Area  
Community Transport

Volunteer Car  
Drivers' Scheme

We are looking for drivers. Would you be willing to give as little as one lift a month to someone in need of transport?  
Please call us on 07968 641427

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