

Whatlington News

JULY 2022

GET IN TOUCH: STEVE TURNER 01424 870041



True countryman, heart of the community and village's most familiar face

Tributes pour in for Robert Fuller who has died at the age of 75

Robert Fuller, perhaps the best-known person in Whatlington and the surrounding area, has died at the age of 75.

He lived in Whatlington all his life, apart from a short spell in Battle, and passed away at his home in Whatlington Road. He leaves four siblings – sisters Rosemary, Valerie and Alison, and brother Anthony.

He was a Whatlington Parish Councillor for 12 years, chairman from 1987 to 1991. He was among those who led the village's recovery after The Great Storm of 1987, helping to organise an army of chainsaw users and other volunteers to clear fallen trees, clear debris and find tarpaulins for damaged roofs.

But he is best known for his timber business, delivering logs and fence posts throughout the village and beyond, earning him the nickname of Rob the Log.

The business JW Fuller and Son had been started by his grandfather primarily as a haulage company, delivering everything from parcels to furniture, initially by pony and trap.

Robert's father Stanley took over the business

Funeral next week

The funeral will take place on Wednesday 27 July at 11.45am in Whatlington Church, where he was Christened. He will be buried in the churchyard close to many of his family members. A large attendance is expected for the service, which is likely to be performed by Rev Kevin Mephram, who retired last year but knew Robert well and hopes to return to lead the farewells.

and lived with his wife Kathleen and their five children in a bungalow to the rear of the wood yard.

Stanley died young and Robert took on the running of the business in his early 20s, although had been involved since he left school at the age of 15.

He gradually moved the business to concentrate solely on logs and fencing. In latter years Tim Everard, another member of a long-established Whatlington family, was employed to

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'Hire the Hall' appeal as community building runs at a loss: page 4

True countryman

From page 1

help Robert with the splitting, sawing and delivery of the logs and posts.

A regular at the Royal Oak in Whatlington and Queen's Head in Sedlescombe he was rarely seen without a dog by his side including his Golden Retriever Holly, who was followed by Mr Woody and then Max – who has been found a new home locally with a family friend.

“Dogs were very much part of his life,” said Valerie.

“They were like family members to him. He loved animals and would often say how much he enjoyed listening to the birds singing when he started work early.

“He worked hard all of his life and had only a very few holidays. He hated being ill if it meant he couldn't keep up his deliveries.

“Even from an early age we were all involved in helping out with the business

but we had a lovely childhood, with lots of space to play.

“He was known by so many people – a real character and true countryman.

“He was a dear brother. We had so much fun and laughter and will miss him dearly.”



Lost generation: Robert, pictured holding part of the bomb that landed near the family's home, with, on the left, Ian Cheveralls with a newspaper from the time and Richard Moore with his father's wartime gas mask. All three have now passed away

A narrow escape

Robert was one of three village stalwarts who spoke about life in Whatlington during the last war at a history night at the Royal Oak organised by John Shepperd.

Robert told of his family's narrow escape when a bomb dropped close to their home in Whatlington Road.

It damaged the roof and blew out the windows of the building, which was behind Robert's timber yard.

Fortunately, although the family was at home, nobody was hurt.

While Italian prisoners-of-war based at Normanhurst repaired the damage, the homeless family went to live with Robert's grandfather.

Robert showed the meeting a unique memento of that time: part of the bomb that wrecked the family home.

It was recovered from a crater in woodland behind the house.



Garden Fete

for Conquest Hospital

Sunday 28 August from 10am

Fairlight Hall

Plant Fair
Music from Sussex Brass Band
Tea Tent with home-made cakes
Fun family stalls
Raffle prizes
Cream teas
Garden tours

All proceeds will go to
Conquest 21
the hospital courtyard
refurbishment project

Tickets: £3 for adults
Free for children

eventbrite.co.uk/e/conquest-friends-garden-fete-tickets-257775291837






TRIBUTES

I'll miss our Sunday morning natters

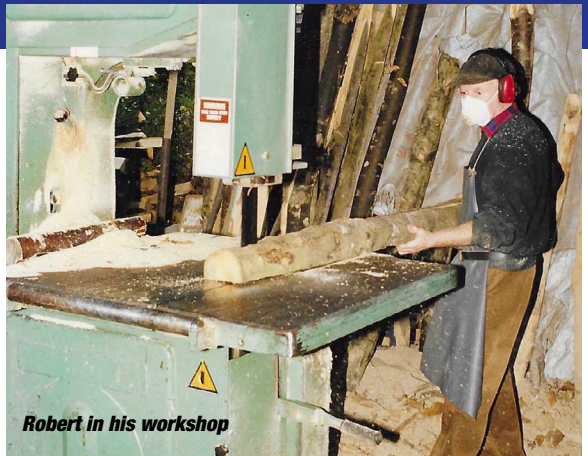
Tim Everard, friend

"I knew Robert from early childhood but got to know him better when he used to come and help my father on his farm in Whatlington. Then when I took over the farm he would often come and help me out, too.

"We were pretty close – he used to drop in and see us every Sunday morning for a natter and a cup of tea. On the last Sunday in June when he didn't turn up I had a feeling that something was wrong.

"It was a real shock when I heard he had passed away. He was always such a good friend and so helpful. Whenever either of us needed help we both gave it to each other straight away.

"I will miss him, particularly on a Sunday morning."



Robert in his workshop

Heart of the community

Roger Fisher, Chair of Whatlington Parish Council

"Robert was at the heart of the community not only as a past councillor and Parish Council Chair but also contributing to the economic well-being of the area in continuing to run the family wood business. He will be sorely missed by his family and his extensive network of friends and customers."



Outside the Royal Oak

Taking a break while helping to set up the 2012 Diamond Jubilee street party

Secrets of the playground

Debbie Haines, friend

"Robert was an old family friend and went to school with my Aunt Stella – they always giggled about playground stories but never shared them!

"I got to know him better when I started work at the vets in the 80s as he had lovely Holly the golden retriever.

"When he lost her I had to find him another companion, as he was totally devastated. So I took him off to a farmer friend in Hooe who had a litter of Patterdale puppies and there was Mr Woody, whom he loved dearly.

"When Mr Woody passed with old age Robert found his last devoted dog Max, who was loyal to the end."

Hall needs income boost as hirers pull out

Appeal to make more use of historic building

The Village Hall is seeking to boost its cashflow in the light of dwindling funds.

For the first time its income is not keeping pace with the cost of running the more than 100-year-old building.

Recent cancellations by regular hirers has caused the current shortfall, exacerbated by a lack of fundraising events as a result of Covid restrictions.

The next major event – the popular Festive Supper – is not until December.

The annual fete, that would normally take place in August, was cancelled so efforts could be concentrated on the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event, which raised a limited amount for Village Hall funds.

"We are not running out of money," said the hall committee's Annette McBride, "but

we are not getting in enough to cover the running costs, so need to find more sources of income."

The yarn spinning group and the Guides are due to return in September but Annette appealed to people looking for a venue for:

- clubs or craft groups
- exercise or dance classes
- parties or receptions
- rehearsals or band practice
- birthday parties or receptions
- any other regular or one-off activities.

The hourly rate is £8 for social gatherings and £10 for commercial meetings.

It has a stage, fully-equipped kitchen, seating and parking spaces.

■ **To find out more call Annette on 01424 871629 or Pauline Lyon 01424 256347.**

Pothole plea fails to prompt repairs

A request for repairs to the surface of Whatlington Road has been turned down by East Sussex Highways.

Whatlington Parish Council had alerted Highways to what it regarded as the parlous state of the road but the county authority responded by saying that, under its safety criteria, there were no potholes deep enough to need filling.

It did promise, however, to keep an eye on the state of the road for any further deterioration.

■ **The next meeting of Whatlington Parish Council is due to take place on 18 August, 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Meetings begin with an open session when residents can raise any points of concern.**

Check www.whatlingtonparishcouncil.com nearer the time of the meeting to see the agenda and to confirm it is going ahead as planned.

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ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH

Flowers, Pimms and hymns but search for new vicar goes on

The search for a new parish priest to replace Rev Kevin Mepham, who retired last year, continues with a new next round of advertising.

The first advertisement drew one application but the candidate was not considered suitable.

Churchwarden John Crouch said: "In the meantime all services are being covered, thanks to the dedicated support of several retired clergy, to whom we extend huge thanks."

Upcoming special services include:

Patronal Weekend 22-24 July

- Flower festival across the weekend
- Church open Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 10 until after the Patronal Service at 6pm. Village Hall car-park open these hours.
- Teas/refreshments on Saturday and Sunday 2-4.30pm.
- Competition.

Hymns and Pimms

Sunday 28 August, 6pm

Enjoy your favourite hymns and a glass of Pimms (hopefully in the churchyard, weather permitting). To nominate a hymn please email grouchycrouch@hotmail.co.uk Six will be selected to be sung at the service.

Harvest Festival and Supper

25 September at 6pm

If you plan to attend please email John at the above as numbers help the catering.

■ For anyone with enquiries regarding Baptisms, Marriages or Funerals, please contact one the wardens: John Crouch on 07788 416903 or Jeffrey Bridges on 01424 772535

Things to do as summer hots up

Wondering what to do this summer while waiting to find out who our next Prime Minister is going to be? There's lots of unusual, creative and educational events going on across the district. These include:

- Watch out for the Bowler Crab Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare comedy *As You Like It* at various venues including Battle Abbey on 7 August.
- Fun and educational events at the Herstmonceux Observatory Science Centre including an alien life workshop and a chance to get a better view of the Perseid

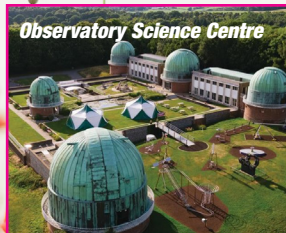
shooting stars than from your back garden, various dates.

- Rye and District Country Show, 20 August.
- Tudor crafts and dancing at Michelham Priory, 17 August
- Bexhill 100 Classic Car Show, 29 August.
- The Rye International Jazz and Blues Festival including acts such as Curtis Stigers, Imelda May and Roachford, 25-29 August.

Full details of all these and more events can be found at www.visit1066country.com Click on the events calendar to find out more.



Imelda May



Observatory Science Centre



Tudors at Michelham

WALK WHATLINGTON

Terry and Brenda Milford have walked the Sussex countryside at least twice a week for more than 10 years, both as individuals and with Battle Ramblers.

This latest in their Whatlington News series of walks will

encourage you to enjoy the great scenery and history around the village.

If you are interested in walking locally they will be happy to put you in touch with Battle Ramblers. Call 07305 618670 or 07757 103563.

4.25 MILES, APPROX TWO HOURS

Numbers refer to map, right.

◆ From the Royal Oak (1) walk down Whatlington Road to the Village Hall, (2) turn into the car park and pass between wooden posts (marked with yellow arrow) at the rear. Continue with the river on your left for about 200 yards. Turn left over a footbridge then right with the river on your right.

◆ Continue through trees, then rough pasture before emerging into an open field. Bear right and follow the field edge, ignore a sleeper footbridge and come to a wooden footbridge with handrails and marker arrows on your right. (3)

◆ Cross the footbridge into trees and walk gently uphill to a T-junction of paths at a finger post. Turn right. Follow this path as it winds through the woods, keeping a (sometimes broken) deer fence on your left and fields to your right.

◆ After about three quarters of a mile, you'll see a house with dormer windows to your right. Turn right (4) towards the house. *(If you miss the turn and continue ahead, your way will be blocked by the railway, so retrace your steps.)* Cross a footbridge, head towards the left side of the house alongside green fencing, then between hedges to a stile onto Whatlington Road.

◆ Turn right (5) and walk down Whatlington Road, past the church on your right and continue to Mill Lane on your left, signed to Leeford Place Hotel.

◆ Turn (6) into Mill Lane for about half a mile, passing Woods Place, the White House, Woods Place Cottage and Woods End Cottage. Where the surfaced track runs out, continue ahead, between hedges then along the top edge of a field. Follow the field until you come to a seven-bar metal bridge gate ahead of you. (7)

Pass through the gate and bear left to follow the path to a three-way fingerpost. Continue ahead (slightly left) on a very muddy path heading downhill and come to a post with marker arrows.

◆ This is Ittington Manor. Pass between a barn on your left and a cottage on your right and after 50 yards come to a small stable on your left with a wooden footpath sign. Turn left to a metal gate into a field. (8)

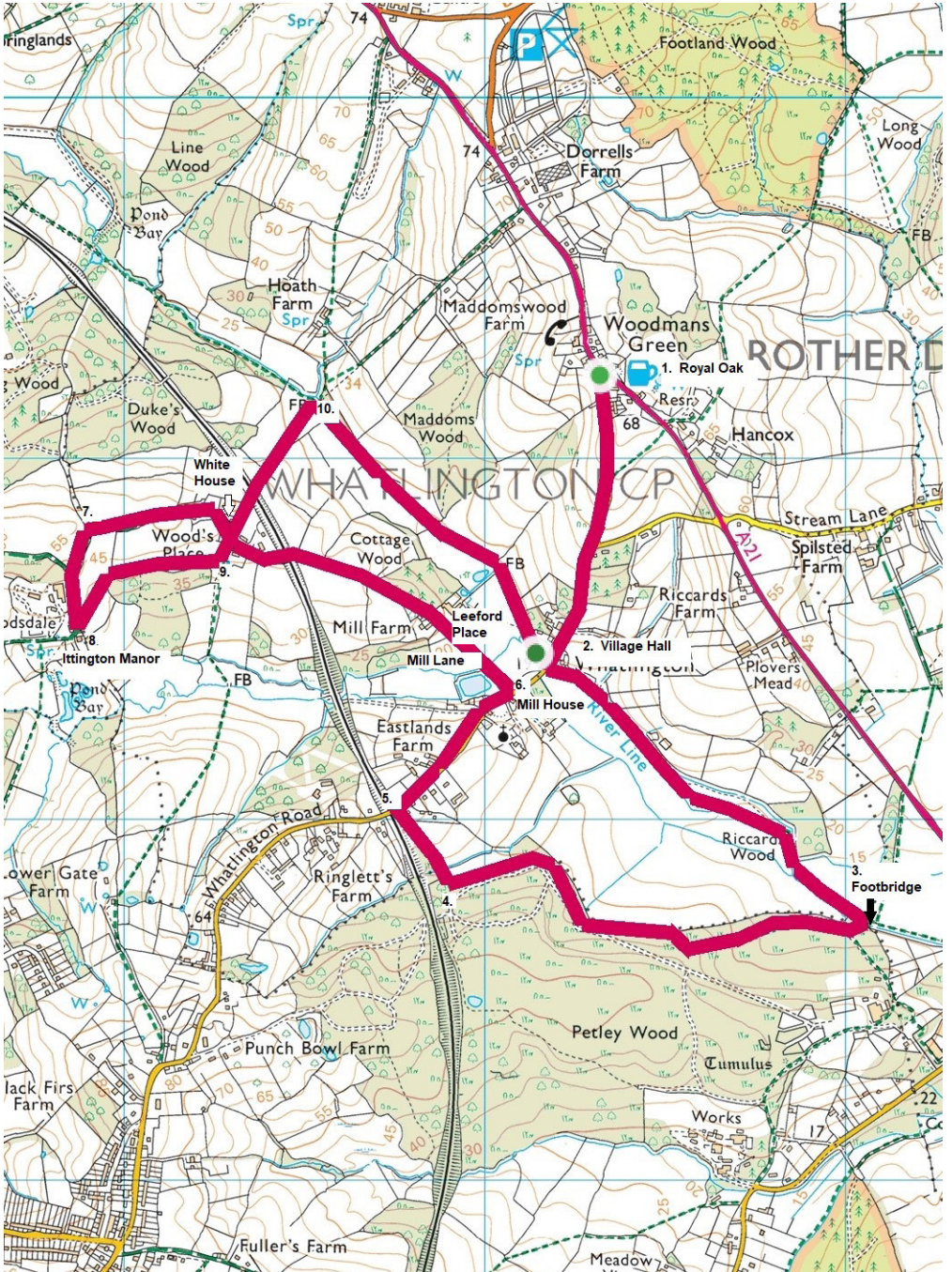
◆ Head diagonally left across the field. As you approach the fence on the far side of the field look for a stile beside a metal field gate. Cross the stile and continue along the bottom edge of the field with a fence on your right. Pass through a hedge line and where the fence cuts away to the right, (9) bear half left, uphill, heading towards barns. Pass through a gate on the right-hand side of the barns and continue on a concrete path out to the lane.

◆ Turn left and at the White House turn right, down the side of the house. Cross the railway, pass through a gate and head downhill. At the foot of the slope, at a fingerpost, bear slightly right to keep a hedge on your right and continue downhill. At the bottom of the field, head slightly left to a small metal gate. Pass through the gate (*but not over the footbridge*), turn immediately right (10) onto an overgrown path. Cross a plank footbridge and a stile to follow the edge of a field with the river on your left.

◆ Continue to follow the river through a series of fields until you pass behind Leeford Place. The path swings left to cross a footbridge over the river and into a paddock. Walk through the paddock and over a stile to emerge onto Whatlington Road, opposite the Village Hall. Turn left to return to the Royal Oak.



WALK WHATLINGTON





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