



FRIENDS OF CORHAMPTON SAXON CHURCH

MEONSTOKE & DROXFORD SCHOOLS

WELCOME THE SAXONS BACK TO THE MEON VALLEY

SCHOOL LEARNING DAY - WEDNESDAY 28TH APRIL



FIRST ANGLO-SAXON FESTIVAL IN THE MEON VALLEY SINCE 11th CENTURY - 17th JULY

For the first time since 1984 when local farmers Gill & Bruce Horn discovered a Saxon man buried at Shavards Farm and prior to that the Norman Conquest in the 11th Century, the Saxons returned to the Meon Valley on April 28th.

The Friends of Corhampton Saxon Church (built in 1020), chaired by Rear Admiral Guy Liardet, worked with Linda Coumbe (head teacher) and the staff of Meonstoke Infant School, to provide a Saxon learning experience for the eighty young pupils of the school.

The school learning day is part of a programme developed by the *Friends* to increase awareness and interest in the cultural and religious history of the Meon Valley, of which Corhampton's ancient Saxon monument - a living Church - is an icon.

Linda Coumbe, head teacher at Meonstoke School, was very excited and grateful for the opportunity offered to the pupils - "*providing a unique, fun and exciting learning opportunity and involvement with the community in creating it.*" The Reverend Stuart Holt (Patron of the Friends, and a Saxon Priest on the day) *welcomed* the school and the children as the newest and youngest *Friends* of the ancient Saxon monument.

After walking the half-mile from the school through Meonstoke & Corhampton, the eighty children aged four to seven, in Saxon costumes, were greeted by a Saxon priest, monk, farmer and the noble Lord Robin Iles. Robin had travelled from the Saxon capital of Winchester at the behest of Winchester City Museum Services.

This welcome was interrupted by a fierce and bloodied Saxon warrior (Admiral Liardet) who had undertaken a 500 mile forced march to win the battle of Stamford Bridge and to be defeated at the Battle of Hastings.

Rear Admiral Guy Liardet says '*this was a great day for the School, the Church and the Meon Valley community. We are all delighted by it.*'

To children were enthralled by the opportunities on offer including a puppet re-enactment, by the local amateur dramatic society, the Riverside Players, of the scenes painted on the walls of the Church. The children were introduced to Saxon history and culture, through activities such as exploring the Church and its history, ringing its bells, examining Saxon artefacts, dressing and performing in period costumes, listening to recordings in Saxon English of the epic poem, *Beowulf*; writing in Saxon 'runes' and illustrated script, sketching the Church, and getting to know the 1000 year old yew tree in the grave yard.

The Meon Valley, which is named after the Meonwara tribe who were part of the Anglo-Saxon invasion in the 5th & 6th Century, has a wealth of Saxon and even older history, Gill Horn, a local farmer and historian brought, for the children to explore, Saxon and Roman artefacts discovered in recent years, in archaeological digs on her farm, which is close to Corhampton Church.

The school learning day will be followed on Saturday July 17th (14:00) by the first Anglo Saxon Festival in the Meon valley since the 11th Century; the pupils of both Meonstoke & Droxford schools will be sharing the fun and learning with their parents and other family members,

The programme is supported by a Winchester City Council Community Chest grant and by Winchester Museum Services. Caroline Thynne, the Winchester councillor for the Upper Meon Valley joined the learning day and, as a founder member of the *Friends* was delighted to see so many young *Friends*. Robin Iles of the Museum Services shared his expert knowledge and the Museum's resources - including allowing the children to hold a precious 1000 year old Saxon pot.

The programme is also helped by resources from The Hampshire Wardrobe, Hampshire Archives & Local Studies, Winchester Cathedral and Winchester College.

Information about Corhampton Saxon Church:

- History of Corhampton Saxon Church - www.bridgechurches.org.uk/church_corhampton.htm
- Corhampton Church within the Meon Valley pilgrimage trail - www.wilfrid-meon-pilgrimage.co.uk/church_corhampton_church.htm

For more information or to help please contact:

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Figure 1: Children dressing as Saxons



Figure 2: How big IS this 1000 year old yew tree?



Figure 3: The Riverside Players and their Saxon puppets



Figure 4: Ready to fight the Norman invaders

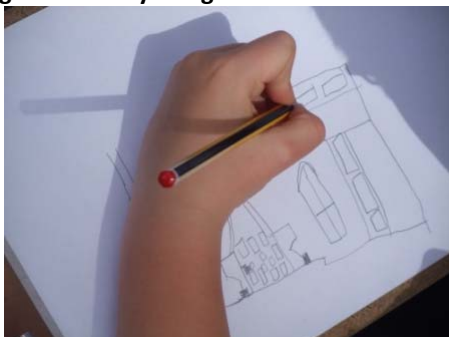


Figure 5: A future church architect



Figure 6: Illustrating Saxon books



Figure 7: Local historian Gill Horn sharing Saxon artefacts found on her farm



Figure 8: Is this really 1000 years old?



Figure 9: Re-enacting the battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings



Figure 10: Welcoming the youngest friends of Corhampton Saxon Church