The Ascott Grapevine

Issue 44 October 2004

Grapevine Appeal

The Ascott Grapevine is provided FREE to every household in Ascott and we wish this to continue for a long time to come.

Although 'The Grapevine' does receive support from the Parish Council and the PCC, it only raises a limited amount of revenue from advertising. 'The Ascott Grapevine' survives mainly on donations. If you would like to help The Grapevine continue, any donation large or small would be appreciated. You can give a donation to any member of the editorial team.

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in the Grapevine please contact a member of the production team to discuss your ideas. Articles for the January issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by January 4th.

Call 01993 832163 or email:
ascottgrapevine@dialpipex.com

Stuart Fox, Kingsley, Wendy Pearse, Karen Purvis

Services at Holy Trinity Church

7 November
11.00am FC
14 November
8.00am HC
14 November
10.30am Service of Remembrance
21 November
11.00am HC
28 November
11.00am HC
28 November
6.00pm EP
5 December
4.00pm Christingle
12 December
8.00am HC
19 December
11.00am HC
19 December
4.00pm Carol Service
Christmas Eve
3.00pm Crib Service
Christmas Eve
11.30pm Midnight Communion
Christmas Day
10.00am Christmas Day Service

What's what

EP = Evening Prayer/ Service
FC = Family Communion
HC = Holy Communion
MP = Morning Prayer/ Service
QP = Time of Quiet Prayer
BS = Benefice Service
Bapt = Holy Baptism

Content & Editorial Policy

If you have an article, story or poem you would like to submit for publication the Grapevine editorial team would love to hear from you. Material for publication is gratefully accepted. Due to space considerations material may not be used immediately but may be held over to be included in a later issue.

The Grapevine editorial team reserve the right to shorten, amend or reject any material submitted for publication.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Births

On 13th July 2004 to Iona (Mackenzie) and Darrell Penning, a son, Douglas William.

On 16th July 2004 to Sarah and Rex Boyd, a son, Felix Arthur Ian.

Marriages

On 26th August 2004 in Woodstock, John Thomas Cull to Debra Anne Harvey.

Deaths

On 1st August 2004, Christopher Kevin Scully aged 82 years.

On 26th August 2004, Margaret Elizabeth Shirley aged 73 years.

On 5th September 2004, Greg Barrett of Fernhill Farm, tragically killed in a road accident, aged 18 years.

The funeral took place at Holy Trinity Church on 10th September 2004 of Cecil George (John) Steddy aged 85 years, sometime resident of Vine House.

Christopher Kevin Scully 1922-2004

Chris Scully was born on 12th February 1922 in Port Laoise, Eire. He was one of eleven children. He moved to England in 1946 and met his wife Beryl in 1948 when he was laying tennis courts for Prebendal House and lodging in Ascott. They were married in 1949 and settled in Ascott. Chris worked for Morris Motors in Oxford as a paint sprayer, sometimes using this talent at home as seen in son Kevin's amazing black and white chequered mini in the late 60's.

He retired in 1982 due to ill health. While his children were of school age, Chris helped in many fund raising events to pay for a swimming pool for Ascott Primary School. He loved his garden and if any of the family mentioned a liking for a particular vegetable, sure enough, the following year that vegetable would be seen growing in his garden.

With failing eyesight, Chris joined the blind school in Chipping Norton, going to meetings once a fortnight and was soon persuaded to entertain the members with his still fine singing voice.

For his 80th birthday in 2002, his family organised a surprise party at the Tiddy Hall, After the initial shock, Chris really enjoyed himself

surrounded by family he hadn't seen for a while and good friends from the village.

Chris leaves behind wife Beryl, children Kevin, Theresa and Nick, four grandchildren and four great grandchildren. The family would like to thank everybody for their messages of sympathy and support.
A collection of £203.20 was made at Chris' funeral for the Wychwood Surgery.

Margaret Elizabeth Shirley 1931-2004

On behalf of our family, I would like to say how much we appreciated the very personal kindness shown by friends and neighbours following the death of our mum Margaret. Margaret died on 26th August 2004 at Langston House, Milton Under Wychwood, a place she really felt at home in, and our sincere thanks go out to all the staff for their kindness, not only to Mum but to the whole family.

We would also like to express our appreciation to Dr Scott and Nurse Jane at the Wychwood Surgery for their care of mum throughout her illness. Also, special thanks to the Reverend Mark Abrey for his kindness and compassion to Margaret and for such a warm and touching funeral service.

Margaret lived in Ascott - under - Wychwood for over 50 years following her marriage, 42 of these in Dawls Close.

Linda St Clair.

Sobell House Hospice is looking for volunteers in various areas:

Could *you*:

- *Work in our shops?*
- *Drive patients and families?*
- *Help in the Day Hospice?*
- *Join the gardeners?*
- *Sell raffle tickets?*
- *Work on reception?*
- *Help in the Ward?*
- *Shake a collecting tin?*
- *Support bereaved people?*

There are many interesting voluntary positions available in Sobell House. No matter how little or how much time you can give, we would like to hear from you. Volunteering for Sobell House is a very rewarding experience.

Please phone Trisha Adams, Voluntary Services Manager on 01865 225868 if you would like to know more.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Ascott Church – The New Services

I wonder how many of us, when confronted with an official form that demands to know our religion, automatically write 'C of E' and then move on. I certainly did. But hey, I did more than that, at Christmas and Easter I would go along to 'support' the Church, put a fiver in the plate, feel that my duty was done and expect the doors to be flung wide in welcome when next I felt the need for a rosy glow. I guess I knew that God would still be there when I wanted Him again. I convinced myself that I did my best to live a good and Christian life, so why did I need to go to church? Well, a stone standing alone never built anything, it is only when stones come together that something is created.

Only in the last six years have I come to realise that being a Christian is much more than having faith and being good. When Christ was on this earth with us he charged his disciples to spread the good news about his life and sacrifice to all people. The good news has been spreading for over 2000 years and amazingly his teachings are as valid and as relevant and as important now as they were all those years ago. If all the world lived as Christ has charged us to live, His kingdom truly would have come. So as Christians we are charged with the task of continuing to build his Church, to continue to spread the word.

As we look around this world we can all see that there is so much to be done. I guess that we all sometimes feel overwhelmed and helpless and feel that we cannot make a difference. I guess that alone that might be true but as the Church of Christ working with people of goodwill across the globe, surely there is nothing that we cannot achieve.

We have to start somewhere and where better than in the place which has been a place of inspiration for hundreds of years, Holy Trinity Church. We have recently rearranged our services to try to meet the worshipping needs of as many people as possible. We start on the first Sunday of the month at 11.00am with a Communion Service which is for all, but with the emphasis on children and young people who have the chance to participate in the service if they wish. On the second Sunday at 8.00am the Communion Service is taken from the Book of Common Prayer and many people find great inspiration in the traditional and familiar language. At 11.00am on the third and fourth Sundays we have more modern language Communion Services. Also on the fourth Sunday, for the first time in September, we held an Evensong Service at 6.00pm. This is a choral service and it would be wonderful if

we could build a small choir to lead the singing. So you will see that there really is something for everyone.

But the service in church is only such a small part of the Christian life. It is like a family coming together to enjoy each others company, to thank God for all that he has done, to learn more about what he wants us to do for him and then to plan how we are to do it. It is like a visit to the filling station to refuel ready for another week. The more of us that are there, the more we can do and the bigger difference we can make in this world.

It is worth remembering that only our Rector, Mark Abrey, is a fulltime clergyman and that he has no less than five parishes to look after. We are extremely fortunate that he is supported by all those who work on a voluntary basis, such as our associate priest Rev Hazel Scarr and priests who are either employed outside the church or who have retired from fulltime ministry. Without all those who willingly give freely of their time, it would be quite impossible to sustain the current number of services. So if you want to make a difference, to make this world a happier, safer and more just place for all mankind, please come along and, with God's help, let us see what can be achieved when there are many shoulders to turn the wheel.

- Tim Lyons

Fatal Foods

For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting medical studies.

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.

2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.

3. Africans drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.

4. Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.

5. Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.

Conclusion:

Eat and drink what you like.

Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

Mark Abrey

Advertise Here ...

Advertise in The Grapevine and reach all the households in Ascott-under-Wychwood in one go!

email: ascottgrapevine@dial.pipex.com

or phone: 832163 for details.

From the Rector

Dear Friends

Well, I'm back and I can't tell you how pleased I am to be working full-time and taking services again in Ascott-under-Wychwood! Thank you to all those who have sent messages of goodwill and those who have been praying for me: I am very grateful.

This past eighteen months have taught me a lot and perhaps the greatest thing has been learning to live in the present moment and to take things slowly. That is quite a big thing in a world which is so driven by results and achievement. But it is an important lesson to learn – to bring awareness to the present moment.

Earlier this year a colleague of mine from Theological College was killed in a motorcycle accident whilst on holiday in France. In February of this year he wrote about the subject of paying attention to the little things and I want to share with you what he said. He wrote:

I was talking with a friend the other night. He was fretting over some of the dazzling things that others do which, as a country priest, he probably never will. His children will go on school trips to places he will probably never see, and regard as commonplace things that to him would seem high adventure. If dazzle and colour are the measure of life, then his life felt suddenly small. He felt sure that it was right to seek fulfilment within the modest bounds of his vocation, but what if ...? Maybe ...?

In Salisbury cathedral there is a clock mechanism. As the hour strikes there are wheels that spin and whirl, levers trip and hammers sound. There is great commotion and excitement, but if we were to stop one of those spinning wheels for a moment and possibly even disturb a strike, I doubt we'd affect the clock much. There's not much moment to those fast moving wheels. If, on the other hand, we were to stop one of the slow moving gears we would soon notice. The whole contraption would stop. The great weights and slow gears which at first seem irrelevant, their motion so modest, their contribution so small, are in fact connected and integrated into every part, quietly orchestrating the whole. People can be like those clock wheels. Some who are in the public eye can dazzle and amaze. By comparison our own lives can seem so small, but before we dismiss our contribution as insignificant, maybe we should consider how many other lives are touched by our own.

Some time ago now, St Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthian church:

'For as with the human body which is a unity although it has many parts ... so it is with Christ. ... Christ's body is yourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole.'

Our lives may indeed seem small, but it is not only those we touch that give us

meaning. We each are part of Christ. So should we regret that a life is lived on a small scale, concerned mostly with that which is local and only ever likely to change the tiniest part of the world, or should we rejoice in slowness and little things, seeking only to connect and integrate all that we are into the love of God? I am glad there is colour and dazzle in this world, I delight in things that amaze, but I am going to try each day to look for something small, something I would normally take for granted, and I will carefully and solemnly give thanks to the God of small things.

Jim was right. As I begin working in a different way – at a slower pace and paying more attention to the present moment – I'm going to try to follow his example. Will you join me?

With all good wishes.

Mark Abrey

Harvest Festival Supper: It All Began With Fred

It all began with Fred. Fred likes the old ways and traditions and latterly the celebration of Harvest Festival had not been what he remembered as a lad. So with a few gentle pushes and nudges the 2004 Ascott Harvest Festival was celebrated in style.

Our vicar, Mark, got us off to a grand start officiating at a friendly and joyful Children's Service combined with Holy Communion, before a congregation of 75 including a number of children and babies. The harvest hymns rang out with gusto.

Approximately 100 people attended the evening celebrations and were greeted despite the wind and rain, with a warm welcome from Tom Gidman busking in the entrance of the Tiddy Hall on his French Horn.

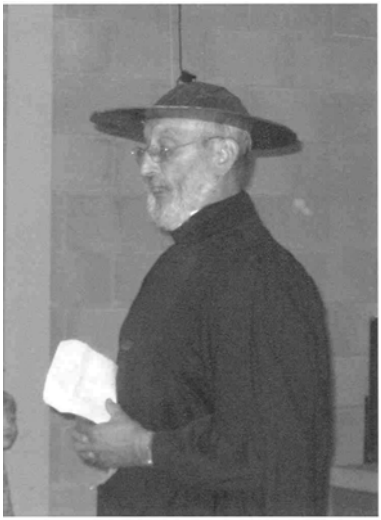
A grand repast of primarily lamb hot pot followed by apple pies made by the ladies and Fred, was enjoyed by all before everyone sat eagerly awaiting the delights to come.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Churchwarden, Tim Lyon had taken on the organisation of the evening and was also compere, a role in which he excells and he certainly maintained his reputation.

Now Fred (Russell) really came to the fore, celebrated author of a Harvest Mummers' Play "The Devil's Seed Trial". Jim Beveridge (Devil) threatened to toast us with his trident. Celia Crampton (Gobbit) was his very delinquent assistant. Mark Dawbarn a Harvest Widow Twanky. Andrew Jackson her reluctant son Jack. Alice Day an attractive policeman. Jussi Brainin an efficient doctor. Alan Edwards the Hound from Hell. Jennifer Blakemore a chaste maiden and Anthony Wood an heroic St. George. They all worked well with Fred in his role as a chanting priest. Dick Crampton as the very able narrator held them all together and Carole Angier took the bow as director. The casts' efforts with a few foibles had the audience in stitches.

Next two young ladies took the floor. Maggie and Tabitha Boyd and their father Rex performing acrobatics par excellence.



Farmer Jim Pearse took us back to the bad old days of the 1870s with his story of farm labourers emigrating from Ascott with high hopes of a better life in the new world of New Zealand. He was ably assisted by the audience.

Then a most beautiful composition written and performed eloquently on the keyboard by Matthew Gidman.

Rosemary Dawbarn ably read the appropriate poem by John Betjman "Diary of a Church Mouse."

Despite delays, William Bugeja was not deterred and delighted us all with a powerful rendering of "Evergreen".

Steve Holborough reading from John Aubrey's "Brief Lives" regaled us with amongst other happenings the strange treatment of ailments in the 17th century.

Vicar Mark's rendering of his "Tale of his great grandfather's ferret", a dubious story, claimed not surprizingly the loudest cheers of the evening.

And finally the Ridley Brothers, David and Josh performing expertly Gymnopdia No 1 and Jupiter on cello and key-

board, finished off the proceedings with a grand flourish. A great time was had by all.

Thanks to Fred for the idea, and thanks also to those other willing but unacknowledged helpers who made the evening such a success.

Wendy Pearse

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Letters to the Grapevine

Any views expressed on the letters page are the personal views of the contributors and are not those of the magazine.

A Smokers View – Tiddy Hall.

Well done the Ascott Village Hall committee, you may or may not be aware that your village hall is now a non-smoking hall. Thank you very much!

As you may guess, I am a smoker, filthy habit I hear you say, well that maybe but I'm not the only one and as it is probably my only vice, I can live with it.

I am disgusted that Ascotts' village hall has become a non-smoking venue. Tiddy Hall was, if I'm not mistaken, built for the people of Ascott village, smokers, non-smokers, drinkers, teetotal people, kids parties etc. It was also built with monies raised by the people of Ascott village, smokers, non-smokers, drinkers, teetotal people etc.

It seems that a certain section of people who helped raise money for the Tiddy Hall have now been ostracised because of their habit, I don't know about you, but this to me is no different than race or sex discrimination.

How can this decision be made without the consultation of the villagers, surely there should have been a meeting where the whole village was invited to attend, and when I say invited, I mean leaflets through doors, not a small notice on the village notice boards, lets face it, when was the last time you read a notice on one of these boards?

Ascott Village hall is not a restaurant, it is a venue for functions where the villagers of Ascott can get together for a bit of a do, whether it be a Disco, folk night or a band. And on these functions, alcohol is served 9 times out of 10, one wonders if that will be the next thing to be banned, after all, alcohol is addictive and I've seen more accidents, damage and sickness through alcohol at various venues than I ever have through cigarettes or cigars & pipes, lets face it, no one tends to fall asleep at a disco with a cigarette in their hand ready to burn the place down. But hey, without alcohol, no one would go to a function would they, therefore the hall would lose out on bookings, so I guess it won't be banned.

I know a lot of people are anti-smoking, (probably 90% of the village hall committee by the sound of it) and that's fair enough, I don't go to their houses and light up a cigarette and I don't hold it against them, I respect their views, they're entitled to them, but Tiddy Hall is NOT their house it is OUR Village Hall and believe it or not we smokers didn't spend all our money on cigarettes, we helped raise funds for the hall.

Normally, when these sort of decisions go

Letters con't...

against the grain I accept them, I don't make a fuss, but on this occasion I could not just ignore it, to me, pompous self-righteousness is just as bad a habit as smoking, and it seems in this day and age, there is a lot of it about unfortunately, denying ordinary decent folk of a basic right somewhere or other.

I am not a wife beater, an alcoholic, a serial killer, a vandal or local thug. I am a smoker who try's his best to help and support his family. Thank you to the village hall committee for taking away one of the pleasures I get in this village. I do suppose at least The Swan will be a beneficiary of this decision, which is no bad thing.

From a very personal point of view, I hope that no one knocks on my door in the future asking me to contribute to any village project or fete, as by now you can probably guess the answer that they will get.

A. Smoker
(name and address supplied)

The Tiddy Hall Committee considered a smoking ban in 2003 and at meeting held in October 2003 voted for a ban which came into force in January 2004.
- Ed.

Firework Code

As Guy Fawkes Night is approaching we take this opportunity to print the following reminder:

- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114
- Keep fireworks in a sealed box or tin
- Use them one at a time, replacing the lid immediately
- NEVER put fireworks in your pocket
- Read the instructions carefully, using a torch or hand lamp NEVER use a naked flame
- Light fireworks at arms length using a taper or a firework lighter
- Stand well back and NEVER return to a firework after it has been lit, it could explode in your face
- Ensure that all chidren with fireworks are well supervised
- NEVER throw fireworks
- Keep all pets and animals indoors
- Take care of sparklers, wear gloves to hold them and dispose of sparklers in a bucket of water as soon as they are finished.

Your village shop is ONE year old on 29 November

Ascott Village Shop opened officially on 29 November 2003, almost one year ago. We've had a challenging, demanding, satisfying and productive twelve months, and went through an immense learning curve. We have been encouraged by our successes and learnt from our mistakes. Through it all we have built a shop to be proud of, open 66 hours a week, financially viable and serving the people of Ascott and surrounding area in line with the original vision.

John Cull, our chairman throughout the planning and opening phases, retired at the AGM in June. We are indebted to him for doggedly following this vision and seeing the project to fruition. Darrell Penning, who has also been involved from day one, has chaired the management committee since June but is now working in Newcastle and is unable to continue! Sandy Markwell has unanimously been elected as our new chairman; she has bags of enthusiasm and a charming way of getting the best out of people. The committee faces the shop's second year of trading with great optimism. As a reminder the committee is:

Chairman
Sandy Markwell
Vice chairman
Bridgette Crundwell
Treasurer Stuart Fox
Secretary Sue Richards
Sue Boyer
Yvette Keauffling
Kathy Pearce
Darrell Penning

As Stuart is not seen in the shop very much you may not appreciate what a grand and time-consuming job he does every day, processing the takings, paying the bills, keeping the accounts and dealing with 1001 other matters to do with running a retail business according to current legislation. He is indispensible, particularly as he also collects the Sunday papers from Shipton!

Mary Balkwill joined us as manager in April and was with us for four months before deciding that she was unable to continue. We thank her for her dedication and hardwork during her time with us and wish her well in her preferred occupation of creative writing. The committee came to the conclusion that an alternative solution to running and staffing the shop would be for volunteers to manage it (ordering and stocking) with paid staff to supplement the volunteer rota, working the early and late weekday shifts and at weekends. Leisha Braithwaite filled in most efficiently and ably over the summer. A number of suitable candidates have responded to our adverts for paid assistants, from both our volunteer base and other local applicants. You will continue to see changes and new faces in

the shop during its second year – the process of evolution goes on.

Thank you to all those people who support the shop and have helped make it such a success, providing such a wonderful asset for all. Tell us what you want, how we are doing but above all – keep on shopping.

Sue Richards

Bluebells at the Barn ...

After three successful years in Charlbury, Bluebells Florist will be relocating to Crown Farm, Ascott-Under-Wychwood in early November. Bluebells at the Barn will use its base in Ascott to continue to create high quality stylish bouquets and arrangements for corporate clients, private orders and weddings.

As well as our local contracts to hotels, pubs and restaurants, Bluebells this year were asked to provide flowers for the inaugural Cornbury Festival. It was great fun designing bouquets for Jools Holland, Will Young and Blondie! So much so, the bouquet we made up for Blondie, was recently re-created for a JCB function at The Dorchester Hotel in London.

So what will be happening at the barn? This is going to be the workshop annex to its main shop based in Deddington, working on numerous weddings which we already have booked for 2005 and corporate events. It will also be the place for brides-to-be to come for their consultation, and of course we look forward to seeing passing trade from Ascott and the surrounding villages.

Our open day is on Monday 8th November from 12.00 until 4.30, so do come and see us. The first 20 customers who come in with their "Grapevine" and spend £20.00 or more will get a £5.00 discount. With the festive season rapidly approaching, we really *could* provide those extra special Christmas presents!

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Debra Harvey and Cath Young.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

In touch with Hilary Biles, District Councillor

By now most readers will have heard the news that Langston House - our wonderful local care home - will close in March 2005. We fought a great battle but we did not win the war! It is so frustrating when I know we are so short of care beds. I know the County said we would get Very Sheltered Housing as part of the redevelopment plan, however that is not in the gift of the County Council as they have to bid against every other council in the South East region who also want funding for their own sites. I will keep you informed of the progress. Spencer Court Woodstock is to be redeveloped and the proposal is that Castle View will be redeveloped along with Chipping Norton Hospital, on the same site.

At the beginning of September nearly 800 people attended the public meeting held by the Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust to give their views on the proposals for the Chipping Norton Hospital. The 'No Cuts' campaign did a wonderful job to get so many people to attend. The PCT announced that X-Ray would stay and the representative from the Radcliffe Trust emphasized that the PCT wanted maternity to be a part of the new build. However, that is up to the Radcliffe Trust, not Cherwell Vale PCT and at the moment the Radcliffe are going through a huge review of services. In fairness should they decide against providing maternity at Chipping Norton it could go whether in the new build or in the current hospital. Many representations have been sent in supporting the need to keep maternity in Chipping Norton.

The main stumbling blocks at the moment are the loss of an MIU unit which is more important now we have to attend Banbury hospital if we need a doctor after 6.30pm or at weekends, the loss of 6 beds and the fact the new building will not be owned by the NHS. By the time you read this there will have been another public meeting and the PCT will have made their decision. I am sure they will go for their preferred option which is a joint operation with the County Council – I wonder why? I sincerely hope they address the problem with the out-of-hours service and the minor injuries unit. Again I will keep you informed as soon as I know the outcome.

New licensing laws are to come in next year and licenses will now be dealt with by the District Council. All District Councillors have been invited to attend training....and yes I will be there.

Please contact me if I can help.

Hilary Biles
District Councillor

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

As there is no meeting in August it has been a quiet time for the Parish Council. Around the village we are pleased to report that the pavement on Shipton Road has been repaired between Maple Way and Dawls Close. The surface was very uneven and we hope that this area will now be easier and safer for people to use. The swing and see-saw in the playing field have been repaired and are in use again after being vandalised. The level crossing will be closed overnight from 11.00 pm on 22nd November to 6.30 am on 23rd November for track renewal works. Notices will be erected to this effect nearer the time. The broken narrow road sign between the railway crossing and the river bridge has been repaired.

The Parish Council is very sad to learn of the decision to close Langston House in Milton. Councillors have supported Hilary Hibbert-Biles, your District Councillor, in her very great efforts to fight this decision but contrary to public opinion it now seems the home will close and residents will be moved to Witney.

The minutes of the July and September meetings are now on the web site. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the councillors if you wish to draw anything to our attention.

Margaret Ismail
Parish Clerk

Parish Council:
Chairman: Nigel Braithwaite 831282
Mike Pearce 830058
Wendy Pearse 831023
Elaine Byles 831427
Stuart Fox 832004
Clerk: Margaret Ismail 832829

PC Barnes writes...

I would just like to introduce myself as the new Area Beat Officer for Minster Lovell, Leafield and the Wychwoods. I am PC Richard Barnes working out of Carterton Police Station. I have been working as one of the Carterton Area Beat Officers for the past year or so. I was asked to take over the beat due to the illness of your previous beat officer. It is my intention to be as visible as the area I cover can allow. Fortunately, the patch is not riddled with crime and the most annoying thing for most residents of the area I cover is youths and their unruly behaviour. If you speak to these youths the one word that always comes from them is 'boredom' This is an area wide problem and will always be a problem in small villages. There is no magic wand to sort out this problem, as I am sure you are aware. Hopefully by working together we can reduce the amount of anti social behaviour over the coming weeks and months. Any suggestions would be welcome. I will leave it for now, look forward to seeing people about in the villages.

Rich Barnes

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Crimestoppers Belongs To You!

The criminal justice system would collapse if people were not willing to be witnesses in court cases. But what happens when those who know something about crime don't want to get involved? What about people who are afraid to contact the police direct or, for whatever personal reason, wish to remain anonymous. The alternative to speaking to the police is to call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Nobody is asked for their name, but their information does help to solve crime. Thames Valley Crimestoppers has been in action for five years and in that time almost 7,400 police investigations have started and over 920 people arrested solely as a result of Crimestoppers callers.

People from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire call about all types of crime. But there is still a lot more information out in the community that would help to reduce crime even further. There are 2.1 million people in the Region and the task of Thames Valley Crimestoppers is to get the message across to all of them. The support of community groups and organisations is vital in spreading the word.

To help everyone understand that Crimestoppers is for them, a competition has been launched to find out if people do know what 'anonymous' means and who or what Crimestoppers is. There are cash prizes of over £1,000 to be won and entry is by a simple form at:

www.thamesvalleycrimestoppers.com

or from Thames Valley Crimestoppers, P0 Box 4818, Earley, Berks RG10 0FT. The closing date is 30th November, so get the information NOW and help to make Crimestoppers an even more effective weapon in the fight against crime - you might also win a cash prize!

Thames Valley
CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime

Transport Information

Service/Day	Departs	Time	Arrives	Time
Bakers 5	Ascott u Wychwood,			
Tuesday	The Swan	0946	Moreton in Marsh	1031
	Moreton in Marsh	1245	Ascott u Wychwood, The Swan	1330
Bakers 34	Ascott u Wychwood,		Chipping Norton,	
Wednesday	The Swan	1403	Council Hse	1429
			Chipping Norton, West St	1430
	Chipping Norton, West St	1630		
	Chipping Norton, Council Hse	1631	Ascott u Wychwood, The Swan	1656
Pulhams 9/806	Ascott u Wychwood,		Chipping Norton	
Thursday	The Swan	0945	Coach Stop	1000
			Banbury Bus Station	1030
	Banbury Bus Station	1340	Chipping Norton Coach Stop	14.10
			Ascott u Wychwood, The Swan	1425
Villager 20	Ascott u Wychwood,			
Thursday	The Swan	1335	Witney, Buttercross	1405
	Witney, Buttercross	1600	Ascott u Wychwood, The Swan	1628
Worths 72	Ascott u Wychwood,		Charlbury Rail Station	
Rail Link	The Swan	0708		0718
		0813		0823
		0913		0923
		1045		1056
		1205		1217
		1441		1451
		1546		1556
		1728		1738
		1813		1823
		1918		1928

Return bus waits for trains at Charlbury station

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

RING A RIDE SCHEME: This is operated by The Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action. It is for people who are unable to use ordinary buses due to temporary or permanent disability. The scheme can be used for transport to work, shopping or visiting friends but not for hospital or day care. These journeys are carried out by the Ambulance Service and Social Services. Call 01865 744478 between 9.30 am – 12.30 Monday to Friday. Journeys can be booked up to 7 days in advance. Journeys cost no more than £1.50 for a single journey and £3.00 for a return.

WYCHWOOD COMMUNITY TRANSPORT: This is a local transport scheme run by the Wychwood Surgery in Milton for those who do not qualify for ambulance transport and have no means of transport. Information can be obtained from Mrs Vanessa Newman at the surgery 01993 831061. There is a charge for this service

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Corporate Events

Funeral tributes.

Details of the opening on November 8th will be posted on the notice boards.

Wychwoods Local History Society

The popularity of Tim Porter, one of the Society's regular speakers was evidenced by the large number of people at the first meeting of the new season. Tim spoke about Oxfordshire Pilgrims and the number of saints' shrines in the county in medieval times. Among these were St Frideswide whose shrine has recently been rebuilt in Christ Church Cathedral, St Birinus whose shrine is in Dorchester Abbey also rebuilt, whilst the original shrine of St. Edburga once in Bicester Priory, was removed to Stanton Harcourt church shortly after the dissolution of the Priory and is still there today.

The November meeting will be on the 18th at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. when another popular speaker, Ralph Mann, will talk about The Early History of Kingham Hill. There is no meeting in December.

Also in Milton Village Hall the meeting on the 20th January 2005 at 7.30.p.m will be the venue for Martin Way's talk entitled Memories of the Home Front - WW2.

Further information about the Society can be obtained from Wendy Pearse, 831023. Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £5 for an individual and £8 for a couple which includes a copy of the Journal, Wychwoods History, when published. Visitors welcome at any meeting at £2 per head.

Wendy Pearse

Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Joan Pratley's Quick and Easy Green Tomato Chuntney

$1^1/_2$ lbs. Green Tomatoes
1 lb. Apples
$1^1/_2$ lbs Onions
$1^1/_2$ lbs Brown Sugar
$1^1/_2$ pints Vinegar
1 oz Ground Ginger
$^1/_2$ teaspoon Tumeric
3 tablespoons Cornflour
Salt and Pepper to taste.

Put Tomatoes, Apples and Onions through mincer, add to pan with 1 pint Vinegar and boil for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile mix dry ingredients with the remaining Vinegar.

Add to pan and boil again for two minutes, then bottle.

Do you have a favourite recipe you would like to share? If so, the Grapevine would love to hear from you.

Further contributions to 'Favourite Recipes' would be appreciated for publication in future issues.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Jottings from the Potting Shed

I'm writing this at the end of September and am sitting here thinking what a strange summer we have had as far as the gardens are concerned. Yes we have had rain just about when it was required and certainly no drought like last year but I wouldn't say it has been ideal. Still, when are we ever satisfied? Anything to do with nature is a bit of a lottery whether in the garden or on the farm. One just has to learn to accept what is thrown at us. Following the wonderful blossom and no late frosts predictably there was plenty of fruit but I didn't notice a proper "June drop" with some of my apples and pears and consequently there was a lot of small fruit. Of course I should have thinned them by hand but I didn't!!!.

Another thing I noticed last week when doing a bit of early tidying around the borders was how many plants are putting on an unseasonable display of flowers – I'm not sure if they are a very late second flowering or very early next years. I have Auriculas, wild Primrose, Choisya, Viburnum tinus, and Spiraea 'Bridal Wreath' all in flower. Obviously it is something to do with the weather conditions but it is difficult to say exactly what.

By the time you get this edition of 'The Grapevine' we will be looking forward to Christmas and I thought it might be an idea to talk about gardening books. Looking at the books I have collected over the years - and they amount to nearly 200 - I couldn't help noticing how many of them were written by women. Indeed, if you look at the more famous gardeners this country has produced over the years, women dominate. For example, you could start with Gertrude Jeckyll, move onto Vita Sackville-West, then Margery Fish, and more recently Rosemary Verey and Penelope Hobhouse. All prolific producers of books on a wide range of topics. In fact I have a book on women gardeners, which lists nearly 120 of them.

If I had to choose my top three favourite garden writers, they would have to be Graham Stuart Thomas for his superb trilogy on roses, Vita Sackville-West whose books – 'In your Garden', 'In your Garden Again' and 'More for the Garden' were taken from articles she wrote for The Observer and are full of interest and very easy to read in a chatty sort of way, and my favourite, Margery Fish, who wrote eight books between 1956 and 1970, again full of interest and written in a style that makes you feel you are in the garden with her. She was of course responsible for popularising the cottage style of gardening and rescuing many cottage garden plants from ex-

tinction. Some of these books have been reprinted and are still available and I think well worth reading. They are not of course the, what I would call, 'Coffee Table books' of today with many glossy colour photographs, but with photos in black and white. They do however; take you back to a different age. If you are stuck for a present for a gardening friend or relative then I suggest you give them a try – I don't think they will be disappointed.

Happy Gardening!

Curly Kale

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Parish Action for the Environment

The Wychwood Project and the Friends of Wychwood are launching a new scheme starting with Ascott, Bruern, Lyneham, Milton and Shipton to improve and enhance the local natural environment.

At a meeting held at Shipton recently various ideas were discussed; including creating wild flower areas in the older parts of churchyards; planting hazel coppice on disused allotment plots to provide bean poles etc; finally to restore overgrown or disappearing ponds.

In addition to these ideas the project is keen to encourage or assist with small-scale tree planting schemes, planting or tagging hedgerow trees and replanting hedgerows. We would also welcome ideas from the local community with which the project could assist or advise and that would improve the environment, biodiversity or encourage wildlife.

If you have any suggestions please contact Stuart Fox on 01993 832004 or email stuart@wychwood.me.uk

Stuart Fox

Fred Russell Remembers Ascott School 1944 - 1950

I hated school, I would turn to the last page of any exercise book and long for the day when I reached that page, and would not have to open another, I would be free at last.

School teachers were not like ordinary people, they were to be feared, they had no feelings of love or hate, for me they were people who made me do things I didn't want to do, and keep discipline over dirty rude little boys. I was known as a backward child so their task was greater, my mind continually wandered. It still does. "More Grit" required, was written on one of my school reports.

During my Primary School days, there must have been something I enjoyed. What first comes to mind, was running out the gate at 3-15 pm knowing it was all over for the day.

I did enjoy the preparations for Christmas, the taking part in the plays we performed for our Mothers to see before the Christmas party. I did not enjoy country dancing to a tinkling piano. While dancing Gathering Peascods, or peapods we called it, Mrs Clemence would turn from playing the piano, and shout, "You boys stop being so rough you will throw the girls off their feet."

I enjoyed playing in the Percussion band, either the drums or cymbals but not the triangle or tambourine, so I remained C of E. and never joined the Salvation Army.

In what academic subject did I excel? The short answer nothing, but I did seem to have a feeling for poetry, learning and reciting Brownings "Home thoughts from abroad". I visualised so easily how he described England in April.

My first day at school began in early 1944.

I remember going into this bleak cold building, which had changed very little from when my Grandmother had gone there in the 1880's and had to pay a penny a week to attend.

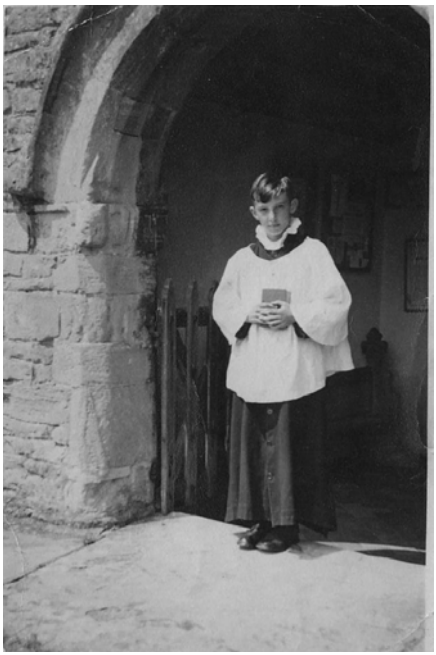
In the main classroom there were two large windows at each end of room, the sills of

which stood well above the height of any child. Sat at my desk pondering over a sum I could not do, I would gaze vacantly through the high windows for inspiration, only to see the blue skies of a beautiful summer's day or the dark grey rolling clouds of autumn or winter.

What heating there was came from an old cast iron, "Slow but sure", stove which gave off acrid fumes when banked up with coke.

Lighting on dark winter afternoons came from gas mantles, and remained so until well after I left to go to Burford Secondary Modern in September 1950. No scholarship to the Grammar for me. When the eleven plus was placed before me, I wondered what it was all about. I don't expect I would fare any better if I sat the same exam today.

Ascott Church of England school had outside lavatories, they were of a primitive kind, a deep pit over which was constructed the wooden seats and buildings. The boys urinal was a large stone trough built against the high wall which separated the boys' latrines from the girls'. There were often competitions by the boys to see how far they could reach up the wall. In my time attending the school nothing was done to prevent the smell and flies.

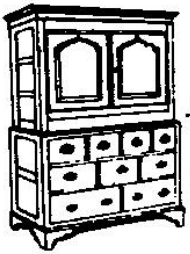


Mrs Lewis was the first teacher I encountered, she taught us very little that I can recall. Many days she would have us infants pulling squares of cotton apart to stuff cushions.

Her cat Smuts would often come to school with her. He was called Smuts after General Smuts the South African leader.

Some afternoons Mrs Lewis would begin to read a story, while knitting for victory, socks for Servicemen. She would doze off and start talking in her sleep, this was of greater enjoyment to all of us than the story she was reading.

Dressed in her long dark victorian clothes,



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had it not been for the outbreak of war she would have retired long before I went to school. The war had been over for a very short while when the school inspector visited Ascott and saw what was going on in the name of education. She was quickly replaced.

With Mrs Clemence came a bright dawn after a dark night, she was a woman of about 30 years from Gloucestershire.

The school had more colour, our paintings were put up around the room, she showed kindness and understanding to those like myself who were a bit slow to grasp anything.

She had a love for the countryside, we would often go on nature walks collecting wildflowers, finding the names for them when we got back to school, then we would draw and paint them, or press them in a book. She introduced the school to rush making, this would mean collecting the rushes from the river Evenlode, letting them dry out, then weaving them into table mats, workbaskets and shopping bags.

So successful did the school become at this craft, it had it's work exhibited at the Oxfordshire Agricultural Show, which the school visited each year as the summer outing.

Sadly none of my work was submitted, however in my last year at Primary school I was awarded a book called "The Countryside and How to Enjoy It". I treasure that book still, along with my "Stanley Matthews Soccer Gift Book for Boys 1953".

During the school year there were some events none of the children looked forward to, the main one being the visit of the school dentist. Mr Cook the school dentist was a short stocky man with curly receding ginger hair, he had gold fillings in his own teeth and when he smiled I thought it that of a torturer who longed to get his victim in the large wooden chair he brought with him, then stick the needle into your gums as far as he could. Thinking about it now I wonder did he

patent that wooden chair and sell it to the U.S.A. to use on death row? I can not say he ever hurt me when I had a tooth pulled, it was the trembling fear of sitting helpless in that chair. Which was it braver to be, sit there and take it like I did, or do what my sister did bite his finger and run home?

The Health Nurse visited more often, she came to look in our hair for lice and nits, also our finger nails, so most of us would try and scrape them clean using our pen nibs.

Scrub them a little harder she would sing in her Welsh accent.

The vicar called in every Friday morning to take a short service and scripture lesson. On Ascension Day in May each year the school children marched from the school at 9 o'clock in the morning for a service in the church, afterwards we were given the rest of the day off. I was free to roam the hay meadows looking for birds' nests.

Being a Church of England school religion was always part of the school day, a hymn and a prayer in the morning, and again before we left in the afternoon. I smile with pleasure even now when I hear the hymn "Now the day is Over ", it reminds me of running out of the school gate. The Bishop's prize was also awarded once a year for those well versed in the Bible and scripture, I never even got a certificate of merit. I wonder will St Peter say failed again I'm afraid?

The kindness of Mrs Clemence was shown each year when she offered the children tomato plants which her husband had grown.

I never took up the offer.

Eventually she commented on this. "You are the boy who never accepts a plant", she said. "If you go through life with that attitude you will be a very lonely person".

There was further embarrassment for me when she told the school "There is one boy here, who if he see's me outside of school hours will run off in the opposite direction so he will not have to speak". What a pity I did not take more notice of what she tried to teach me. In closing I must record how patriotic some of us little boys were. To the tune of "Land of Hope and Glory", we would sing

Land of soap and water

Mother's washing the kids

Father's picking his toe nails

Smells like mouldy cheese

Land of soap and water

Smells like mouldy cheese.

Fred Russell

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Nature Notes

In this article I want to look back at our history to see how this area gained many of its distinctive landscape features.

The Wychwood villages are situated in the heart of the former Royal Hunting Forest. This doesn't mean that the whole area was covered with trees, rather it consisted of areas of woodland, some large, some small, with wide expanses of open space and heath land in between. Within the whole area the deer were reserved for the King's use and Forest officials imposed Forest Law, which protected the King's deer and their environment.

The woodland would have provided cover for the deer, but the hunt itself would have taken place over open countryside. How often the King actually hunted here is not recorded. Normally the King's Forester would have arranged for deer to be caught by Royal Huntsmen who came to the Forest for that purpose. The meat, which was often salted, was then sent to Westminster, for the King's use. Wild boar may also have been present, but there is only one written reference to them dating back to 1216. Wild Cats certainly lived in the area along with the more familiar wildlife such as hares, badgers, foxes and woodcock, all of which have been mentioned in ancient manuscripts.

The area of the Royal Hunting Forest was defined by William the Conqueror and is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but over the centuries its borders changed. These changes of boundaries were referred to as "perambulations" as royal officials and local representatives would ride or walk the bounds. The last of these took place in 1638 but by 1857 with the coming of the enclosures and disafforestation the Crown's involvement with the Forest had ended.

Some areas of woodland were dense or coppiced but others, called Forest Pastures, consisted of widely spaced mature trees with grassland underneath. This type of landscape can still be seen on some of the large estates, such as Blenheim and Ditchley. There were also areas of common land where local inhabitants could graze their animals and each year, between September and November, pigs were allowed into the

Forest to feed on acorns and beech-nuts. A fee, known as pannage was charged. Inhabitants were also allowed to gather fallen timber for firewood and some had rights to take timber for fencing or building.

Today, in this age of plastic and metal, we tend to forget that timber was once the primary raw material and as far as the King was concerned the Forest provided timber for his construction projects and the navy as well as a source of revenue.

Many settlements were created from Forest clearances, or assarts as they were called, and some like Leafield, which was once surrounded by woodland, gradually expanded as a result of clearance, not all of which was properly authorised! Indeed a substantial part of the income that the Crown gained from the Forest came from fines for illegal woodland clearance. In 1250 four people farming land in Ascott, Roger Douly, Adam Le Fuler, Alice Fulwell and John Fox were recorded as paying Assart Rents for land that had been cleared and planted with wheat and oats.

Look at any modern map and these ancient assart fields, with their uneven shapes and sinuous boundaries can easily be distinguished from the regular outlines of those created by the enclosures.

The ancient Forest, like today's woodland consisted primarily of oak and ash with some elm and beech. Hazel was the main timber used for coppice although ash too could be used. The ideal woodland, in terms of productivity was hazel coppice with oak standards. In a survey completed in 1791 it was reported that the Forest contained 27,600 oaks, 13,400 ash trees, 600 beech, 350 elms, 66 sycamores, 101 limes and 72 horse chestnuts. Sadly it was also reported that because of poor management and neglect only 173 oaks were fit for use by the navy. However things must have improved because between 1803 and 1833 approximately 1500 mature oaks were supplied to the naval dockyards.

The coppiced woodland not only produced timber but the raw material for charcoal production. Before the use of coal it was charcoal that fed forge and furnace and so was of critical importance. Wychwood charcoal supported the Woodstock steel industry as well as the pottery

kilns that were found all over the area. Today charcoal is still being produced, on a small scale, at Foxholes the local BBOWT reserve.

What remains of the Forest's 900-year history? Obviously we still have the deer, today it's roe and fallow, although in the distant past red deer were also present. In some areas the small fields, carved from woodland, can still be seen and in the adjoining hedgerows woodland trees and flowers like yellow archangel and wood anemone can be found. If you walk from Kingstanding down London Lane and up to the A361 the hedges are full of elm suckers and small elm trees. Once, before Dutch elm disease killed them, a line of mature trees marked the way through Ascott village.

Compare these fields with the large ones; rectangular in shape, created as a result of "planned countryside" which was intended to improve agricultural efficiency.

Notice place names, Ramsden Heath and Lyneham Heath as well as farms containing the word "heath" all indicating landscape features that have now disappeared under the plough.

Even the roads betray their origins. Twisting, turning country lanes follow the route of ancient irregular assarts, whilst straight roads were often produced by the parliamentary enclosure acts. Good examples are the long straight road leaving Chadlington and the road from Fairspear to Leafield.

Fortunately much woodland still remains to enhance our landscape and provide home to the many species of plant and animals and birds that we can all enjoy today.

Stuart Fox

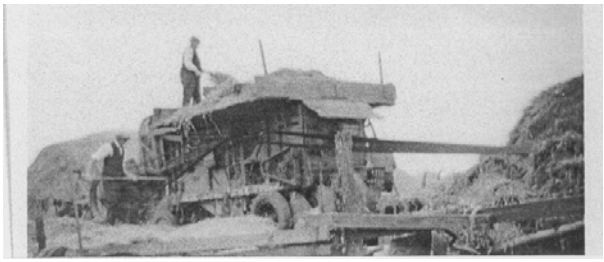
Don't forget about the Ascott website:

History of Harvest Part 2

After harvest the corn ricks had to be thatched as soon as possible because the grain would quickly sprout under wet conditions. The yealmer shook ready threshed straw into a heap and dampened it for strength. A number of handfuls were pulled out and using his fingers he combed the straw to make a yealm - a thatching unit. The yealms were laid in alternate directions in the angle of a forked stick - a jack. When full the jack was carried on the yealmer's shoulder to the rick, where the thatcher carried it up the ladder to the roof. He began at the eaves and tucked the thinner end of the yealm into the roof. Then the next yealm was put in with the big end, the thinner end overlapping the first yealm. He continued to lay the yealms up the roof until he reached the very top. Then starting from the top and working downhill, he combed the thatch out straight with a hand rake and fastened it down with a bond of twine held into place with sprays (rick pegs) three feet long made from split ash or hazel. Up to a dozen lines of twine and sprays were arranged across the roof. A good overhang at the eaves and gable ends gave better protection from the weather.

Corn stored in these thatched ricks or in barns was threshed by hand with flails until gradually superseded by machines during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was a very slow process with the flail and provided work for many labourers all through the winter. After threshing, the grain also had to be winnowed by hand to remove the chaff and dust. The whole process was done in the stone barns with the big doorways which provided the necessary draught.

The first mechanical threshing machines were built into stone barns, those were powered either by a horse gearing or a small steam engine. On many farms the farmer with his shotgun had to sleep by these machines at night to prevent them from being smashed by the workers whose jobs had been taken away. Threshing machines slowly improved until by about nineteen hundred they were large and



mobile, being taken from farm to farm by contractors. Large steam engines provided the power until gradually taken over by tractors in the nineteen forties. The threshing machine was driven by a large endless belt.

For steam engines the farmer supplied the coal and a worker to carry water. A gang of at least eight other workers was also needed with two or more on the corn rick passing sheaves onto the top of the machine where one person cut the bonds and passed the loose sheaf to the next man, the feeder. He regulated the flow of material into the machine through a space in the floor about five feet long and one foot wide. This was directly above the drum cylinder revolving in excess of one thousand R.P.M. and was quite dangerous especially with the fast rocking motion from the movement of the riddle shakers. Many a knife has gone through with a 'crunch, tinkle, tinkle' when not tied to the wrist.

The corn was separated into four components. Grain came from shutes at one end into the four-bushel sacks. Barley sacks weighed two cwt. (one hundred and four kilograms), wheat two and a quarter cwt. and oats one and a half cwt. Straw and cavings (dead leaf and short bits of straw) came from the other end. The straw was either built into a rick, usually with the help of an elevator; baled with a stationary baler driven by a belt from the threshing machine; or if it was wheat straw for thatching, it was trussed by a mechanical trusser driven by a chain from the threshing machines. Trusses were like big long sheaves but tied by twine in two places. Chaff was blown out underneath the machine and was either raked out into a heap or onto a canvas sheet and carried away. "Doing chaff and cavings,"was the worst job because it was so dusty.

Some wheat ricks were left right through until early summer by which time they had often become home to dozens of rats and hundreds of mice. In the time of the first world war a reward was paid for dead rats' tails, so Teddy, a contractor's man, made some beer money running down the rats with a cry of "Oi. Oi". So when a rat was spotted the shout went up "Oi. Oi. Teddy," and Teddy gave chase. In the time of the second world war the contractors had to carry rolls of wire mesh with them to put round the

corn rick so that all the rats could be killed.

Work normally started at 7.30.a.m. with breaks at 9.30, 12.00 and 3.00 p.m. for a bite to eat and a friendly chat. No drink goes down better than a cup of warm tea on a hot and dusty threshing afternoon!

By about 1950 a self feed system was fitted so the bond cutter just dropped the loose sheaves onto a canvas or a roller. A chaff blower sent the chaff along pipes to a selected place and a cavings blower sent this up into the straw. These improvements saved two peoples' jobs. The threshing gang was traditionally made up of pensioners and housewives but in the second world war Italian prisoners came, then German prisoners followed by D.P.s (Displaced persons from Eastern Europe). Few of these men from abroad spoke English but one D.P. who did was a dentist from Czechoslovakia. After these most of the muscle power was provided by landgirls until they also were disbanded. By then willing helpers were very few, so farmers helped each other with their threshing. The worst part of the job was the dust, although as one farmer remarked to me "But it wouldn't be threshing if it wasn't dusty would it?"

A few combine harvesters were in action in the 1940s but these were slow working and had to be drawn by tractors, then in the early 1950s the red self propelled Massey Harris combines were available in large numbers and soon changed the harvest scene for ever! Many farmers and workers rejoiced at this change because it cut out so much work but I enjoyed working with the sheaves and it was a sad day when the threshing machine left our farm for the last time.

Progress has continued. Grain storage and handling facilities have improved and with todays high yielding crops the modern combines can deliver as much grain in an hour as the threshing gang would have coped with during a full days work.

Jim Pearse

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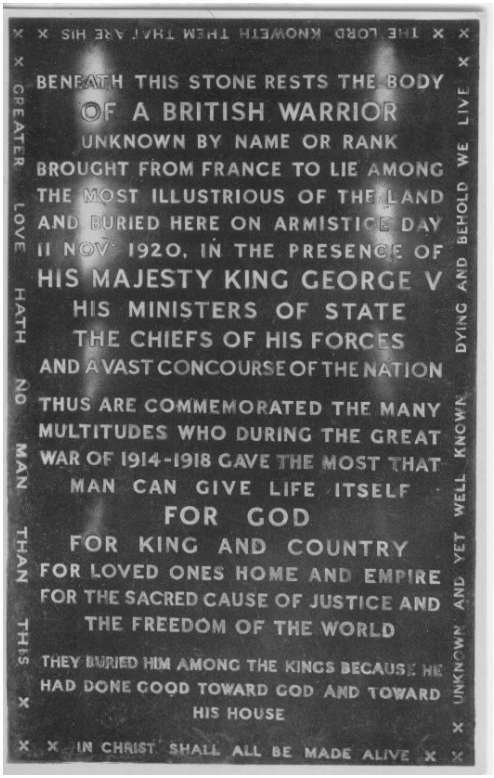
The Story of the Unknown Warrior



With the approach of Remembrance Day, November 11th, thoughts naturally turn to the Cenotaph in Whitehall and it's origin following the end of the First World War. However another strong association from those times is the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey and behind that monument is a rather remarkable story.

David Railton was an army padre serving in the trenches in France and one day he came across a rough wooden cross in an abandoned garden on which were pencilled the words "An Unknown Warrior of the Black Watch". Railton felt compelled to write to Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force to suggest that a similarly unknown warrior taken from a grave in the war zone and reburied in Britain would be a fitting memorial to all the unknown warriors lost in the War.

No response was forthcoming but after the War the Dean of Westminster, Bishop Ryle, was very enthusiastic about the idea. He suggested Westminster Abbey as the most suitable site and despite the reluctance of George V found allies in the Cabinet. Lord Curzon was appointed head of a committee who would choose the body and bring it back to Britain. He was also to persuade the King to reconsider his opinion. It was agreed that Armistice Day 1920 would be the most suitable day for the ceremony.

Secrecy surrounded the choice of the unknown warrior. On 7th November 1920, from

the six main battlefields of the Western Front, Ypres, Marne, Cambrai, Somme, Aisne and Arras, six working parties of soldiers exhumed and placed in a plain coffin one British body from amongst the thousands of unknown graves. Ambulances brought these bodies to an army hut near Ypres where an unknown senior officer, previously blindfolded, was led in to touch one of the coffins. This was then placed in an oak casket inscribed "A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914-1918 for King and Country".

The chosen Unknown Soldier then began his final journey home whilst the other bodies were reverently returned to their original resting places. From Ypres he travelled to Boulogne Castle for the night and the following day was taken through the streets on a French Military Wagon for salutes by Military leaders before embarking on the H.M.S.Verdun in the harbour. Escorted by six destroyers, the flotilla on reaching the English coast was greeted at Dover with a 19 gun salute. By rail to Victoria and finally to the Abbey where the nave was lined by 100 holders of the Victoria Cross. The King, by then fully converted to the idea, ordered that one of his swords should be placed in the tomb with the coffin which was scattered with soil from the French battlefields whilst the Last Post was sounded. A similar event was also taking place in Paris where the French Unknown Warrior was

Ascott Memorial Plaque

interred beneath the Arc de Triomphe.

Over 1,000,000 people filed past the tomb during the next five days where the inscription read "They buried him amongst Kings because he had done good toward God and toward His house". A Black Belgian marble gravestone was unveiled the following year when the highest American award, the Congressional Medal of Honour was placed beside the King's wreath. It is now on a nearby column not far from a tattered Union Jack originally owned by David Railton the padre from whom the whole idea came into being.

There are always flowers on the grave, but perhaps one of the most touching was the bridal bouquet of the late Queen Mother who on arriving at the Abbey for her wedding in 1923 placed her bouquet on the tomb. Her brother lies in an unknown warrior's grave following his death in the Battle of Loos in 1915. Like David Railton's original source of inspiration he was also an "Unknown Warrior of the Black Watch".

Wendy Pearse

I am grateful to Peter M Smith for allowing me to use the above information from his article "In Memory of the Nameless Fallen" in The Great War magazine. The Great War magazine is dedicated to the Great War and to those who perished and those who returned, and more information can be obtained from Mark Marsay, the Editor, on 01723 581329 or www.greatnorthernpublishing.co.uk

At the going down of the sun and in the morning. We will remember them...

War Graves, Ypres

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Poem

Beech-wood fires burn bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year;
Store your beech for Christmastide
With new-cut holly laid beside.
Chestnut's only good, they say,
If for years 'tis stored away;
Birch and firwood burn too fast,
Blaze too bright and do not last.
Flames from larch will shoot up high,
Dangerously the sparks will fly;
But ash-wood green and ashwood brown
Are fit for a queen with a golden crown.
Oaken logs, if dry and old,
Keep away the winter's cold;
Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke.
Elm-wood burns like churchyard mould,
E'en the very flames are cold;
Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread -
So it is in Ireland said.
Applewood will scent the room,
Pear-wood smells like flowers in bloom,
But ash-wood wet and ash-wood dry
A king may warm his slippers by.

If the poem above has inspired you to light a fire in your fireplace, the Fire Service reminds us...

Chimney fires cause severe damage, personal injury or even death every winter.

Have your chimney swept by a competent chimney sweep at least once a year, preferably before you light the fire for the first time in the Autumn (N.B. If you regularly burn wood, the fire service recommend that the chimney is swept twice a year).

Having your chimney swept will ensure that the flue is not blocked, and that smoke and gases can escape safely.

USE a spark guard fixed to the wall when a fire is left unattended, or when there are children or elderly people around.

DO NOT place clothes or other flammable material on the guard or too close to the fire.

MAKE SURE you have a bedtime safety routine to keep your family safe.

USE fire lighters, never flammable liquids

CHECK that your smoke alarm is working.

School News

Ascott Pre-school

The term has started really well with a variety of activities to keep the children amused. The demand for places is so great that the pre-school is now open on a Friday morning as well. Toddler group now runs on a Friday afternoon from 1 o'clock.

The children have been enjoying the new outdoor play facilities, which have greatly enhanced the previous equipment. The new shed, which arrived in the summer, can now accommodate all the toys much better and allows much greater access.

The children enthusiastically picked blackberries at the beginning of the term, but enjoyed eating them even more! The theme for this term is pets. A number of children have delighted in showing their animals and fish to their friends. These have included 4 dogs, a snake, a lizard, rabbits, a tortoise, a guinea pig, a hamster and some goldfish. The highlight so far has been a visit by a Chipping Norton Veterinary nurse. The children practised their bandaging skills on a willing soft toy and listened to Sarah's dog's heartbeat.

Later in the term, the children will have a story-telling session with Mrs Brown from the library. The children love these visits from Mrs Brown.

A number of Pauline's team are currently working on NVQ courses to increase their knowledge and skills. Sally, Sarah and Frances are studying for NVQ2 in Early Years Childcare and Education, while Sandra is studying for NVQ3 in the same field. Pauline herself has just qualified as an NVQ Level 3 assessor. All the staff are dedicated in their work and their efforts are really appreciated by children, parents and carers.

There is a new fundraising team in place to support the pre-school. Forthcoming events in November include an autumn sale and a craft evening, both to be held at Tiddy Hall. Look out for further details and please come and support them. All proceeds from such fundraising activities are vital for the pre-school. Without them the pre-school couldn't provide the variety of equipment essential for the stimulation and development of young children.

Windrush Valley School

The end of the summer term brought to a close another busy and successful school year and we waved a sad goodbye both to our Form 6 pupils and some valued staff members.

A few highlights from the end of last term included an Activity Week at the Kingswood Centre at Denbigh Castle in North Wales attended by 19 pupils and 2 staff. Closer to home, 27 pupils and 6 staff had an overnight camp at Banbury Hill Farm Camping Site. Activities included a BBQ, cooked breakfast, sporty games, quizzes, a nature trail walk and sleeping in a tent.

Several day trips were also undertaken to support

Drawings by Ascott Pre-school

Tabitha - Mummy and Arthur

Rhiannon - a butterfly on a rock

various individual form groups' subject topics. These included a trip to the Butterfly Farm at Stratford-on-Avon for the Foundation Unit, a trip to Warwick Castle for Form 1 and trips to Hampton Court for Forms 3 and 5.

In the classroom, this years examination results continued to be a testament to the hard work of both the staff and pupils. Two boys, Ashley Elder and Geoffrey Chapman competed in the finals of the Primary Mathematics Challenge with Geoffrey gaining a Bronze award. Excellent results were achieved throughout the school for the English Speaking Board (100% success rate), Key Stage 1 SATs in English and Maths (with 87% of pupils at or above national average in both subjects) and for Key Stage 2 where one pupil scored a magnificent 99% in the maths test.

On a social note, pupils, parents and staff all enjoyed a very successful end-of term barn dance organised by the Friends of Windrush Valley School at New Beaconsfield Hall.

This September we have welcomed a lot of new faces at the start of another academic year. Pupils and parents enjoyed a lively harvest festival at Holy Trinity church led by Reverend Hazel Scarr. At the end of the day home-baked goods and garden produce were sold, raising £170 for the ActionAid charity.

Looking ahead to the rest of this Autumn term, pupils from Year 4 are going to a Roman Play and Anglo Saxon trip while our under 9 and under 11 football sides have a regular away fixture against St Johns in Banbury.

After half-term, work will begin on our Christmas productions, watch out in the next issue for a review of A Child is Born (Years 2-6) and the under 7s production.

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Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Leafield School

Here we are again already well into the new school year and fast approaching half term. For those of you who have been through Leafield this summer you will have noticed how busy the builders have been. After an extra few days holiday and a lot of unpacking, dusting and major cleaning by all the staff, the children came back to what seemed like a totally new school. The changes inside have made a huge difference to the school with a proper dedicated ICT suite, foundation area, staff room, offices and lovely new toilets. A comment from one child was "it's like a proper school now"!, and the new classroom should be in use by the time you read this, freeing up our hall for assemblies and other group activities. There will be an official opening when all the work is totally completed so watch this space or look out for notices.

We had a super Leaver's Service on the 14th of July in Leafield Church where our Year 6 children spoke and performed brilliantly. They are now all settled into their new schools and we wish them all well. We then had an End of Year Family Celebration organised by The Friends of Leafield School at the Village Hall, which went tremendously well and helped raise a substantial amount of money towards our fund for new equipment for the new building. Thanks to everyone who came along and supported us.

The Governors are pleased to say that numbers are rising with 75 children on roll and a lot of new parents enquiring for places at Leafield, so if you have a child born between 1.9.00 and 31.9.01 you should have received an application form from Oxfordshire County Council for a school place. If you should have received one and haven't then please contact the Admissions Team at Macclesfield House (01865 815175). The closing date is 19th October, but if you are a little late and unsure of the procedure then please telephone our Head Mrs. Ryde and have a chat with her.

The Annual Governors Meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th November at 7.30 pm. At last year's meeting we were able to view the plans of the proposed new building. This year we will actually be able to view the new classroom building as well as the rest of the school if you haven't already had the opportunity to do so.

The Friends of Leafield School are planning some further fundraising events prior to Christmas, so again look out for notices and do come along and support your local school.

For any further information please contact the school secretary Mrs Deb Brown on 01993 878273.

Vicky Greves,
Governor

Adrian White

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Don't forget about the Ascott website:

Sport

Wychwood Football

Prior to the game a minute silence was held in respect of Greg Barrett who had tragically died in a car accident in the week before this match. Greg had several close friends and a relative in the Wychwood Squad.

'Turn Up for the Book'

Match Report: Pre Season Friendly 12th September 2004 Away - Oxford City Colts 1 – 4 Wychwood

Several weeks ago when Oxford City requested a pre season friendly they weren't to know that we were going to considerably improve our squad in time for the new season. At that time we also didn't know either and fully expected to be hammered! Efforts over the past few weeks to sign more players saw several new quality players turn up for this friendly game and sign on for the new season starting next week. The result was a 'turn up for the book'.

It was agreed that this would be a game of three thirty minutes sessions. Both sides were very competitive throughout. We took the lead after ten minutes when a mistake by their keeper let Tom Fletcher put us 1-0 up. Five minutes before the first session was due to finish Richard Sutton increased our lead with a unchallenged header from a corner.

The second session, with the strong wind against us saw us hold our own and also increase our lead at the end of the session. This was the best goal of the match scored by Tim Senior when he worked his way down the left side and into the area to thump the ball past the advancing keeper.

With ten minutes to go in the final session Tom Fletcher scored again to give us a 4-0 lead. A consolation goal was scored by Oxford City Colts minutes from the end to make it 4-1.

We thoroughly deserved this unexpected victory. We defended excellently and created several goal scoring opportunities. Although possession was pretty equal the opposition were restricted to very few goal scoring chances throughout!

Man of the Match: Excellent performances by all but Jon Wheater deserved 'man of the match' for his excellent defending throughout!

Team:

Shaun Green, Tim Allan/ Ian Wright/ Jon Wheater, Luke Ford/Mike Hornsby, Tom Holdsworth, Shaun Kench, Neil Mustoe / Ben Greatbatch, Jamie Stalker, Tim Senior/ Tim Barnes/ Tom Haines, Richard Sutton, Tom Fletcher

Next Game:Home (Milton under Wychwood) League:Summertown. Kick off 2.30

- Paul Marsh

Ascott C.C. End of Season Review

The 2004 season for Ascott C.C. is now complete, bar our annual end of season do, which will give all the players a chance to reflect on the glory of the recent summer, that is, if there was any glory!!

The second half of our season was not much of an improvement on the first half, with a few highlights, a couple of close games and dare I say it, some downright thrashings!

July started so well away to Combe, a late start due to a drizzly shower didn't put Combe off, nor did it put off our ability to bowl plenty of overs at our opponents, at tea Combe had amassed 183 for 7 wickets off 41 overs. Ascotts poor batting continued, as after 10 overs we were 30 for 5. However some lusty blows from G.Doggett & C.Jowett ensured that after 29 overs Ascott were 184 for 5.

Our next fixture was cancelled, as Stonesfield couldn't get a team, they were to do this to us again later on in the season. The next fixture on our agenda was a fund raising event, a sponsored darts marathon at The Swan, I'd like to thank Alex the Landlord for putting up with us & anyone who got collared as they entered the pub for a donation, many, many thanks to you all, a substantial amount was raised for the club.

Minster paid homage to the Ascott ground on the 18th of July and were duly despatched with the game resulting in an Ascott win by teatime!! That's 2 wins on the trot now.

Well that's about as good as it got unfortunately, believe it or not, of our last 5 fixtures, which were against Chadlington, Appleton, Risinghurst, Shipton & Minster, they all fielded a couple of league players or more, in Shiptons case, a county batsman no less.

In three out of these 5 games we took a hell of a beating, against Chadlington, Shipton & Minster.

We scored 174 against Appleton, which on many Sundays would be good enough for a win, however we were chasing 240, which made things a bit more difficult.

And we did run Risinghurst close, scoring 113 all out, we feared the worst. We had them on the run for a short while as they were 0 for 2 at one stage, and a wonderful performance by George Gross, who is only 15, got returns of 6 overs, 4 maidens, 6 runs for 3 wickets & at 46 for 6 we thought we might run through the rest of them. It was not to be, we only managed to get 2 more wickets before they passed our total, but it was a good game.

All in all, 2004 has not been very successful in terms of results. In terms of enjoyment and entertainment, it has

been a great season, we have a couple of new players who've joined us, and the support we have received for away matches as well as home games has been a pleasant surprise to us all. So to all those who had nothing better to do on a Sunday afternoon, a huge thanks for giving us your support, even if you weren't there just for the Cricket!

And last of all, as club captain (for the last season) I'd like to offer my thanks to all the players for their efforts & support during the 2004 season.

Clive Jowett
Ascott C.C.
skipper 2004.

Once again, if anyone is interested in playing for the club, feel free to ring me on 01993 831916.

Sue's Great North Run

Many thanks to those who sponsored and encouraged me in an age-defying challenge. It was a good feeling running with 49,999 other participants, and every few kilometres or so there was a band playing to stimulate momentum and resolve. Up in the sky over the seafront at South Shields the Red Arrows performed, which with the cheering from my one-man support team got me through that hardest last mile to the finish line. I ran the 13.1 miles in 2hrs 15 mins - definitely a personal best as this was my first half marathon. Do call round to admire my medal!

You have contributed to over £300 being raised for Macmillan Cancer Relief and the Greg Barrett Fund for Cricket Development at Burford School. Thank you all.

You might be interested to know that my brother (the one that started all this running lark) is fully recovered from his two operations for kidney cancer, so much so that he cycled coast to coast in May, cycled from Lands End to John O'Groats in August, ran the Great North Run in September and is entering the London Marathon in April next year. His chosen charity is Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Sue Richards

FARMERS MARKETS 2004

Witney - 3rd Thursday of the Month

Woodstock - 1st Saturday of the Month

Chipping Norton - 4th Friday of the Month

Charlbury - Quarterly on Saturdays (Dates to be Confirmed)

Further details from Thames Valley Farmers' Market Association on:
0870 2414762
or
visit the web site at:
ww.tvfm.co.uk

Tiddy Hall

Regular Activities

Monday to Thursday Mornings Pre-School- Contact Pauline Plant 07968006451

Friday Mornings
Mother and Toddler Group. Contact Pauline Plant 07968006451.

Tuesday Evenings
Yoga. Contact David Billham 01993 842061.

Wednesday Evenings
Badminton. Contact Chris Morgan 01993 831958.

Thursday Evenings
Yoga. Contact Chris Setters 01608 676236

Saturday Mornings
Dog Training. Contact Sharon Wilson 01993 831801.

To book the Tiddy Hall contact: **Rosemary Dawbarn 01993 831632.**

Wychwood Library

The Library should now be back in its permanent home after spending much of June and July housed at The Old Bank in Milton.

Opening Times

Monday: 2pm to 5pm/6pm to 7.30pm
Wednesday: 10am to noon/2pm to 5pm
Friday: 2pm to 5pm/ 6pm to 7.30pm
Saturday:
9.30am to noon

Beryl Brown, Library Manager 01993 830281

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In 1897 in New York City, 8 year old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote to her local paper requesting an answer to a very serious question. The paper responded to her question with an editorial and a headline which we reprint in full here.

Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

Dear Editor-I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the scepticism of a sceptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to have men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even

the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Editorial Page, New York Sun, 1897
Editor: Francis Pharcellus Church

Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas

or 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

"Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now, PRANCER and VIXEN!
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONDER and BLITZEN!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes — how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

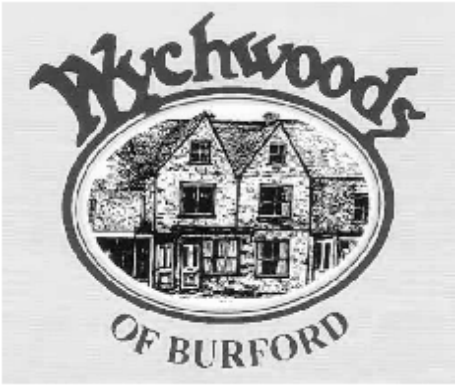
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!"

- Major Henry Livingston Jr. (1748-1828)
(previously believed to be by Clement Clarke Moore)

As there will not be another issue of **The Grapevine** *before Christmas, the editorial team would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a very happy New Year.*

Don't forget about the Ascott website:



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So if you are considering a move or just want to look into any options that may be available to you, contact us for a FREE MARKET APPRAISAL or an informal chat and some advice.

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