
The Ascott Grapevine



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 team to discuss your ideas. Articles for the Winter issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by January 5th.

Call 01993 831023 or email: wendypearse@honeydale.freeserve.co.uk

**Stuart Fox, Elaine
Byles, Kingsley,
Wendy Pearse,
Yvette Keauffling**

Church Services

The details and times of the regular services are advertised on the various notice boards around the village and in the church porch:

1st Sunday of the month

10.00am Holy Communion - Common Worship

2nd Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion - Book of Common Prayer

10.00am Family Service

3rd Sunday

10.00am Benefice Service

4th Sunday

10.00 Morning Prayer

Please check the notice boards for times of Advent, Christmas and other special services.

We look forward to welcoming you and worshipping with you.

Tim Lyon

Chase News

The *Chase News* can be found in the centre of this issue of *The Grapevine*.

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.

David Cameron helps Citizens Advice Bureau raise funds at Tiddy Hall

West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau held an Auction of Promises at Tiddy Hall on 21st September. There was some trepidation before the event as none of the organising committee had been involved in this type of event before but lots of hard work went on behind the scenes to secure a huge variety of 'promises'. There was everything from a dowsing lesson, learning to make cheese, a salsa lesson and a man's chest wax – ouch! Over 100 people turned out to watch David Cameron auction the first ten lots, which he did with great style and humour. When it came to the star prizes bidding was fast and furious to experience an RAF

Air to Air refuelling flight, an overseas apartment for a week, a weekend in London and a tour of the Renault Formula 1 factory.

It was an extremely entertaining evening, which raised a staggering £7,300 towards running the CAB offices in Witney and Chipping Norton. The two offices handled 15,000 enquires last year. In recent weeks, the trained Volunteer Advisers have been very busy dealing with enquires following the flooding in the area. These have included insurance advice, housing options for those forced to leave their homes, landlord and tenant responsibilities and helping employers and em-



ployees whose businesses and work places have been flooded out. CAB would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported the event especially people from Ascott under Wychwood.

The Tiddy Hall is a great venue and your support enables the CAB to continue providing free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to the people of West Oxfordshire.

***Nigel Parker
West Oxfordshire Citizens
Advice
Board of
Governors***



Births

On 25th July 2007 to Carolyn and Andrew Timms, a daughter. Amy Sophia

Deaths

On the 27th September 2007, Sir Peter Leslie aged 76 years.

On the 1st October 2007, Joan White, aged 75 years.

Sir Peter Evelyn Leslie 1931- 2007

Peter Evelyn Leslie was born in Oxford in 1931, the son of a distinguished statistician in the zoology department at Oxford University. He was educated at the Dragon School in Oxford and Stowe School in Buckinghamshire, where he was later to be chairman of the governors. After New College, Oxford, where he read history, and National Service in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Peter Leslie began a long and impressive career in banking joining Barclays DCO (Dominions, Colonies, Overseas) in 1955. He was sent to Sudan and in between 1956 and 1971, he also worked in Algeria, Zaire, Kenya and the Bahamas. On his return to London, he was made general manager and director of Barclays Bank International.

Quoting his step-daughter, Alice Wenban-Smith, 'he was in demand as a clear thinking, far sighted and precise decision maker and a brilliant co-ordinator and communicator'.

During the 1980's, Peter Leslie co-chaired meetings of international bankers and in 1985 when Barclays merged its International and U.K. banks, he was made chief general manager. Retiring from Barclays when he reached 60, Peter Leslie was knighted and almost immediately joined Midland Bank and became managing director and then chairman. When he fully retired from banking, he continued to strengthen his ties with Oxford. From 1990-1995, Sir Peter was curator of the University Chest and from 1991-2000 chairman of the Audit Committee at Oxford University.

Having lived in Ascott-under-Wychwood for many years, he and his wife Charlotte moved to central Oxford in 2005.

Fluent in Arabic and French and keenly interested in history, in 2005 he wrote a book detailing the friendship between the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie and Edwin Chapman-Andrews, who was later to be knighted, an ambassador and his father-in-law.

Sir Peter died of a brain tumour on the 27th September, 2007 and is survived by his wife Charlotte whom he married in 1975 and by four step children.

One Day Event Held at Crown Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood on July 14, 2007

On July 14th we held our first British Event here at Crown Farm. This event has been two years in the planning, although we have held many Pony Club Events and Riding Club Events, this next step to B. E. level was huge for us.

Janet and I invited Mike Etherington-Smith to design the Cross Country course. At our first meeting we quickly understood what it is to work with the best designer in the world. The standards are very high. His first comment 'if you don't get the ground right, I won't design the jumps'. So he designed where the new course was to go before even considering a single jump. We ploughed up the new 10m wide track, crushed all the stone and seeded it with specialist grass seed. Thankfully, we had a dry March in 2006 which allowed the stone crusher to work properly and a wet May to get the grass seed to grow. Mike returned, approved and designed 45 new fences. The winter and most of the summer up to



July 14 was spent building permanent fences and mobile ones. Two courses were built, one for Intro level and the other for Pre-Novice level. The biggest job was the new water jump 20 x 25m. The new track was mown on a regular basis in an effort to thicken the grass. Approximately a month before the event we started putting the jumps into position. It was a very wet time and we were beginning to worry about the hay which was still on the show jumping, car parking and dressages areas. We made the decision two weeks before the event to silage the grass giving us two weeks for the ground to green up again.

In the meantime, Janet and Charlotte Fanshawe were busy in the office organising the 120 or so helpers we require for the day, as well as the catering for the helpers and the 125 sponsors we were entertaining for lunch.

We were amazed at the number of entries. We can only run 300 horses round in any one day so it was very sad to have to tell 150 riders that they could not come to Crown Farm.

The week of the event came. Marquees arrived, show jumps arrived, 8 dressage arenas, loos, caterers and 15 trade stands arrived. It all began to look like our hard work was coming to fruition.

The ground was very wet the week running up to the event. Many other events had been cancelled, but we were lucky. Three dry days and we were running. We pulled the first half dozen lorries in but after that all was well.

We ran 7 sections of 42 horses. One section did their dressage on Friday afternoon. Many well known British riders competed including Lucinda Green, Chris King and Daisy Dick.

Each fence on the Cross Country course was sponsored. A huge thanks to all of them as it enabled us to give top prize money - a very important factor in today's cost of running an event horse. So let's imagine for a moment you are a rider coming to Crown Farm. You arrive, park

your lorry, check your horse has travelled ok. Next job, to the Secretary's tent to pick up your number and have your horse's passport checked. On your way back to the lorry you stop at Jo's Canteen and buy the obligatory bacon roll and strong coffee! Back at the lorry you prepare your horse for the first element of competition. The Dressage, a four minute discipline to show the judges you are in total control of your horse through a pre-set set of movements. Always a difficult area for some, but now that's over you move to show jumping. Another test of the horse's ability, originally designed to prove the horse's fitness to remain in army service, and lastly, the most exciting part of the

day, the Cross Country. A course designed to help the rider move to the next stage of competition and encourage horses to have confidence as the course starts fairly easily, the mid section is the most difficult and the last section lets the horse and rider ease down. The course is 2100m long with 24 difficult obstacles to negotiate. There is a time limit. Penalties for going over the time. Any jumping error is also penalised. The cross country phase is again based on the army horses' ability to travel long distances over all types of terrain. The idea is to finish on your dressage score i.e. this means that you have a clear round show jumping and cross country inside the time allowed. The Section winners were; Hannah Mace, Toby Pigott, Clare Moreton, Lucy Gasston, Nathalie Rozard, Chris King and Rebecca Gibbs.

Running an event of this nature requires key people. Our thanks go to Maggie Jackman for all her hard work in totally running the Dressage phase. Karen Baldwin of KEB Ltd



who put the programme together. Roger Shepherd of Information Press who printed the programme. Deborah Cull of Bluebells at the Barn who made the hospitality marquee look so lovely for all our sponsors.

Lady Felicity Blyth who organised all the fence judges (2 per fence) and fed and watered them all day.

Dr Sandy Scott, Dr Nina Brown and Dr Sue Ruddock who were doctors on duty for the day. Charlotte Fanshawe for her knowledge of the sport and her patience in putting up with Janet and me over the past 12 months.

Jacob Davies and his team for organising the Arena party. Chris Townsend for his help and skill in creating the fish jumps before the water.

Also huge thanks to all our sponsors but particularly the local ones: F.W.P. Matthews, Barrington Accountancy, Empire Homes, Hickman Brother Landscapes Ltd, KEB Ltd, Information Press, Sportif Suzuki.



It was a great day. Thankfully Vets, Paramedics and Doctors were not called upon and the sun shone - unlike the following weekend !

Dates for 2007/8:

October 28, 2007

Crown Farm Fun Ride
10 miles around Crown Farm and Cornbury Park

March 15/16, 2008

Riding Club Area Hunter Trial

April 3, 2008

Heythrop Pony Club One Day Event

May 31, 2008

British Eventing One Day Event

July 12, 2008

British Eventing One Day Event

Please come and watch on any of the days. If you would like to help or are interested in sponsoring us, do please contact Janet or myself.

Chris Badger



Garden notes

After the flood I had thought that this article would be full of doom and gloom because many garden plants had been spread liberally with a layer of fine mud which I expected would clog up their growing systems. It lingered through a number of subsequent rain showers and I was sure it would do them harm. But now some two months later I can see that the vast majority have survived. Surprisingly, there are only a couple of plants that I'm a little doubtful about. Those are the euphorbias which have lost most of their leaves and left just little topknots of leaves at the ends of the stems. Everything else looks good. As you would imagine because of all the rain this year, lots of plants have grown much taller than normal outgrowing their allotted space and flopping into their neighbours, but not disastrously so.

I know some people's gardens have suffered a lot more than mine because of the force of the floodwater. My heart goes out to them. Gardens are so per-

sonal and provide so much pleasure that it must have been really upsetting to experience the destruction of yours. Thank goodness most plants and trees will recover in time and may in fact have benefitted from the unmentionable substances that may have been in the floodwater. One more mentionable substance did turn up in our garden - horse manure - and I look forward to seeing the benefit next year.

I suppose the one thing that makes me cross is that the vegetables grown in the raised beds I set up this year (as you will know for the first time) cannot be eaten because of possible pollution. We were so looking forward to them. The parsnips, celeriac and carrots, which were sown inside in drainpipes before being transferred to the raised beds, all prospered. The parsnips, particularly, were much bigger than I've managed to grow before. Runner and french beans looked good and grew after the flood so could have been eaten but had to stay on the plants not because of contamination but because of no kitchen in

which to prepare and cook them. It's so annoying and frustrating! The compost heap, on the other hand, is doing very well as each newly dug vegetable is tipped into it rather than into our stomachs.

Enough of that, now onto the good things. Its time to plant daffodils, bluebells, scillas and other spring bulbs but a little early for tulips which are best planted in November. If you have no time in October or November, bulbs can still go in in December or even, in the case of tulips, January. They may flower a little later and be less showy than normal but they will come up. Now is also the time to sow lawn seed or lay turfs before icy weather sets in. In November you can sow broad bean seeds to overwinter. The variety 'aquadulce' is recommended by experts as one of the hardiest for autumn sowing. I expect many of you will soon be planting up containers for autumn and winter colour and interest and I would really love to have your thoughts as to plants and planting combinations you have

used in the past or are trying out for the first time. I find container gardening really difficult. I don't have good ideas and find it difficult to make time to fill my pots. Letters to the editor please, I need help.

I'll be topping up the raised beds with compost very soon so that the worms can take it down into the soil during the winter. I've already weeded them and I could not believe what an easy and quick job it was in comparison to conventional vegetable beds. All in all, the raised beds have been so successful that I have found room for a couple more. Introducing the beds has been one of the best things I have done. I feel so much more in control of the garden. Previously the vegetable garden has always been a bugbear, something to be tolerated because homegrown vegetables are fun to grow and taste so good. But I felt that the vegetable plot always let down the rest of the garden because I could not keep on top of the weeding. Now I can.

Some annual flower seeds benefit from being

sown outside in Autumn, such as cornflowers and Californian poppies. They make earlier and more robust plants. Likewise sweet peas but they are better sown and left in a cold frame to overwinter. I intend to do my seeds this weekend (mid-October) and will put the cornflowers in the coldframe as well so that they do not get lost among other plants in the flower bed and I can place them in gaps in spring or early summer. The poppies will need to be sown out-

side where I think I need them because they do not like being transplanted.

Some seed catalogues for next year's gardening have already come in the post and I'll be sending for others. They'll play an important part in my winter. They make not being able to go out and garden in winter, bearable. I'm looking forward to armchair gardening. I've got the reading matter now all I need is the armchair.

Yvette Keauffling

Wychwood Wrought Iron 

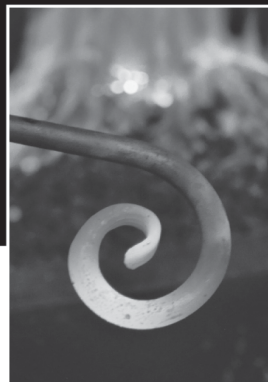
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Another Banana Republic

Colombia and Venezuela became frequent stamping grounds in the early 80s.

My first trip was to Colombia, a 14 hour flight from Gatwick via Puerto Rico, Caracas and thence to Bogota. I flew in a DC-10 of British Caledonian, which in itself was a worry, as DC-10s had a habit of losing engines. By losing, I mean they dropped off. Once ground engineers learned that the maintenance manual was serious about the correct way to remove and replace engines on their mounting pylons, the problem ceased.

My aircraft kept a tight hold on all three power plants and we droned across the Pond for about 10 hours before touching down in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. It looked just like a film set, all dusty palm trees and rickety huts, but the most amazing sight was the collection of 'Daks'. There seemed to be hundreds of Douglas Dako-

tas DC-3s, ranging from full working order to gaunt skeletons, stripped of engines and bits of the airframe, no doubt to keep their fellows airworthy.

The chap in the next seat was a Chilean on his way to the BCal's final stop in Quito. He said he was getting off for the hour or so on the ground, but some instinct made me stay aboard and just wander around the almost empty cabin. On his return, I asked him how he had fared.

'Because we had no visas, they locked us all in a small room for an hour!' came the reply.

Always trust your instincts.....

Caracas, an hour in the transit lounge, then Bogota loomed. As I speak no Spanish, I prayed there would be no immigration problems and a couple of passport stamps later, I was met by local manager Keith and his wife. I had been told that Colombia was a violent place, one of the few

countries where the GDP is drugs and murder is cheap - ludicrously cheap. On one occasion, I met a Yorkshireman who had married the local Mafia chief's daughter and made a fortune smuggling containers of various items from Aruba in the Dutch Antilles. Because he spoke Spanish all the time, his English had a Spanish accent. Without a moment's hesitation, he said that if anyone caused us a problem, he could arrange a 'hit' for £30.

You always drove with doors locked and windows shut, as a favourite ploy was to attack a car at junctions and steal anything cash or with a cash value such as a watch or even spectacles. The golden rule was not to fight back, as the poor in Colombia are dirt-poor and would murder for just a few dollars.

My guide in Bogota was Jorge Rodrigues, a young and very gung-ho Colombian who spoke excellent English. He

chauffeured me round to various appointments and we were always late. One day I could stand it no longer, and said that this time, we would be punctual; so we were, but of the lawyer we were to meet, there was no sign! I learned a lot about when in Rome. Jorge taught me some Spanish, which as I will later recount, came in very handy.

Many, many girls in Colombia are stunningly beautiful, to the extent they would win beauty contests hand-down outside their own country. Certainly the offices of our local partners had their fair share and that was nothing unusual. I also found the Colombian people charming and delightful, which struck me as totally at odds in a country of such violence.

During this and subsequent trips, I had to fly internally. The national airline Avianca was thought to be relatively OK, as their servicing was done by Pan-

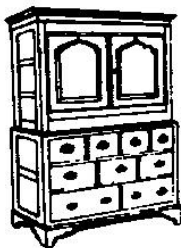
Am, but as for the rest, they were an accident waiting to happen and the waiting between accidents was often short. Colombia is a mountainous country and very unforgiving of malfunction or poor flying. One evening, our company lawyer Stephen and I sat in a Boeing 727 at Bogota awaiting take-off to Barranquilla, a coastal town 500 miles north. There was a problem with the electrics. Every time the pilot switched from ground power to the aircraft's, everything - yes, everything - went black. Chattering electricians flitted between cockpit and the nosewheel bay which housed the con-

trol panels. This went on for an hour and a half without a cure.

'If this were Europe, we'd have got off long ago' remarked our legal sage and I heartily concurred with his view.

Eventually, some genius worked out that if they ran up an engine, the engine's alternator would provide current. So it was and we took off from Bogota, a town at 8,500 feet and surrounded by unyielding mountains. To our relief, we made it intact to Barranquilla. As we reached the terminal doors, the pilot shut off the engines. And everything went black again.

One Sunday, Jorge and his friends took me



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to a bullfight. For me, it was a nightmare, seeing endless bulls goaded and finally slaughtered, often unskilfully. The locals loved it and drank frequently from porrons, tipping some local wine brew down their necks. When the last carcass had been dragged ignominiously away on a sledge we left the corrida, to be greeted by a phalanx of phalluses. Anxious to relieve their bursting bladders, hundreds of men simply stood and peed, oblivious to the

many women walking past them. How can anyone call that entertainment - and I don't mean the peeing?

Jutting out from Colombia's north-east coast is the Guajira peninsula, site of one of the world's most sizeable brown coal deposits and the main reason for our presence. We ran a camp at the tip of the peninsula and kept it resupplied by light aircraft from Santa Marta, a small town near Barranquilla. The approach to Santa Marta

airfield was in itself a chilling reminder of the fight against drugs. At one end of the runway lay the gaunt wreck of a Beechcraft KingAir, riddled with machine gun bulletholes.

We loaded our own plane, a twin-engined Cessna, by the simple expedient of putting the people in first then piling the food on top of them. To say we were overweight was putting it mildly. Our worthy pilot lined it up on the threshold, gave it full welly against the brakes,

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then let 'er roll. And roll. And roll. With feet to spare before the runway ended, we staggered into the air and clawed some height. We flew at about 2,000 feet over the peninsula, whose other main export was grass. I'm not referring to the kind you mow. Everywhere were primitive airstrips used by the drug runners and everywhere were the high-sided trucks used to carry the weed.

The camp was a pleasant enough Portakabin affair, but its wire fence and armed guards shrieked 'Colombia'. I was assigned a minder who spoke English and spent a few days seeing what went on. My guide told me that the local Arturo Scargillo was suspicious of me and what I was doing there. As we walked to lunch, our union worthy passed us in the corridor and asked my guide who I was. Seizing the moment, I said 'Hoy jefe de personal de sociedad Grandmet'. Now completely unsure of how much Spanish I spoke

or understood, he beat a hasty retreat and troubled us no more.

Late on that first day, we went for a drink at a small bar on the edge of the airstrip. One of its customers was an American from the camp, drunk enough and with Spanish enough to be dangerous. Another customer, obviously a drug-runner from the Colt .45 in his belt, was demonstrating with the Yank for throwing his beer caps on the ground. The Yank was having none of it and to a man, we were all tensed to dive over the bar if the druggie began shooting, the Colombian philosophy being that dead witnesses tell no tales. Fortunately, it all calmed down.

Family feuds are very big in Colombia. I heard of one feud between family A and family B. Family A was ahead, having nuked no less than 64 of their rivals and Number 64 represented a tour de force. Number 64 was in jail, so Family A went round to the Police Chief's house and

stole his uniform at gun-point. Dressed in the borrowed plumes and with the peak of the cap pulled low, one of the family went to the jail and ordered Number 64 to be released. Freedom was short-lived; they blew him away.

One afternoon, we took some 4-wheel drives and visited a small hamlet some miles away, famous for being the burial ground for local people. The Colombian graves were small, white, above-ground mausoleums and the area was covered in these edifices. Quite spooky, especially in the headlights of the cars.

My flight back was with the same pilot and as the only passenger, I sat in the right-hand seat and put on headphones. The pilot was US-trained and spoke fluent English. As we hummed towards Barranquilla, he looked out at the gathering dusk and opened the throttle wider. Seeing my enquiring glance, he explained that any light

aircraft flying after dark, even with its lights on, would be shot down by the Colombian Air Force as a drug-runner.

‘Give it full throttle!’ was my rejoinder.

As we approached our destination, all the air traffic instructions were in Spanish.

‘Why aren’t they speaking English?’ said I.

‘If you talk to them in English, they’ll reply in English’ said our pilot.

‘But Barranquilla is an international airport and there may be traffic

in the circuit where they only speak English’.

The pilot looked at me pityingly as though I was some kind of half-wit.

Strangely enough, it was the Americans who had the last laugh on my Colombian perambulations. Not that I found it funny. I flew Barranquilla to Miami, en-route to Houston. The US customs officer was all laid-back and smiling.

‘How yah doing?’

‘Just great’ I replied, thankful to be back

once more in civilisation.

‘Where yah come from?’

At the word ‘Barranquilla’, his smile disappeared in a micro-second, just as if someone had flicked a switch. He then gave me the treatment, going through my case with a toothcomb and even twisting the heels of my shoes to check for false compartments. I got a body-search too, but thankfully, he stopped short of the old rubber glove job.

Colombia is now so dangerous, you apparently cannot leave Bogota without an armed escort. I’m glad I don’t fly there anymore.

Nigel Wild

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Nature Notes

With the arrival of the short dark days of winter, birds that have spent the summer in the fields, hedgerows and woodland of the surrounding countryside will now be seeking shelter and food in our gardens. Tits, Sparrows, Green Finch, Chaffinch, Gold Finch and Greater Spotted Woodpecker, will all be joining the garden regulars, the Blackbird, Wren and Robin.

I'm always reminded of that old nursery rhyme:

*The north wind doth blow,
and we shall have snow.*

*What will the Robin do
then?*

Poor thing!

What can we do? The first and simplest answer is to provide suitable food. Many shops and garden centres sell wide varieties of seed based



food, often formulated for a particular species, plus various 'treats' including freeze-dried mealworms-which the birds in our garden love- and seed cakes, plus the ever-popular peanut nets. If you don't want to go to the expense of buying mixtures then a few suggestions from the kitchen includes; grated cheese, wholemeal bread (serve it moist not dry), pastry cooked and uncooked, cooked rice and pasta, stale cake and biscuit crumbs and dried fruit (soak it first)

If you want to make your own seed mixture use black sunflower seeds, niger seeds and peanuts plus some wheat to bulk it up. In spring make sure that the peanuts are finely chopped, young birds can choke if fed on whole peanuts!

Secondly, as you plan your garden planting try and make it 'bird friendly,' plant shrubs that produce winter berries such as Elder, Hawthorn, Pyracantha, Honeysuckle, Ivy, Mahonia



and Rowan. Also, don't be too tidy, allow plants that produce seed heads to stay over winter and you will encourage seed eaters, like the Goldfinch to visit. If you have apple and pear trees in your garden allow wind-falls to remain and they will feed grateful Blackbirds. In spring don't spray your roses with pesticides; the Blue Tits will welcome the aphids to feed their young.

Now that many people do feed garden birds some species, like the Goldfinch, are beginning to increase in numbers after many years of decline. Sparrows too are in decline, possibly because grain is now more efficiently harvested and more securely stored, and so

garden feeding is a life-saver.

The old idea of only feeding in the winter is now changing and current thinking is to provide food throughout the year. In winter food is required because it is scarce in the natural environment. In spring the female uses so much energy producing eggs and the male in defending his territory that supplementary feeding is of great help. At this time the youngsters will need all the insect food that the adults can gather so additional food will benefit the adults and provide energy for their continual food gathering. In the summer, after breeding, the adults moult and generally will be in poor condition, again extra food will help them regain strength.

Before setting up your feeding stations here are a few simple guidelines:

- Once you start feeding don't stop, the local bird population will come to rely on you

and may starve if you suddenly stop feeding. Also try and put the food out at a regular time each day.

- Don't put out more food than will be consumed that day. Mouldy food can kill and encourage vermin.
- Keep the feeding station clean. Remove stale food and bird droppings each day.
- Don't feed with salty food.
- Don't feed with dried food, unless it has been thoroughly moistened. Desiccated coconut can kill.
- Do provide a supply of **clean** water for drinking and bathing.
- Move hanging feeders to prevent the build-up of bird droppings.
- Store food in clean, dry containers in a cool place and always buy best quality peanuts.

- Watch out for cats and ensure feeders are out of their reach. Likewise Sparrowhawks can be a problem, try and site feeding stations adjacent to a hedge so that songbirds can escape.



I hope you can feed this winter, I know you will be rewarded by the variety of birds that visit your garden.

One last thought, if you have put up nest boxes in the spring, now is the time to take them down, remove all old nest material and give them a thorough clean with hot soapy water.

Stuart Fox

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Christmas Word Puzzle

1. What do you get when you cross an Ascott Runner with a pie?

Your Name: _____

U

F

F

1313108934

2. What do you get if you cross a Christmas tree with an apple?

101371121013132

3. What do you get if you cross a pig with a naked person?

893210410511

4. What are the most musical parts of a turkey?

123189758

5. What are brown, crusty and might be found sneaking around the kitchen?

17115213728

6. What is a chess players favourite nut?

56239119

7. What nuts sound like a sneeze?

510862148

123345637891108

10111210

610131341121442103

Age: _____
Contact Phone #: _____

Christmas Word Puzzle Competition

Rules of Entry

This competition is open to under-15s from Ascott-under-Wychwood and a Christmas Stocking will be awarded to the winner.

Read the clues and put the answers to each clue into the grid to the right of the clue.

To reveal the secret message, use the num-

bers below the boxes to determine where to put the corresponding letters into the empty grids at the bottom of the page.

Put your name, age and a contact phone number on your answer sheet and hand your entry in to the Village Shop by Sunday 9th December 2007.

The winner will be drawn from amongst the correct entries.

Special thanks to Tim Ryan for creating the puzzle and supplying the prize.

Good luck!

What's On

10th November to 9th December 2007 -

'Christmas at Blenheim Palace'

Christmas trees, decorations, choirs, organists and bands bring the Palace alive.

20 November 2007 to 8 January 2008

'Rapunzel'

The Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton

Join us in our annual pantomime adventure.

24 November 2007 to 6 January 2008

'Oxfordshire Craft Guild Christmas Exhibition'

Garden Gallery,

The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

A chance to buy something crafted by hand with flare and design by some of Oxfordshire's best contemporary craft designers and makers.

1st & 2nd December 2007

Stow on the Wold

Christmas Fair,

In & Around the Town Square, Stow on the Wold.

Father Christmas will be present to switch on the lights and meet the children in his Grotto. Carol singing, street entertainment and other activities for children and adults.

Mulled wine, mince pies and a pig roast will be available to keep you warm.

Thursday, 6 December 2007

Chipping Norton Lights Up

The Christmas lights will be switched on by the Mayor at 6.00pm followed by a candlelit procession at 6.30pm. There is also late night shopping with stalls, roundabouts and rides, a Christmas bazaar in the Town Hall and a pig roast. Don't miss the spectacular Symphonie Conique - a magical forest of spires which change colour.

Christmas in the 1940s

The beginning of the Christmas Season began soon after Bonfire Night on the 5th November. When I attended Ascott Primary School in the late 1940's, in what my grandmother called the dark days before Christmas, in a dull gas lit classroom, preparations began making the decorations and rehearsing the entertainment for our mothers to see at the end of term party.

I enjoyed trying to be funny in the Pantomime we performed. And I have wondered ever since, are some people born funny and the rest of us spend a lifetime trying to achieve it? I have found that I have been at my most silliest when I thought I was being most serious.

For a short period leading up to the holidays, hymns and prayers at the beginning and the ending of the day, were cheerful Carols, instead of the often mournful hymns we had the rest of the year. The Holly and the Ivy reminds me

most of school days at Ascott.

The vicar supplied the Christmas Tree from his garden. It was usually a branch from one of the yews in the vicarage grounds.

The afternoon of the party our mothers would arrive with cakes, sandwiches and jellies for our tea. After performing our party pieces, they had a cup of tea, then went off home to leave us children to our tea party and games. We all had a small present from the tree. All this must have been arranged by Mrs Clemence our school teacher. In recent years Jim Pearse told me he didn't like Mrs Clemence very much. She gave me the cane more than once, but thinking about her now she was strict and a bit strait-laced but at heart was a kindly woman who wanted the best for us children.

The Christmas party went on till about six o'clock. It was about the

only time I didn't mind being in the place after 3.15.p.m. When I did run out of the school door on a dark winter's night! IT WAS CHRISTMAS. I felt the whole countryside was full of the excitement and joy of the season. I wanted to grab and hold what I felt then and keep it with me all my life

"What about going Carol Singing?", Charlie and Roger Pilcher would say to me. After reporting home and asking if I could go, we would wander the dark streets of the village stopping at houses where they would stump up sixpence, even if it was just to make us go away. Of course it was a form of begging but most had done the same when they were young. Our tactics were to sing the first verse of Shepherds Watch then knock on the door. If no-one came we would move off down the street muttering what mean sods they were.

What was to be avoided if possible was to be invited into a house and asked to sing more than one carol to the family. We only knew the first verse of most of them.

It was a time of year friends would call round for drinks, sons and daughters who had moved away came home to see mum and dad for the Christmas holidays.

The smell which reminds me most of Christmas is the smell of cigar smoke. Most men smoked Woodbines or rolled their own for the rest of the year. There was a lot of celebrating and merrymaking to be crammed into two days of Christmas Day and Boxing Day. For most working men it was back to work the day after.

During the two weeks of the school holiday there was much to look forward to. Soon after Christmas there was the Village Party for children in the old Tiddy Hall and a visit to

the Pantomime. My first memories of the Village Christmas Party, they were organised by Peggie Cox. Sadly so many people like Peggie are forgotten now but they did much in their time in keeping the village community together. She died quite young. Her son Ken lives and farms on the hill above Chilson. Every child from 5 years to 11 years was given a small present from the tree after the tea and party games. These were handed out to us by Vernie Fletcher dressed as Father Christmas. Vernie was the landlord at the Churchill Arms during the war and for a few years after.

On a cold January afternoon, a bus full of Ascott schoolchildren and a few adults left for the Pantomime at the New Theatre, Oxford, the outing and the tickets booked by Mrs Clemence. The first pantomime I remember seeing was Babes in the Wood, sat right up in

the gods where I felt I would fall into the orchestra pit if I stood up. I was transferred into a world of colour, music and laughter and when the chorus girls came on with their beautiful long legs, even for a boy of nine or ten I was moved. There are other words I could think of but moved seems the right one for a genteel magazine like the Grapevine.

Many days have gone since I knew that land of lost content. I have become more cynical as a shield against the slings and arrows we all have to face but when I hear the word Christmas, it stirs in me a warm feeling, so perhaps I did capture what I felt when I ran out the door of school all those years ago.

*So long for now
Yer Old Lubberyeard.*

The Importance of Remembrance

The act of observing a Two Minute Silence began in 1919 following the Armistice at 11am on the 11th November 1918 at the end of the First World War.

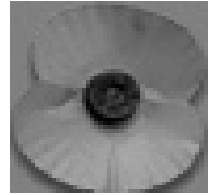
In 1921, the year the Royal British Legion was formed, 'Armistice Day' was formally adopted as the national day of Remembrance and the Legion was charged in its Royal Charter with organising "Festivals of Remembrance, services and parades to perpetuate the memory of sacrifices made during service with Our Armed Forces in war and peace".

In the 86 years which have passed since then, the Legion has been responsible for organising national, regional and local ceremonies of Remembrance to reflect the nation's concern that the human cost of war should not be forgotten.

Remembrance is not just about those who fought in the two World Wars of the last century, but also about

those involved in the many other conflicts worldwide since 1945 and those still fighting for peace and freedom now. It is also about learning from the past and resolving to make the world a better place to live in the future.

This year, 11th November falls on a Remembrance Sunday and, as in previous



years, millions of people across the nation will stop at 11am for a Two Minute Silence to remember those who fought, and those who are still fighting, for all of us today.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep,
though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

by John McCrae
May 1915

Village Shop at the Forest Fair

This years Wychwood Forest Fair was held on 2nd September at Capp's Lodge Plain between Burford and Shipton.

The original Forest Fair began in the late 18th century, but ceased in 1856, because of 'drunkenness and debauchery'.

This year there was a Fun Fair, Children's

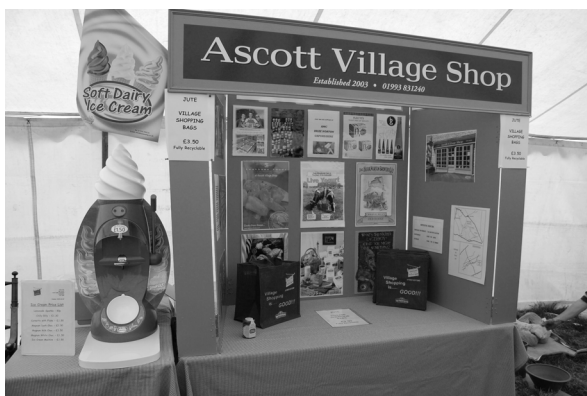
Story Teller, Flying Teddies, Ferret Racing, Morris Dancing, the Windrush Bowmen and of course the Wychwood Brewery Beer tent along with many other entertainments.

Ascott Village Shop was there too, along with other local conservation and community groups and our stalwart



volunteers successfully sold over £200.00 worth of ice cream!

There was no 'drunkenness and debauchery' in evidence, but a great time was still had by all.



Old Fashioned Sayings

When I was a boy nearly all the hay was not baled but was loaded onto wagons and stacked loose into hay ricks. In some good years more hay was made than would be needed to feed the livestock that coming winter but the old farmers would say "A spare hay rick is never in the way. It might be needed next year."

In the Old Testament in the Bible Joseph had the same idea when he advised Pharaoh to store up the surplus grain from the seven good years so that the people would have

food to eat during the lean years which would follow.

Similarly in Britain and Europe many good years of production built up good reserves of food including grain, meat and butter, but 'the powers that be' decided that food production must be reduced because it cost money to store the surplus!

Farmers were forced to set land aside and financial aids towards food production were curtailed.

We now come to a lean year when the weather over many

countries of the world has been unfavourable for food production just when there is an increase in the world-wide demand for food and increasingly more grain and oil seed is needed for bio-fuel to help combat global warming.

The surpluses have gone. There WILL be shortages and who knows what the weather will be like next year?

From this farmer's viewpoint, please excuse me if I conclude with another old fashioned saying "Serves 'em jolly well right!"

Jim Pearse

Wychwoods Local History Society

The History Society will be holding a joint meeting with The Friends of Wychwood on Thursday, 15th November 2007 in Shipton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. The speaker will be Mike Righton and his subject will be The Fulling Mills on the Windrush.

There is no meeting in December but on Thursday, 17th January

2008 David Morton will talk about The English Canal System at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £6 for an individual and £9 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at

£2 per head. More information about the Society can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023.

Wendy Pearse

Mystery and Legend: Tales of the Unexpected

The Declaration of Thomas Sparrow

Maryerin Hitchman, Elizabeth Smith, Alicie Birdsey and Annis Jefferies. Four names from Ascott's 17th century past and through the survival of those names emerges the sad story of Thomas Sparrow. The son of John Sparrow who died in 1630, Thomas followed his father as Keeper at High Lodge then called Roger Hill Lodge, up Brazil Lane in the Forest of Wychwood. A fairly wealthy man, John had come from a small Wiltshire village to take up the position of Keeper under Lord Danvers of Cornbury.

The day may have been wet and windy or even draped with snow when in the early morning gloom or frosty gathering dusk of 2nd March 1635 a small procession hurried it's furtive way down Brazil Lane and London Lane to it's destination in an obscure corner of Ascott churchyard. All doors and windows were probably shuttered and barred in

the village, the fearful inhabitants tightly immuring themselves, none wishing to have contact with the body of Thomas Sparrow from Roger Hill Lodge who had died of smallpox. The gravedigger must have prepared the burial spot, perhaps paid an extra penny for a rapid preparation, and even if a priest was in the vicinity he may well have absented himself as apparently he did from the bedside of the dying man. Thomas's young children, Thomas, John and Anne, all under six years of age, were probably in the care of their grandmother Edith, perhaps well away from the Lodge, and Joane, Thomas's 2nd wife of just a few months may also have been restrained by relatives from approaching his bedside. So, perhaps only the pallbearers attended the body as it was hastily deposited in the grave. They may even have given the gravedigger a willing hand to quickly cover

the body with the cleansing soil.

Whether smallpox was plaguing the Wychwoods at that time or whether Thomas had visited some distant neighbourhood and contracted it we cannot know, but a great fear must have been abroad at the visitation to the village of such an horrendous disease. In all centuries man has had the unknown to fear, emanating from a variety of sources, no less so in the 21st century than the 17th, but in those days of very basic medical skills especially amongst the vast majority of the population, the presence of smallpox must have constituted a real nightmare. Only those with a very strong constitution were able to combat it's virulence and even then many spent the rest of their lives frightfully scarred. Nevertheless there were survivors perhaps more than we are aware of and fortunately four lo-

cal women must have been amongst that number because their presence at Thomas's bedside nursing the patient, enabled them to confirm his last wishes as to the distribution of his estate, and a legal document was produced to that effect. These four women were Maryerin Hitchman, Elizabeth Smith, Alicie Birdsey and Annis Jefferies and their names are recorded on the following document.

"The last will and testament or by word or mouth made and declared by Thomas Sparrow late of Whichwood forest in the County of Oxon keeper deceased

Them said that upon the first day of March Anno Domini 1635 the aforesaid Thomas Sparrow lynge sicke of the sickenes whereof hee dyed on his bedd in an upper Roome of his house the day that hee dyed with intent to declare his last will and Testament and to dispose of his goodes did order as followeth viz: first hee did give and

bequeath to Joane his wife all that portion in money specialls or other household stuffe which hee had with hir in marriadge and forty poundes more as a legacy

Item: hee did give and bequeath to his eldes sonne Thomas his free lande in the la feild (Leafield) **Item:** hee did give to his sonne John and Anne his daughter foure score poundes apeece to each of them foure score poundes.

Item: hee did give to the said Anne his daughter all his first wives wearing apparell

And he further desired that Edith Sparrowe his mother might have the disposeinge and orderinge of all the remainder of his gooddes for the use and best behafe of his children And this the said Thomas Sparrow having declared was desirous it should have bene committed to writinge and drawne into forme of a will or testament But hee lyinge sicke of the small poxe could not

p(ro)cure a Clerke to write the same.

The particulars above specified were declared and uttered by the deceased Thomas Sparrow in the presence of **signed:**

Maryerin Hitchman
signed: Alicie Birdsey
signed: Elizabeth Smith
signed: Annis Jefferies"

Only five years later Edith Sparrow died and there are no further records of the three little orphaned Sparrows.

But is this the real story of Thomas's burial?

John Kibble in his book *Charming Charlbury* which was published in 1930, records the following tale about a stone near the table tomb close to the porch in Ascott churchyard.

"When a very large flat stone near this tomb was lifted some years ago a skeleton lay prone beneath it, evidently a secret burial of someone to be quickly put out of the way. Who? When?"

Perhaps Thomas Sparrow! We shall never know.

Wendy Pearse

Civil Defence Prayer - Can You Help?

Tim Essex-Lopresti has written the following letter to The Grapevine as an appeal for help to find the text of 'The Civil Defence Prayer'.

Dear Grapevine,

I am hoping that you or one of your readers can help me.

I am told that Rev Jim Nickalls was the Civil Defence Corps Chief Warden in West Oxfordshire in the 1950s and 1960s and recruited all of his colleagues as Wardens in their parishes.

He also wrote what became THE Civil Defence Prayer which was used on many occasions not least on the Civil Defence cruises on the MV Dunera during the 1960s.

2008 will be the 40th Anniversary of the Stand-down of the Civil Defence Corps and the Auxiliary Fire Service and we will be holding a special event at the Civil Defence Memorial at The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire. As part of this we will be dedicating a new memorial to ensure that the service of those volunteers between 1949

and 1968 is not forgotten.

We would very much like to use his prayer but, sadly, it has gone astray. As it was written by the incumbent of Holy Trinity Church I am hoping that a copy still exists at least in the mind of someone in the area.

Failing anyone remembering or having a copy of the Civil Defence prayer, if anyone can please advise where the Rev Nickalls papers would have been deposited - the diocese perhaps? - it would be most helpful.

It would also be nice to know what happened to Rev Nickalls. His last incumbancy was in Amersham and then he either directly or indirectly moved to a retirement home in Great Missenden. Apparently he was there in 1987. It is believed that he died around 1989.

I trust that someone may be able to help me.

Regards

Tim Essex-Lopresti

Secretary

Civil Defence

Association

24 Paxton Close

Matlock

Derbyshire

DE4 3TD

01629 55738

Ascott Fun Run

**Well done to everyone
who took part in the
Ascott Fun Run.**

**It successfully raised
almost £1000.**

The Ascott Pound - What Next?

At long last, after delays and floods, the new wall surrounding the Ascott Pound has been completed. Thanks must be given to The Cotswold Conservation Board, The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and The Wychwood Project Parish Conservation Scheme for providing funding for the work.

The Parish Council's scheme to renovate this historic area within the village will continue over the next few months. The site will be levelled and grassed over and a bench and gate in-

stalled, creating an open area for relaxation or recreation in the centre of the village. We will also erect a small interpretation board explaining the history and former use of the site. The cost of this work is being covered by a grant from the National Lottery Fund, so once again there will be no cost to local ratepayers.

Providing we can secure further funding it is our intention to bring back the stones that were excavated from the Ascott Barrow, erecting them as they were originally found and install-

ing an interpretation board.

The Long Barrow, which was situated east of the Coldwell Stream Bridge, was fully excavated between 1965 and 1969 when plans were made to widen the B 4473 Charlbury to Burford Road. This road scheme was never implemented so removal of this ancient monument was totally unnecessary. The human remains and other artifacts were taken by the Oxfordshire Museum Service and have been on display at Woodstock Museum. The stones have, for some years, been held at the museum store at Standlake, but now the space is needed for other items and so we have been given the opportunity to bring them back to our parish.

Stuart Fox

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Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

When I last reported on behalf of the Parish Council they had just held their June meeting and were planning for the July meeting, which was duly held. There were 6 members of the public who attended this one, together with Police Constable Colin James and Police Community Support Officer Kirstyn Tyrer. The Parish Council had invited the police to advise on how the Police Community Support Officers were going to impact on the Village and how they would indeed police Ascott. The Parish Council also invited Mr Richard Lait, the new owner of the Swan Public House, to introduce himself to the Village and of course the Parish Council to introduce themselves to him - Mr Lait gave a brief outline of how he intends to restore the Swan to an Inn, providing both accommodation and food.

Then came the "Floods". On the week-

end of Friday 20th and Saturday 21st July the Village fell victim to the horrendous flooding. The ground floors of many many houses were knee high and above in water, I believe that 42 houses in total were affected. People had to be rescued from the second floor of their houses, cars were left floating up and down Shipton Road and the Village Green was completely submerged in flood water. It was brought to the attention of the Parish Council that one member of the Village - Mr Andrew Jackson had worked extremely hard in rescuing numerous people. The Parish Council have written and thanked Mr Jackson for all his efforts and indeed bravery. Members of the Parish quickly formed a committee (ARC) to commence helping all restore some kind of normality and deal with the aftermath left by the flooding. There was no meeting in August,

which then takes us to the September meeting. Flooding was first on the Agenda and although this was briefly discussed it was confirmed that the Parish Council would include this matter within the October meeting. The Clerk has booked the Tiddy Hall and has written to the following inviting them to attend:

Thames Water
The Environment Agency
West Oxfordshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council (Highways)
Ascott Recovery Committee (ARC)

All of the above have confirmed that a representative will attend the October meeting to discuss the impact of the floods on the Village and just as importantly the prevention of any future flooding.

Planning remains quiet, with just a few applications awaiting approval from WODC.

The Parish Council are still pushing forward with the various high-ways issues outstanding. The conservation project on the Pound is also moving forward now and the next stage to level the ground should be underway soon. The Clerk is still battling on with the electricity company, who have now agreed to look to re-site the electricity pole situated in the middle of the

Pound. We have received confirmation that the Post Office facility will be held in the Tiddy Hall, but are waiting for confirmation of days and times.

The Clerk has had to write to Savills, the Land Agent for Cornbury Estate on numerous occasions with regards to hedgerows being left uncut, the ditch over the river bridge in desperate need of clearing to name but

a few. Obviously since the flooding there are now walls which have broken down - again the Clerk has written with regards to these also. It has been reported to the Parish Council that a gentleman from the Village - Mr Eric Hickson, has in fact cut back one of the Hedgerows that belong to Cornbury Estate himself. The Parish Council have written and thanked Mr Hickson accordingly.

Should anybody wish to contact the Parish Council on any of the above issues or indeed on any matter, please do not hesitate - contact details are as noted below and remember all are welcome to the Parish Council meetings:

Parish Council:

David Wilkinson,
Chairman 832144

Stuart Fox
832004

Elaine Byles 831427
Bridgette Crundwell
830671

Sally Franks 831432
*Angela Barnes - Parish
Clerk: 01608 641045*

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An African Adventure

In July of this year I and eleven other students from Burford School were very fortunate in being able to spend time in Uganda and Tanzania. Our visit was the first leg of an annual exchange between students from our school and Bishop Dunstan Secondary School, Kalangala, Ssesse Islands, Uganda.

The Link was founded in 1995. With its motto "Learning Together" the link between the two schools aims to create a unique opportunity for young people (between 16 and 18) to become friends and to learn about each other's culture at first hand.

In addition to the visits the Link has raised funds to build a Girl's Dormitory and a library for the school and community of Kalangala. This is now finished and the computers we have provided were up and running when we visited this year.

Although we had seen pictures of their



visit taken by previous students nothing could have prepared us for the scene that met us when we landed in Kampala. It was as if you had walked into a shop in Oxford Street and walked out a few hours later into Ascott High Street. Everywhere we looked the people, the roads, the buildings, the landscape, all were so very different from Oxfordshire.

As we made our plans for the trip, I realised that my greatest fear was of being bitten by mosquitoes.....I think I must have read too many pamphlets on malaria before we left. I did not have long to wait. As we stood in the

baggage hall waiting for our luggage to be unloaded from the aircraft, one landed on my arm with a lot of flapping, and not before my squeaks had scared half the team to death we managed to dispose of it. This was to be the first of many as I soon discovered that my fears were justified as I am clearly irresistible to these little creatures that pack such a potent bite...I still bear the scars!

After a day's acclimatisation, phoning home...'we have arrived safely or we wouldn't be phoning'.... 'of course we are all ok'.....' no I won't forget to take my malaria tablets'.....we took the

bus from Kampala to Entebbe to board the boat to Kalangala. As the ferry docked we were overwhelmed by the size of the crowd that had turned out to greet us....almost everyone on the island seemed to be there waving, shouting and screaming....well perhaps the fact that the King of Buganda and his wife were on the same boat might have had something to do with the size and the warmth of the reception we received! So that's who the guys in the leopard skins, with those amazing hats and carrying those wicked spears were guarding.

We were to meet the King and his entourage again the following day when he came to open



the school's new computer centre. Sadly this was also our first experience of 'Africa time' as we waited almost 5 hours for the King to arrive at the school and consequently missed our promised day on the beach with our partners.

Much of our first full day on the island was spent in church...the service lasted four

hours! After lunch we went home to stay with our partners, these home stays gave a rare opportunity to live, sleep and eat Ugandan style. Before the homestay I was feeling very anxious about what it would be like, where we would sleep, what we would eat. I knew that my partner's family lived in a small village quite close to the school, but in the jungle. I found this was the hardest part of our trip as we had only known our partners for a very short time and their families spoke no English. Being away from the group was quite difficult as there was no one else I knew living near and I was the first

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white person my partner's family had met. Although I was made very welcome I found it quite disturbing to be living with people who had so very little. But I knew that it would be difficult for everyone else too.

We were all given Ugandan names, mine was Nakyanzi and I became a member of her partner's tribe, which was the cow tribe, this meant I was not allowed to eat beef.

When we met up at school the following day and compared notes I was interested to learn that Ali Snare's partner lived at the mosque with other orphan children and Ali had to get up and pray with him at 5.30am.

I don't think that the food that I tasted during my time on the island will ever be forgotten, from the mouth watering passion fruits and pineapple to the yams to very unappetising matoki, the staple food of the islanders.

While on the island we spend time working

with children from the local primary schools teaching them songs and dances and doing various art and craft activities with them. Sports matches and other activities were organised with students from the secondary school including a game of what was supposed to be touch rugby, but soon turned into a full on game as both sides were overtaken by enthusiasm!

Whilst we were at Bishop Dunstan's, pupils from a secondary school in Kitgum (in northern Uganda bordering the Sudan) came to join us and our partners for a few days (the Link funds the cost of their visit). They live in one of many camps for displaced persons that were set up in the area to provide shelter for people fleeing attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels who have massacred thou-



sands of people during their 15 year rebellion. It was very difficult for us and the students from the peaceful Sses islands to appreciate just how different the lives of these teenagers were from our own. We learned that class sizes in their school were enormous as many as 100 students being taught at once by a single teacher. Although our lives are very different we soon

found that we had many things in common.... the Kitgum students were determined to learn how to use a computer and were excited at the prospect that one day they might have access to the internet and be able to email to us in England. Sadly they had little time to do more than master the use of the mouse before it was time to leave.

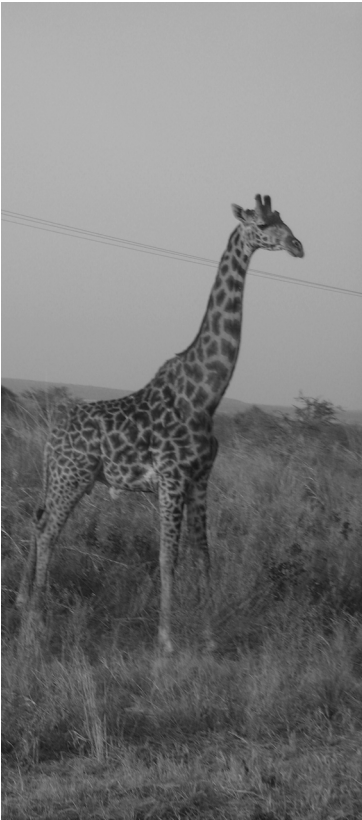
If the problem of the generator and the intermittent power supply can be solved then the six desktop and one laptop provided by the Link will make a huge difference to the students and the rest of the community.

Once the Kitgum party left for home with our partners we boarded the ferry for Queen Elizabeth National Park. A boat trip along the Kazinga Channel gave me a chance to see hip-

pos cavorting in the muddy water....sadly they do not swim in circles in quite the way they do on tv, but it was amazing to watch their graceful antics and to realise what huge teeth they have! Sharing rooms with our partners enabled us to get to know them better and continue learning together. My partner was very excited at everything she saw as it was the first time that she had left the island.

A visit to Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary gave us the chance to see chimps at close quarters in their natural habitat and to learn about the work of the sanctuary in caring for chimps confiscated/rescued from poachers within Uganda. In addition to providing a safe home for the chimps the sanctuary also works to preserve the ecology of the island and to teach people about conservation.

For the last few days of our visit to Africa we flew to Tanzania where

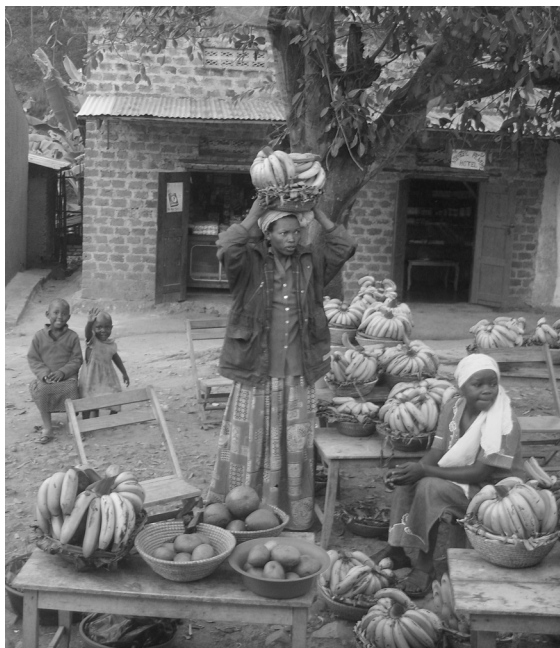


we went on game drives and spent a night under canvas in the Ngorongoro Crater which is the largest, unbroken volcanic caldera in the world whose high walls prevent game from entering or leaving and as a result the crater is rich in wildlife. Here we saw leopards, hippos, lions, zebra, wildebeest, Grants and Thomson's gazelle also buffalo, huge tusked elephants, black-maned lions, cheetah and spotted hyena as well as flamingoes.

We also saw the Masai herdsman with their colourful robes whose cattle graze in the Crater. We watched lionesses hunting a zebra, and saw a leopard asleep in a tree. Camping was an amazing experience especially knowing that there was a pride of lions not far away!

All too soon our African adventure was at an end and we were back in Burford...*'yes I did remember to take my malaria tablets'*.

Looking back for me the highlight of the trip



was singing and playing with the children in the primary schools, whether teaching them to sing and mime 'head shoulders, knees and toes' or playing British bull dog.

I would like to go back to visit the Island again in a few years time to see how the Link has developed and to take my family to show them all that I have seen and to meet the friends I have made.

For now we must concentrate on raising the money that will be

needed to bring our partners over here next year. So please watch out for details of our fundraising activities on the village notice boards.

Katie Anderson

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Prison Visiting

Inside every prison and immigration removal centre there is an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) - a group of ordinary people doing an unusual job. IMB members are independent and unpaid. They monitor the day-to-day life of the prison and ensure that proper standards of care and decency are maintained. Members have unrestricted access to all parts of the prison at any time and can talk to any prisoner they wish to. Contact with the prison officers and governors is frequent and direct discussions with the Governor take place at least monthly and more usually weekly. A typical monitoring visit might include time spent in the kitchens, workshops, accommodation blocks, recreation areas, healthcare centre and chaplaincy and attending wing meetings. All members have one or more special interests including: healthcare, suicide

awareness, visits, education and (anti) drugs strategy.

I joined the IMB at HMP Grendon & Springhill, which lies between Bicester and Aylesbury, ten years ago. The Board members are mainly middle class and middle age but we have a good mix of skills and experience, vital to the independent nature of the work of the Board, which sometimes includes raising matters of importance with the

Director General of the Service, the Prisons' Minister and the Home Secretary.

Grendon is a secure prison where prisoners are challenged about their past behaviour through psychotherapy. It has an international reputation for successfully handling and helping difficult and dangerous men, many of whom have been convicted of violent crimes. Springhill is very different; it is an open prison



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with a strong ethos of resettling prisoners into the community through focusing on work and responsibility. Both prisons have a record of reducing the likelihood of re-offending, with re-offending rates significantly lower than the average across the prison service. It is clear that the prisoner who leaves with a skill and a job is not likely to return to crime, while the illiterate and jobless is very likely to be arrested again and to spend more time inside.

If a prisoner or detainee has an issue that he has been unable to resolve through the usual internal channels,

he or she can put in a confidential request to see a member of the IMB. We do not solve problems and do not get involved in management policy but we do give advice on how a prisoner can help himself and we raise matters of concern with the Governor or other appropriate members of the staff.

The Prison Service is not in crisis but it is rarely very far short of it these days. The recent unlawful strike by the Prison Officers' Association over the Government's failure to implement the recommendations of the independent pay review body

might have caused chaos. Strangely perhaps, at both Grendon and Springhill, none of the prisoners took advantage of the disruption and behaved with common sense throughout. The overcrowding of the prison system means that moving prisoners on from Grendon after completing therapy is often very difficult as places are at a premium. Most prisoners at Springhill are released back into the community; many with qualifications which will help them get a job and some who have started full time work while still serving their sentences.

Of all the 80,000 prisoners in UK, only about 30 will never be released. All the rest will, one day, be back in our free society. It makes sense to do all we can to give these people a chance of becoming decent members of our society – unfortunately we are not very good at it.

Nick Leadbetter

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the kind people who helped us in the aftermath of the Ascott flood, not forgetting the firemen who rescued us at 5.30am on Saturday 21 July.

Lyn and Tony Collins

Hidden Treasures

Autumn is usually the time when some of the countryside's hidden treasures – fungi – make themselves known. A walk in the woods and fields or even a stroll round the garden or a country lane can bring to light a host of different fungi for those who are prepared to look. Fungi do not have the light capturing green pigment 'chlorophyll' that plants have. Instead they rely upon the decomposition of plant and animal matter to gain their nutrients. Fungi that live off other living things are called parasites, those that live off dead and dying matter are called saprophytes. The ability of fungi to break down organic matter is an essential part of the recycling of nutrients that maintains life. A lesser known fact is that many trees depend upon very specific fungi that grow in association with the tree roots and help the tree draw nutrients from the soil. These types of fungi are

known as mycorrhizae (pronounced my-cor-ise-ee). There are very few places that some sort of fungi won't grow and not all fungi are considered beneficial. One type of fungus has even been found thriving in aircraft fuel.

Fungi reproduce by producing tiny spores – the fungal equivalent of seeds. The different structures that are used to spread spores are the easiest way to tell different fungi apart. Many

fungi need damp conditions to really produce the best displays of fruiting bodies. So far, this year has not been a particularly good one to see fungi as they thrive best in steady damp conditions. There are however, still plenty of fungi that can be seen. The most obvious are the bracket fungi usually found growing on trees with hard or leathery brackets that stick out of the side of the tree and shed spores from the

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underside. Being easily visible these have often been given intriguing names - dryad's saddle, blushing bracket and beef-steak fungus to name but three. Look more closely and you may see sheet forming fungi that spread across the surface of fallen

branches such as the brown *Phellinus ferreus* on hazel. If the fungus feels rather slimy it might be in the later stages of decomposition or it could be a member of the Jelly Fungi such as the delightfully named 'yellow brain fungus'.

Because of the very specific associations they can have with certain hosts, fungi are very sensitive to changes in the environment and the numbers of different fungi present in an area reflects the overall diversity of the habitat. Habitats that are protected from frequent change such as ancient trees and woodlands, and unimproved grasslands are particularly important for fungi. If you wish to encourage some fungi into your garden then a simple pile of logs left in a damp or shady corner should start to produce results after a couple of years.

*Nick Mottram.
Wychwood
Project*



Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

A Date for your Diary
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Humbug

Why is it you can't get Old English Humbugs anymore? They are or were a brown and white coloured sweet. And solid to the last suck, unlike the Welsh Humbug which has a soft centre. The difference must have something to do with Hearts of Oak and all that.

Does anyone wear bicycle clips now, and can you still get them and is the word 'twice' now obsolete? People seem to use two times now. I can hear my English teacher telling me, you can use the word twice, and crossing out two times. If you ask me it's all to do with Hollywood speak, like being hospitalised, rather than going into hospital.

It seems to me you can put 'ised' on a word and make a new one.

I am desperate to go down in history for inventing a new word, and I think I may have invented one.

Democracy we are told is what keeps the Western World free.

My new word is Murdocracy. When the next general election comes along, both Brown and Cameron will court the Murdoch empire for their support, so I suggest we no longer live in a Democracy but a Murdocracy.

Of course I am a miserable old git. I've spent a lifetime training to be one.

Of course I don't like spoilt children and especially screaming babies.

But like W.C.Fields once said, "Anyone who hates dogs and children can't be all bad."

Fred Russell

P.S. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, but please remember at this festive season lonely old men, who when they open gifts, most of us will get handkerchiefs and socks. My relatives must think I have a continual running nose and more legs than a bloody octopus.

Gifts & Treats Fairs 2007

If you need to buy a special gift or simply treat yourself, these events are not to be missed.

Gifts & Treats Fairs will be held at the Langdale Hall, Witney on the following dates:

Saturday 28th April 2007

Saturday 23rd June 2007

Saturday 29th September 2007

Saturday 22nd December 2007

Entrance is free, refreshments are available and many businesses will be present selling books, toiletries, jewellery, clothing, cakes, arts and crafts and cards all at fantastic prices!

For further details on visiting or exhibiting,
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e. max.pridsam@maxexposure-online.co.uk

Local Businesses

Michael Gulley-Farrier

Ascott's blacksmith may have ceased his trade many years ago, but some of his traditional skills are still available from Michael Gulley our local Farrier. Michael lives in Church Close on the other side of the lane from the original forge, but has his workshop in Groves Yard at Milton-under-Wychwood, in the building that once housed Groves' original blacksmith's shop.

Michael was apprenticed to his father when he left school and served for four years in order to learn the necessary skills, not only of metalworking but also how to handle horses.

Unlike a blacksmith that traditionally would tackle any kind of metalworking, including repairing farm equipment and making decorative items a farrier works exclusively with horses. In times long past the farrier was also the horse doctor, supplying medicines to sick animals, fil-

ing teeth and advising on the general health of the horses brought to him. Now other professionals provide these services and the farrier concentrates on shoeing and care of horses' hooves. In order to practice as a farrier you must serve a full apprenticeship and become registered with the Worshipful Company of Farriers.

Michael's workshop still contains all of the traditional tools, many of which are handmade as well as the open forge and anvil. Indeed the

manufacture of horse-shoes has changed little over the centuries. The forge is still fuelled by coke and blasting air through the burning fuel creates the high temperatures required to make the metal red-hot. Today this is done by an electric motor, but in the past bellows would have been used.



Do you have some spare time?

**Would you like to help
in the Village Shop?**

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Michael also has a gas oven, and this equipment is essential when he takes his mobile workshop out to visit his clients. Very few horses are now brought to the workshop.

Today, horseshoes are usually made from mild steel, although aluminium is sometimes used for show and competition purposes. In the past shoes would have been made from iron, a much more difficult material to work with. Michael makes at least half of his own horseshoes, from steel bar, in the traditional way. The remainder are bought-in from Holland. Because he still makes his own shoes he can produce special or unusual items and can work with any animal from the smallest pony to the largest carthorse.

Horses' hooves need checking every six weeks, if a horse has been kept on grass the old shoes can be reused, but if a lot of roadwork is done the shoes will wear out more quickly. In the

cabs the shoes would need to be replaced every two weeks!

Michael has one apprentice and another trainee soon to be apprenticed. The work is physically demanding, not only producing the horseshoes, but also in dealing with the horses themselves. Before starting an apprenticeship

each applicant must have a medical and be fit and strong. This is not a dying rural trade, there are over forty farriers in Oxfordshire and three thousand in Britain, but with his skills and experience Michael must be counted amongst the very best!

Stuart Fox

Thoughts to Pumping the Church Organ 50 Year Ago

How much longer to pump this organ
While that bloody uman screams?
Every Sundee her shouts her yead off
Showin off, to I it seems.

The bloody parson, he's no better
His sermon bores us all to tears
Then he picks them hymns to please her
Till her screechin hurts yer ears.

I reaon hers his fancy uman
Choir practise every night.
I yent comin pumpin organs.
I yent stoppin till it's late,

Look at that, her goes on yawpin.
Come on missus shut yer trap.
The pubs be open now I reacons,
Bugger, it's turned twelve o'clock.

Fred Russell

Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Canapes

- Allow 8 canapes per head and a selection of 5/6 for a drinks party.
- A canape needs to be picked up with fingers whether it is self-contained eg filled fruit and veg, on a cocktail stick eg a sausage, or served in some sort of wrapping eg salmon parcels.
- Canapes should not leave the hands greasy although small napkins can be offered.
- Canapes should be small enough to be eaten in a mouthful or two. They should not disintegrate at the first bite.
- When planning the types of canapes think about your oven space and how many trays of canapes you can get into it at a time.
- Consider colours, shapes, textures and flavours and remember vegetarians.
- Luxurious ingredients can be used because you will be using small quantities of them.
- Do as much as possible in advance.

- Herbs can be chopped several hours before, clingfilmed and stored in fridge.

- Make sure the majority of your canapes do not need complicated last-minute assembly or need to be served immediately after cooking.

- If served hot then they need to be at a reasonable temperature.

- Serve different sorts of canapes on a tray to give your guests a selection.

- Decorate the trays the canapes are served on with flowers.

Salmon and Dill Crackers

Makes 18 - Ingredients

250g fresh skinned salmon fillet
juice of 1 lemon
bunch of dill, finely chopped
seasoning
6 sheets filo pastry
50g butter, melted

Method

Preheat oven to 200C, 400F, GM6. Lightly grease a large baking tray.

1. Cut the salmon in strips 4cm (1½in) long and 2cm (¾ in) wide. Place strips in shallow dish and sprinkle with lemon juice, dill and seasoning.

2. Take one sheet of filo pastry and cover the rest with a damp teatowel to stop it drying out. Brush the surface with melted butter then fold the sheet in half to form a rectangle. Brush again with butter then cut the pastry into 3 equal pieces.

3. Place a salmon strip on the centre of each pastry piece along one edge, roll the pastry up around the fish. Twist the ends to form a cracker shape and brush with butter. Repeat with the remaining salmon and pastry.

4. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Serve with tartare sauce.

To get ahead

Fill the crackers then freeze them. They can be baked straight from the freezer when needed for about 15 minutes.

Cheese Palmiers

Makes 24 - Ingredients

176g puff pastry
75g strong Cheddar or
Parmesan, finely grated
50g Parma ham

Method

Preheat oven to 200C,
400F, GM6 You need 2
greased baking sheets.

1. Roll the pastry out into a large rectangle. Cut in half lengthways to make two strips.
2. On one of the strips lay half the ham then sprinkle over a quarter of the cheese. Take both ends of the strip and bring them to meet in the middle. Sprinkle on another quarter of cheese.
3. Then take both ends of the strip and bring to meet in the middle again. A long roll of pastry will be formed. Repeat with the other strip of pastry.
4. Cut into 1cm (0.5in) slices. Put these cut side up on the baking sheets leaving a gap for expansion.
5. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden.

Alternatives

Anchovies, chopped black olives, sundried tomato paste or pesto can be used instead of ham.

To get ahead

These can be prepared earlier in the day and covered in clingfilm or made in advance and cooked from frozen (allow 12-15 minutes cooking time).

Cocktail Sausages with Chilli Jam

Ingredients

2 red onions, finely chopped
2 tbsps olive oil
4 garlic cloves, crushed or finely chopped
4 red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
1 teasp grated fresh root ginger
500g (1lb) tomatoes, skinned and roughly chopped
2 tbsps balsamic vinegar
150g light muscovado sugar
salt and pepper
500g cocktail sausages

Method

1. Fry the onions in the oil over a gentle heat for about 15 minutes. Add the garlic, chilli, ginger and tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes.
 2. Add the vinegar, sugar and seasoning and bring to a simmer. Simmer for an hour until reduced and thick.
 3. Cool and serve with the sausages. It can also be poured into sterilised jars and will keep for a month in the fridge.
 4. Put the sausages in a roasting tin and cook for 15-20 minutes 200C, 400F, GM6.
- To get ahead**
The chilli jam can be made in advance.

***Philip & Helen
Pratley***

Observations on the Farm

Life on a working farm is a good position from which to observe the processes of nature. Also with some of the farm work being routine there is time to think about what makes things the way they are.

Following the general dormancy of winter the rising temperature of spring wakes up the seeds which germinate and grow. The hibernating insects also wake up and their eggs hatch into larvae just in time for the birds to collect and feed to their newly hatched young. Enough larvae survive to mature into adult insects which pollinate the flowers and also become food

for insect eating birds. The fertilised flowers produce fruit and seeds which will also provide food for birds and other animal life and the remaining seeds perpetuate their species in the following year. Crops and grass flourish and grow through summer providing food for animal life and when harvested and stored can be used for feed through the winter.

Farm animals are subject to illnesses such as lameness, digestive upset and pneumonia, these last two especially in young calves, so they need to be kept in conditions favourable to good health. They also

need to be checked regularly for ailments and if necessary treated promptly before they become ill. Surprisingly a young calf flat out and puffing with pneumonia can be standing up and eating happily six hours after being injected with half a teaspoonful of antibiotic.

With the delicate balances necessary for functions such as temperature control, digestion, circulation, body cell production, the immune system, mobility and the mental processes, it is amazing really that they stay as healthy as they do. Basically all living things begin life in a small way, grow with

vigour, reproduce, then gradually decline, finally die and return to the soil. "Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all it's sons away."

As I understand it in the natural order of things, planets spin as if on an



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axis between the north and south poles as they travel in annual orbit round their sun or star, but our planet has been adjusted. People who know about these things tell us that millions of years ago it was heavily clobbered by a solid mass or huge asteroid which slammed into the earth with such force that caused it to tilt at an angle. The northern hemisphere leans towards the sun for six months of the year and the southern hemisphere leans towards the sun for the other six months. This is what gives us our seasons and why the sun appears to move to and fro annually between the two tropics.

If this collision had not occurred our lives would be much different. The sun would have risen at the same time in the same place every day. Every day would be the same length and average temperature would be the same throughout the



year. Swallows and other birds would not come and go as they do and the sequence of spring flowers which we all enjoy, snowdrops, crocus, primroses and daffodils, would not happen. Likewise the hedgerow blossoms, blackthorn, may, elderflower and dog rose. Nor would we see the masses of coloured leaves in the autumn. My guess is that some of the plants and trees which we have would flower sporadically throughout the year and some of them would not be here.

We can only guess what type of farming would prevail but it would be much different

from the system that we have. So when at our Harvest Festival we sing our thanks for "All good gifts around us", there is perhaps more to consider than this year's fruit and vegetables and the fuel which powers our cars.

Jim Pearse

Refurbishment at The Swan

The refurbishment of The Swan is now in full swing and it is progressing extremely well. At the moment electricians and plumbers are installing cables and pipes and in a month or so we will be moving on to plastering. With regulations coming out of both ears I am not too sure as to exactly when you will get your (new and improved!!) pub back but at present I am aiming for March to May 2008.

Over the years I have probably spent too much time in village pubs but I love the atmosphere of a good pub and I hope that The Swan will soon be playing a full role in village life. Along with others I fought for two years to save our village pub in Coln St Aldwyns largely because I believe that pubs play a vital part in village life. They are a meeting place, a place to unwind and a place to meet up with old

friends and meet new ones. The nearer I get to opening the more daunting it becomes!!

I plan to open seven days a week and to serve food both in the bar and in a dedicated restaurant. The kitchens have been gutted and the Ladies and Gents are being upgraded. To the rear I hope to substantially improve the beer garden and generally improve the appearance of the whole place. The bar is not moving so ordering a pint should be no problem! Upstairs I will have six large suites for staff and guests with four more to follow in the outbuildings at a later date.

Arriving in Ascott as the new landlord of The Swan was frankly very scary.

However the warm welcome which I have received has been fantastic and I hope to offer all of you a warm welcome at The Swan before too long.

Richard Lait



**Congratulations
and Good Luck to
Nicola Gomm
for the
17th November!**

**Nicola is running 1st Reserve
for the England Team
at the
2007 British and Irish Cross
Country Championships.
17th November 2007
Stormont Castle, Belfast
We wish Nicola the best of luck!**

Maybe Volunteer Link Up Can Help.....!

Are you the organiser or leader of a group that's in need of help? Volunteer Link Up is the Volunteer Centre for West Oxfordshire, recruiting people with time to spare to help people and organisations in need of assistance. We can advertise, free of charge, any voluntary role on the National Volunteering Database, DO-IT and we also keep details in the office of local opportunities available for volunteers.

As mentioned above, we also recruit people with time to spare to help local people – by driving them to appointments, visiting isolated members of the community in their homes or doing shopping for them, or by doing simple DIY jobs and gardening.

If you think Volunteer Link Up can help you, or if you want to help out in your local community, call us on 01993 776277. Our of-



fice is open, Monday to Friday, 9a.m – 1p.m and we're based at the Methodist Church Centre, 10 Wesley Walk (off High Street), Witney, OX28 6ZJ. We can also be contacted by email at westoxonvb@freeuk.com. You can also find out more by visiting our website, which is westoxonvb.org.uk.

Remember, Remember the Fifth of November...

Pets and Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night can be very distressing for many pets and the following suggestions may help reduce stress:

- Ensure that pets are kept indoors and all windows, doors and cat/dog flaps are shut.
- Play the TV and radio loudly to help muffle the sound of the fireworks.
- Cover your rabbit hutch, or hamster cage with a rug, and put in plenty of extra hay. This will add to your pet's security and help reduce the noise levels.
- Make sure that your pet has a 'bolt hole' to retreat to – somewhere he can feel safe and secure. Draw the curtains, and feed him here.
- Make sure that cats have a litter tray.
- Make sure your pet has a supply of fresh water, his bed and blankets, and some favourite toys.
- Check your pet regularly, to reassure him that all is well, and make a fuss of him.
- If you know your pet has a serious firework or noise phobia, talk to your vet in advance.

Harvest Festival



Ascott-u-Wychwood Cricket Club

"I'm sad to say it's time to go, until we meet again along the road..."

So the Season is over. Despite the rain, rain and more rain we only lost five games, managing to play a total of twelve.

Of those twelve, we lost seven, drew two and won three. It's not the winning that matters but the taking part though (that's what we keep telling ourselves and eventually we might believe it).

Highlights from the season included beating the Don Barnes XI for the third year running, a battling draw against the Sir Peter Gross XI and Appleton turning

up at the wrong venue. Our best win of the season saw us beat STL Vets by over two hundred runs.

Opening bowler Kevin Cambray managed to break his nose during The Flood and had to be rescued by boat. Like a true hero he played the next week and put in a man-of-the-match performance. Boxing gloves and baseball bats now come out whenever his form takes a slide.

Although we had a healthy selection of players throughout the season more players from the village are always welcomed. Please feel free to contact our captain (for the time-be-

ing at least!) on 07717 864369 if you are interested in playing.

"Until we meet again we wish you well."

Ady Suter

*(Lyrics courtesy of
David Coverdale's
Whitesnake)*

Sir Peter Gross' XI versus Ascott

The annual cricket match between Sir Peter Gross' XI and Ascott cricket club took place on the sport's field on Sunday, 12th August. This annual event began in 1990. Sir Peter's team batted first and declared at 242 for 5. Ascott scored 175 for 6 and the match ended in a draw. Ascott's batsman, Gary Doggett scored 104 not out.

Wychwood Forest F.C.

Just a few lines by way of introduction to Wychwood Forest Football Club.

We are a fairly new club, this is our fifth season, formed originally as Burford United, playing on the recreation ground at Burford.

At the start of the 2005-6 season we had the opportunity to move to the fantastic facilities at Ascott and we duly changed our name, after much discussion, to Wychwood Forest to reflect our new home.

We run three teams, two on Saturday in the Witney and District League and a new Sunday side in the Morrels of Oxford League and have over forty players signed on ranging in age from sixteen to well over forty.

Wychwood Forest F.C. continued...

We pride ourselves on being a friendly club and welcome all players and supporters, our own and the oppositions and have been very happy with the way this has been reciprocated by the village. We regularly get 'crowds' in excess of twenty, this might not sound much but at many places we play, we play to one man and his dog and atmosphere is important to the players.

Although on the field we rarely set the leagues alight with our perform-

ance we all enjoy playing and fun is what football at this level is about. We have had some success and last season we won the George Dingle Cup beating Combe 2 - 0 in the final at Clanfield.

But success is not what it is all about, enjoyment is the main thing and playing for a happy club, with excellent facilities in a friendly and beautiful setting goes a very long way in achieving that enjoyment.

So if you fancy pulling on a pair of boots or would just like to come along and support, please do. There is a home game almost every Saturday afternoon, kick off 2.00pm and alternate Sunday mornings, kick off 10.30am. We'll be pleased to see you.

Jem Johnson.

***Wychwood Forest
F.C.***

Keep up to date with all local football fixtures and results at www.witneyfootball.com

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Something for Everyone at Ascott Pre School!

Ascott Pre School has long had a reputation for providing children with a friendly, secure and stimulating environment for their first experience of education. It has been thriving for a number of years and continues to do so, offering its children an unequalled range of daily sessions and extra activities.

In addition to its daily morning sessions for 2½ to 5 year olds, the Pre School, which is based at Tiddy Hall, runs two afternoon sessions for 2 to 3 year olds. These sessions have smaller child numbers with a higher staff ratio to help the little ones to settle into the Pre School routine. Activities are specifically geared to the younger children and the space in which they play is physically smaller so that they are not overwhelmed.

For older children (usually 3½ plus) the Pre School runs two 'Prepare for School' sessions each week. These

sessions aim to give children a taste of school life before they embark on it for real! Each child brings a packed lunch, to get used to eating with their peers in a school environment. The learning is fun and based around numbers and letters with related games and stories.

Another activity open to the older Pre School children is **Cooking Club**. It is not only a fun and exciting activity but also an ideal opportunity for them to learn about the importance of healthy eating and hygiene. The children are taught about where food comes from and seasonal eating and they all wear special hats and aprons when cooking.

Under adult supervision and in small groups (the club is run on a rota basis), the children make their own dish from start to finish using a range of different utensils and implements. From fish pie to apple and carrot muffins, the children gain a

great deal of satisfaction and confidence from doing it all for themselves (including washing up at the end!).

Finally, for the under 2's there is an associated **Toddler Group**, based at Ascott Cricket Pavilion. The Group provides a safe, friendly and informal setting in which 0 - 4 year olds can play while their parents and carers enjoy a cup of coffee and some adult conversation! Equally, for new or expectant mums or those new to the area, it offers an opportunity to meet other parents and carers with shared experiences.

Ascott Toddler Group is held on Tuesday mornings from 9.30 - 11.30am and it is £2.00 per family to attend (drinks and snacks included!). Newcomers are always welcome.

For further information about Ascott Pre School or its related activities, Supervisor Pauline Plant can be contacted on 07968 006451.

Kate Habberley

Leaffield School

We are well into the new academic year and it is as busy and bustling as ever. We have two new teachers and a full class of Foundation Stage children to welcome.

We would like to offer huge congratulations to the children, staff and parents of all the Year 6 children, who have now moved on to Senior School. For yet another year, the results have been above the Oxfordshire and National average in Key Stage 1, likewise for Maths and Science in KS2, with an astounding 62 % reaching level 5 in Science. Well done everyone.

The children are enjoying are new creative

approach to the curriculum, where many of their subjects are taught together, based upon a topic. The feedback from my own children is very positive.

We are now actively involved in the Forest Schools Project, and all the infants have had trips there. The all-in-one waterproof outfits, provided by school, are a sight worth seeing.

As always, there are many clubs and activities for the children to participate in before and after school, including; Art, ICT, Cookery, Sports, and Breakfast club, to name but a few.

The Foundation Stage teacher, Kate Maloney, visited Ascott

Playgroup recently and met some of the younger children. She will be making regular visits, to meet the children and any parents that would like to discuss their child's schooling.

We welcome visits to the school and urge parents to think early about their choice of school, as the foundation stage has been full this year, and continues to be next year.

The Leaffield school website is nearly up and running and details will be provided in future letters.

Enjoy the autumn weather, and let's hope the rain holds off!

*Charlie Marshall,
Leaffield School
Community Governor*

Tiddy Hall

Regular Activities:

Monday – Friday

Mornings

Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant 07968006451

Wednesday Afternoons

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Wednesday Evenings

Badminton

Contact: Chris Morgan 01993 831958

Thursday evenings

Yoga – 7.30 – 9pm

Contact: Jan Holah 01608 810620

Friday afternoon

Post Office 2pm – 4pm

Special Events:

November 10th

Quiz Night

November 24th

Folk Night

To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

**Ingrid Ridley:
01993 830612**

Wychwood Library

The Wychwood Library welcomes a new Manager. On 15th October Gillian Hoskins, from Hook Norton, joined our library as its new manager. This is Gillian's first experience of managing a library and when I visited she was busy meeting some of her regular customers and getting to grips with the computer system.

Gillian's message to the Wychwoods is "keep using this excellent facility to ensure that it will continue serving the local community for many years to come, the County Council keeps a close check on the numbers visiting and the quantity of books borrowed."

There will be many new titles arriving this winter, especially for the younger readers, and travel guides will be available in the New Year. The library has good stocks of large print and audio books, together with DVD'S

and there are on-line computers available for you to use free-of-charge.

A new service allows you to order books on-line and keep track of books you have borrowed and their return dates. If you are interested in this facility speak to Gillian or one of her staff and they will provide further details.

Stuart Fox



Opening Times

Monday:

2pm to 7.00pm

Tuesday:

Closed

Wednesday:

9.30am to 1pm/
2pm to 5pm

Thursday

Closed

Friday:

2pm to 7pm

Saturday:

9.30am to 1pm

*Gillian Hoskins,
Library Manager*



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Burford,
Oxfordshire OX18 4QA
01993 824800

Dashwood House, Shipton Road,
Milton Under Wychwood,
Oxfordshire OX7 6JH
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