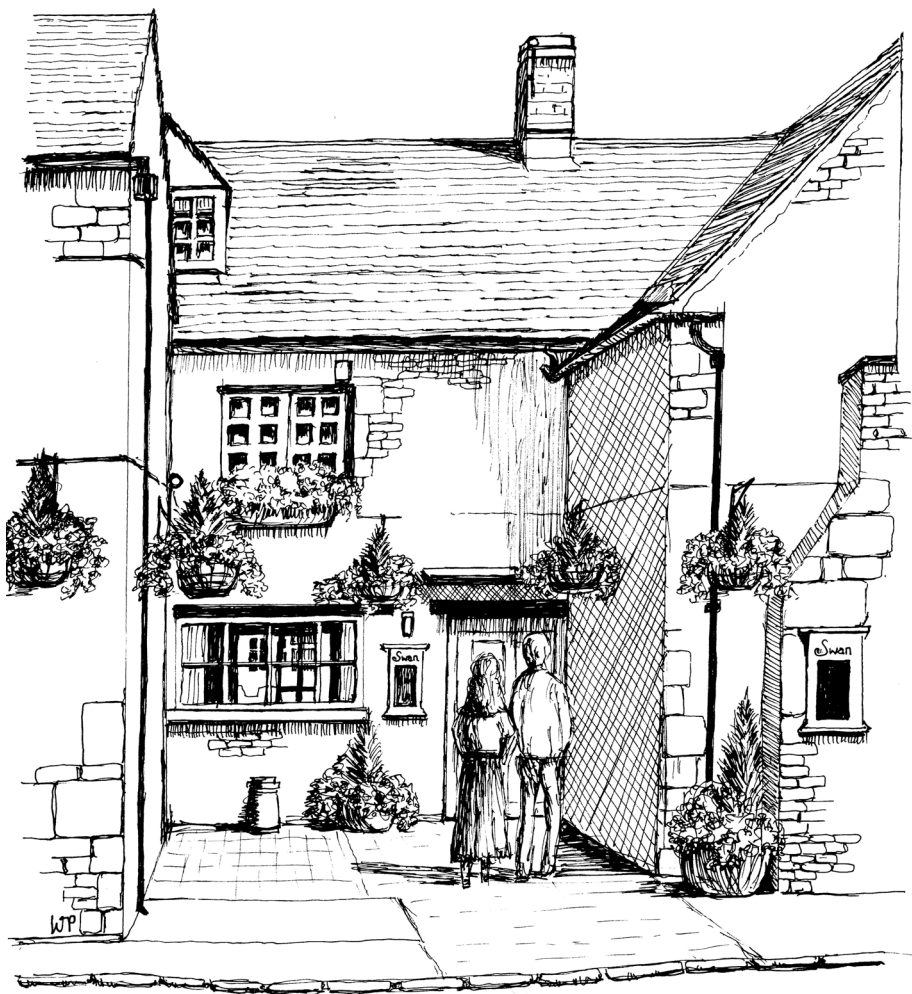

The Ascott Grapevine



Issue 59

Summer 2008

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 Autumn issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by October 5th.

Call 01993 831023 or email:
wendypearse@

honeydale.freeserve.co.uk

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,

Wendy Pearse,

Yvette Keauffling

Church Services

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 Holy Communion -
Common Worship

5th Sunday of the month

10.00 a.m. Benefice Service

Details and times of the regular services and details of special services are advertised on the various notice boards around the village and in the church porch or telephone the Church Wardens - Anne Braithwaite 831282 or Fred Russell 830972.

We look forward to welcoming you and worshipping with you.

Anne Braithwaite

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.



Come and enjoy a coffee [and home made biscuits] between 10.00am and mid-day in the Church on:
Saturday 6th September

Ascott Marquee

Ascott residents may like to know that the village charity has recently acquired a marquee that can be used for summer events and that the marquee is available for village residents to borrow. There is a £30 charge made for private and commercial use but it is available free for fund-raising for local good causes. There is also a return-

able deposit of £50 payable for all borrowings. The marquee measures 10 metres by 4 and it may need a few strong people to erect it.

Anyone interested should contact Mark Dawbarn (01993 831632) or one of the other trustees.

Mark Dawbarn

Grapevine Quiz

The winner of the “collective noun” quiz in the spring issue of the Grape

Vine was Jill Greenaway, with an all correct entry. Congratulations Jill!

Jill wins a bottle of wine.

Births

On the 13th May 2008 to Fiona and Sean Foy, a daughter, Martha Elizabeth.

Deaths

The funeral followed by interment took place at Holy Trinity Church on 22nd April 2008 of Suzanne Julia Kay aged 48 years, sister of Chris Kay, The Grange, Shipton Road.

Joe

By the time you read this I know a great many of you will know that sadly Joe Packer (the other half of The Last Straw) died suddenly on 3 June 2008 aged 51. Everyone who knew him was in a state of shock. Joe was extremely well liked. He was always smiling and was gentle, kind, thoughtful and very talented.

We have known Joe for many years and when we resurrected the folk nights in 1996 The Last Straw fronted the evening and continued to do so until the present time. For many years The Last Straw was made up of Paul, Joe and Margaret but for the last two



years Paul and Joe performed as a duo. Joe generally playing guitar, double bass and of course singing. Paul and Joe had been friends and musical partners for 25 years.

He will be missed so much by his family and friends and is a great loss to the world of folk and entertainment.

Lyn Collins



Ascott Village Fete

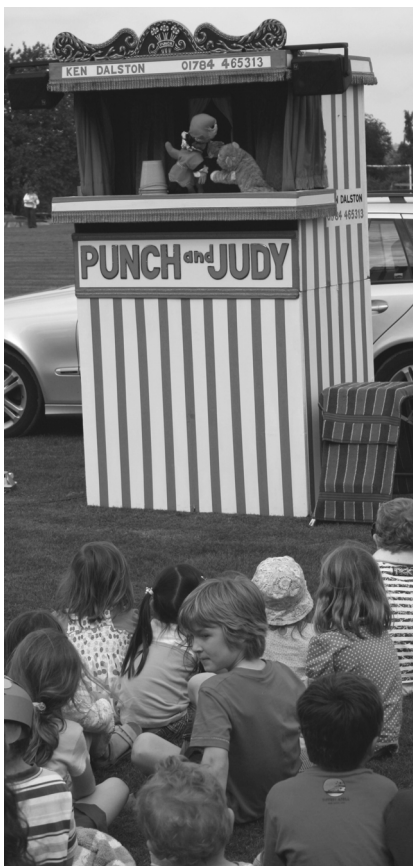
This year's fete was moved from July to June
Would the weather be good, or was it too soon?
Organising behind the scenes started last year
With a blank piece of paper and lots of ideas
Two months to go with names in the frame
We wanted it different but also the same
Punch and Judy and CN Brass Band
Joined the Morris Dancers and dressage display to lend us a hand
Stalls were set up of different kinds
With stallholders ready with lots of good finds
Strawberries and cream with tea were on sale
And people could sit at tables or on bales
Beers and Pimms could be bought as well
With the BBQ wafting a magnificent smell
A call from the MC to announce the raffle prizes
Which were then presented in all different shapes and sizes
At the end of the day with aching feet
The committee hoped that last year's money we would beat
And an amazing £2,464.00 was made!
So a very Big THANK YOU to one and all
See you next year, let's hope it's another ball!

Debra Cull



A Day at the Races: Ascott Village Fete and...





...just some of the Scarecrows



Talking Shop

Ascott Village Shop now continues its fifth year as the firmly established heart of the community, a business focused on serving and supporting you, our customers.

Like any business, we have to keep moving forward, making changes and improvements.

We held our AGM in May. Any AGM is usually a dry do, but we avoided that by holding it in The Swan! Many thanks to Richard Lait, who kindly opened up when the pub was supposed to be closed. The meeting was packed and saw Paul Galistan elected as the new Secretary on the retirement of Rosemary Dawbarn from the post.

Rosemary has been with the shop since its earliest days and continues to do sterling work behind the counter and behind the scenes, and we thank her for equally sterling efforts as Secretary for so many years.

The Management Committee is now Alan Chubb as Chairman, Lorraine Knight as Deputy Chairman/Personnel, Paul Galistan as Secretary, Stuart Fox as Treasurer and Nigel Wild as Marketing and PR.

Local shopping

Our mantra is local shopping, local sourcing. The rocketing price of fuel and food has brought a new imperative to both, with everyone now thinking twice before undertaking any journey and watching the pennies. We aim to provide a wide range of

competitively priced goods to offer you choice on your doorstep and avoid that drive.

We're always on the lookout for new ranges. Delicious home made soups from The Soupery went down well, especially in those chilly winter months. Recently, we brought in cards, coasters and bookmarks from the Ann Edwards range. Ann hails from Blewbury and her quirky and humorous artwork based on her own animals brings an instant smile to anyone's face.

In response to demand for frozen fish, we're now trialling an excellent and well-priced selection from Hellabys of Filkins. Fresh catches from Margate are frozen the same day. Orders will be placed each Thursday for Friday delivery.

Survey

To help us meet your needs and aspirations, we'll soon be delivering a short survey form through each letterbox. One of our many volunteers will be round to collect it on the date shown on the front. It really is most important for us to have your feedback, so please take a few minutes to complete it.

As part of our continuing drive towards eco-friendly shopping, we're trying to reduce the use of plastic



bags. From Tuesday 1 July, you'll be asked to donate 5p if you need a plastic bag. In return, we'll hand you a green counter to place in a box by the till. At regular intervals, the counters will totalled and a cheque sent to Helen and Douglas House, the hospice in Oxford.

If you would like one of our snazzy recyclable jute shopping bags, or the one you already have is wearing thin, a new batch is on order.

Volunteers welcome!

Have you ever thought about volunteering for the shop? Our current team numbers well over 40. While many serve behind the counter, others make a tremendous contribution backstage. Some do both! An enter-

prise like the shop is a bit like an iceberg, the part you don't see is by far the greatest mass.

Volunteering is great fun, very rewarding. You'll be a member of a truly happy and committed team and it's a great way of meeting people.

No retail experience? Not a problem, we offer full training and let you work alongside experienced members until you're confident. So, give Alan Chubb a call on 830280.

And finally, are you a shareholder? Being a shareholder not only boosts shop funds, but also gives you a vote at the AGM and a voice in the way things are run. Call Paul Galistan on 830979 or Stuart Fox on 832004 for details.

Wychwood Local History Society

Another very successful season for the Society finished on the 19th June when Muriel Pilkington gave a very interesting talk about The Mitfords in the Cotswolds. The large audience attested to the interest in the Mitford family in our area. The marriage of a Norman to a Saxon heiress, in Northumberland, just after the Norman Conquest, was the beginning of the line that arrived at the notable family of Mitford sisters who lived at Asthall Manor and South Lawn in the first half of the twentieth century.

Our new season will begin on Thursday 18th September 2008 at 7.30.p.m. in Milton Village Hall when one of our most popular speak-

ers, Tim Porter, will talk about The Cotswolds under Henry VIII. But I should mention at this point that as Milton Village Hall is undergoing repairs at present, there may be a change of venue. Please look at the Society's posters on the villages' notices boards nearer to the date of the meeting.

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

A Questionnaire from your Church Warden

In 2007 I was asked to be one of the Church Wardens of Holy Trinity, Ascott.

Now I have become more settled in this post I'm afraid this power has gone to my head. Therefore I have compiled a questionnaire to see if you qualify to be a member of the C of E.

The first 10 questions will be on religion, the other 10 will be on your good works.

1. When Eve was created from Adam's rib and became his wife, did this cause him a pain in the neck in later years?
2. When Adam and Eve were told to go forth and multiply, was it an Adder that tempted them?
3. Were the Israelites told to labour for six days, then rest on the Sabbath? Or told when they worked on Sundays, always ask for double time?
4. When the Israelites ate unleavened bread before a match, did this mean they always started with ten men?
5. How many tablets was Moses told to take?
6. Is Canon Law the rules of the Royal Artillery?
7. Is Matins a church service or something made of coconut you can put on the kitchen floor?
8. Is a stipend a vicar's salary or a place where he keeps pigs to save his bacon?
9. Where would you find the Primate of all England? In Lambeth Palace or the Monkey House at London Zoo?
10. In the great Welsh hymn 'Guide me O thou Great Jehovah', why did they go to the West Country to get their bread of Devon?

The following questions will be on your good works.

1. Do you help old ladies across the road?
2. Do you help them back again, even though they don't want to go?
3. Are you kind and considerate to the aged and infirm, by going round and kicking their cat out at night?
4. Are you always polite when you answer your phone when someone tries to sell you double glazing?
5. Do you always invite a Jehovah Witness in for a cup of tea?
6. When you are in a supermarket and you see a small child screaming and kicking it's mother and demanding more sweets, what do you feel like doing?
 - a. Stuff them with more sweets so they become obese with bad teeth.
 - b. Plead with them not to be naughty.
 - c. Give them a good smack and tell them to stop showing off.
7. You are just coming out of a supermarket when you see someone shaking a collection can. Do you give with a generous heart or quickly look for another exit?

8. You are just about to park your car when someone steals your space. Do you say to yourself 'Their need is greater than mine', or from the safety of your car call them Selfish Moronic Louts or words to that effect?

9. On a cold winter's morning when you get up, you bang your toe on the corner of the bed. Do you say Oh drat, Oh darn or some foul four letter Anglo Saxon word not in keeping for a religious person?

10. Are you still or have you ever been jealous of your brother or sister?

If you score less than five marks, sorry you have failed. Please try again next year.

If you wish to appeal against this judgement contact Rev. Mark Abrey. Tel.01608 676572.

Fred Russell

Music for a Summer Evening

A most enjoyable concert given by Vital Recitals of popular classics was held at Holy Trinity Church on Saturday, 2nd August 2008.

The programme ranged from well known pieces by Handel to music from Porgy and Bess by George and Ira Gershwin.

The first half of the programme was music by English composers to recognise that this was a postponed St. George's Day concert. After wine and canapes, the second half consisted mainly of excerpts from musicals and operettas.

Many thanks to Daphne Abe, piano, Morag Crowther, soprano, Clare Hedges, violin and Peter Crowther, cello, and to all those who contributed to its success raising £370 towards Church funds.



Fuel for Thought

Both these stories concern fuel, both are totally different.

‘To thine ownself be true’ was a motto drummed into us during officer training.

Destination today was RAF Aberporth, a firing range on Cardigan Bay. The approach in a strong crosswind was quite hairy, but the Devon’s captain was more than equal to the task and executed a copybook landing on the single ‘doggy-bone’ runway. I went off in search of the genial Welsh ex-Wing Commander who ran the place, known universally as Dai-the-spy. I promised to be back by 3 o’clock. In my job, you learned a lot about flying and flyers. They would file a flight plan based on a certain takeoff time. If they failed to take off within 15 minutes of their stated time, they had to re-file. So, punctuality was vital.

My business with Dai was wrapped up well within time and the crew said they wanted to go to RAF Valley in Anglesey to drop off spares and refuel. We landed at Valley and taxied over to the Missile Firing School to take on fuel. The crew said it would take half an hour, so I went into the

crew-room and had a coffee. My abiding memory of the RAF is the coffee, not so much the coffee itself but the milk. Fridges were a rare commodity, so everyone bought Carnation condensed milk. ‘Nato standard’ was coffee with two sugars and Carnation. I drank the revolting brew because there was no choice, but I never touched Carnation again once I left the RAF.

Finishing my coffee, I strolled out to the Devon to check progress. I was startled to see the tanker driving away from the Devon. I was startled because the tanker was marked ‘AVTUR’.

At that time, the RAF had large numbers of both piston-engined and jet aircraft. Piston-engined planes like our Devon used aviation gasoline or AVGAS and jets used aviation turbine fuel or AVTUR (JET A-1 in civilian terms). The RAF went to inordinate lengths to prevent the wrong fuel going in the wrong aircraft. These included labelling the tankers, putting



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coloured plates on the sides painted with special paint that retained the true colour even under the sodium lighting of dispersals and aprons, and establishing cordon sanitaire refuelling areas where AVGAS tankers could not enter AVTUR areas and vice versa. And still there were refuelling errors. Jets did not take kindly to AVGAS and the suck-press-bang-burp engines simply would not run on AVTUR. Using an AVTUR tanker for AVGAS or t'other way round was lunacy. Not only could it lead to the wrong fuel in the aircraft tanks, but contamination of one fuel by the other was equally as bad. The RAF Flight Safety magazine was always full of some drama of refuelling errors or a new scheme to prevent them.

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I pointed out to the pilot the AVTUR marking, but he said he already knew, had checked the fuel and it really was AVGAS. I prayed he was right. RAF Valley was well-named, being surrounded by unyielding hills and a margin for error of frankly, bigger all. The pilot was in the wrong. He should not have accepted the fuel in the first place and in the second, should have raised Cain at this totally dangerous practice.

Fortunately, it **was** AVGAS and we flew safely home. I pondered on what to do, but because I was relatively new to the RAF and not aircrew, decided to do nothing at all.

Four years later I was in Germany. A friend of mine was promoted from being Command Flight Safety Officer to Wing Commander and posted to RAF Valley as Wing Commander Flying. As I paid him some expenses, I jokingly remarked that I hoped they put the right fuel in his aircraft. When he asked why, I recounted my tale.

'Didn't you hear about the crash at Valley?' he asked.

I shook my head. An RAF Bassett had called into Valley to collect a Group Captain and refuel. I had spent hundreds of happy hours in Bassetts, a six-seater air taxi whose Rolls-Royce engines drank exclusively AVGAS. Following the refuelling, the plane took off and immediately lost power. With nowhere else to go, the pilot pancaked into a field. The Bassett ended up against a stone wall,

the navigator and the Group Captain dead. The tanks had been filled with AVTUR. Somehow, there had been enough clean fuel in the system for taxi and takeoff but no more.

The board of enquiry opened a frightening can of worms. The flightline refuelling was run chaotically, rules ignored and the AVGAS in an AVTUR tanker or vice versa by no means uncommon. The accident waiting to happen was the Bassett and its occupants. Heads rolled, but it did not bring back the poor sods whose lives had ended against a Welsh stone wall.

To thine ownself be true. I felt thoroughly ashamed.

And so to a happier institution, Sports Afternoon.

‘It’s sports afternoon, let’s go flying’ said Dave.

Dave was the new section head at Strike Command and had a third share in an Auster based at Wycombe Park aerodrome.

Wednesday afternoon was traditionally sports afternoon in the RAF, the premise being that those who could should participate in some healthy sport and keep fit. I am not sure flying met those criteria, but damn it all, this **was** the RAF and flying’s what we’re about, what?

I agreed to meet Dave, another Secretarial Officer, at Wycombe Park. When I arrived, he had already carried out pre-flight checks and found the battery flat. I would have to swing

the prop by hand, a prospect I found less than appealing. We went through the ‘Switches off, throttle set’ routine and I moved the prop through several rotations to prime the engine. Then, ‘Contact’, the traditional whirling hand motion with forefinger raised and the engine burst into song.

Our agreed target was Sywell, a grass airfield outside Northampton about 45 minutes away. Dave ran through radio checks, gave our complement and destination to the tower and we took off. After consulting a map, Dave gave me a compass bearing and handed over control. The Auster was very light and twitched in the thermals over the Chilterns. Initially, I was scared we would pitch into an irretrievable spin, but I soon learned that a light touch on the ‘pole’ was all that was necessary to keep us straight and level.

About 25 minutes after takeoff, Dave leaned over and said ‘Do you know where we are?’

I was dumbstruck. Inured to skilled RAF navigators who plotted courses and used Decca navigators, VORs and various other ‘navaids’ to perfection, this was new territory.

‘I thought you were supposed to be the pilot!’ I said.

There was no reply but Dave’s face said it all.

I looked down.

‘That’s Santa Pod dragstrip on the outskirts of Bedford’ I said.

‘No good’ came the reply.

Flying conditions were not good, with a thick heathaze obscuring vision. Seen from low altitude, the towns of Aylesbury, Northampton and Milton Keynes, whilst some distance apart by road, seemed close together and we could not clearly identify which was which. At that point, Dave induced further angst when he looked at the fuel gauges in the wing roots and announced we were low on gas. Flyers have an adage that there are old pilots and bold pilots, but there are no old and bold pilots. Bold pilots in my book included those crass enough to take off without checking their fuel state.

We eventually identified Northampton. Spotting a field with tarmac runways is difficult, but spotting a grass field is even more difficult, espe-

cially when you are not sure where it is. After circling Northampton several times, fuel dwindling by the minute, we eventually found Sywell - parked aircraft were the clue - and landed. Then Dave found he had forgotten his fuel card and had to use his blankety-blank chequebook and pen to buy AVGAS.

Once again, I drew the short straw on swinging the wretched prop when the refuelling mechanic declined and we took to the air en route to Wycombe Park. Chastened by his earlier gaffe, Dave took his navigation more seriously and we hit Wycombe Park on the nose.

When he took out a runway marker on landing it confirmed my resolution never to fly with him again.

Nigel Wild

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Gardening Notes

I don't know how to sum up gardening during the last quarter. I suppose frustrating would be a good word. Frustrating because of the weather. There have been very few prolonged periods of good weather without rain, temperatures haven't been as high as might be expected and there has been lots of wind. The consequences in my garden are that weeds have had a field day and everything ornamental has grown much taller than normal and is flopping into its neighbour. The plus side is that because of moderate temperatures flowers are lasting well. The old-fashioned roses have been excellent and are still holding on while phlox look very healthy and show no signs of drying out, shown in crispy brown leaves at the bottom of their stems so I am looking forward to their wonderful perfume carrying on for weeks.

Another consequence of the weather is that many plants are outgrowing their allotted spaces and I am fearful that I will have to do major cutting back in the Autumn. That fills me with dread. I hate hacking back. I'm always sure that I'll kill flowers and shrubs, upset the balance of the plants and ruin the overall effect for next year. When I start to think logically I begin to see the wrongness of my thoughts of disaster be-

cause if I don't cut back I am going to cause plants to struggle for space, lose their vigour and probably die so I have to hack back and give them a chance. I know also that cutting back stimulates growth and vastly improves a plant so what am I getting so upset about?

Despite setbacks brought about by the weather or plants not turning out to be the colour I expected them to be or dying despite the loving care and attention I've given them, I get more pleased every year with the way the garden is turning out. It has been such a wise decision to remove the gravel paths. Laying grass instead has shown

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off plants, shrubs and trees much better than the gravel ever did. The garden looks so much more like a country garden and I think looks more spacious because you are not so aware of where one section ends and the next begins. The last gravel will come out this winter. Look out for another skip, I can't live without one! The trees we planted some five to eight years ago are beginning to have a presence. One thing we will do as part of the Autumn chop will be to raise the canopies of most trees by removing their lowest branches. This will either give more opportunity for planting beneath the trees or make it more comfortable to walk under them or give better vistas to areas beyond.

There is still one area to be developed. I've written about it before and had expected to have made a start by now. It is where we intend to have a herb garden and asparagus bed. As it happens, it is a good thing it has not been dealt with because the extra raised vegetable beds I obtained this year have encroached on the area. Not by much but it will mean changing the layout a little. I do hope we don't have any more re-thinks, I want to be able to concentrate on making lovely combinations of plants and colours in the flower beds. I really like growing vegetables but flowers are my first love. Sometimes I think they get scant attention.

I bet a number of you are thinking, it's all very well telling us about the garden we can't see behind the big wooden gates but will she ever get round to doing something about the front garden so improving what we can see. You'll be pleased to know that this is another job for Autumn/Winter. The real problem has been that I have never hit on a satisfactory solution for what is a very small and impoverished area of soil. This year the problem has been compounded by the very nasty meadow grass which the flood brought and the building work that took place last year. Now, I think I have at last hit on a satisfactory plan. You'll have wait and see. Not that it is anything spectacular. At least telling you means I'll have to get down to it or my name will be mud! Wish me luck that it all works out.

As you will have noticed there is plenty of enjoyable work stacked up for the coming months. No doubt as with all plans some of it will get done, some won't and some will never be done because events overtake plans. But please, please, please don't let either Dave or I come up with a brilliant new idea for major upheavals in the main garden because if it is 'brilliant' we will want to do it and I really, really want to concentrate on the flower borders.

Yvette Keuffling

How old are Ascott's pubs?

The simple answer is that no one knows. Their origins lie in the obscure mists of time.

However the two pubs which have until fairly recently formed part of the village, date back at least two centuries, maybe several more.

The Churchill Arms which closed in the latter part of the 20c. was first situated in the building later known as Corner House Farm at the west end of High Street. Then a new purpose built pub was erected in the 1850's (now Sunset House) just after the arrival of the railway in Ascott. Perhaps a speculation on the part of Lord Churchill who at that time, owned the pub and most of the village. In the village Census of 1841, the two proprietors were John and Elizabeth North, both aged 75. Perhaps innkeeping was a fairly healthy occu-

pation for those days, contributing to a longer life.

The Swan, now happily flourishing again, can be documented back to the late 18c. when William Milton travelled to Ascott via West Wycombe and Charlbury, to become the landlord in 1790. He remained in charge of the pub until 1815 and lived there with his wife Elizabeth. They had ten children between 1781 and 1802 but although several daughters married in Holy Trinity Church, the sons either died or moved away, sometime before William died in 1817. The Swan then came into the hands of Nathaniel Paintin who was both baker and landlord. Could this be the origin of the bread oven or were previous landlords also bakers? Yet another question!

Wendy Pearse

Flu Jab: Reminder from Wychwood Surgery

The Partners at Wychwood Surgery would like to invite all their patients who are 65 or turning 65 before the 1st April 2009 and those who have a regular flu jab for any other reason such as a long term medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, or who are a carer to attend the surgery for their flu vaccination early in October.

Clinics will be available daily from October 6th so please ring and make your appointment now on 01993 831061.

There will be NO INDIVIDUAL LETTERS this year. Please mention this to anyone you know who would benefit from or usually has a flu vaccination.

If you need any further information please visit the surgery or look at the website at:

www.wychwoodsurgery.co.uk.

Events in West Oxfordshire

Local History Exhibition

Hastings Hill, Churchill
Saturdays and Sundays 2-4.00pm
to 28th September

The 70s - The Decade that Time Forgot

County Museum, Woodstock
to 12th October

The Blanket Story

Witney Town Museum
20th August to 22nd October

Threshing & Harvest

Cogges Museum, Witney
6th & 7th September

Banbury Street Organ Festival & Town Criers Championship

Saturday 6 Sept - 9am until 4pm
Around the Town of Banbury - based
at Banbury Town Hall, Bridge Street,
Banbury OX16 5QB

Chippy Jazz - A Day of Jazz Events

from mid-morning to evening
Sunday 7 Sep 08 - Free gigs 12:00am
until 11:00pm around the town.
Afternoon of Swing with the Chipping
Norton School All Stars Jazz
Band - £8 per ticket 2.30pm at the
Chipping Norton Theatre.
Evening Concert featuring Megs
Etherington's 8-Piece Hokum Jazz
Band i - £14 per ticket including first
drink free at 7.30pm at the Chipping
Norton Town Hall. Chipping
Norton.

Witney Music Festival -

Cokethorpe School, Witney OX29
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6.30pm to 10.00pm
Saturday 13 September (Jazz):
11.30am to 8.00pm

Sunday 14 September (Classical):
10.00am to 8.00pm

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Harvest Home

Cogges Museum, Witney
14th September

Country Fair & Poultry Show

27th & 28th September

Apple & Orchard Weekend

11th & 12th October

Scarcrow Weekend

25th & 26th October

Advent Weekend

6th & 7th December

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I Want to be a Wise Man

Like ninety percent of the population most of my working life was spent in employment I didn't like. During those years I had to present myself at the Labour Exchange because I had lost my previous job, either through redundancy or walking out because I couldn't stand it any longer.

More often than not I would be interviewed by a bright young thing who would ask, 'What qualifications do you have?' Answer. None. 'Do you have a trade?' No. 'Did you serve an apprenticeship?' No. 'What work would you be suitable of doing, do you think?'

It's then I wanted to answer, but had not got the nerve. I wanted to say, 'I want to be a wise man. I don't want to do anything. I just want to think about it.' This had the advantage of, let's say.... digging the garden, but only thinking about it. Or think about being a Christian while spending Sunday morning in bed. The problem is, once you announce you are a wise man, it is then you are as far away from being one as you could possibly get.

What clothes and bearing should a wise man have? Always smart and alert to the world. Or wander around deep in thought, with your shirt out of your trousers and wearing odd socks? Should you greet everyone with a knowing smile or trip on the pavement and use language unsuitable for abstract thought?

Then when someone becomes wise, they are expected to make profound statements like 'Why when you clip your toenails do the bits fly into the Irish Stew on the cooker.' Or, 'Why when we get older does hair stop growing through the top of our scalp and grows down our noses and out of our ears?'

Of course it is often said that old people become wiser. This is completely untrue. They just forget what idiots they were when they were young.

One of the most famous studies in Art of a wise man, would be Rodin's 'The Thinker.' But what was he thinking? My guess. He was thinking, 'Now where did I put my shirt and trousers last night?'

I can offer some words of wisdom. The owl is said to be a wise old bird but don't try and copy it by trying to turn your head too far around. You will finish with a neck brace and looking like a Burmese dancing girl.

I've always been a dreamer and I have often thought, 'Ah, life is but a dream.' This can soon be proved otherwise by getting someone to kick your arse and see if it hurts.

So the question is... Do you think you are wise? Are you level headed with good taste? If so, ask yourself this. Why am I bothering to read this nonsense?

Fred Russell

Our Changing River

My friend Bill Izod and I were invited to join a small group to assess problems with the river and to discuss what might be done to limit the severity of future flooding.

I have lived in Ascott parish all my life and Bill has always lived nearby and has farmed Ascott land by the river for over twenty years.

We were walking across the meadow towards the other people by the river when we were surprised by a friendly call from a well meaning lady by the roadside, with an enquiry as to whether we were lost. So thank you madam for your kind offer of help, but no. We were not lost!

The present state of the river brought to my mind the changes in it's appearance and character during the seven decades over which I have known this watercourse. I lived in Coldstone Farmhouse until 1952 and I remember the full time gang of river cleaners who made regular patrols and cleaned out all the fallen trees and branches and with their long handled slash hooks trimmed back the briars and other shrubs down the bank sides. In spite of all their efforts our lower floors were flooded several times to a depth of up to 30 centimetres. Then

in the early 1950s a large dredger came along and thoroughly cleaned out the riverbed for the full length of the Evenlode. Although we had several long very wet spells in the fifties and sixties which I well remember because I was trying to make hay and harvest grain crops during those same years, the floors of Coldstone House were not flooded again for about thirty years. The nineties was a relatively drier decade which was lucky for some people.

My own understanding of the present situation is that the 'Thames Water Company' of today uses the

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river for its profit making, water supply and sewerage treatment enterprises but is not in any way responsible for the upkeep of the river and makes no contribution of any sort towards its maintenance.

Nature has had free reign over the river for half a century allowing mounds of silt, mud and debris to

accumulate. These not only reduce the speed of flow but also divert the fastest currents to the sides where they undermine the banks and wash against the bridge foundations.

Experts of today state that river dredging would not solve the flooding problems. However, one draws ones own conclusions.

Jim Pearse

Who is Stan?

I could be accused of being a couch potato when it comes to watching television. But let me make it clear right away. This does not include Soap Operas, Reality Shows or Quiz Shows. These I would like to blast as far as possible into space, where they may be discovered by Aliens, and if they watched these programmes, we would be safe, because they would never want to invade the Earth.

Have you noticed that when they dramatise a story from the past involving the North of England, more often than not the background music is of a brass band. While if it's from the more genteel and better spoken English of Jane Austen and the South, it's usually some bloke playing a crumhorn or sackbut. Although I'm a soft southerner, I prefer the brass band.

A little knowledge is said to be a bad thing, so what I am about to write could be wrong. The period of English history I dislike the most is the 18th century into the 19th century. I

am told it was the age of reason. If this was so, why did the men wear those ridiculous wigs and the women plaster their faces like white faced clowns, with spots on them like large blackheads? When what they both needed was a good hot bath. But what annoys me most, if we are to believe how this period is portrayed in drama on television, is the men who seem to strut about in those white britches, constipated with their own importance.

Now we come forward a little to when refined ladies wore the crinoline dresses. For those who do not know what a crinoline is, these can be seen today as knitted dolls which cover the lavatory paper in many a tasteful bathroom up and down the country. My theory is that they wore these dresses in Victorian days because babies were not born the natural way, but hatched from eggs. These were carried under the crinoline to be incubated by the mother like a hen with young chicks. That's why they had

large families. It made sense to incubate 12 rather than just one. It's a great pity we are not hatched from eggs today. Think of the money that could be saved in maternity grants. Both mother and father could go off to work and leave the egg to incubate in a warm oven along with the casserole.

The question I would like the answer to is, 'Who is Stan?'

I know in this day and age one must be very PC and not offend anyone. But there is Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkestan and various other 'stans' from around that region. I know of Stan Matthews, Stan

Mortenson and Stan Laurel. I don't think it was any of these. Perhaps through the pages of the Grapevine, someone could answer this question?

I have attended church most of my life, so it came as a great shock when the Rev. Mary Crameri revealed to me that to be a Christian was a religion for losers. I am getting old now and realise I have been a bit of a loser all my life. I'm fed up with being a loser so I have decided to give up Christianity and start supporting Man United. It would be interesting to know what Bishop Colin will make of this!

Fred Russell

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The Ascott Barrow

There are probably not too many people in the world who pull back their curtains each morning and gaze into stone receptacles, even older than Stonehenge, which contained the bones of those who lived in the locality 5700 years before them, but thanks to the recently installed barrow stones that is now my situation.

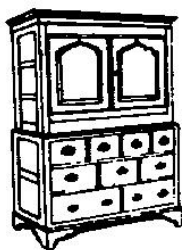
Since they lie next to Holy Trinity Church, there is the fascinating contrast between the new monotheism of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and the polytheism of the older faiths. As I looked out at the stones I started to wonder about the people who first used them and about their beliefs.

They were what we now call Pagans and a good start was to find a definition. The word comes from the Latin *Paganus* and was originally used by urban Romans to refer to country dwellers; people who preferred their local faith. It was later applied to people who worshipped local deities, or people who practiced polytheism.

There are many forms of paganism, ranging from native shamanism, which exists in similar form across the world, to the sophistication and complex lineages of the Roman and Greek pantheons. The beliefs of our local pa-

gans would have been profoundly influenced by the revolving seasons of the year and the waxing and waning of the moon. Rather than going on bended knee to all powerful deities, they worked in partnership with their Goddesses and their Gods to protect and treasure the land and the animals upon which they depended. In fact our people would almost certainly have revered the Goddess since all the earliest representations of deities are female, with models such as the 30,000 year-old "Venus of Willendorf". In the West it was not until some 1000 BCE that male gods started to become prevalent, as societies became more structured and warlike, and felt the need for warrior support rather than the nurturing of the Goddesses.

Since there is no Pagan 'bible' and such written record as there is comes largely from the accounts of the Ro-



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mans, much of what is known about the old beliefs relies upon oral traditions. The fascinating thing for me has been to realise that, despite some 1600 years of Christianity, so many of the old traditions still exist and here are a few of those that I have been able to gather to date:

The days of the week:

Sunday – named after: the sun

Monday – named after: the moon

Tuesday – name after Tiw (Tyr):
God of battle and victory.

Wednesday – named after Woden/
Wotan (Odin): Father and ruler of the
Gods and mortals

Thursday – named after Thor: God
of thunder and sky, and good crops.

Friday – named after Frigg (Friia):
wife of Odin; great mother of the
Gods.

Saturday – named after Saturn: god
of fertility, agriculture, time.

It is interesting that despite the days of the week having been Roman during the occupation, the old Goddesses and Gods Tiw, Woden, Thor and Frigg moved back in pretty fast when the Romans left!

The Roman Gods did manage to hang on to the first three months of the year: **January**. Named after the Roman god of beginnings and endings Janus (the month Januarius).

February. The name comes either from the old-Italian god Februs or else from februa, signifying the festivals of purification celebrated in Rome during this month.

March. This is the first month of the Roman year. It is named after the Roman god of war, Mars.

It is equally remarkable how the celebration of the old festivals and the traditions associated with them have also survived.

Yule is an ancient festival celebrated at the winter solstice around 21st December. This is the shortest day and many of the old religions celebrate the rebirth of life and their Gods such as Attis and Mithra, at this time as the days start to lengthen. Fir trees (the home of the woodland spirits in the wintertime) were brought into the home and decorated to join the celebrations. The fairy on the top of the tree is said to represent the Goddess, whilst the shiny balls that we use today reflect back to the witch balls that were hung in windows to protect the home. Mistletoe has long been a sacred and mysterious plant. The Celts in particular revered it as the golden circles of mistletoe in the trees represented the rebirth of the sun. The original giver of gifts was the God Woden who would ride through the sky in his wooden chariot. The Yule-log was carefully selected and dragged in to the home with much ceremony and had to burn for the length of the festival to help the strengthening sun to grow.

Easter is another very significant celebration, named after the Saxon Goddess Eostre. There is a legend that she found a wounded bird and

healed it. Every year thereafter, in gratitude, the bird presented her with a gloriously decorated egg. Eggs have always been associated with birth and they also reflect the power of the full moon. Eostre's earthly form was that of a rabbit from which we get the Easter Bunny. Even hot cross buns are said to represent a sacred circle marked with the four points of the compass and their associated elements of earth, air, fire and water. All the changing seasons would have been celebrated, as would the phases of the moon which hold great significance to Pagans and the date of Easter Sunday, the most important Christian festival, is still calculated as being the first Sunday after the first Full Moon on or after the Spring Equinox.

I have also discovered that so many words that we take for granted have their roots deep in ancient times. Just one example comes from Sweden, where Helgoland County was named after Hel (Mother Earth), whom the Scandinavians worshiped as the one all-powerful source of life's abundance and there is evidence from sculptures that she has been known to humanity for at least 25,000 years. There was no complicated mythology to believe in, spiritual practice was simply the art of serving and living in harmony with the whole of the Goddess' creation. A sacred place of communion with Hel was often near water, that embraces and flows through all. It seems likely that the present site of Holy Trinity Church was a sacred

place by the river where those who were here before us came to meet their Goddess.

When the Vikings invaded Scandinavia they imposed their own deities and traditions and in particular created Valhalla, the home after death of warriors. Hel was then forced underground, to be considered a lesser Goddess who took in women and men, who were not brave in battle, after their deaths and tended and cared for them until they were ready for reincarnation. Helvete (Hell) later became the name of the Christian inferno of endless pain when the bible was translated into the Germanic Languages.

So far reaching was Hel that her name is reflected in Holland, Helvetica (Switzerland), Helas (Greece) and even England and Scotland, Albion and Alba respectively, both meaning "offspring (bearn) of Hel". She is also the root of English words, heal, holy, help, hail, hold, whole, all, elf, etc.

I have come to realise that our predecessors in this place were not crude stone shifters but men and women with a deep understanding of the environment in which they lived and a sensitivity to the ebb and flow of the energies all around them. Their legacy is still with us and we would do well to emulate them by working in harmony with the rest of creation, rather than trying to impose a domination over it.

Tim Lyons

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Who do you think you are?

Have you ever wondered about where your family came from? Have you wondered about how you came to be the person that you are? The recent television programmes which have traced the ancestry of various 'celebrities' have certainly prompted many people to look into their own family trees. The good news is that it has never been easier. In the past, genealogical research required you to travel to record offices and then spend hours of hunting through dusty records. Thanks to the internet and, in fairness, the Church of Latter Day Saints, tracing family history has become an activity that you can undertake without ever leaving your PC. It is also fascinating, frustrating, rewarding, educational and can lead to friendships across the world.

Let me say at once that I am by no means an expert and that all I have achieved has been as a result of trial and error but I hope that this short article will inspire you and give you enough information to get you started. I began my researching just two years ago and this morning my software congratulated me for recording my 1700th family member.

In order to build your family tree you really just need four things:-

1. As much base information about your family as you can gather.

2. A means of recording the information and there are loads of software packages to assist with this. I guess

you could record it manually but computers are made for the job.

3. Sources of research material and the internet is full of it.

4. A means of sharing and exchanging information if you so wish.

So, where to start? You must start by questioning your family and recording as much information as you can. When Granny has gone, all her memories will have gone with her. So please ask about parents, grand parents, great grandparents, where and when they were born, their occupations, really any pieces of information. Get them to dig out old photographs and family papers, identify all the people in the pictures, pencil names and dates and locations on the back, scan them and label them. Marriage Certificates, Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, Wills are hugely useful. As a child, and perhaps in more respectful times, I had a number of 'Uncles and Aunties' who were actually not related but friends of my parents. Sort these out because they can really confuse things! Be a bit sensitive as well because single parents are by no means a modern phenomenon and when you start digging, you might find that marriage and birth dates as reported to you are not necessarily accurate. I have recently come across a woman in the 1860s, described in the parish registers as being 'married with her fathers consent' presumably

because despite being just 14, there was a baptism 4 months after the wedding!

Once you have gathered information, you will need some software to record the details of the individuals you discover and their relationships to each other. There are quite a number of software packages available including some free downloads. I use Family Tree Maker to build my tree since this links through to Ancestry.com which is probably the biggest genealogical data base in the world. I also pay about £80 per annum to Ancestry which allows me to search all the UK records. If you think that you have family overseas, you can pay extra and have access to records such as ship passenger lists, immigration lists, US census returns, even slave ship lists.

After I have added a new individual into Family Tree Maker, one click will start a search of all the Birth, Marriage and Death records and all the census records which have been taken every 10 years from 1841. 1901 is the last census to be released and you can bet that there will be massive web activity when the 1911 census is published. Once I have identified a match, I can then view the actual census return which will tell me where my ancestors lived, details of their children, their ages, occupations and place of birth. These census returns are really fascinating and hugely useful. If you know the name, year and birth place of a relation born before 1901 you should

be in business. Searching through www.ancestry.co.uk should enable you to find them on the census return. You then work backwards through the returns until you find them living with their parents. You now have the parent's names and can work them back in the same way.

So, for example, I knew that my grandfather, Ralph Woodward, was born in Bristol in 1890. A search on his name, location and year of birth brought up the 1901 census which showed that he and his mother and brother were staying that census night with his mother's parents. The census shows his mother as Maria Woodward (a teacher) and since she was with her parents, I get the bonus of knowing that her maiden name was Jefferies. I can now search on Maria Woodward and find her on the 1891 census with her husband John, also a school teacher.

From the 1891 census return I now know that John was born in Bristol in 1864 and searching on him reveals him in 1871 census with his parents John Charles Woodward & Harriet, living in Hotwells Road in Bristol, where father John was a master wood turner and carpenter working in the shipyards. A search on John Charles (born 1832) reveals him in 1851 living in Jacobs Wells, Bristol with his parents George and Charlotte. George was born in 1800 and was a cordwainer (boot maker). Of course each census has also shown me the children of all the families and so I

can then start to try and follow them forward. In a few minutes it can be possible to travel through 100 years of family history.

An annoyance is that the people who compiled the census did not always have the greatest handwriting and, as the information was collated, thick pencils were used to tick things off. Add to this the need for the information to then be typed into software by people who may not have been familiar with the names and places and you will see that mistakes can be made. Unfortunately searching on 'Lyon' when it has been entered as 'Lyun' means it will never be found and for this reason whole families can 'disappear' from the census because of a typing error. I discovered that in one of the census years Leafield had been consistently entered as Seafield. Incidentally, here is a strange thing. Apart from living in Ascott for 11 years, I had no notion of any connection with this part of the world until I discovered that Gt Gt Uncle William Lee had been Vicar of Leafield from the 1880s to the 1920s. There is a plaque in the church commemorating him. It is also fascinating to see that he employed a governess, a nurse, a house maid, a cook and a laundry maid all to look after him, his wife and two children.

Something else that does frustrate me is that the census returns do not show women's maiden names, because I hate just having 'Granny Harriet' in my tree. I want to know

all about them. To achieve this I usually obtain a copy of their marriage certificate from the General Register Office www.gro.gov.uk who for £7.00 will get a copy to you in 4 or 5 days. Beware, there are other organisations who will obtain this information for you but they charge more and go to exactly the same source. Once you have the certificate, you have Granny's surname, details of her father and off you go with your researches again. I discovered a new Gt Gt Gt Grandfather only this week by this method.

Getting back to the generations before the census returns does require investigating parish records for marriage, death and christening records but many of these exist and many are on line. The internet will usually put you in touch with people who can help you and most towns have some sort of family history association and the local authority websites can often tell you where the records can be inspected.

The best news is that much of the research may have already been done for you. Quite apart from the families in the UK who have published the results of their work on line, genealogy is a worldwide activity and many people on the old colonies are very keen to find out about their British roots. Their family trees are often shared on the internet and one good 'hit' can fill in a whole branch of your tree. One contact completed my father's paternal line back to Patrick Lyon, 1st Lord of Glamis, born in

1402. Actually 'One World Tree' continued the lineage back to Charlemagne but having a grandfather who was a Holy Roman Emperor seems a bit extreme!

So now you have done your researches and carefully recorded all the information you have found on your software package. This will also compile family trees for you to print out together with all sorts of reports. A BIG MISTAKE I have made is that I have not always recorded the sources of the information that I have discovered. This really is so important because you may want to revisit the source and as new information comes to light you may have to review parts of your tree. Sometimes information is challenged and when you are asked for your sources, 'I can't remember' is a bit pathetic!

Now, if you want to, you can share your information with the world. For this I use genesreunited.co.uk. One of the options on your software will be to save the data as a 'gedcom'. This is a common genealogical format that you simply upload to your account with genesreunited. You can actually build your tree on the website but I find it easier to work off line. Your researches will then be compared with the 500 million or so names already there and if there are matches with your tree they are reported back to you. You can now contact the owners of the matching tree, open yours for their inspection, ask to see theirs and establish whether the match is

genuine. If it is, you have just found a long lost relation! What is more they may have been researching for years and be able to tell you huge amounts about your family.

The downsides? Well there are a couple. In publishing your information on the web you effectively giving it away and I believe that the Church of Latter Day Saints use genealogical information to 'baptise' the quick and the dead into their Church but since most of the information comes from sources that they have researched and transcribed anyway, you are unlikely to be adding names that they do not already know. The other issue is that great family legends can be disproved and, occasionally, illegitimacies, unknown adoptions and so on can be unearthed.

I have found the process to be fascinating and it has taught me a great deal of social history. For example, I had many family members who were weavers and agricultural labourers living in Wellington, Somerset in the 1840's and 50's. In the 1860's the weavers had started to move away to the mill towns of Bradford and Bolton, they were economic migrants following the work. The Enclosures Acts changed the way farm labourers lived and so they started to move off to the towns of Bridgwater and to Bristol to work on the new railways. Some moved to South Wales and became miners. This was also a time of great emigration and I have also gathered up family (well fifth cousins

three times removed!) all over the world and we share information by email.

Thanks to the miracle of the web, a family of relations 'lost' from the 1871 census was 'found' the same day in Firestone Creek, Australia because the town website mentioned them as early settlers and identified the parts of town still named after them. I can then switch to Google Earth and look down upon the places where they lived.

There are also complete surprises and astonishing coincidences. I had no idea that my father, who was a Cornishman, had a Grandmother who came from Essex and even weirder

that I had visited the pub in Great Baddow in which she was born in 1840. Most people want to know if I have found anyone famous and yes I have! My 8th Great Grandfather was Sir John Hebden (born 1612) who was Charles 1st Emissary to the Russian Court, he also worked for the Czar, travelled all over Europe on buying missions and is mentioned in Samuel Pepys Diaries.

If you are interested in having a go, visit one of the genealogical websites, try a search and you could be well on your way to starting a hobby which can become disturbingly addictive! I will get to 2000 relations! Happy hunting.

Tim Lyons

West Oxfordshire Cats Protection

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Please call 01993/831350 for more information.

Or email

www.westoxoncats.org.uk

Lou Tyack



Nature notes

Following my own advice, from an earlier Nature Notes, I've continued feeding the garden birds throughout the breeding season and during summer. It's certainly been a rewarding experience as it's given me the opportunity to observe the behaviour of the various species that have visited our feeders.

The bravest birds were the Robins; during the nesting season three birds were regular visitors throughout the day and one in particular became very tame, sitting on the edge of the table whilst we put out fresh food always being first down on the winter mornings. Now they are less regular feeders, but we have been left with several youngsters who top-up their regular insect diet with a feast of seed and peanut pieces. The young with their speckled brown plumage look nothing like the red-breasted adults.



Great Tits, Blue Tits and Coal Tits all visit for the peanuts, but also enjoy biscuit crumbs, sunflower seeds and raw pastry. Being larger the Great Tits do try and hog the feeding tray,

driving their smaller cousins away and occasionally squabbling amongst themselves, but the Coal Tits seem surprisingly brave and will stand their ground. Sadly none of the Tits used the nest box this year, perhaps the situation is now too open after I removed overgrown ivy from the house wall. We did see some young Blue Tits being fed, so they must have found a sheltered place somewhere in the garden.

Blackbirds have been regular visitors, more so in the spring than summer. At this time of year they look particularly bedraggled as they lose their old feathers, before the new ones have grown. One visitor has a bald head and virtually no tail feathers.

Our early morning visitors include a pair of Ring Necked Doves and a pair of Wood Pigeons. The Pigeons sit on one side of the tray and the Doves on the other and each time the Doves move towards the seed they are driven back by the Pigeons. Eventually some kind of truce is agreed and they all have their breakfast. It's only when these four have had their fill that the smaller birds are allowed to move in.

After removing some overgrown shrubbery a pair of Magpies spotted the feeding table and have now become regular early morning visitors. Too early in fact, their raucous cries waking us at dawn and they have even taken to sitting on our bedroom windowsill tapping the window with

their beaks. Whether they are trying to get us up to feed them or attacking their reflection in our window I wouldn't like to say, but having your bedroom window hammered at 4.30 a.m. is quite an unnerving experience!

Despite Magpies reputation as vicious birds given to stealing eggs and young songbirds from their nests our pair is extremely nerv-



ous, rapidly flying off if they see movement through a window or hearing a door-handle rattle. They do seem to enjoy the fat and seed balls that I hang from a nearby tree, but try as they might they cannot emulate the agile Tits and all attempts to hang onto the seed

ball and feed at the same time are doomed to ungainly failure with much flapping of wings. Instead they try, with some success, to remove the seed ball from the tree or unpick the retaining string so that everything plunges to the ground, where they can feed at their leisure.

Another very shy, occasional visitor is a Greater Spotted Woodpecker, who despite his size can negotiate the hanging seed balls, using his tail as a prop in the same way as it is used when clinging to a tree trunk and searching for insects in the bark crevices.



Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

Enjoy a relaxing day out at the Park where there is something to appeal to all ages.

Birds of Prey Demonstrations all weekends in August and over the Bank Holiday.

Reptile Awareness Days – All Sundays from 2pm – 4pm, weather permitting.

Bring a picnic, ride the train, see baby camels and crocodiles, visit Madagascar.

**For full information on the above see the website
www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk
or call 01993 823006.**

The Park is open daily from 10am.

Needless to say we have a constant stream of Chaffinches; they now seem to be the most common visitors to our garden, but seem to display little in the way of interesting or unusual behaviour.



We've certainly enjoyed our spring & summer visitors; I hope I might have encouraged you to continue feeding throughout the year. Remember the golden rules: don't feed whole peanuts whilst young are being raised, keep all feeding stations scrupulously clean, don't put out salty food and ensure that clean water is available for drinking and bathing.

Happy bird watching.

Stuart Fox

Letter to the Editor

I write in response to a disturbing report in your spring edition, detailing a shocking case of daffodil theft in the Ascott churchyard.

The culprit in this matter is my wife, and I feel that certain relevant facts should be drawn to your reader's attention.

Firstly my wife and I, at the time of this offence, had been in England a matter of a few weeks, and were completely unaware that daffodil picking was verboten. I must say that in the time that we have been here, we have on the whole, been welcomed into the community on every side, which only makes this incident more regrettable.

I can assure you that neither I nor my wife will offend again, and earnestly beg forgiveness. Should any transgression of this nature be inadvertently committed again, we would quite understand if we were to be dealt with severely at the local Assizes, and transported back to Botany Bay forthwith. Of course this would follow a good flogging and a period in the local stocks.

*Yours humbly
Damien Ryan*

Parish Council Flood Sub-Committee (FSC)

The Parish Council and the Ascott Recovery Committee agreed in May to form a sub-committee, which will concentrate on flood and sewage related matters and report to the Parish Council on the progress on flood defences, foul water drainage and river and highways maintenance work. The FSC will also provide the main points of contact for villagers concerned about flooding and for outside bodies, including: West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Environment Agency (EA), Network Rail (NR), Thames Water (TW) and riparian owners.

The WODC Flood Report (a copy has been in the shop since 11 June)

can be viewed on the WODC website www.westoxon.gov.uk. It divides the village into four areas, roughly: Ascott Earl; Shipton Road; The Green and Wychwood Court; High Street. Each of the four volunteer members of the FSC has agreed to take special interest in one of these areas:

Area 1 – Keith Macaulay, Ascott Earl House, Shipton Road

Area 2 – Philippa Carter, The Barn House, Shipton Road

Area 3 – Dave Wilkinson, Sunset House, Wychwood Court

Area 4 – Stephen Jones, Spring Barn, High Street

Their role does not include giving advice on flood related matters, indeed none of us is qualified to do so.

However each member will be looking in detail at the proposals of the responsible bodies and will make comments to the Parish Council, so if anyone has an observation, idea or complaint about the work proposed in the WODC Flood Report, please make contact with the person covering your area of the village.

At the time of writing on 24th June:

NR has agreed to repair the rail bridge and smooth the river flow under it. This work is supposed to begin during the summer and will last about two weeks.

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- The EA has agreed to fund clearance work on the river between Gypsy Lane and Chipping Norton Road next year and the riparian owners are investigating clearing two choke points on the river along the same stretch this year.

- TW has completed the first phase of a study into the connectivity of sewage drains and is starting a second phase to model the system to see where the weaknesses are and what solutions they can then put into the model to alleviate flooding. This is due to be completed by the middle of September.

- OCC Highways has planned work on the Brook and Spring at Ascott Earl during August and enlarg-

ing the culvert in the High Street during September.

- Cornbury has looked again at the run off from the hillside onto the High Street and will investigate ways of improving the flow of water away from the road and properties.

Nick Leadbetter

Member Parish Council

W. J. Wright

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Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

On behalf of the Parish Council, I am pleased to report a good steady progress on the flood prevention and contingency plans should any future peril strike the Village. The Parish Council have formed a Flood Sub-Committee, which is being chaired by Nick Leadbetter and volunteers. Please see Nick's progress report on his dealings with all agencies including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, West Oxfordshire District Council, Network Rail etc. I am sure you will all agree this is excellent progress for Ascott, albeit the hard work is not done yet. The Council took the decision to form a sub-committee in order that Flooding could be dealt with by the sub-committee giving the Council more time to spend on issues, both ongoing and new within the Village. The Parish Council would also like to thank the District Councillor, Hilary Hibbert-Biles for her continued support and guidance on this and all other issues.

The reinstated Verge down the one side of the Village Green appears to be bedding in well now and without doubt has helped alleviate the traffic flow. The Parish Council would however ask all parishioners and their family and friends when visiting to please park responsibly.

Planning has been particularly quiet over the last few months, with nothing much to report, that is of course with the exception of 2A Shipton Road. The original Bungalow has

now been demolished and progress appears to have started. The Parish Council, together with the District Council are watching the future development of this site very carefully.

Dog Mess is still a problem, especially on and around the verges and would you believe it in the Churchyard? Please pick up after your dog and dispose of responsibly.

The Pound is practically complete, with the Ascott Barrow firmly in place, the Gate, Notice Boards and Bench in situ and the grass growing steadily. The re-siting of the electricity pole is still being chased, and progress is being made albeit slowly.

Finally, just to remind you all that the Parish Council meet every second Monday of the month in the Tiddy Hall at 8pm, with the exception of August. It is good to see so many parishioners attending the meetings to have their say and to listen to how issues are being dealt with by their Parish Council. Should anybody wish to contact the Council, the contact details are noted below and of course on the Village Website.

Parish Council:

Stuart Fox 832004
Elaine Byles 831427
Bridgette Crundwell 830671
Nick Leadbetter 831571
Peter Greening 831757

Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)
01608 641045

Wychwood Library

Library News

Thank you to everyone who donated such wonderful books to the Library for the Milton Summer Fete. Some of them actually went onto the library shelves they were so new and the rest were sorted and sold.

You will probably have noticed the colourful window displays recently. The space is available for all village happenings so come in and book a slot.

We have an amazing Jazz collection here at present. CD's, sheet music books and books on the artists will all be here until the end of September. Just £1 to take out a CD for one week so come in a take your pick and if there is a particular aspect of music you would like to see in the library, let us know and the Music Department will happily send us another collection.

Holiday Activities

The Summer Reading Scheme "Team Read", as reported last issue, started on July 5th. If you haven't signed up it's not too late. Look out for colouring sheets, puzzles and hunt the Gang in the library as well as collecting stickers and prizes as you go.

We will be holding a serial reading every Monday at 4pm aimed at ages eight years and over. The book is "Weirdstone of Brisingamen" by Alan Garner. "Hotter than Potter" says one of the critics so it should be good. Come along.

There will also be a "Storytime" for the younger readers every Friday afternoon at 3pm during the holiday period.

Come and have a coffee with us on a Wednesday morning. If the weather is fine you can sit in the garden at the back, with the kind permission of Mr and Mrs Ralph. Good coffee and cake to raise money for more new books.

See you soon at Wychwood Library.

*Ruth Gillingham,
Library Manager.*

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

Phone: 01993 830281

Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Best Ever Carrot Cake

Ingredients

Cake

275g (10oz) carrots
125g (4 oz) walnut pieces
225g (8oz) softened butter
225g (8oz) light soft brown sugar
4 eggs
200g (7oz) white self-raising flour
1 level teasp baking powder
2 level teasp ground cinnamon
25g (1oz) ground almonds
grated rind of 1 orange

Grease and line 8 inch square cake tin

To make cake

Coarsely grate the carrots

Roughly chop the walnuts

Place next seven ingredients in a food processor and blend until smooth. (Or beat with electric whisk)

Pour mixture into a large bowl and fold in walnuts, carrots and orange rind

Pour into tin and bake 180C/350F or gas mark 4 for about 1hr 25 mins

Cool in tin for 10 mins before turning out onto a wire rack to cool.

When cake is completely cold spread topping over.

Topping

110g (4oz) cream cheese, at room temperature

50g (2oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature

½ tbsp orange juice

150g (5oz) icing sugar, sifted

Zest of 1 orange

To make topping

Combine cream cheese, butter and orange juice together with electric whisk, and then gradually add the icing sugar until mixture is smooth. If mixture is stiff add more orange juice. When slightly set decorate with orange zest.

Margaret Ismail

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Saturday 9am - 1:00pm

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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:

Harvest Supper is on Sunday 28th
September.

To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

**Ingrid Ridley:
01993 830612**

DID YOU KNOW..

Buses & Trains from Ascott

TRAINS

Monday to Friday (till 5th September- Summer timetable)

Ascott > Oxford dep. 07:44

Oxford > Ascott dep. 17:31

Ascott > Moreton dep. 17:55

Moreton > Ascott dep. 07:27

BUSES

ALWAYS ALLOW 10 MINUTES IN CASE THE BUSES ARE RUNNING EARLY

C1 Railbus Tel. 01993 8691000

Monday to Friday

Ascott > Charlbury dep. 06:51 - 08:03 - 09:05 - 10:05 - 12:00 - 17:44 - 18:20 - 19:16

Charlbury > Ascott dep. 08:35 - 09:35 - 11:10 - 12:35 - 17:10 - 17:55 - 18:40 - 19:35

34 Bakers- Chipping Norton Tel. 01608 677415

Wednesday only

Ascott > Chippy dep. 11:23

Chippy > Ascott dep. 13:40

5 Bakers- Moreton in Marsh Tel. 01608 677415

Tuesday only

Ascott > Moreton dep. 09:46

Moreton > Ascott dep. 12:45

The Villager- Witney Tel. 01608 658602

Thursday only

Ascott > Witney dep. 13:30

Witney > Ascott dep. 16:00

806 Pulhams- Banbury Tel. 01451 820369

Thursday only

Ascott > Banbury dep. 09:45

Banbury > Ascott dep. 13:40

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