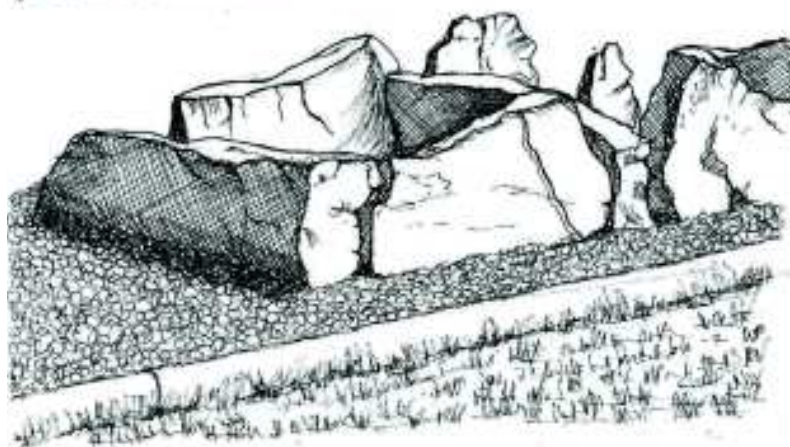
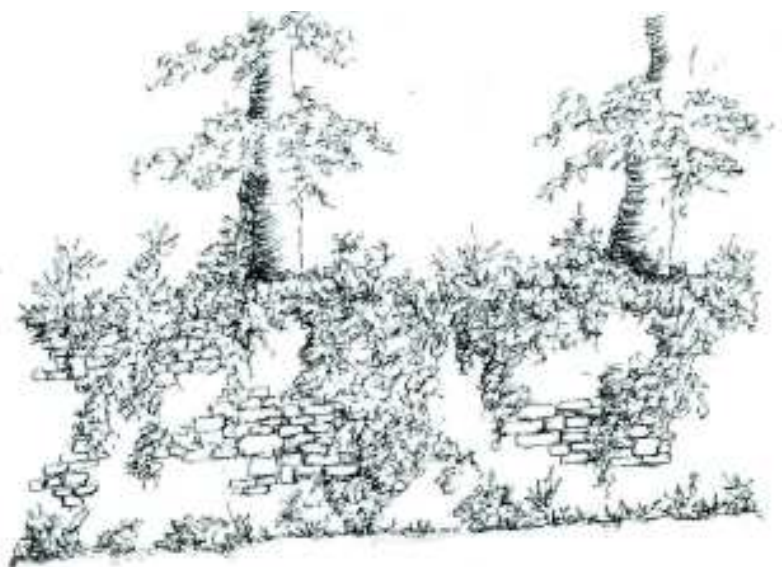

The Ascott Grapevine



Issue 60

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

Call 01993 831023 or email:

wendypearse@

honeydale.freemove.co.uk

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,

Wendy Pearse, Yvette Keauffling,

Maggie Lyon.

Advertising Rates

£15.00 for full page

£10.00 for half page

£5.00 for quarter page

Book and pay in advance for four issues and you only have to pay for three.

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

10.00am Holy Communion -

Common Worship

5th Sunday of the month

10.00am 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.

Christmas Services

14th December	Carol Service at 4.00 pm
24th December	Crib & Christingle at 3.00 pm
	Midnight at 11.30 pm
25th December	BCP at 10.00 am
28th December	Benefice Service at Spelsbury at 10.00 am

The Swan at Ascott

Our reputation for consistently high quality food at reasonable prices seems to be spreading further and further afield. Our rooms are up and running and they are usually full at the weekends which is an encouraging start. And to top it off we have been awarded four stars...not bad for our first six months, so huge thanks to all those who have supported us.



Looking forward to Christmas we have menus in place for small and large parties. If you are planning a Christmas Party please get in touch and we will get a menu to you by one means or another.

We are finding that on the odd occasion we are fully booked, especially at weekends. So if possible please try and book a table and avoid any disappointment (01993 832332). Thank you all for your support and we look forward to your next visit. Happy Christmas!

Richard Lait

Ascott Village Shop

Good news! Mary Barco is back behind the counter at Ascott Shop. After a short break we are delighted to welcome Mary back. You now have two reasons to visit the shop; first to say hello to Mary and second to enjoy the wide range of exciting products that we have in stock.



Also, watch out for the arrival of our Christmas Stock; these will help you solve your gift problems!

www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk

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Chris Townsend Artist

Many of you will be familiar with Chris's work, such as the large figure amongst Mr Badger's Horse Trial jumps at the top of the Leaffield Road, the tree sculpture in the Swan and various signs incorporating his fish theme, but I was lucky enough to visit him in his workshop to see some of his current projects.

Throughout his schooldays Chris's twin interests were art and rugby and he continued to develop his artistic skills, first at the North Oxfordshire Art College in Banbury and then at Liverpool University, where in 1996 he gained a degree in Fine Arts and Psychology. His metal working skills have been largely self-taught with Chris Badger teaching him how to weld. Sadly a back problem ended his rugby ambitions, but he has taken up Tai chi and kick boxing instead!



Much of Chris's work is sculptural with constructions made of steel, varying from 12 feet high figures to table-top sized items; his latest commission is a life sized owl. These are finished in a variety of ways including, hand painting, powder coating, galvanising and bronze polishing. Working from the former grain store at Crown Farm he often makes use of pieces of discarded and broken machinery in his works.

For his inspiration he turns to the natural world surrounding Ascott and his latest series of sculptures are based on the oaks of Wychwood Forest. He is also much influenced by the sea and things watery as a result of visits to Cornwall and Devon. Artistically his work is influenced by Picasso, Miro, Naum Gabo, Barbara Hepworth and many others.

Like most artists Chris is happy to work in many mediums and produces abstract paintings, some of which are combined with decorative metal work and also works in wood and stone. He has turned his hand at chain saw wood carving, the results of which can be seen in the fish and dolphins that form part of Mr Badger's horse jumps. Chris accepts a wide variety of commissions; a recent project has been to produce the decorative oak entry gates that can be seen as you enter Shipton-on-Stour from Stratford and Darlingscote.

Currently he is preparing work for the Grand Designs Live exhibition,



www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk

which will be held at the NEC in October and recently he was invited to mount a display at the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park. His work is on regular display at the Waterperry Gallery in Thame, the Taurus Gallery, North Parade, Oxford, the Wonderwall Gallery in Cirencester and at the Café Gallery, Burford Garden Company. He hopes to mount a Christmas Show locally, so look out for dates and venues. A wide selection of his work can be seen on his website:

www.christophertownsend.co.uk

Does he have any unfulfilled ambitions? Yes, he would like to create a monumental work in this area to rival the Angel of the North and to continue to produce original artworks that are available and affordable. He is also keen to continue his work with local schools encouraging children's interest in art.



Stuart Fox



Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival was celebrated by a large congregation in Holy Trinity Church on Sunday 28th September. The church was appropriately decorated to reflect the season, with flowers, fruit and vegetables and the order of service, conducted by the Revd. Mary Crameri included several traditional harvest hymns and an inspiring anthem by Daphne Abe's choir.

The anthem was repeated following the Harvest Supper later in the evening, when it was justifiably applauded, as was the rest of the choir's programme.

The ample Harvest Supper, in the Tiddy Hall, presented by many willing helpers, was enjoyed by the 60 or so villagers and friends present, and thanks are due to all those who participated in the preparations for the celebration of this major thanksgiving festival of the church's year.

Wendy Pearse



(Many thanks to Debra Cull for the photographs)

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE 1940s



What was it about Sunday, when I was a little boy and followed me through my working life that seemed to depress me. Sunday seemed to hang round my spirits like a millstone about my neck. Saturday was a day of enjoyment, of football and cricket, of going to the pictures, of village fetes, of trips to the seaside. I looked forward to Saturday with almost the same excitement I did Christmas. But Sunday! It was a day when God seemed to be waiting in his long white nightshirt, saying thou wilt or thou wilt not. Thou wilt not enjoy thyself. Thou shalt not go to the pictures. There wilt be no cricket or football matches. Thou wilt not go to pub before 12 p.m. and thou shall be out

before closing time at 10 p.m. on Sunday night. Thou wilt wear thy best clothes and not kick a ball in thy best shoes, and thou wilt behave thyself at mealtimes especially Sunday tea, where thou shall sit still, be quiet and not think thou canst start eating cake and then go back to eating sandwiches, and shall ask to get down from the table. By 9 o'clock on a Sunday morning I was packed off to Church Sunday School. The only joy I got from this was playing hide and seek between the pews before the Vicar or the Sunday School teacher came. Then after Sunday dinner which I always remember when I smell mint in the garden, I was sent off to the Baptist Chapel, a building

at the back of the Swan. I couldn't wait for it to be over and race to kick a ball with the other boys and young men.

Thinking about Chapel Sunday School now, God seemed more approachable and friendly as did the people who taught us, whereas the God of the Church of England seemed solemn and remote. I still have great affection for the simple prayers and chorus we sang at Chapel. Here is one I remember.

Now Zaccheus was a very little man and a very little man was he.

He climbed into a sycamore tree for the Saviour he wanted to see,

And when the saviour came that way he looked into the tree

And said now Zaccheus you come down

For I am coming to your house for tea.

On a Sunday the programmes on the wireless from the B.B.C. had the holier than thou theme to most of them. By the time Sunday Half Hour came on in the early evening, that was a programme of hymn singing, I knew the weekend was drawing to its end. It was time to think of Monday morning, of school and later, work. I approached this with a sinking feeling like falling into a dark well of despair.

It is a problem today, how you get little boys of 9 and 10 interested in Sunday School. I think it could be by giving them something to look forward to, even those who are 70. The Chapel Sunday

School took us on outings to Evesham for a trip on the river, or to Wicksteed Park near Kettering. All I remember getting from the Church was a stamp to stick in a book each Sunday. Thinking about it now I would have been far more comfortable in the non-conformist church than the established one. But I was greatly influenced by my grandmother who said Chapel folk were against the pub and drinking, but had it in secret at home. And a father who had little interest in the clergy of any denomination. In these few words I've written I seemed to have criticised the Church of England for its remote meanness. I am a bit of a hypocrite about this.

Over the years I have seen many changes in Ascott but the church building of Holy Trinity has remained unchanged at the centre of the village, although the format of many of the services has changed. But after 2000 years, still at the heart of its teaching, it offers a redeeming hope in an uncertain world. And although it is full of contradictions and comical customs, I have no regrets belonging to a faith that still seems to muddle through.

Of course if I had my way, I would fill it with rousing music of celebration with a band like the Salvation Army. I agree with General Booth who said, 'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?'

Fred Russell

Sabrina Way

Ah! What a wonderful girl she was – or so I’ve been told. However I want to tell you about the Sabrina Way that is a bridleway which runs from Forthampton, near Tewksbury in Gloucestershire through Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire to Hartington in Derbyshire. The route is two hundred miles long with forty-four miles within Gloucestershire and before you ask – no I haven’t walked the full two hundred miles, I haven’t even walked the forty-four miles within Gloucestershire. I have however walked the section from Great Barrington to Great Rissington many times. The bridleway is a route developed by the British Horse Society and Ride UK and the Gloucestershire section was opened by Princess Anne in 2002.

The route from Great Barrington to Great Rissington passes through the Barrington Park Estate and Windrush Agricultural Estates and borders the National Trust lands of the Sherbourne Estate. This section starts at the top end of the deer park on the Barrington Park estate where you

can park at the side of the road at the ‘T’ junction. Cross the minor road (more about this road later) and go through the pedestrian gate into an open area used for among other things silage making. The route is very straightforward with only one other gate near Great Rissington. There are no stiles. Once you are clear of this area you are on high ground with open views back towards the A40 and along the Windrush Valley. I understand that the Barrington Park estate is totally organic and therefore presents you with the opportunity to enjoy the mixed hedgerows and birdlife. The last time I was there was Grand National Day and the blackthorn was in flower. Hares

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were also running about and larks were abundant. As I walk along I always stop at each field intersection and look and listen – remember, when you move nature stands still. It's surprising the sights you see. At the right time of year you will see many Spindleberry trees (*Euonymus Europaeus*) with their carmine and scarlet fruits in the first hedge you walk along. I have also seen buzzards, fieldfares, yellowhammers and other 'brown twittering things' as well as deer and hares.

The path is generally good with only the occasional muddy patch and despite it being a national bridleway I have yet to see a horse and rider although there is evidence that they use it. After a while the path goes first downhill and then uphill (logical) but they are both gentle inclines. After passing four fields on your right you will come to a path on the left. I suggest that you do not take

this path but continue on to Great Risington. On the outskirts of Great Risington you will see a footpath sign directing you diagonally across a field on the left, ignore this and continue to the road junction in the village. I suggested that you take this high route for two reasons. Firstly if you are hungry or thirsty, or both you can take a short diversion right to the Lamb Inn and secondly you would miss the opportunity to enjoy part of the village as you walk down the hill to visit St John the Baptist church. The Lamb Inn has a comprehensive menu and is reasonably priced. I have not eaten there but have heard good reports from two walkers I spoke to. This is the 'only food in the village'. If you visit the pub retrace your steps and continue down the hill towards the church. As you go down the hill on the left hand side just before you come to the triangular green the wall at the back of

the footpath suddenly has a semicircular diversion about two feet wide in it. I wonder why?

At the bottom of the hill, straight in front of you and next to the manor house is the church of St John the Baptist.



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I often find that instead of going straight into a church it is worth looking around the churchyard first. At the entrance to the churchyard, on the right hand wall half covered with ivy is a stone with the inscription 'This Churchyard Entrance Way was given by Catherine Loboitt 1902 – 1973' and on the left hand side of the gate is an inscription 'In memory of Doctor Dorothy Barbara Marling, August 19, 1888 – Sept 3, 1939. This gate was given by her father and sisters. "Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

A big friendly church noted for its splendid central tower, it rises from 12th century cruciform foundations – leading on the inside to the nave, chancel, north and south transepts. On the outside the tower has splendid 15th century battlements and pinnacles. As you leave the churchyard and rejoin the road turn right and walk past properties with such names as Drover's Barn, Weavers Cottage, Woolpack Cottage, Mill Barn, Jacob's Cottage and The Granary. Their very names evoke the history of the area. Continue along this short length of road and bear right at the end. This will take you along a public footpath. At the end of the high hedge on your left take the footpath diagonally across the field. (*A word of warning, this part of the walk can be muddy after rain*) The path will take you down to the banks of the river Windrush. Follow the river downstream through the woodland and across the fields until you come to a wide track

which crosses the footpath. At this point you have three choices – if you turn right along the track you can walk to the Sherbourne Estate, cross the river and wander the marked footpaths. If you choose to walk straight across the track you can continue your walk to Manor Farm, but be warned, unless you want a long walk I would advise that you do not take this option. When you get to Manor Farm there is a paved road (the one mentioned in paragraph 2) that would take you back to your car, however there is also a very prominent notice saying "No Public Access". This notice is enforced and when I first walked this route I was challenged. I managed to bluff my way out – I'm old, I've walked a long way, there is no sign at the top of the hill where I parked, I will not do it again etc. Just remember that they do enforce the sign. So on reaching Manor Farm you have two choices, re-trace your steps or continue along the valley to Windrush village and follow the road to the Fox Inn and then up the hill through Great Barrington to your car. Your third choice is to follow the track up the hill, through a small copse to rejoin your original outward route. At the footpath junction turn right and head back towards your car. Retracing your steps is no hardship since the views across the valley are rewarding and you will be surprised at what you missed on the outward journey.

I have enjoyed this walk many times at all times of the year and I hope you will try it.

Rob Morgan

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The Farmers' Lot

We British farmers were happy during the 2007 harvest when it became apparent that there was a world wide shortage of oil seed and grain and our prices rocketed from around £80 per tonne to around £150 per tonne and higher for good quality corn. However many farmers were already tied into pre-season contracts and received much less than £150 per tonne. But never mind, we all believed that prices would stay at reasonable levels for the foreseeable future. Indeed many optimists invested in much needed new equipment ready for the good times to come. Unfortunately then came the turn of fuel prices to climb swiftly. Farm diesel oil doubled in 12 months and fertiliser prices almost trebled. This led to the pig and poultry side of agriculture which traditionally consumes most of our feed quality grain, faced with high prices for feed and energy on top of excessive government regulations, responding with a reduction in numbers and capacity.

In spite of these adverse developments things looked good in early summer 2008. Most crops looked magnificent with a promise of high yields of good quality. Harvest began well. Farmers were very pleased with the winter barley crops gathered easily in July. Oil seed rape harvested slightly later, yielded well but some required expensive drying. Then came August with high humidity, continuous cloud

cover and rain falling almost every day, effectively stopping harvest work for three weeks. When the rain stopped for a whole week, frustratingly the cloud stayed, and stayed and stayed so that everything harvested during that week needed to be dried with the expensive fuel. Also at this time, we became aware that the rest of the world, and Europe in particular, had produced a record harvest of high quality seeds and grain including breadmaking wheat, and this in turn caused our prices to plummet to £100 per tonne and below.

At the beginning of September many farms still had 20% to 50% of the wheat crop uncut and the new month immediately turned the crisis into a disaster. Frequent heavy rains and high humidity caused the grains to germinate and sprout whilst still in the ears of the standing crop thus rendering it useless apart from poor quality animal feed.

At last the weather we needed in early August arrived in late September. The drier air making it possible to do a salvage job on the battered remains of the wheat crops, and hopefully reduce the losses a bit. But with Ukraine already unloading huge quantities of feed grain into countries which normally take much of our surplus, and the British pig and poultry industries in decline, the selling prospects were far from optimistic. It was however satisfying to see harvest finished at last and the fields cleared,

enabling farmers to make a very late start on preparation and sowing in hope of better days in 2009.

2008 brought a prime example of how much British agriculture is affected by the weather. Big expensive powerful machines were standing idle for weeks in August and people could only look on while the crops which they had viewed with pride in July, steadily deteriorated into a sorry state in September. But farmers being farmers will cope with the adversities and carry on. Again they will work the long hours and bear the expenses, to cultivate the land, sow the seed and grow the crops to the best of their ability, whilst being well aware that the outcome from their efforts, success or failure, will be dependent on the weather. Only the weather can provide the amounts of springtime rain and warmth needed to help the crops to thrive and enough dry weather at the right time to harvest them.

Will next summer be any better we wonder? And will it even be worthwhile sowing expensive seed for next year's crop? (Answers on a postcard please.) With all the upward spiralling cost and expenses it is not easy to foresee much profit coming from the 2009 harvest.

Ah well. Things could be worse.

Jim Pearse

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2009 EDITION

JANUARY 5TH

PLEASE DON'T BE LATE

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Rain and Ruin

When I wrote in the last Grapevine about the unexpected discovery that Rev William Lee, Vicar of Leaffield from the 1880s to the 1920s, was my Great Uncle, Wendy Pearse contacted me to suggest that I try to obtain a copy of a book called:

Rain and Ruin – The Diary of an
Oxfordshire Farmer
John Simpson Calvertt
1875-1900

She mentioned that John Calvertt records a visit to Fairspear Farm by Rev W T Lee & Mr Lion (sic) and, sure enough, there it is in his diary entry for Oct 14 1891. How on earth does Wendy remember these things!? The Mr Lyon in question would almost certainly have been his nephew Leopold Lyon who was at Oxford University with Rev Lee's daughter Margaret.

I then set about reading the rest of the book and it really is fascinating, being compiled from the diaries of John Calvertt, who was the Crown's tenant at Fairspear Farm and High Lodge Farms, between Ascott and Leaffield, from 1875 until his death in 1900. The book was published in 1983 and is now out of print but is available in libraries and copies can be found through Amazon. He chronicles his daily life with particular reference to his farming activity, his hunting and the weather. If we think things are bad now, the last 25 years of

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

the nineteenth century were very bad! I have selected a few of his weather reports to give an idea:

Aug 22nd 1879 Continues the most cursed, ruinous weather on record – cannot thrash oats – plough fallows- skerry turnips, not even carry manure on the Clover land for Wheat!!! – and this state of things has been going on *all over* the Country since *last April!!!*

Sept 13th 1879 Only cut harvest one day this week!!! – today worse than ever-ruin to all farmers – such a rainy spring and summer, has never occurred in all my time – and so little sun- for weeks and months together.....

Dec 31 1879 Wind and rain for most of the day – no work done!! So ends the most *ruinously* ugly *seasoned* year of *this century*.

Jan 1 1887 Rode thro' the floods at Ascott.....

Jan 3 1887 Rain – Rain- the valley of Ascott, Shipton, &c, looks like an inland Lake – Floods all over England and Scotland.

Dec 31 1887 Much of the past year, been the *worst* on record for *Farmers* – the weather set in, sunny and hot from 10th June for *3 months*, consequently no after-maths – half a crop of spring corn, - Grass burnt up – a fifth of a Turnip crop, and the young clovers, more than half scorched up – *three-fourths* of the

Wheats, good crops at 28s to 31s – for Reds – Barley 23s – Oats 15s – *Ruin-ation for Landlords and Tenants*

Aug 29 1891 Fearful & Ruinous, Winds and rains, over all the country – immense damage done to all kinds of Fruit and *Grain* crops!!!

Dec 31 1891 The past year has been the most wretched, ruinous year's weather, for farming, I ever experienced since 1852!!!

There were some good years as well but this was a time of great cold, late snow and frosts, heavy rain and long hot dry periods. In most years he seemed to experience great extremes of weather. Despite this, however, he was a successful farmer and survived when many around him failed. He also loved his hunting and shooting and rode out with the hounds three or four times most weeks. I have been amazed at the distances he covered for instance:

Dec 14 1892 Met hounds, Adlestrop – found in Evenlode Spinney, ran to Wolford, Barton, Brailes, Long Compton nearly to Whichford.....

Even as the crow flies that is some 35 miles. Not a bad days riding for a gentleman 63 years of age!

This book is a window into a different age made all the more interesting because the places and names are so familiar.

Tim Lyon



I guess that we get used to the poles and wires above our heads. It looks better without them!



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The Pound is no longer a work in progress. Thanks to generous funding from The Cotswold Conservation Board, The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, The Wychwood Project Parish Conservation Challenge, The Na-



tional Lottery Fund, West Oxfordshire District Council, a small contribution from Ascott Parish Council and the driving force of Stuart Fox, this project has now been completed. With the perimeter wall rebuilt, two information boards erected, a wooden bench and the Ascott long barrow stones in place, telegraph pole removed



and grass growing well, it's time for the residents of Ascott and visitors alike, to enjoy this lovely setting in the middle of the village, next to the church. Hopefully it will provide

an open space for relaxation and perhaps, quiet contemplation of life, past, present and future. A recent publication by Oxbow Books, *Building Memories: The Neolithic Cotswold Long Barrow at Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire*, is the definitive report on the excavation of the long barrow directed by Don Benson (1965-1969), copies of which are held by Wychwood Library and Ascott Parish Council. It is worth noting that should you decide to take a look at the original site of the long barrow, it is not the one marked on Ordnance Survey maps (see information board in The Pound for precise location: NGR SP 299 176).

Photographs by Stuart Fox

Elaine Byles

Births

On the 4th October 2008 to Natalie and Eli Rutene, a son, Orion.

Deaths

On the 4th October 2008, Peter Monaghan, aged 88 years.

On the 7th October 2008, Beryl Ann Scully, aged 78 years.

IVY BENFIELD 1918 - 2008



Ivy Himpsen was born on 6th January 1918 at Ascott Park, Stadhampton, Oxfordshire. She was one of twelve children and grew up in Sunningwell, Oxfordshire. As a young woman she moved to Milton-u-Wychwood to take up a post 'in service' at a house in Frog Lane. It was here that she met her first husband, Don Pittaway, from Shipton-u-Wychwood. The couple were married in Sunningwell Church on 16th March 1940.

During the war years, Ivy and Don lived with Ivy's sister Dora and her husband Jack in Cirencester, Gloucestershire from where Jack and Don travelled to their work as air frame fitters at 5

Maintenance Unit, RAF Kemble. It was in Cirencester that Ivy gave birth to their daughter Georgina (Gina). Over the years Ivy recalled many amusing anecdotes of these times.

In 1947 Don returned to his trade as a cabinet maker at the 'Till Yard', Station Road and Ivy, Don and Gina moved back to Shipton-u-Wychwood to set up home in Meadow Lane. Don was a keen cricketer and played for Shipton village team. Ivy and Gina spent many hours as spectators, with Ivy helping out on occasions with cricket teas. Ivy devoted those years to being a good housewife, mother and neighbour and was always busy gardening, cake making, knitting, taking Gina and her friends on country walks across the fields and arranging impromptu picnics for them. This idyllic life was brought to an abrupt end in September 1964 when Don died suddenly from a brain tumour. Ivy was 46 and Gina was 20.

Ivy then needed to find work and was fortunate in being offered a position in the offices of FWP Matthews limited of Shipton-u-Wychwood. Office life was new to Ivy but she relished her new environment and enjoyed meeting cus-

tomers. She relayed many happy stories of 'life at the Mill' with frequent references to her bosses, Mr Smith, 'Mr Ian' and 'Mr Gordon'.

It was here that Ivy met her second husband, Philip Benfield, of Ascott-u-Wychwood. Philip, like Ivy, had been recently widowed. They were married at Chipping Norton registry office on Valentine's Day 1970 to the delight of Gina and Philip's son David.

Philip moved over to Meadow Lane where the couple spent a further 19 happy years, continuing to work at 'the Mill' until their retirement. At home, Philip took over the vegetable garden whilst Ivy concentrated on the flower garden and also took up painting. Throughout that time they took pleasure in the achievements of both of their families and were always a happy home to visit.

In late 1989 Philip and Ivy moved to a more manageable bungalow and garden in Ascott-u-Wychwood, just down the road from Philip's son David and his wife Eileen, sharing in the joys and everyday occurrences of their family's lives.

Philip died 5 years later in 1994 at the age of 81. Sadly Ivy did not reach a silver wedding anniversary with either Don or Philip, both marriages ending after 24 years. However, Ivy always said that she was fortunate in having had two good husbands.

Ivy always maintained a positive approach to life and a mischievous sense

of humour. She was always well presented, and a pleasure to meet and to spend time with.

From her 82nd year Ivy battled with Alzheimer's disease but she always remained good humoured and considerate to others and enjoyed her weekly trips to the day centre at Shipton's Beaconsfield Hall and the new friends she made there.

As her illness progressed, Ivy was well supported in her own home by the Wychwood surgery, community nurses, carers from the home support service, Age Concern Flexible Care and her family. Ivy enjoyed everyone's visit and shared many of her happy early memories with them.

Ivy died at her daughter's home in Stroud, Gloucestershire on 29th August 2008, aged 90 years.

The funeral service, conducted by the Reverend Anne Hartley, took place at St. Mary's Church, Shipton-u-Wychwood on Monday, 8th September, followed by burial, reunited with her first husband Donald Pittaway, in Shipton churchyard. This was followed by a gathering at the Shaven Crown Hotel.

Ivy was dearly loved by her family and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Gina Murphy

Julius (Jussi) Brainin 1919 – 2008

Jussi was born in Austria in 1919, the son of Margaret Beck, from a family long established in Vienna, and Sigmund Brainin, from what was then Russia and is now the Ukraine. Both sides of the family were Jewish but no longer practising, and Jussi was firmly secular all his life, keeping only Yom Kippur every year as a gesture of solidarity with his people.

Jussi was the model self-made man, who made himself over several times, each time more successfully than the one before.

In his youth he was a passionate Zionist. His great ambition was to join the Israeli Navy, which was training in Italy in the 1930s, but his parents wouldn't give their permission. That was his first and perhaps worst disappointment. However, he now had two pieces of good luck. Firstly, he was a bad student; secondly, his father, who was the representative of a British textile firm, instead of keeping him at school in Vienna, sent him to England to learn the textile trade. Thus he escaped the inferno to come.

He began his British life in Huddersfield and he always liked to think that there was a touch of Yorkshire in his English. There he pursued his second ambition, which was to be a journalist, writing articles in the Huddersfield Examiner.

When war broke out, his father told him not to come home, and for the next eight years, Jussi did not see his parents. Happily, they eventually got away to the United States and all three members of the family knew the others were safe.

On 3rd September 1939, the day war was declared, Jussi met Liesl Kelsen, also from Vienna. In June 1940, at not quite 21, they married, but within a week Jussi was interned as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man. Three months later he was released to join the British Army, first with the Pioneer Corps and later with the Royal Engineers. He ended the war in Intelligence, working to re-educate German prisoners. He was unusually objective and sympathetic and made several friends among the ordinary, non-Nazi POWs.

In 1946, after six years' service to King and Country, he was demobbed - and told to report to the nearest police station as an alien. He never forgot that, or the grand sum of £94.13s severance pay. It was his only complaint. Like many Jewish refugees of his generation, he was profoundly impressed by British tolerance and freedom and was undyingly loyal and grateful to his adoptive countries, Britain and Canada.

In 1948 he gave up the battle to survive in post-war austerity Britain and emigrated with his wife and small daughter to Montreal. There he succeeded triumphantly, building up a successful insurance brokerage. He loved Canada, but he always kept up the con-

nection to Europe. Most of his friends were European, and he took his family to Britain and Austria every summer. He became Honorary Austrian Consul in Montreal for four years. He kept up his youthful ambition to be a foreign correspondent, travelling to Hungary in 1956 and reporting on the Hungarian Revolution for the Montreal Gazette. He also indulged his passion for politics, embarking on an MA in Political Science at McGill University and once running for the Canadian Parliament - though it must be said, as a sacrifice candidate against the wildly popular then Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. To these old passions he added a new one, for the stage, and for many years he acted with the Montreal German Theatre.

In the late 1970s, history intervened in his life for a second time. Quebec separatism affected his business so badly that he decided to sell up and return to Europe. He and Liesl arrived here in 1978 with little left from their thirty good Canadian years. For the first year they lived in the Shipton Road with me, their elder daughter, as I had already been back in Britain for over a decade. Later, they moved to High Street.

Jussi was nearly 60. He had left behind his Canadian life and family and had lost a top job for which he had been hired in an American company. Undaunted, or at least undefeated, he soon set up IBMCA, his own management consultancy for UK insurance brokers. For the second time in his life, he built

up a successful business, even more successful than the first one; and this time history let him keep it. He deserved it. For sheer grit and professional skill, IBMCA was his finest hour. He worked in it until he was over 80, and throughout that time wrote a column in the Brokers Monthly, every month for 20 years. He finally retired in 2000.

His retirement was darkened by the decline of his wife, with whom he celebrated 68 years of marriage this year. He worked on the family albums, putting the finishing touches to Volume 67 just two weeks before he died. He returned to writing, producing five volumes of his memoirs and dozens of articles on Austria, Britain, Canada and the world. He enjoyed the English countryside, going for vigorous walks and delighting in the Cotswold landscape. Every time he returned from Heathrow or London and emerged through the limestone hills near Stokenchurch, he would recall the same journey home after his heart bypass operation in 1984, and the moment when he saw Oxfordshire spread out before him and thought, 'It's good to be alive'.

My father was a sociable man who loved parties and chatting to people. He was a great adapter and found things to love everywhere. Above all, he loved history and politics, and was a great newspaper reader, news watcher and Radio 4 listener. He loved to travel and had a boyish passion for everything that moved, cars, ships or trains. He also

loved food, especially middle European food.

Most of all, he was brave, self-disciplined, and absolutely independent. He was a devoted husband and father, giving his whole life to his family.

He is survived by his wife Liesl, his daughters Carole and Kay and his son Danny and their families.

Carole Angier

Mr Brainin

If we are lucky during our lifetime, we may meet people with a friendly disposition. Jussi Brainin was such a person.

I am born and bred in Ascott, and like all old villagers I treat with suspicion anyone new moving in. Jussi soon dispelled our fears. He was always ready to stop and have a friendly chat with whoever he met.

Coming from a generation who were taught to treat our elders with respect, I always knew Jussi as Mr Brainin. Often I would see him striding to the top of Chippy Hill or London Lane. He was a great example that when we grow old we need not lose our charm or zest for life.

His life had made him a very determined man. I realised this when, only days before his last illness, he was determined to drive his car again. And he was

a good driver – I always felt in safe hands whenever I travelled with him.

About 12 years ago a discussion group was formed in our village. Jussi became a keen member. One of our most interesting evenings was when he talked of how he came to England and how he came to join the British Army.

Soon after the war started he was interned with many other aliens on the Isle of Man. It must have been very frightening for Jewish refugees who had fled Europe because of persecution. Jussi was very proud that during internment his cousin Norbert founded the Amadeus Quartet.

Later in the war he volunteered for the British Army and joined the Pioneer Corps. His skills were soon recognised and he quickly transferred to the Royal Engineers and later to Intelligence. At the end of the war he could have gone as an interpreter at the Nuremburg trials, but his family came first, and he was keen to get back to them.

Jussi was always ready to be involved in village activities. One of his key interests was the village shop, when it opened in 2003. He could often be seen stacking the shelves or keeping the place clean and tidy.

For many years he took part in the Christmas Pantomime. Anyone listening in at rehearsals would think they had tuned in to an episode of the Archers. First Jussi played the Doctor, or other intellectual roles, because of his distinguished bearing and goatee beard, which

made him look like Sigmund Freud. In the last two years he played Father Christmas. He wasn't fat enough, so he needed padding, but he did a great Ho Ho Ho.

What did a Jewish refugee from Vienna have in common with someone born in a Cotswold village? Jussi and Liesl enjoyed watching the New Year's Day concert from Vienna, and so do I, listening to the glorious music of Johann Strauss.

When we get older we look around for those old familiar faces. When they are no longer there, we realise how rich they made our lives, and at their passing, how much poorer we are.

To Liesl, Jussi's wife, to Carole, Kay and Danny, to the grandchildren and the rest of the family, may the memory of Jussi be a great joy and inspiration to you all for the rest of your lives.

Fred Russell

WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

As usual, our first meeting of the season when popular speaker Tim Porter described The Cotswolds under Henry VIII, was extremely well attended and appreciated.

On Thursday 20th November at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. Simon Townley will talk about Burford and its Buildings, Saxon Burgh to Cotswold Town.

There is no meeting in December.

On Thursday 15th January David Clark will tell us about Houses and History, Reading Buildings for Clues, 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.

Not A Proper Job

'Hi. I'm Andy'. "Come in Andy. Did you see that documentary on Channel Four about John last night?" Was this for real? Sir Paul McCartney had invited me for a chat about John, the press, life, what we wanted 'Paul' to do on the show. I was 'chatting' to Macca.


Over the last thirty years I have been fortunate to work alongside gifted broadcasters, comedians, writers, actors and musicians - an experience which has often left me feeling inadequate and aware of my own shortcomings. Eventually I learned to be grateful that my job allowed me to occasionally sit at the top entertainment table in a supporting capacity. Then five years ago, I met Macca and, at the age of forty nine, I was reduced to a gibbering, fawning, incoherent fan, unable to function professionally.

All I can offer in my defence is that for anyone of my generation, sitting, exchanging chit-chat with McCartney is as mind-blowingly 'fab' a moment as you can hope for.

My entrée into the shining world of the small screen probably started when I was nine or ten years old. I have a strong childhood memory of sitting on the floor watching my parents newly acquired black and white television. During the course of the next ten years similar

screens would, for the first time bring into sitting rooms all over Britain, events such as The Kennedy Assassination, Profumo, Beatlemania, Vietnam, Take Your Pick, race riots, Sunday Night At The London Palladium, the first human footstep on another planet andSteptoe and Son.

Watching television has had a profound effect on us all. Watching my dad cry with laughter at 'Steptoe and Son', had a very specific effect on me. I remember thinking, 'It must be wonderful to be part of something that can do that to people'. A full fifteen years later I

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entered the hallowed halls of Broadcasting House as a Junior Studio Manager for BBC Radio. Amongst my contemporary trainee Studio Managers was a very young, shy Charlotte Green, now the doyenne of Radio 4 continuity announcers.

From 1978 to 1983 I worked on domestic and overseas radio. Amongst my more memorable 'overseas' credits were continuity announcements to all of Africa, Europe and parts of The Middle East, and single-handedly running a live, eight hour broadcast for The BBC Polish Service on the night that 'Solidarnosc' was outlawed. On domestic radio I rattled teacups on Waggoner's Walk, edited coughs from Robin Day's interviews, coaxed a rare interview from Alan Bennett and managed the logistics of Radio

Four regulars such as Desert Island Discs, PM, Money Box and The Today Programme.

On December 9th 1980 I was 'second pair of hands' on The Today Programme. Just after we went on air a harassed reporter thrust a tape at me saying, 'watch for my cue'. I watched, got the cue, pressed the button and heard, 'John Lennon was murdered outside his apartment block'. I didn't hear any more of the tape, but I remember that for the remainder of the broadcast the normally frantic production room was virtually silent. For me and I suspect for a lot of people of my generation, life felt sadder and weirder.

Alongside my duties as a Studio Manager, I developed a second career as a comedy sketch writer. I still remember

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the thrill of having my first sketch – a parody of a Hovis ad – performed by David Jason. ‘Weekending’ was at that time produced by a very young Griff Rhys Jones and in 1983 I followed Griff across to Television Centre to work briefly on Not the Nine O’clock News before working as Production Manager on shows such as 3 Of a Kind, Carrott’s Lib, Butterflies and Only Fools & Horses.

‘Fools’ was initially produced and directed by Ray Butt. Ray had started his career as ‘boom- op’ on ‘Hancock’s Half Hour’ and ‘Steptoe & Son’ – here I was working with the guy whose job it had been to capture the dialogue that twenty years earlier had moved my dad to tears of laughter. I’d arrived.

For the next thirteen years I worked variously as Production Manager, Script Editor, Director, Producer and Production Executive on amongst others Top of the Pops, Dear John, Don’t Wait Up, Alas Smith & Jones, Blackadder, Comic Relief and many more. A few memories shine particularly brightly. During a recording of The Kenny Everett Christmas Show in 1985, I became acutely aware that I was giving direction to Kenny, Barry Cryer, Spike Milligan, Peter Cook, Les Dawson and Eric Sykes. Comedy heaven.

In 1989 I became involved with the perennially popular Last of the Summer Wine. I was no fan, but agreeing to work on the show was a smart move. As I walked onto location on the first morn-

ing of production my eyes lighted on an extraordinarily pretty design assistant – nineteen years later we live with our two daughters in Ascott.

In 1997 I left the staff of the BBC and for the next eight years worked freelance, pleased to be earning good money still without having ‘a proper job’. In 2005 I had a call from the agent of a young actor called David Tennant with whom I had made a sci-fi pilot for BBC Drama. The BBC wanted him to play the lead, but not in my sci-fi drama. They wanted him to be Dr Who – time for me to try something else.

For the last three years I have run a Film & Television Production Degree for Bournemouth University. Helping students make their first short films is enormously rewarding and (almost) as good as doing it myself – and as my mother pointed out it’s the closest I’ve come to having ‘a proper job’!

A couple of years ago I began to put together a project to be filmed in The Wychwoods. A nasty illness slowed things up a bit but I’m feeling better these days and have started to pick up the threads. If you see any local publicity for a project to be produced by NDY Films you might want to get involved. NDY...? Not Dead Yet.

Andrew Smith – July 2008
Ndyfilms.co.uk

“Fishing! You must be mad!”

“Fishing! You must be mad”, “I don’t know what you see in it...”, “It’s a worm at one end and a fool at the other” and so on. If I had a pound for each time I heard someone claim fishing was boring, or words to that effect, I’d be the proud owner of a fishery by now. I’d be wealthier still if I collected another pound from those that hadn’t actually tried it before.

Not wishing to stand on a metaphorical soapbox, I am going to try to articulate why, for me at least, fishing is the antithesis of boredom and why it is in fact the nation’s most popular pastime; of course in the hope of inspiring one or two others from ‘Ascott’ and the surrounds to try the sport before they buy the reflex response and presume it’s not for them.

I’m frequently asked by the angling uninitiated what I “see” in it and I have to confess that, when put on the spot, I struggle for words inspiring enough to reflect my own feelings. So, when asked by Pete Moss (founder member of Coldstone Angling Club) to write an article

for this issue of the Grapevine, I saw it as a perfect opportunity to find the words that have eluded me in conversation so many times.

Before you turn the page with an agnostic sigh of “who cares?”, I’d like to add that our village has a wonderful little angling club much in need of new

members. An opportunity, if ever there was one, to experience what I am about to make such a fuss of. Join me readers please on this voyage of enlightenment and find out what you’ve been missing out on all these years!

I’ve fished for over 30 years,

ever since my grandfather introduced me to a rod and line as a 3-year old in the early seventies and I’ve been captivated ever since. It’s not a hobby for me; it’s a way of life. I could not imagine my life without fishing. I’ve often pondered how I could become so bewitched by one thing but actually fishing is so many things and therein may lay the answer.



**The author with a 5lb+ River Evenlode Chub.
Caught January 27th 2008?**

There's a common misconception that to fish means to sit and wait, often in all weathers, as if the only determinants of success are patience and luck. **Not so.** In the words of Izaak Walton, a founding father of modern angling:

"Angling may be said to be so like the mathematics that it can never be fully learned."

There is a fascinating, unique puzzle to solve each and every time you go fishing, with so many variables to consider when devising your formula for success. Water levels, clarity, temperature, flow; wind direction, air temperature, barometric pressure; resident species, bait, natural cover, feeding habits, tackle selection, presentation, nuisance species, to name a few salient ones, all have a bearing upon your chances of success on any given day. Something that works well one day may fail miserably the next. Over time you gain experience and skill and the puzzle gets easier but you never fully solve it. The variety and uncertainty of fishing provides you with a constant challenge and source of stimulation. So when you see an angler perched motionless by the riverside with rod in hand, he is not enduring the passage of time, he is oblivious to it as he figures out the puzzle!

Fishing may also seem to some like an individual pursuit. Man (or woman) against fish. True in many ways but it is also true that 4 million Brits are anglers

and with such a community comes a great camaraderie. As one might expect some of my oldest and dearest friends are fellow anglers, but I also knew when I stepped foot into Ascott-under-Wychwood for the first time three years ago, the chaps at Coldstone Angling Club would be my kind of people, and so it has proved. A passion for angling transcends age and gender. To illustrate the point, last weekend I was joined by an octogenarian couple who have been my friends since I fished in Coventry as a boy. We managed two excursions on the River Evenlode where we caught Brown Trout, Chub, Dace and Roach aplenty

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and in the evening enjoyed hospitality at The Swan Inn.

For the competitive among us there is a vibrant match scene with cash prizes for those that can catch the heaviest weight of fish within a 5-hour period. Preparation and practice means prizes and I can tell you from experience that once the whistle blows and the match starts it's every man for himself. Not the most athletic of sports but certainly one of the most competitive.

For a specimen angler, there is the indescribable thrill of hooking and landing your targeted species by design; when without warning the rod arcs over and a leviathan is hooked and fighting hard for its freedom; the heart stopping seconds as it strips line from the spool, lunging for branch or root; the sheer joy when the fish is beaten and lies glistening in your landing net: a prize of epic proportion and true rarity; when all the planning at home and hours on the bank culminate in a new personal best fish; when the puzzle is momentarily solved!

For me though fishing is as much about escape as it is the catching of fish. It doesn't matter too much whether I catch or not, the enjoyment is the same. It's my therapy for what is otherwise a hectic pace of life.

The bond between the angler and nature is strong. Most anglers are conservationists at heart. We

love our natural history and serve to protect it. Few people have experienced more close encounters with the natural world than anglers. As we sit immersed in the countryside at the crack of dawn or in the twilight hours, nature comes to us. Kingfishers, otters, stoats, bats, voles, red kites, sparrow hawks, barn owls, grass snakes, mice, deer and all manner of fauna present themselves when they think the world isn't watching. Only the angler is. During the winter before last I was hoping to catch a Chub or two on a stretch of the River Evenlode between Shipton and Ascott. As dusk fell an otter paddled down-

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stream towards me and climbed out of the water not ten feet away! Of course when it did eventually see me it bolted back in, under and away. A magical encounter nonetheless.

It's the close affinity with nature that draws me to angling most. There is no place I'd rather be than by a riverside at dawn in mid-Winter when most are sleeping in their beds. It is a different world and, but for the drone of a distant road, one could be alone in it. I'll leave it to the late, great poet Ted Hughes to encapsulate the feeling with his words:

*Buds fur-gloved with frost.
Everything had come to a standstill
In a brand new stillness.
The river-trees, in a blue haze,
Were fractured domes of spun ghost.
Wheel-ruts frost-fixed. Mid-morning,
slowly
The sun pushed dark spokes of melt
and sparkle
Across the fields of hoar. And the
river steamed –
Flint-olive.*

Angling is a sport, an art, a science and a pastime. Whether you are young or old, male or female, competitive or laid back, into nature, science or both, crave solitude or camaraderie, stimulation or relaxation; angling delivers in spades! Perhaps then I can be forgiven for not being able to express my passion for angling in two sentences when the naysayers strike, but I hope that having

read this you can now appreciate why fishing is anything but boring.

For anyone who would like to learn more for themselves or their kids, try it first hand or join our angling club then please contact Pete Moss on 01993 830758 or email me at steve@getfitwellness.com.

Steve Russell

The Ascott Village Charity Student Book Awards

A little while ago the Trustees of the Charity asked residents of Ascott for any ideas on how the Charity's funds might be used to help local causes and amenities. We would still like to hear any ideas you may have on this.

One of the purposes for which the Charity was founded was the furtherance of education and this might be of interest to Ascott residents who are going through further education. The Charity has some funds available to help with book purchase for students and would welcome applications. If you are interested, contact one of the trustees, whose names and phone numbers are on various of the village notice boards.

Mark Dawbarn

NO LIGHT TASK

Boy, will I be glad when Christmas is over for another year.

Don't get me wrong, I really love the festive season and not even cards in the shops in September, Slade's *Merry Christmas* being ground out ad nauseam and a pandemic of sofa ads on the TV can dampen my enthusiasm.

No, the bugbear of Christmas is the small matter of lights or rather, the matter of small lights. Take last Christmas.

We have four sets of fairy lights. One is a long string of white bulbs in festoons rejoicing in the name of Ice Lights, and these grace the eaves of our converted barn. Two sets are units of about 20 multi-coloured bulbs, and the piece de resistance is a kind of multi-string hawser of lord knows how many bulbs that we coil around the branches of our Christmas tree. A key element in all this is that we only put up decorations and tree in the week before Christmas.

Our barn being of miniscule proportions, storage is at a premium. Thus lights and deccies are packed into the darkest recesses of the understairs cupboard and exhuming them is akin to excavating Tutankhamen's tomb. Having carefully placed said lights in neat

coils which had lain undisturbed since January, how the St Nick had those same coils inextricably wound themselves into tangles of Gordian proportions? I understand now why sailors found oakum picking so tedious and similarly, why the senior service has a reputation for salty language.

After half an hour of unravelling, we had four strings lying on the lounge floor. Now for the acid test. I plugged in each set in turn, sending up a silent but eloquent plea to the Almighty as I so did. Usually, one or two of the sets

refuse to illuminate, but last year, three of the four decided to go en greve simultaneously.

At this juncture, around 9pm on a Sunday, is when you remember that you used up all but a couple of the multifarious spare

bulbs last year, so there is no chance of buying fresh until the morrow. And it is now you also remember why the minute white label on the end of each string is marked 'Do not remove'. At least that bit is legible, the remainder being in a typeface of fractions of a point that is just a blur to old farts like me. So, where the hell *did* I leave the magnifying glass?

The good news is that each type of bulb has a letter code like *W1* or *K1* so



you don't have to make a note that they are 2.5V 0.7W as opposed to 2.4V 0.7W. Believe me, they're different! And, gentle hombres, those bulbs with a white tip are fuse bulbs, which share the same voltage as their companions but are of different wattage.

Off to our local garden centre to view their treasure chest of spares. Two things strike you on staring at the rack of blister packs. The first is the bewildering plethora of shapes, sizes, colours, voltages and wattages of fairy light that are to be had, some miniature Edison screw, some push in. The second and more pressing is that quite obviously, many a household had been sporting decorations since at least Michaelmas if not midsummer and had pillaged the spare bulbs section. I managed to buy a couple of packs each of W1s and K1s and B12s or whatever, but of fuse bulbs, there was no sign.

Back on the lounge floor, I began the game of 'spot the duff bulb'. White bulbs often blacken to show they're extinct, but any blackening on coloured lights is invisible. The Ice Lights surrendered quickly and the one troublesome festoon blinked back into life after two spare bulbs. One of the 20 bulb strings was kaput, while the Christmas tree hawser was divided into three sections, of which two were alight. Now it was time for Sod's law to come into play, that more than one bulb would have blown, so the sequential replacement of each bulb in turn would avail you nothing.

It was out with the multimeter, pulling out every bulb and trying to juggle two meter probes and a diddy bulb while trying to clamp the hairlike contacts between the probes AND not disturb the contacts in their grooves. Those who lack both meter and a penchant for roulette simply hurl the wretched lights in the bin and buy fresh.

'Do not replace fuse bulbs with ordinary bulbs' warn the instructions. But when you find that among the three or four blown items in a string is a fuse bulb and you have no spare, what are you supposed to do? At long last, they were all A1 – or so I thought. I wound the bulbs around the Christmas tree, switched on, then found one section had gone AWOL once more. Fortunately, some judicious waggling of the bulbs and some un-festive oaths effected a cure. Not so one of the single strings. It worked fine when initially festooned around the hall radiator cover, but blew a bulb or two when we switched on next morning. Out with the multi-meter again, one new bulb, then twenty minutes later, another popped its cork. I lost count of how many times I played footsie with those lights last year and when they went on the blink on 5 January, I left 'em that way. No doubt I will curse myself in December.

And what did we do when the decorations came down? Why, coiled up the lights and stowed them in the back of the understairs cupboard. What else did you expect?!

Nigel Wild

A Timely Word of Warning!!!!!!

In early December 2006, Ken Norman, my co-director, decided it was time to start gathering together his Christmas decorations and, like so many people, he stores them in the attic of his home. To facilitate their retrieval, his step ladder was located, carefully erected and up he clambered. Just as he approached the top step, the ladder decided that then was as good a time as any to collapse and so it did. As Ken started his abrupt and totally unexpected downward journey, he instinctively grabbed the edge of his loft hatch. Big mistake. Instead of arresting his descent, he was slowed briefly whilst his shoulder dislocated and then he carried on down until he hit the floor, now in some considerable additional discomfort. The story of his shoulder's relocation is grim. In fact, let's not even think about it. The point is that when the ambulance arrived to take him to hospital, the crew congratulated him on being the first Christmas Decoration Injury of the Year. Apparently from 1 December onwards we fall out of lofts like lemmings over cliffs. Be warned!!

Tim Lyon

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MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD SIXTY YEARS AGO

One dark afternoon in November 1947, I listened with Dennis to the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip on an old wireless powered by an accumulator which needed charging up with electric about every two weeks. I was sat on an old cast iron bed with brass knobs on the corners, in an old cottage bedroom with rain dripping through the thatched roof. Dennis was ill in bed with pleurisy. He had not long left school and was working for Johnnie Kethro, the baker at Shipton, having to bike very early in the morning six days a week, two miles along the lane to the Bakery.

Dennis and Keith taught me how to hold a cricket bat. They were my second cousins who lived in an old thatched cottage opposite the old Tiddy Hall at the bottom of the village, which my grandmother called Stump End.

Stepping down from a flag stone path in a garden where old apple trees stood, I was in a warm kitchen and living room of the Vizor family. In the middle of the room with chairs around it was the kitchen table, the wood on the top almost white from years of scrubbing. Often sat in a high back wooden chair near an open fire with black lead ovens each side and an iron spit hanging down from the chimney, would be Dennis and Keith's dad, Fred Vizor, peacefully smoking his pipe of Black Beauty tobacco. He was a quiet man who had

been gassed in the First World War and still carried the burn marks on his face. Fred worked for Carrs who farmed at Fairspear near Leafield, and he biked six days a week the two miles up to the farm until he retired. He was not from a village family and I never knew him get involved with much in the village. Like my own dad, they considered themselves outsiders and in my dad's case, didn't care. Etty Vizer, their mother, was my mother's cousin. Their family had been in the village since the early 1870s.

Dennis and Keith were one or two years older than myself. Dennis was the elder and always got into more mischief. In his teens he liked the girls and most of

them liked him and throughout his life he had a charm which seemed to appeal to the ladies. Both boys were always about the fields, birds nesting or fishing in the Evenlode. I was sometimes with them in the spring when they would go up Gypsy Lane looking for moorhens' eggs in the dead river, and bringing them back for tea. Sometimes I would go on walks with them, following Coldwell Brook or Cordell as we old villagers called it. We would follow the stream up through the meadows till we crossed the road by the old pumping station building. We continued up through the valley till we reached Priest Grove where we saw primroses and amongst the trees, the wood was carpeted with bluebells. In

late summer the boys would roam the fields near Chestnut Close, Wychwood Manor now. We would be looking for hazel nuts. I think these fields were farmed by Jim Pearse's family. It was often on a Sunday evening we went looking for nuts. I would often eat too many and make myself sick. I should have listened to my grandmother who said the devil was in the nut trees on a Sunday.

I always enjoyed visiting them in their old cottage. There were always comics to look at, the

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Champion, the Hotspur and Adventure. These were not comics with pictures but stories of Ripping Yarns for Boys, but there were always the Beano and Dandy, Film Fun, Radio Fun, Chips and Knockout. All these were swapped around with Bill Slatter.

‘Want to see how many birds’ eggs we’ve got?’ they would ask me. From the old chest of drawers in the pantry they would take a box full of birds’ eggs, protected in the box by sawdust. They seemed to have the lot, from the rook to the wren. All the eggs had been blown. You did this by making a small hole at each end, then blow the yolk through using your mouth. Dennis once had five cats, much to the annoyance of his mother. He also kept pigeons for a while. He built a hut for them in the garden. His mother said to me once, ‘Our Dennis is silly. The other night when it thundered and poured with rain, he went and sat in the hut because he thought the pigeons would be frightened.’

Both Dennis and Keith were keen on sport. They were always playing football outside their gate with an old tennis ball. In the summer of 1948 they went to Oxford to see Don Bradman and his Australian cricket team play the University. They came back singing the praises of Ray Lindwall and Keith Miller and for many years after, modelled themselves on these two Aussies.

‘Can I go to the pictures tonight with Keith and Bill Slatter?’ I would ask

mother. If she said yes I would then have to ask for a shilling to get in. Going to the pictures meant walking the two miles along the lane to Shipton. In the early evening during the summer, I would start off in high spirits trying to entertain Keith and Bill by trying to be silly. As we neared Shipton we passed Mutton Lane on our left. Going down the road into Shipton, on our right was the Tillyard where only a few years later, I would bike every morning with Bill Slatter to work, making wooden cash tills. Beyond the Tillyard was the Gas Works which was still working, opposite was the Y.M.C.A. hut which by the late 1940s was not used very much. Turning left towards Burford we walked passed the cricket ground and Shipton Court. Just beyond the Lamb and the butcher’s shop owned by Dick Avery, and the Bakery where Dennis worked, we reached the Picture House, run by Nobby Clark. It had been converted from an old woodworking factory. It is difficult now to judge how many it seated but it must have been under a hundred. Warm and thirsty after walking along the lane, the first advert to come on the screen would be for Hitchman’s lemonade from Chipping Norton. Then would come the Newsreel. With any luck there would be highlights of the Cup Final or an International match. These were about three weeks after the actual match event. After a short supporting film, there was the main event. Whenever I

was keen to go to the pictures it was to see Laurel and Hardy, Old Mother Riley, George Formby and Frank Randle. These funny men and others like them have remained my heroes. What better epitaph than to know that you have given joy to millions. I was never that keen on romantic love stories or cow-boys.

Walking home afterwards my spirits were not so high. Keith and Bill would talk of frightening things. My imagination was very vivid. It didn't help if a cow coughed in a nearby field. Leaving me at the bottom of Ascott, Keith and Bill would go off to their own homes. I was alone in the dark. My pace quickened until I broke into a run, pass the Grange haunted by a Huntsman but I never saw him, up Church View where mother had seen a ghost, turning into Heritage Lane panting I was almost home. Safe.

To think, for only a shilling, 5p to-day, I had been for a walk, seen a film and improved my sprinting. When I think of those days now I am filled with a deep nostalgia. Dennis died in 1989, aged 56, peacefully on the sofa in his home in Leafield. Bill Slatter died in the summer of 2007 in Banbury. He was 74. Keith and I grow older with our memories. I sometimes think to myself, 'It wasn't all a dream.' If it wasn't, then I like to think, somewhere in time we are all still there, kicking a tennis ball along the roads of Ascott.

Fred Russell

GOOD NEWS- MORE BUSES

A big thank you to everyone who completed the transport survey back in April.

Oxfordshire County Council has just announced their preliminary decisions on the current bus subsidies up for review & all your feedback has played a vital part in helping to highlight Ascott's needs.

The large subsidy & lack of use meant that the C1 Railbus to Charlbury was under serious threat of being cut completely however all the support locally means it is being reduced slightly to peak-times only.

The good news is that the X8 Kingham station to Chipping Norton route is now being diverted, in off-peak times, via the Wychwood villages, which means that Ascott will then have a number of buses every day to & from Chippy, the other Wychwood villages & Kingham station.

The exact timetables & fares haven't been announced yet but as soon as they are you will see posters going up around the village to let you all know. The current bus timetable will continue unchanged until 14th December.

As you can see it was worth filling in those bits of paper!

Peter Greening

Your Preschool needs you (to shop)!

At the heart of our community, Ascott-under-Wychwood Preschool provides a friendly, secure and stimulating environment for two to five year olds. There, they begin their first steps towards education and are able to use a wide range of equipment, toys and materials for both indoor and outdoor play.

The Preschool is a charity and relies on donations from parents, villagers, and local businesses to operate effectively. Currently the Preschool is raising funds for a 'Safe and Secure during Play' project. The aim is to replace existing fencing that is in desperate need of repair and will mean the children are safer during outdoor play times.

If you would like to help, there is now a really easy way to donate without costing you a penny. **Easyfundraising.org** is a fantastic website where you can raise funds for the Preschool – just by shopping online!

If you already shop online with high street stores such as NEXT, Argos, Amazon, or Toys'R'Us, simply use the links provided on the easyfundraising site when you shop and

at no extra cost to you, the Preschool will receive a free cash donation of up to 15% from every purchase you make. Over 600 retailers are featured.

If you are interested, all you need to do is register on the website www.easyfundraising.org.uk/auwps.

When you next shop online, go first to the website and log in using your username and password. All you need to do then is click any of the retailer links provided and then shop as normal.

It's that simple! Even if you only raise a few pence each time it all adds up and you really can help make a difference. Thank you.

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The Beauty Room - Milton under Wychwood

I moved to Shipton-Under-Wychwood Christmas 2003; which was a little chaotic with 2 young children! I can't believe we've now been here nearly 5



years, those young children are now at Burford and Wychwood School and I have my own Beauty business.

I qualified as a beautician in 1985 but in 1987 I ventured into the cosmetic industry to broaden my horizons. I trained & worked with Charles of the Ritz, YSL and Lancôme. I then worked for Clinique cosmetics for 10 years, 4 years of which I was a Regional Training Manager covering Central South, East Anglia, Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland (just a small area!). When our first child came along in '96 my full time job as a trainer was no longer possible. In 1998 I decided to start up a mobile beauty & bridal make-up business which quickly became a great success, especially with other Mum's needing a pamper and it fitted in with my life as a Mum and housewife. In 2003 we moved to Shipton - four months after moving I decided to re-start my mobile beauty business & bridal make-up, again a great success -

so much so, when our second son started school full time in 2006 I opened The Beauty Room in Milton under Wychwood. Beauty has been my work, hobby and my passion for the last 23 years, in fact I started selling Avon at school when I was 15, so it's 26 yrs, to give my age away!

The Beauty Room offers affordable treatments in tranquil surroundings.



There are two rooms, decorated in calming colours and décor. Susan Molyneux facials, waxing treatments, brow tidying, lash and brow tinting and make up lessons are completed upstairs in the lovely spacious room that has 3 velux windows. Downstairs is where I complete Jessica manicures at a lovely manicure desk and pedicures at a comfortable set up including a foot spa to really complete the treat. I also offer a Bridal make-up service, which is very popular, this includes a rehearsal and going to the brides home or venue on her big day.

A woman's life is a jack of all trades, whether married, single, with or



without kids. Juggling work, play, house, kids and husband puts time for ourselves at the bottom of a very big pile. Take time to refresh, rejuvenate and revive yourself with a pamper. Whether it's with a beautician like myself, or 20 minutes in a warm bubble bath, with a facemask, a few candles and a large glass of wine! Make that time for you, to look good and feel Great!

Heather Edwards

For more information on The Beauty Room, please visit
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No Olympic Funding but Wychwood Forest survives

Rather than publish a series of league tables and results we thought that we would give the readers an insight into the backroom operation of the club. That said the club did get to two cup finals this past season but was 'robbed' in both cases. You can believe if you want that *'it is the participating that is important'*. In true British style we sulked with stiff upper lips for weeks after both defeats!

The season at a glance:

The Winter of 07/08 - It really was a winter of discontent with regard to the Ascott pitch. On quite a few occasions the pitch was far too wet to play on, at one point we were playing up to 3 games in a week in order to catch up on fixtures.

June 08 - When one of the team rang in to announce that his car had been stolen we offered our sympathy! When he told us that the team kit was in the car we sympathised even more and then put him on the transfer list.

Police are now appealing for information on anyone or indeed whole families seen walking around in blue tops and white shorts with numbers on their back and 'Cool Cuisine' advertising



logo emblazoned across their front. Do not be fooled these outfits are not from the leading edge of the London Fashion Week! Sadly the truth is that we didn't get the kit back.

No one was to blame for this loss and as ever there was no insurance payout as the premium for such cover is unrealistic. So we start the new season struggling to find the price of a new kit. To be part of the league you must have authorised kit. Last season the running costs of the club were in excess of £6,000 which includes balls and referees – yes, they are different! All of these funds come solely from the player's subs each week.

The club ended last season with a net surplus of some £60 but we need the best part of £1,000 in order to start the new season. So making ends meet is a constant task within the club especially when you have an unexpected cost like a new kit!

Women in Sport – Wychwood Forest are pleased to announce that it has followed many of the unwritten PC guidelines and has encouraged female participation in the club. Vicky Godfrey from the village was Club Secretary for many years and when she stood

down in order to undertake the more important duty of being a mother we were joined by not just one but two women.

Leanne Miller took over the role as surrogate mother to the club (Club Treasurer). Many a night Leanne can be seen actually going to the homes of players in order to collect overdue subs. She regularly regales us with stories of calling around to players homes and collecting



overdue subs from embarrassed parents who offer every apology but at 35 years of age it seems inappropriate to still be paying for 'the boy'. Whilst I shouldn't say it although it is true at times managing the club is a little like dealing with naughty boys.

There is never intent in their motives but we often live with excuses, fantasy, fibs, exaggeration and the stamping feet (no tiny feet here). Suffice to say that Leanne does a fantastic job.

Our other long suffering female is Sue Andrews who joined with Leanne and is the Club Secretary. This role takes up literally hundreds of hours during the season. Her role spans managing all of the day to day issues of the club from sorting out those infamous yellow cards on a Saturday (very few come our way) to making sure that we have correct first aid kits. If Leanne is a sort of

mum to the club then Sue is becoming a super-mum.

The down side to having females in the club is that they are never deflected from their tasks, cannot be mislead or distracted with a beer at the pub after the match and rarely accept excuses! In reality the whole of the club benefits from this steely management and as Chairman I pass my public thanks to these two.

In putting these two ladies into the Hall of Fame it is now incumbent on me to add a few more: Under Roger's leadership the Pavilion and Sports Committee are great supporters to the club as is Margaret who manages the pavilion. The playing side of the club would fold if it was not for the daily efforts of the two Team Managers and their deputies ... in fact let me say thank you to everyone.



Back Row (L to R): Ian Read, Mick Ody, Dean Godfrey, Mathew Johnson, Scott Thomson, Luke Russell, Simon Gibbs, Scott Read, Grant Oliver

Kneeling (L to R): Steve Edwards, Chris Read, Mike Hornsby, Ollie Bush, Lee Manners, Pete Travers

From a non summer weather wise and an Autumn that is fast being marked with horrific economic news there are still bright patches out there. In a society that can all too often seem less attractive than previous eras. Village football is still alive and reasonably well, yes we lost a kit, yes we didn't win the league, yes the players don't always pay, yes we get the odd complaint.... On reflection I think that 'bright spot' may have just clouded over!

The reality is that we should be proud that village football in Ascott is alive and relatively well. That these 30 to 40 young men (and women – committee, wives, girlfriends and supporters) are participating in sport. They are not stood around on street corners or feeling bored and getting into trouble, they are actively involved in sport.

There are no Olympic funds past or present to support the tens of thousands of amateur players who run on to the fields each week. Wychwood Forest survives on the generosity of people within the club and within the local community.

In conclusion can we offer an open invitation to everyone within the village to come along and enjoy vast amounts of fresh air, a little exercise and to participate within the community generated by the game.

From a proud Chairman

LAKI'S LEGACY

This summer we seem to have lived under a perpetual cloud. Explanations came from the Met Office. Continual batches of low pressure systems coming with the jet stream across the Atlantic on a much more southerly course than usual and emptying quantities of rain over the English and Welsh towns and countryside. At least we understand what is happening and reluctantly accept this disruption to what should have been, according to all present beliefs, a hot, dry and sunny summer.

But supposing we were living 225 years ago during June to September 1783. How could we then have understood the permanent dry fog in the atmosphere, the veiled sun, the sunrises and sunsets when the lurid sky looked as though it was soaked in blood, and the infectious smell in the evenings. No wonder fear and panic affected populations in various parts of Western Europe, with rumours of the Day of Judgement at hand.

But what was the source of these apparitions? Well, coincidentally with this summer it seems to have been connected with a change in the course of the weather patterns. A volcanic eruption occurred in Iceland on June 8th 1783. It was one of the largest in the past 1000 years and due to the very hot summer of that year, which was until recently the hottest on record, the then high pressure sent the fallout in a north, then east, then

southerly clockwise motion across Scandinavia, Germany, France and on round to Britain. Normally the airflow from Iceland is north over the uninhabited polar regions and this would have been the expected route of the fallout. Not so in 1783, and this totally natural disaster which caused thousands of deaths in Iceland and Europe, is almost virtually forgotten.

Iceland sits on the mid Atlantic Ridge where two tectonic plates are pulling away from each other and at 9 a.m. on Sunday 8th June 1783 the Icelandic population thought that hell had been unleashed. The Laki volcano did not erupt from a single cone but its sequence was the more deadly series of fissure eruptions. The 1000 degree centigrade magma came out of the ground in a series of segments similar to unzipping the earth. The gorge created reached to a length of 17 miles causing fissures up to 1000 feet wide and the 600 square kilometres of larva destroyed farms, houses and countryside and raced across the land at the speed of a river swelled with melt water in summer. Eruptions continued for eight months and the larva flow did not cease until February 7th 1784.

The Rev. Jon Stingrimsson who was there at the time recorded the following description. 'began with the earth heaving upwards, with a great screaming noise of wind from its depths, then split-

ting asunder, ripping and tearing, as if a crazed animal was tearing something apart.'

Initially the eruption threw up quantities of fluorine which landed on the vegetation, in turn poisoning the animals. Then the remaining vegetation died and most of the surviving livestock starved. Three quarters of the Icelandic animals, cattle, sheep and horses died, and so did one quarter of Iceland's population. But the volcano's power did not rest there. Sul-

phur dioxide was also discharged by Laki. The moisture rich atmosphere over the Atlantic turned the sulphur dioxide into sulphuric acid and this lethal

cocktail, buffeted by the winds on the high pressure system, spread remorselessly in a clockwise spiral from Scandinavia, through North West Europe and ultimately to Britain.

Reports of the lethal poisonous fog were recorded in Bergen on 10th June, Berlin on 17th June, Le Havre on 20th and Britain on the 22nd. The thick fog made it impossible to navigate around the coasts and the clergyman and naturalist Gilbert White of Selborne, recorded in his diary: 'This summer was an amazing

and portentous one, and full of horrible phenomena: for, besides the alarming meteors and tremendous thunderstorms that affrighted and distressed the different counties of this kingdom, the peculiar haze or smoky fog that prevailed for many weeks in this island and in every part of Europe, and even beyond its limits, was a most extraordinary appearance, unlike anything known within the memory of man. From June 23rd until July 20th inclusive, during which period



the wind varied to every quarter without making any alteration in the air. The sun at noon looked as blank as a clouded moon and shed a rust-coloured ferruginous light on the ground and

floors of rooms, but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting. All the time the heat was so intense that butcher's meat could hardly be eaten on the day after it was killed...'

Longterm exposure to sulphuric acid is deadly, corroding sensitive tissues from within and in some areas of Europe many died agonising deaths. In Chartres in France 40 died in 18 days and the villagers implored their priest to exorcise the devils in the cloud. In Britain there were reports of labourers collaps-

ing in the fields where the polluted air took its toll of men employed in heavy manual work. Records in Bedfordshire show double the normal number of summer deaths as do Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, East Anglia and parts of Essex and Kent. It is estimated that 20,000 Britons died that summer through the effects of the fog. But all was not over. The abnormal weather conditions continued with incredible storms over Europe, torrential rains, floods, hailstones big enough to kill livestock and terrific lightning and thunderstorms. Finally the cloud dissipated only to bring in its wake a long, exceptionally cold winter, the worse for 250 years. It was followed by a backward spring and floods of melt water in Europe. This also contributed to the dreadful death rate in Iceland and thousands of other deaths in Europe.

In Britain which also endured the summer storms and long, hard winter nothing survives as evidence of these dramatic events. Probably the only records are the deaths listed in many parish registers to which are attributed no actual cause and certainly no-one would ever know that they resulted from a volcanic eruption thousands of miles away.

But what of Ascott? Presumably the men and women living in the village and working in the fields lived through all these memorable weather conditions. Were they frightened and awestruck by the phenomena? Did they agonise over the cause? Why the fog? Why didn't the sun shine? What made the sky red at dawn and dusk? Subsequently they shivered in the torrential storms, huddled in cottages with scant protection from the onslaught of wind and rain. And ultimately they were stricken with heavy snowstorms and severe frosts.

Unfortunately the only records of Ascott in 1783 are to be found in the

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parish registers and contrary to the above forebodings, they do not appear to indicate the legacy suggested by Laki's visit. The same would appear to be endorsed by Shipton's records. See below:

Burials in Ascott		Burials in Shipton
1780	10	35
1781	10	40
1782	2	34
1783	7	29
1784	16	38
1785	11	32
1786	10	33

Certainly the 16 deaths in Ascott in 1784 are higher than normal. But a check on those who died produces 6 widows, all of whom would seem from records to be elderly; 5 children, mostly very young; 4 men, apparently elderly and one other woman. The 2 who died in 1783 after the eruption were both women. So it would seem hard to suggest that Laki extended her legacy over Ascott, although some of those buried in Holy Trinity churchyard may beg to differ.

Wendy Pearse

To all our friends in Ascott

Barbara and I will be back home in Melbourne by the time this edition comes out, but we would like to place on record what a wonderful time we have had during our six months in Ascott-under-Wychwood.

We have loved our experience of village life, the folk night at Tiddy Hall, the village fete, the village shop and friendly times at the Swan.

We made some good friends here, (you know who you are), and we shall not forget you.

Among the many other things we will not forget are the seasons, the spring lilacs and roses, the snow in the winter, the beautiful stone walls, the rain of course, but some glorious sunny days too, the horse folk at Crown Farm, shopping in Chippy, and so much more. We even became hooked on "The Archers."

So once again thank you all for the way you welcomed us into your village. We will miss it all.

Damien and Barbara Ryan
Formerly of Stable Cottage

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Of Myths and Legends

It seems that the magic of the Olympic Games remains undiminished in this and many other countries. Flying from Beijing to Tashkent a couple of days after the Closing Ceremony we shared the aircraft with the Uzbek Olympic team. Judging by their size the national sports in Uzbekistan must be weightlifting and Greco Roman wrestling. There was a question in my mind as to whether the plane would have enough power to lift all that weight off the ground. It did, and on arrival at the Uzbek capital we were greeted (well the team were greeted) by a civic reception and brass band – a kind of impromptu version of the recent parade in Trafalgar Square for Team GB.

In some ways it is odd that the Olympics has such a pull in this country; we do not send a football team, there is no cricket, rugby or horse racing and the tennis is not at the same level as Wimbledon. I have yet to meet anybody who has any interest in synchronised swimming or considers pistol shooting to be a good spectator sport.

For me the Olympics is only about track and field athletics. My earliest recollection of an Olympic legend was watching (on a small black and white television) a barefooted Ethiopian called Abebe Bikila running along the Appian Way towards the finish line in front of the Coliseum in Rome in 1960. The race finished after dark and the ancient road was lit by flaming torches. As a piece of

sporting theatre it was wonderful (particularly for a nine year old sports mad boy). I became aware of my first Olympic legend.

One of the great Olympic myths surrounds the marathon. It is widely believed that in 490 BC an Athenian runner called Pheidippides ran from the site of the battle of Marathon to Athens (about 25 miles) to report the victory over the Persians. An alternative version has him running from Athens to Sparta (an altogether longer journey). The first modern Olympic marathon in 1896 was run from Marathon and measured 40 kilometres but it was not until the 1908 London games that the organisers decided to place the finish of the race (which had started outside Windsor Castle) directly opposite the royal box in the White City and that measured 26 miles 385 yards. The race has been run over that distance ever since. The marathon is not a natural spectator sport; it is most easily followed on TV. Oddly neither is the track's shortest event the 100 metres. The men's event lasts less than 10 seconds but its impact in the stadium in Beijing was extraordinary. Usain Bolt of Jamaica is a big man who has been running fast at 200 meters for a few years. Previously he has been all straining muscle and tension but this season he has mastered the art of relaxation. In athletics the very best (Ed Moses, Sebastian Coe, Michael Johnson) appear to be effortless when performing at their very best. There are of course exceptions to

this rule (Emil Zatopek and Paula Radcliffe are all rolling motion and gritted teeth). There was a stunned reaction in the stadium following Bolt's victory. I could not quite believe what I thought I had seen. Despite visibly starting to celebrate and slow down with at least 10 metres left he decimated the world's best sprinters and set a world record. Its not supposed to be like that ! I had witnessed one of the all time great performances and another legend was created.

Inevitably the question has to be asked "Was it drug aided ?"; drugs are the blight of modern sport. In my view athletics is one of the few sports that is seeking to deal with the drug issue and slowly the cheats are being identified and banned. There are many sports in-

very unscientific test is to become very suspicious if an athlete suddenly changes body shape (usually a bulking up of muscle) and achieves a major improvement in their performance. This criterion does not apply to Bolt or to Christine Ohuruogu who won the 400 metres title. That she won was not a great surprise since she has a reputation for being very relaxed and peaking on the big occasion whereas her main rival, Sanya Richards of the USA has a history of "bottling" the big events.

But finally the real legend of the Beijing Games was the National Stadium, the "Birds Nest". You will have seen the pictures but nothing quite prepared me for its stunning beauty. Every day on the coach going to the stadium you could see people straining for their first glimpse. At night it was floodlit a deep red. Despite holding 90,000 people there was a superb view of everything that was going on. I had the impression of being somewhere quite unique, which is, after all, what the Olympics should be about.



cluding some of the most popular in this country that are widely believed to turn a blind eye. I would much rather follow a sport that is trying to be clean. My own

David Wilkinson

HELL DRIVING, HELL FLYING

Driving in Algeria was not bad, once you had left the lunacy of Algiers behind. The road into the Sahara betrayed the old French colony and the Foreign Legion, being arrow-straight and exactly the width of six men marching abreast. You could safely cruise at 90-100mph, but keeping a wary eye for the 'Sable' signs which warned of sand blowing across the road. I was driving towards Algiers at about 90mph and saw a convoy of Army tank-transporters coming towards me. Just as I reached the convoy, the leading driver decided to light his fag and swerved his rig across the road. I did the only thing I could – I accelerated hard just before the gap closed up.

Another strange sight was on the road to Oran. There had been a serious earthquake a year or so before which had killed hundreds. The epicentre had been on the Oran road and left a terraced crater like an old fashioned jelly-mould upside down and several hundred feet deep. It sent shivers down your spine just to look at it.

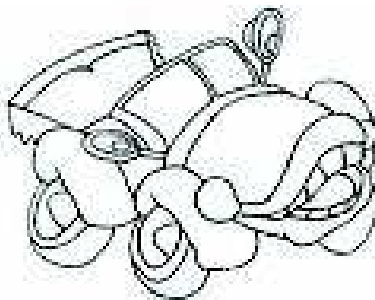
Spare parts for cars in Algeria were like gold-dust. You took off your wiper arms when parking your car or they would be stolen. The rains between November and March are stair-rod variety,

so wipers are essential. I was always buying and shipping spare bits to Algiers, often because our cars were broken into. On one occasion, I was asked for the windscreen rubber for our Peugeot 504.

'Why?' I asked. 'Because it was broken into last night by slitting the rubber with a knife!' On another visit, I took in a whole boxload of spares. We used an ex-Customs officer as a fixit, otherwise it would take ages to get the parts cleared. On arrival at Algiers, no sign of fixit. I let my luggage go round the carousel four times, then deliberately joined the longest passport queue. Just as I reached the head of the queue, fixit appeared, to my intense relief.

Talking of wipers reminds me of the high jinks we had with Bill's new company Peugeot 505. Shipped in from Marseilles, we eventually found the car on top of a dock building

reached by a steep ramp. The car had suffered grievous bodily harm to its front end en route, but the radiator was intact. The keys were in it, alas the battery was flat. We scrounged a battery from our local garage. The engine turned, but there was no petrol, so I set off to find both petrol and a jerrican to hold it. Carrying petrol in jerricans is illegal in Algeria, owing to the nasty habit of some locals of making bombs. When I at last succeeded in buying a can



and filling it, I then had to get it through the dock gates. With sweat trickling between my shoulder blades, I marched boldly through the gates, dreading a summons from the dock police, but none came. Petrol now good, battery now flat, patience now exhausted. We bump started the car down the ramp.

The major problem remained. It was the rainy season and the wiper arms and blades had been stolen. Spare 505 raclets in Algiers? You cannot be serious, man! The garage supplied a temporary bodge in the shape of arms and blades from a 504, but they were far too short and during the frequent storms, Bill had to drive crouched over the wheel like Secret Squirrel. In faraway Chiswick, the Peugeot agent confirmed that indeed LHD wiper arms were totally different to RHD and would take weeks to obtain. Two days later, we set off into the Sahara, emerging from the green Gorge des Singes of the mountains behind Algiers onto the desert plain. Several hundred miles downroute, we spotted salvation, a 505 totalled in a rollover but with wipers intact. Just as we slowed to a halt to er, relocate the wipers, a figure crouched out of sight on the far side of the car rose to his feet. It was a policeman. We skedadalled.

So it was that I rerouted myself home via Paris so that I could buy the parts from a Peugeot garage near Charles de Gaulle airport. As I had not intended to visit France I had no francs, but planned to draw some on my credit

card at the airport bureau de change. I took the bus to CdG satellite airport, to find all the bureaux shut, with notices in French and English proclaiming 'On strike for more pay'. So there, with not a sou to my name, I sat for 3 ½ hours until my flight to Heathrow. Determined not to be beaten, I telexed the same Peugeot garage for a price, sent FF250 by post and Bill eventually received his errant wipers.

On one occasion, it was not the flying that was dangerous, it was simply getting aboard. Our flight from Ouargla to Algiers had been delayed. One of my party knew the airport manager, who said we could board ahead of the hoi polloi and led us across the tarmac. Seeing what was happening, the remaining Algerians panicked and rushed the plane. I found myself being crushed against the foot of the aircraft steps, my cries of 'Doucement' totally ignored. A small but thickset Algerian policeman saved the day by climbing over the rioting mob Crocodile Dundee style. Placing his boot firmly in several chests, he pushed back the crowd and restored order. The joys of flying....

Which leads me to my journey from hell. Whilst I have experienced many difficult flights, one stands out as **the** journey from hell. I was a personnel officer with a construction company which had sites around the world including two in Algeria. One was at Arzew on the western coast and the other at Skikda on the eastern coast.

Accompanied by an attractive lady some years my senior who worked in the same department, I had to visit the two Algerian sites. The lady, who we will call Jill, had recently undergone major surgery and had not yet fully recovered.

We flew to Oran, had some very useful days at Arzew and then moved down to Skikda. In my experience, flying always means starting early and finishing late. Thus at 4.30 am on the Friday, bleary-eyed and with the beginnings of Algerian gut, we found ourselves at Constantine airport to fly home. I knew a bad day was in store when the immigration officer, unable to read the entry stamp in my passport, spotted one from over a year ago and accused me of being in Algeria without a work permit. Algerian jails are beyond the pale and a mixture of adrenaline-induced French and a clearer stamp in Jill's passport saved the day.

The Air France 727 arrived and we sank gratefully into our seats. There was a very loud bang. Initial thoughts of a slammed cargo-bay door were rapidly dispelled by the sight of a bemused Algerian ruefully contemplating the trailing edge of a wing he had just crumpled by towing the aircraft steps into it. The Algerian was taken away by the Police, we were taken back to the departure lounge, where we steamed for 6 hours until a relief aircraft landed. The temperature and humidity in the lounge matched at about 90 degrees and percent and there we sat. The loos were indescribable. The crew served us our in-

flight lunch, after which I amazed Jill by going to sleep upright for about 2 or 3 hours without swaying.

An Air Algerie 737 took us on the first stage of our journey, Marseilles. The route was Constantine-Marseilles, internal flight to Orly Sud, bus to Charles de Gaulle, CdG to Heathrow and limo home. Discovering that our flight to Orly now coincided with our pl
an



ned departure from CdG, I attempted to rebook flights for the following day.

'Non, eet is ze French bank 'oliday and all flights to London are full.' A fellow-sufferer was travelling to Manchester and reported spare seats, so Manchester it was. After a free (and ghastly) meal, we took off for Paris. By now it was 9.30 pm and we had had it. On arrival at Orly Sud, we approached the Air France ground hostess, explained our problem and asked for hotel rooms. Ground hostess shrugged and said it was not her problem. At that point Jill, who was by now paper-white, completely lost her sang-froid. Ground hostess made a few calls and announced that she had found us a room. 'No, rooms' we

said, 'we're not married'. 'Non, eet is ze French bank 'oliday and all rooms at ze airport hotels are booked. If you want rooms, you must travel to ze centre of Paris.'

Jill agreed to ze room, if I agreed never to tell her husband. I then told Jill, not unkindly, that I did not care if she was Brigitte Bardot, I just wanted to sleep. A taxi took us to the hotel, where we had the stupidity to ask for coffee. The hotel demanded FF50 per cup. My French did not stretch to 'Get stuffed', but we made do with water. A much needed bath apiece, then we set the alarm and fell instantly asleep. What felt like minutes later, the alarm shrilled and we flew to Manchester, bought two shuttle tickets and phoned the limo company. Once again, we sank gratefully into our seats.

'We're almost home' I said. Stupid boy! Bing-bong. 'British Airways regret to announce a delay in the departure of this flight as the coffee and biscuits have not arrived.' A universal cry of 'Sod the coffee and biscuits' was ignored and there we waited.

Could anything else go wrong this trip? Fortunately, the limo was there and took us home, actually only 14 hours late, but it was **the** journey from hell.

Nigel Wild

Gardening Notes

Winter is on the horizon but what a marvellous autumn we are having, days and days of sunshine with only the odd day of rain. I expect like me you have been taking the opportunity to get rid of the awful deluge of weeds brought by the flood and all the many, many rainy days which have followed. The weeds have flourished and the meadow grass which arrived in our garden in its masses has threatened to overtake quite a few plants. Its been so rewarding to pull up the invaders and then to tidy up the plants which have emerged and see that there still is a proper garden trying to grow underneath all the dross.

I've cut down more than I usually do at this time of year. Normally, to give the birds a seedy treat I leave most plants until spring before hacking back. This time I am going to leave just a few large seed heads like sunflowers and echinacea but make sure I feed the birds well this winter with shop-bought food. Then in the next few weeks I am going to prune severely all the large shrubs which do not flower early in the year (I don't want to lose next year's flowers which will have already formed on spring and early summer flowerers) and which can cope with a lot being taken off them at one go. In the previous *Grapevine* I said I dreaded cutting back because I always think something is going to go wrong and I will have to live with the mistake for years until the shrub grows back sufficiently. But as time has

gone on and everything has grown way beyond its bounds because of the rain, I'm actually looking forward to the 'great chop'. Some of the plants I love have almost been swamped by all this extra growth. I am sure that if I do not take action now, when next spring brings further growth to the shrubs, my favourites will be squeezed out altogether and cease to exist. Also we've got a shredder which will turn the prunings into smallish pieces which can either be put on flower beds to smother weeds or on the compost heap. It is amazing how quickly shreddings turn into compost – much quicker than spent flower stems will, for example.

It is not surprising that the Credit Crunch has been invading my gardening thoughts. How can I reduce the amount of money I spend on the garden? Obviously the shreddings will cut down on the amount of compost or mulch I buy but what else can I do. Whereas at twenty - something I would spend any spare cash on new clothes and even forego food and heating to be able to have some new shoes, skirts, jumpers.....and on and on. Now most spare cash seems to be spent on the garden. One thing, of course is to grow as much as possible from seed. I regularly grow annuals and vegetables from seed but not perennials. I've hardly ever done perennials because they take so much longer to become decent-sized plants and most do not flower until their second year. I am too

impatient and cannot wait that long to fill a space in the garden. I suppose if I planned further ahead I could afford to wait. But it would not always work out because plants can die off unexpectedly and produce an ugly gap in the garden. I'd want to fill it immediately. The easiest way by far to get more perennials is to divide plants you already have. This doesn't help if you want a plant you have never had before and you haven't managed to spot it in anybody else's garden and beg a piece. Sowing seed has to be the cheap answer and as seed catalogues are starting to come through the letter box I could start choosing what to try straight away. But I'd still be waiting until spring/summer 2010 for a decently mature plant. But if I don't start now I'll never get into the swing of it.

Lots of plants will root from cuttings so this is another cheap, if slow and frustrating way (at least for me) of making new plants but once again you need to find someone with a plant to take the cuttings from. Local plants sales are a cheap way of finding new plants. You may not find the plant that you are actually looking for but it is amazing how often you find something that will do just as well if not be better. Usually you find some absolute gems and prices are very good value but if they are not just don't buy. So keep a good look out for local sales. I find it very disappointing when gardens which open under the 'Yellow book' scheme do not have sales of plants from their own gardens but

bring in a professional nursery to sell plants. It is disappointing because the plants for sale are more expensive than they would be if they were from the owner's garden but also because you often see a plant in their garden which you would dearly like to grow and which the professional nursery is not selling but the owner might have done. In a previous issue of the magazine I've talked about being able to match people who have spare plants with people who want those plants. Most schemes take a bit of organisation and most people in the village lead very busy lives and cannot spare the time. However, we could use the next edition of the magazine to

advertise which people have which plants or expect to have them in the near future. This could become a regular feature of future editions if enough people take part and it proves worthwhile. So please contact the editor in time for the next edition with your name and telephone number and/or email address together with the names of the plant(s) you have or expect to have spare.

Also please let the editor know if you have any handy hints for saving money in the garden. These will be published in the next edition.

I'm off now to do a little vegetable gardening, planting autumn onion sets and garlic cloves which will get off to a

good start while the soil is still warm and will overwinter well to give a good harvest next year. In November I will be sowing broad bean 'Aquadulce' which will give me a slightly earlier harvest than a spring sowing.

They are one of my favourite vegetables, just thinking about them makes my mouth water.

Yvette Keauffling

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NATURE NOTES

If you like your garden to be extremely tidy, with not a leaf out of place, your lawn to be as fine as a bowling green and your borders to be completely weed free read no further; this article is not for you! If you are happy to relax your iron grip on nature and put away that spray gun, read on and enjoy the wildlife that you will encourage to visit your garden.

It is estimated that there are 15 million gardens in Britain covering over six hundred thousand acres, potentially our biggest continuous nature reserve stretching from city, to suburb, to village and into the countryside; a wildlife corridor reaching all parts of this island.

How can you make your plot more wildlife friendly? Obviously the things you can do will be constrained by the size of your garden and your own ideas about garden design, but here are a few suggestions.

First of all minimise the use of pesticides and slug pellets, be as organic as you can. This will create a cleaner environment and will allow predators and prey to achieve a natural balance keeping garden pests under control. Kill

all the aphids and caterpillars and there will be no food for young nestlings in spring. So by removing the pests you remove the beneficial insects and animals too.

Consider creating a pond, large or small, it will encourage a wide range of creatures into your garden including frogs, toads, newts and many fascinating insects such as dragonflies, water beetles and pond skaters.

Collect some frog or toad spawn in spring, introduce it into your pond and these amphibians should

live in your garden and return to the pond each year to breed. Frogs and toads are nature's best slug controllers.

Plant a tree, preferably a native species; oak and ash are ideal for the larger garden, for the smaller plot choose hawthorn, hazel, holly or rowan. Trees encourage birds and a host of beneficial insects and will provide a wealth of nuts and berries for food in the autumn and winter.

If you are thinking of erecting or replacing a fence consider instead planting a mixed hedge, especially one comprising of native species such as; hawthorn, sloe, elder, hazel and dog rose. This will provide shelter, food and nesting sites for many bird species and act as a wildlife corridor. The base of the hedge will provide a sheltered home for a



wide variety of small mammals including shrews and hedgehogs. Likewise if you are planning to build a new wall consider a dry stone wall constructed of local stone, its many nooks and crannies will provide home to many creatures and connect your garden to the local landscape.

If you have the space why not create a wildflower meadow in place of a conventional lawn, either by starting from scratch with a wildflower and grass seed mixture or allowing an existing grass area to grow and see what appears, perhaps helping things along by growing and planting out some grassland wild flowers.



This area would only be cut in the autumn once the flowers have seeded. Bulbs could be naturalised for spring colour. Never treat this area with fertilisers or weed killer and always remove your grass clippings. Wildflower meadows thrive on poor soils in an open sunny aspect; low soil fertility stops the more rampant grasses establishing themselves and overwhelming the flowering plants. In high summer a successful meadow will be alive with bees, butterflies and moths.

Look at your borders and consider growing plants that will provide nectar and caterpillar food to encourage butter-

flies, moths and hoverflies (their larva eat aphids) to visit your garden. Plan your plants to ensure that there is something in flower throughout the season; spring flowering plants will feed those butterflies emerging from hibernation and autumn flowering ones will build up their reserves prior to winter. Suggestions for flowering plants include; honesty, wallflowers, native bluebells, candytuft, forget-me-not, ice plant, evening primrose, buddleia, michaelmas daisy, scabious, red valerian, honey-suckle and flowering tobacco. Avoid double flowered hybrids; their nectar may be too difficult to access. If possible include some of the more decorative and less invasive wild flowers such as; knapweed, cowslips, ragged robin, teasels and hardy geraniums.

Food plants could include holly and ivy, for the holly blue, buckthorn, for brimstones, and sweet rocket for orange tips. If you have a sunny, out-of-the-way area allow a patch of nettles to grow as these provide food for the comma, red admiral, small tortoiseshell and many moths.

An ivy covered wall will provide ideal shelter for nesting birds and the late autumn flowers provide a welcome source of nectar for many insects and the berries which



follow will help to sustain thrushes and blackbirds during the winter months. Leaving plants to seed and not cutting them back until spring will also provide



food for seed eaters during the winter; a stand of teasels may attract our most exotic bird, the goldfinch.

Finally, don't be too tidy; create habitat piles of decaying logs, stones and hollow canes for insects; put up nest boxes and bat boxes; always ensure that there is a supply of fresh water and start a compost heap.

Enjoy your garden and let other creatures enjoy the habitat you have created.

Stuart Fox

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

After a pretty awful summer, weather wise, the Parish Council met for their meetings as usual with the exception of August and indeed continued with the progress of ongoing issues. One of the main issues has been with Highways. The Parish Council have reported and have had noted under their Matters Arising, Oxfordshire Highways. The issues being potholes, road surfaces, kerb stones etc etc., to name but a few. Last

week Paul Wilson from Oxfordshire Highways met with Peter Greening and together they walked through the Village addressing each ongoing issue. The Parish Council are now confident that these will be addressed by Oxfordshire Highways and so hopefully become completed issues. A note to all parishioners, should you have any issues to do with the Highways throughout the Village please do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the Parish Council or indeed any issue of any kind that you would like addressing and or hopefully resolving.

I am pleased to report that the Pound is now finished! The electricity pole has been removed, the barrow sited along with the benches and notice boards with the grass lush and green. This truly is and has been a pleasure to see through to fruition. This is a beautiful place to visit for all parishioners and indeed visitors alike.

Planning is still particularly quiet, with the exception of 2A Shipton Road, the Parish Council continue to do what they can supporting the Village.

The Flood Sub-Committee continue their hard work and have been involved in numerous and lengthy discussions with all the relevant agencies. Dare we say, progress appears to have started, albeit there is still a long way to go.

Following the RoSPA Spring/Summer Report on the play equipment at the Sports Field, repairs have been made to the see-saw and swing seats so

that the younger members of the Village can continue to enjoy the facilities.

Finally, just to remind you all that the Parish Council meets 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 Web Site.

Flooding Issues

Work on mitigating flood damage continues, but sadly at a painfully slow pace. Further flooding in the region during the summer has forced the Environment Agency to delay some of its work on the river banks but that work and the railway bridge repairs should be completed before the end of the year. Network Rail will clear the ditch and culvert at the Signal Box shortly and Cornbury Estate will then finish this work by clearing the ditch to the north of the railway line. OCC Highways has completed the pipe work in the High Street and is due to start work at Ascott Earl in December. A new culvert under the Chipping Norton road bridge, to speed the flow of water off the flood plain and the road when the river level drops, is in the planning stage. Riparian owners have all done their bit and things are now coming together. Finally, at the

time of writing, Thames Water has yet to report the findings of a survey of all the foul water drains undertaken at the start of September but during the survey a lot were found to be clogged with roots and debris and cleared out. A detailed report will appear in the Winter Grapevine.

Parish Council:

Stuart Fox
832004
Elaine Byles
831427
Bridgette Crundwell
830671
Nick Leadbetter
831571
Peter Greening
831757
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)
01608 641045

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2009 EDITION

JANUARY 5TH

PLEASE DON'T BE LATE

Wychwood Library

With cooler days ahead what better than a visit to Wychwood Library to stock up on reading material. There are always new books on our shelves, both fiction and non-fiction titles for adults and children. We have a huge selection of cookery books at present with winter warming soups and other delicious comfort food recipes.

Come and sit on our new bright red sofa in our children's area purchased by funds raised by Friends of Wychwood Library, ideal for a quiet time reading with your young ones or catching up with other mums. Come on a Wednesday morning and you can have coffee and cake as well!

Ancestry

I am delighted to be able to let you know that Wychwood Library, and indeed all Oxfordshire Libraries are now part of a countywide licence to provide access to Ancestry, the extremely popular family history database. This site is only available within the Library and not from home so come on in, or better still, book an hour long slot on one of our very speedy "Peoples Network" computers. Our public computers run at 100.0 Mbps so there is a minimum waiting time.

Answers Direct

Another Oxfordshire initiative is Answers Direct. This is an expert librarian-run countywide service, providing an-

swers to your questions, big and small on anything and everything. Contact 0845 600 3119 or libraryanswersdirect@oxfordshire.gov.uk or come on in to Wychwood Library and we can help you as well.

Junior Reading Club

Over the winter period, Wychwood Library will be running a Reading Club for our younger readers once a month. Suitable for ages 8 – 11, both boys and girls are invited to come along on Wednesday afternoons at 4pm for half an hour to discuss a chosen book. The first meeting will be **Wednesday 26 November**.

We look forward to seeing you at Wychwood Library

Ruth Gillingham and Liz Newport

Opening Times:

2.00 pm to 7.00 pm

Tuesday:

Closed

Wednesday:

9.30am to 1.00pm/2.00pm to 5.00pm

Thursday:

Closed

Friday:

2.00pm to 7.00 pm

Saturday:

9.30 am to 1.00 pm

Phone: 01993 830281

Leaffield School News

We are well and truly into the new school year and there is a buzz all around. The children are experiencing a creative curriculum, with a whole school theme, 'Down Our Way', looking at the local area. The children are excited and vocal about the trips and experiences they are having.

The school grounds are greatly altered, with new equipment for the children, including a traversing wall, adventure playground and netball and football posts. Lucky things!

The number of clubs and after school activities has increased again this year, with something on offer everyday. These include, football, rugby, singing, music, construction, lego, computer and dance. There is also a breakfast club on a Friday for a bit of early morning socialising!

The end of Year SAT results show, yet again, that Leaffield is above county and national averages in both key stages and exceeding the school's own targets in every subject. Well done to the children and staff for all their hard work.

Last month, we welcomed the 'Anglican Schools' Inspectorate into our school and their report stated that Leaffield School 'is very effective at fostering links with its community and very energetic in fostering a strong bond with its parish church. It is outstanding in establishing a sense of self worth among the pupils. The pupils are com-

passionate and sensitive towards each other and show respect towards the adults.' This is a great reflection on our school.

There will be many events within school and at the church during the Christmas period, so pop along and give your support. I am sure we are in for a few treats!

If you require any further information, please contact the school office, on 01993 878273.

Charlie Marshall
Community Governor

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2009 EDITION

JANUARY 5TH

PLEASE DON'T BE LATE

DID YOU KNOW..
Buses & Trains from Ascott

TRAINS

Monday to Friday (till 5 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 869100

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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USE THEM OR LOSE THEM

Events in West Oxfordshire

Antiques/Interiors Fair

Burford

15 November 2008

Victorian Christmas

Blenheim Palace

15 November - 14 December 2008

Sleeping Beauty Pantomime

Chipping Norton Theatre

18 November 2008 – 10 January 2009

Witney Farmers Market

Witney

19 November 2008

Living Crafts for Christmas

Blenheim Palace

21- 23 November 2008

Annual Christmas Presents Fair

Burford

21- 22 November 2008

Leafield Christmas Fayre & Feast

Leafield

22 November 2008

Burford Fleamarket

Burford

22 - 23 November and

29 November 2008

Traditional Christmas Decorations

Chastleton House

26- 29 November 2008

Annual Christmas Presents Fair

Burford

5 - 6 December 2008

Gifts & Treats Fair

Witney

6 December 2008

King's Craft Fairs

Woodstock

6- 7 December 2008

Chastleton House Dressed for Christmas

Chastleton House

6 December 2008

Burford Fleamarket

Burford

6 - 13 December 2008

Advent Weekend

Cogges Manor Farm

6 - 7 December 2008

Christmas Presents Fair

Burford

7 - 8 December 2008

Charlbury Farmers Market

Playing Close, Charlbury

13 - 14 December 2008

Santa Weekend

Bus Museum, Long Hanborough

13 December 2008

Festive Entertainment

Concert at Blenheim Palace
13 - 14 December 2008

Witney Farmers Market

Witney
17 December 2008

Chipping Norton Farmers Market

Chipping Norton
20 December 2008

Antiques/Interiors Fair

Burford
24, 26, 27, 29 & 31 December 2008

Antiques/Interiors Fair

Burford
1 January 2009

New Years Day

Bus Museum, Long Hanborough
1 January 2009

These dates and times were correct at the time they were compiled. We suggest that you check the venues before visiting.



Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

. Visit the Park to follow the progress of the recent babies as seen on "Michaela's Zoo Babies" on Channel 5.

Looking forward to Christmas Roy Cheek will be returning on 3rd and 4th December to give a seasonal talk, followed by lunch and the making of a holly wreath. This follows the now very popular format. Tickets £30.

Gift suggestions for any occasion include Animal Adoptions, Keeper for the Day (must be age 18 or over), Feed the Penguins, Day or Season Tickets.

Burford Oxon OX18 4JP Tel 01993 823006
Please see our website for more information
www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk

COOK'S CORNER: ASCOTT'S FAVOURITE RECIPES

Sweet-and-Sour Balti Chicken

This dish combines a sweet and sour flavour with a creamy texture. It is delicious served with Pullao Rice or Naan (Serves 4).

Ingredients

3 tbsp tomato purée
2 tbsp Greek style yoghurt
1 1/2 tsp garam masala
1 tsp chilli powder
1 tsp garlic pulp
2 tbsp mango chutney
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp sugar (optional)
4 tbsp corn oil
675g/ 1 1/2 lb/ 4 2/3 • cups chicken, skinned, boned and cubed
150 ml/ 1/4 pint/ • 2/3 cup water
2 fresh green chillies, chopped
2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
2 tbsp single cream

Method

1. Blend together the tomato purée, yoghurt, garam masala, chilli powder, garlic, mango chutney, salt and sugar (if using) in a medium mixing bowl.
2. Heat the oil in a deep round bottomed frying pan. Lower the heat slightly and pour in the spice mixture. Bring to the boil and cook for about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the chicken pieces and stir until they are well coated.
4. Add the water to thin the sauce slightly. Continue cooking for 5 – 7 minutes or until the chicken is tender.
5. Finally add the fresh chillies, coriander and cream and cook for a further 2 minutes until the chicken is cooked through.

Maggie Lyon

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Tiddy Hall

Regular Activities:

Monday - Friday Mornings

Pre-School

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant
07968 006451

Wednesday Afternoons

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter
01993 774568

Wednesday Evenings

Badminton

Contact: Chris Morgan
01993 831958

Special Events:

Race Night is on Saturday 8th
November

Flix in the Stix (with supper) is on Sat-
urday 15th November

Gifts & Treats Fair is on Saturday 22nd
November

To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

**Ingrid Ridley
01993 830612**



And finally.....

After 5 years of diligent desk top publishing, pressure of work has prompted Kingsley to decide that the time has come to pass on the job of compiling and laying out The Grapvine to someone else.

She has done a wonderful job and we are sure that all our readers will want to join the team in thanking her for all her hard work and dedication over the years.

THANK YOU KINGSLEY



We are pleased to say that Maggie Lyon has volunteered to take on the job and this is her first edition!

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Marble Arch
London
W1H 7BL
Tel: 0207 298 0314

Email: sales@wychwoods.com Web: www.wychwoods.com

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