
The Ascott Grapevine



Grapevine Appeal

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

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

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in 'The Grapevine' please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas.

Articles for the Spring issue of *The Ascott Grapevine* should be submitted by 5th April 2011.

Call 01993 831023 or email:
wendypearse@btinternet.com

The Editorial Team:
Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,
Wendy Pearse, Maggie Lyon.

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.

Opinions expressed in contributions are not necessarily those of the editorial team.

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THE CHASE BENEFICE

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends

With the rush of Christmas over, we tumble into the New Year, sleep for a couple of days, take down the decorations and plod back to work, school or our normal routines. By the time you read this Easter Eggs will be in the shops!



There's a pleasure about getting back to normality, but there's also the challenge of looking forward to what the year will bring.

Not all of us want this new year. For some of us we know it will bring separations and loss: children growing up and growing away, moving away, family and friends moving on. For some of us it brings extra work as we take on new responsibilities, study for exams, look after others.

For some we have to start again; to learn to be on our own, perhaps through moving away or the loss of those we have lived with for many years and decades.

A New Year is a fresh start whether exciting or daunting. It is a time to look forward and to realise that we are not alone for we walk with God.

The Christmas promise held by the babe of Bethlehem should not be lost with the tree and the tinsel, that promise of hope, love, peace and justice is there every day of 2011.

At the start of this New Year pray that God will walk ahead of you, to be by your side and close behind you: to surround you with his presence.

For it is his day that we are walking into and not ours. Let his will be done, and not ours.

May I wish you and your families a Happy and Peaceful 2011.

Mark Abrey

Thank you...

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the worship this Christmas. The weather made things more difficult than we were expecting and we were sorry that we had to cancel some services. So thank you to those who cleared paths, decorated the churches, played instruments, rehearsed carols, read in church, rang bells or served mulled wine and mince pies. Everyone's contribution really matters and makes a difference. There is always space for others to offer their gifts too.

If you are feeling you would have liked to have been part of the communities celebrations but don't know how, then have a word with one of the churchwardens or clergy. Its so important that our worship draws on the gifts and offering of as many as possible and not just a few.

And for those who were sad that the services in their Churches were cancelled because of the snow - don't forget that there are services in the Benefice every Sunday and not just at Christmas!

Mark Abrey



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Deaths

On the 31st October 2010, John Edward Kenny, aged 73 years.

On the 13th November 2010, Margaret Eleanor Longshaw, aged 83 years.

On the 10th December 2010, Eric Nathan Pratley, aged 84 years.

OBITUARIES

John Edward Kenny
1937 - 2010

John was born in Leamington Spa. On leaving school, he worked for a short time at Flavell's Foundry, Leamington Spa. After National Service, he became a regular soldier serving in the Royal Corps of Transport for 20 years. The next 14 years were spent in Saudi Arabia working with the Saudi Arabian Oil Company. Various jobs followed until he retired.



Although John and Janet his wife, whom he married in 1958 had not lived in Ascott very long, John loved the village and was hoping to help at the village shop but illness intervened and he died on the 31st October.

He is survived by Janet, two sons and a daughter, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Janet Kenny

Margaret Eleanor Longshaw
1927 - 2010

Yorkshire-born Margaret Tarves travelled to Oxfordshire at age 18 in 1945 as a volunteer land girl. An avid diarist all her life, Margaret recorded her memories of her six years of service in the Women's Land Army, recalling the camaraderie as vividly as the challenging conditions:



“It was tough ... blisters on our hands and feet and aching muscles. We usually went out to work in gangs of six. We did jobs in season - spud planting and picking, hoeing, harvesting sugar beet mangles, picking sprouts at Rollright, pitching sheaves of barley and corn and wearing wellies all the time because of rats and mice. After a while I became a forewoman over 24 girls, a big responsibility and the start of REAL hard work and long hours because the production of food was vital. But I did enjoy my life with great girls – full of fun and hard-working. I have many wonderful memories. I was released in 1951 and received a signed certificate from the Queen Mother for my service.”

In keeping with Margaret's zest for life, she was quick to add that the Land
www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk

Girls did not suffer *all* the time. “We all loved dancing,” Margaret wrote, “and often at the village hall we had to dance with each other due to the shortage of men our age.” At one such dance, though, she met John Longshaw from Ascott, and began married life on the High Street in 1952. Over

time, they bought the orchard on Ship-ton Road, built their home and moved in with their young son, Paul, in 1961. With Paul at the village school, Margaret assisted for a while at the Ascott post office, while John worked as a builder supervising local construction projects. In 1973, Margaret took a part-time job at Waitrose in Witney, where Margaret remained happily until retirement. There, she also found a special circle of life-long friends and spouses who met regularly for coffee, travelled to the theatre in London, shopped and socialised together. As a remarkable benefit of her employment, Margaret was able to make frequent holidays with her family and later, on her own, to places that became her favourite destinations of all: to the south, the sea surrounding Brownsea Castle, and to the north, the lakes and hills of Cumbria.

As Margaret would often declare in the midst of many a conversation, “I could talk the hind legs off a donkey” and it was indeed her joyful love of good conversation that enabled her to connect with anyone, anywhere, of any age. As a result, everyone seemed to know her or of her, and they made a point of looking out for her after her husband John died in 1995. Living on her own for more than a decade, Margaret said she always felt very safe in Ascott, surrounded both by a beautiful and bountiful garden and by dear friends. She recounted often the terrifying night of the flood, expressing her relief – and gratitude – when a neigh-

bour knocked on her door at 2:00 a.m. to see if she was all right.

Whether at work, on holiday or out for a stroll, what Margaret loved most was the company of other people – the more, the merrier. A lively raconteur and a party girl at heart, she loved a gathering, and any opportunity to celebrate. This, no doubt, is how she would want to be remembered: laughing with her friends and family, regaling them with colourful, funny stories about her adventures near and far.

Paul and Cille Longshaw

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Eric Nathan Pratley
1926 - 2010

On a dark January morning in 1954, I got on my bike to start my first day's work at the Tillyard in Shipton. Many young boys had their first employment after leaving school at the Tillyard. This included Eric Pratley. Whereas most of us became reasonably proficient at using a hammer and chisel,



Eric took his talent for woodwork further, and for the rest of his life, became a highly skilled cabinet maker. This ability he took with him when he did service in the Royal Engineers. Most of this time he spent in Egypt.

He loved to talk of his time in the Army, and when we often talked of old days in the village, for those brief moments we were young again.

The village church has lost a great friend in his passing. He and Joan, over the years, must have saved the church a great deal of money. When-

ever the churchyard wall fell down, Eric was always there to repair it. They could always be relied upon at Christmas to have the church warm for Midnight Communion and everything was prepared for the Service.

I shall remember with gratitude what kindness Eric and Joan showed me after my mother died.

They would often invite me to share their Sunday dinner. Their hospitality extended to Bishop Kenneth Cragg when he came to take a service in the village.

It is difficult to write at this sad time when a friend is no longer with us. It is in the days to come that we will miss them more.

I can say with confidence of Eric; he fought the good fight, he finished the course, he has kept the faith. May he meet his Redeemer with great joy.

Fred Russell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Eric Pratley

Joan and family would like to thank you all for the very many kind messages of sympathy we have received following Eric's recent death. Special thanks to those who helped clear the snow to the church and for all the support given by attending the funeral and donations to MIND. Due to the great number of cards and letters received will you please accept this as a very personal thank you from us all.

Folk at Tiddy

Well what a night! Saturday 20 November, our Folk night was a great success. This event was held in memory of Joe Packer who used to perform as part of our warm up act and had done so for many years. As some of you will know Joe died suddenly at the age of 51 in 2008. Anything Goes were our warm up act this time and we also had friends old and new to entertain as well. Our main guest, Johnny Silvo, as expected, gave a rousing performance and said to us later that it had been his best night ever!! An understatement to say that was some compliment. The fact that we had a fantastic audience of about 180 people made this a night to remember.

The raffle, in aid of Diabetes UK, which was the chosen charity of Joe's widow, raised the tremendous sum of £300.00. Tiddy Hall funds reaped the benefit of a grand total of £1,247.00. Thanks to everyone who supported this event.



Lyn Collins

OPEN GARDENS 2011

**Open Gardens 2011 to be held on
25 and 26 June**



If you would like to open your garden or need some more information about the event please contact **Yvette Keauffling on 832144 or y.keauffling@btinternet.com**. You can still open your garden if you can only do it on one of those days.

Hollie the Guide Dog Puppy

Hollie is now 8 months old and has grown to her adult size but is still a puppy in her actions and thoughts. She is strong and is currently 24kg, which makes playing tugging games a physical task. She is very happy when out on free runs as she loves to run completely free chasing anything and everything and loving every minute of her time outside.

Her supervisor recently took Hollie out without me just to see her reaction to someone else walking and controlling her in a similar environment that she will have to cope with when working. She came back having behaved perfectly and was praised highly by the supervisor, who has rated her as a probable good guide dog. What I would like to ask Hollie is 'Why don't you behave like that for me?'

One of the requirements for guide dogs is the ability to greet other dogs in the street as just passing friends who do not need to be jumped upon and played with but Hollie has not yet learnt to this task. However, Hollie did have a sharp lesson in understanding the dog hierarchy. Due to a long standing family arrangement I had to do a lot of travelling and staying overnight

with family members who could not accommodate Hollie. Due to Guide Dog rules Hollie could not be sent to kennels but to any registered past or present puppy walkers. The lady owner of Hollie's mother, Tara, who lives in Abingdon, agreed to board Hollie for 7 days as she has maintained an

interest in Hollie's progress and we had been in regular contact. The lady also has a failed guide dog, she turned out to be too timid and not assertive enough to take control of an owner, and also a rescued Jack Russell/Pointer cross dog. Hollie rushed in with her usual enthusiasm and playfulness and jumped all over Tara who immediately turned on



Hollie and with a strong snarl and bark putting Hollie straight on her belly in total submission. Hollie naively tried again with the same reaction from her mother and Hollie finished shaking and cringing between my legs begging to be taken away to safety! However, the chance to play with the Jack Russell was too much and she raced off to have fun. I took the opportunity to get out before she had chance to realise I had disappeared. During my absence she learnt very quickly who was in charge and Tara and Hollie became good friends, but Tara took over

Hollie's bed to show who was in charge and Hollie had to find somewhere else to sleep.

Hollie is fast approaching a major change in her life, adulthood. Her first season is close and this can be seen in her changes in behaviour, she has started to do things she has never done before, deliberate refusal to react to commands, more confidence in her actions and general mischievousness being the downside but on the upside she is becoming more controlled when meeting with people and now is less boisterous with small children. She still has an instinct to jump up and demand playtime with anyone she meets but settles down more quickly. Two months ago my 2 year old granddaughter was frightened by Hollie although Hollie only wanted to play but was overpowering. The Christmas visit by the family was a delight as Hollie was now more relaxed and my granddaughter was able to play with her, poke her, lay on top of her and generally have fun with her without fear. This change in life will result in Hollie having to be spayed soon after the end of her first season. This is standard procedure for all working dogs, male and female, as it is not possible for the dogs to react to instinctive desires to procreate whilst working.

The weather over the Christmas period prevented any real progress with Hollie's specific training as getting out and about to crowded shopping areas, trying to catch buses or trains etc. was

just not possible, consequently Hollie has had a real holiday of free runs every day and loving the snow, which she found absolutely fascinating. When we went across to Chilson through virtually virgin deep snow she had to bound rather than run and this seemed to be wonderful fun and managed to use a lot of energy, which was fortunate as she retired to her bed and let me rest for a couple of hours without having to respond to her normal demands for play. The number of free runs that Hollie has been allowed has resulted in her losing some weight, I weigh her every week to monitor her progress and she lost 2kg over the Christmas period but has not lost any energy or desire to go out and run around. I will have to reduce the overall number of free runs to three times a week, the other days will be walks in the village or Witney or Chipping Norton. Bus trips and train trips will now have to be programmed in to continue her proper training.

The next visit from the supervisor is in Banbury. I have to meet Cath in the Castle Quays Mall complete with Hollie's coat, which declares her as a guide dog puppy thus giving her access to most shops to see her reaction to real crowds, busy traffic and her level of patience whilst browsing.

In 2010 I have travelled to Fringford for fortnightly meetings of many of the guide dog puppies, 6 weeks to 7 months, in the Oxfordshire / Buckingham area where we perform various

training exercises as a group. This is to allow walkers to discuss any difficulties they may have encountered and also for the puppies to be controlled in what could be a chaotic situation, fifteen puppies all wanting to play with each other. This year Hollie moves up a class with the 8 - 12 months puppies, which should prove to be fun!

After remedial action on my part we have made great progress in Hollie's spending routine and the majority of walks are now clean as Hollie will do her business on command. I still have to gauge when the appropriate time is for her to go, it is not possible for her to completely control when she can go. Hollie enjoyed Christmas in her own fashion as the photo shows, no fancy presents necessary for her.

A visitor to our village remarked how disgusted he was with the amount of dog poo that is everywhere on the pavements and on the footpaths. He was concerned as he could not allow his 2 year old daughter to walk entirely on her own as there was always the danger of her treading in the poo, children do not generally look for

poo on the path in order to avoid it. Why do some dog owners find it necessary to leave their dog's mess anywhere their dog feels the need to leave it? Many people manage to carry bags to collect the dog poo and drop these off in the dog poo waste bins provided. It is such an easy thing to do, there is no need for the poo to get on the fingers if the correct procedure is followed. Older children who may be asked, or ask to take the family pet for a walk, can easily be taught how to pick up the poo without embarrassment.

Keith Ravenhill

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A DAY OUT ...

Don't you just love it when a plan comes together? Today I had to get to London because I wanted to visit my son Tom exhibiting his pies at Olympia's Fine Food Fayre.

However, last night the news said tube strike.

So, using TFL forward slash transport it gave me the update I needed. I downloaded bus routes from Paddington to Olympia. Also, as a fallback a PDF walking map in case I fancied a stroll through Hyde Park. (I'm a big believer in the concept of 'security is always having an alternative'!)

So, it's the 7.48 to London (at £15.40 senior return from Ascott this must be one of BR's best kept secrets for cheap fares at peak times). I change at Oxford for the 8.15 Virgin Cross Country to Bournemouth. Change at Reading. Jump on the 8.45 London direct and I arrive at Paddington station for 9.15. Now, that's not bad.

Tube update - chaos! Choice; cab bus or walk. Number 27 from Chalk Farm pulling in - bus rage about to break out. I show my seniors bus pass - free ride. Strap-hang for a couple of stops and then get a view from the top deck of Notting Hill village, down Kensington Church St onto Kensington High St (famous for Biba's and Derry and Toms in the sixties - brought back pleasant memories of working there at their Xmas sales). Now at Olympia

Great Hall. Its 10 a.m. and it's just over two hours since leaving Ascott.

Sampled fine food at the fine food exhibition and met some passionate entrepreneurs including a home based curry paste manufacturer and a Yorkshire couple who have just launched Henry V1 bottled water. I chatted about the merits of balsamic glaze - fig works well on vanilla ice cream apparently, as well as discussing ethical coffee trading in Uganda.

Back on the number 27 to Paddington, picked up a free copy of the Evening Standard, caught the 16.22 transferred to 17.31 at Oxford and walked through my front door at six for a glass of red and one of Toms Pies.

Cost for my day out in London - less than twenty quid.

But what if you miss the 7.48 I hear you say. Well, there is always the hourly rail bus to Kingham station. (Did you know they even have a buy or swap a book service before you board your train).

That's just a little of what you get when you Flash the Pass. I love it!

John Cull

Ed: Come on Ascott - let's hear about your top tips in these austere times!

MARK PIDGEON - SINGER/SONGWRITER

Who me?..... Actually I quite like the sound of it, singer-songwriter sounds a lot more glamorous than my day job. Singer/Songwriter or a Singer of Songs. I actually prefer a Singer of Stories. If a story is worth telling then it's worth writing a song about it, that's my philosophy and I'm sticking to it.

At the time of writing I've only been an official resident of the village for three days. Three days and they already want me to write my life story, WOW!!!!

I'm not a stranger to the village of course, I've been dating Elaine for a couple of years and she thought it was time she made me settle down so while you were all tucking into the excesses of Christmas we were busy moving my stuff into her home, not helped at all by the ice and snow. I was also part of the Acousticana show which played the Tiddy Hall last year and plans are afoot to play there again sometime this year. I also sang a couple of ditties at the start of the Village Panto.

It would be nice to be a full time musician but unfortunately unless you're exceptionally talented or extremely lucky it doesn't pay the bills so semi-pro is all I can class myself as being. That said, at the age of 51 I still

haven't given up hope and if Simon Cowell gets to read this.....

I started playing at the age of 11 on the cornet in the school brass band, learned to read music (apart from soccer it was all I was good at) and carried on until I left school at the age of 16. I

found my first guitar 3 months before Christmas in 1975, I say found because it was hidden away in my mum's wardrobe ready and waiting to be handed to me on Christmas day. It took them a bit by surprise when Christmas day came and I played them Apache by The Shadows. I had to pretend that I'd been practicing on a friend's guitar,

though I don't think mum ever believed that story.

I carried on playing (though not very well) for the next 10 years while I was serving in the Army. I played in a couple of 'Rock 'n' Roll Bands and started to take tentative steps in writing my own material. I've still got copies of what I class as the better songs but looking back now I can be honest enough to say they were very amateurish.

It was in my thirties that I started to write and perform seriously and was



one of the founder members of a band called 'Branded'. We were a sort of Country-Rock / Americana outfit. We'd do mostly up tempo numbers by bands and artists such as Creedance, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Steve Earle, etc. I don't think any of us were particularly talented as individuals but put together it sounded pretty cool. We even got to play at a couple of festivals and reached our pinnacle in 1998 when we headlined a Country Trade Fair down in Bitton, near Bristol. By that time most of the songs we performed were mine and they seemed to go down well wherever we played.

We had recorded an album called 'the Phoenix' and also played material which I later recorded on my second album titled 'Don't Give Up The Day Job'

We were offered a tour but most of the band at that time had real jobs and families so couldn't commit so the band as it was then, folded.

I took a year out and reformed the band with new members and we became just another Rock Covers band performing at weddings, parties and pub gigs.

I still wrote songs on and off and someone suggested

I should try the folk circuit. So that's what I do now.

I've recorded two more albums over the last few years, a rock covers album called 'Unrepentant' and more recently another one of mostly my own material called 'Demons'. I plan on releasing a new album this year provisionally titled 'Sold Down The River' which will still have a touch of Americana about it but is aimed at the Folk Club circuit

Well that's me and you can check out my website www.markpidgeon.com

PS I never claimed to be a singer it's just that no bugger else would do it....'Keep on Rockin'....Mark

STOP PRESS:

Acousticana returns to Tiddy Hall, Saturday April 2nd.



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GERMANY CALLING

“Nobody gets posted abroad from the Accounts Course” said the sages who were our instructors. Having just spent 18 months at RAF Strike Command flying around UK and bits of the globe, I fully expected to spend three years as an accountant at some remote UK RAF station.

So I was posted to HQ RAF Germany at Rheindahlen near Monchengladbach, and another girl to Brunssum in the Netherlands.

In early November 1972, fresh from honeymoon, we loaded most of our worldly goods into and onto my Mini, then in a real pea-souper, boarded the Dover-Zeebrugge ferry. We parked behind a Triumph Spitfire with British Forces Germany number plates. BFG plates were white on black, a pair of letters, three numbers and a ‘B’ for British. They were discontinued in the 1980s because they made the cars distinctive targets for the IRA.

Hopes that the fog would be less on the Continent were dashed, it was even thicker. An ex-Germany colleague had advised routing via Brussels, so at about 45mph because of the fog, I set out to drive abroad for the very first time. We reached the Brussels ring at Friday rush-hour. Scant years before, the Belgians had introduced the driving test, and it showed. It would have been bad enough in daylight and clear visibility: in darkness and fog, it was mayhem. Somehow we escaped, tried to

plot a new route and ended up crawling through towns and villages on A and B roads. With signs on walls at junctions, we were peering at them with a torch. Some time after 11pm, we crossed the German border. My wife Celia had been an RAF nursing sister, and colleagues who had been at RAF Wegberg hospital near Rheindahlen told her not to go into Wegberg village. So guess where we ended up?

“I’ll ask that chap over there” said I, spotting a figure in the gloom.

“I wouldn’t right now” came the reply.

I waited until Mafeking had been relieved, then asked the way. He was completely stotious, but his slurred ‘gerade aus’, ‘links’ and ‘rechts’ were dead accurate and around midnight, we collapsed in the officers’ hostel.

The following and gin-clear morning, my new boss Alec and wife Val appeared, having given up on us the evening before, and gave us a conducted tour of the military city. And the first car we saw? The Spitfire! Doh!

Rheindahlen was huge, the HQ for the RAF and Army and NATO too. It was dominated by the Big House, the white stone HQ complex. Entirely self-contained with its own power station etc, it boasted the world’s biggest NAAFI, its own filling station, a parade of shops, three banks and every

amenity possible. It housed 15,000 people from British, German, Dutch and Belgian forces, with many more living off-base as far away as Cologne. All the roads were German public highways, but with English names like Queens Drive.

A key priority was to obtain BFG driving licences and a BFG registration for the car. Getting your licence involved the 'tick-test', multiple choice on road signs, markings and the rules. Having mugged-up prior to leaving UK, I managed to pass first time, but it took Celia two or three attempts. Every time she took the test, there was the same lady who was now on her ninth or tenth try!

I had set the Mini up to meet the regs and it passed its MOT first go. Now we could buy BFG petrol coupons. Every vehicle had a monthly ration, with extra for leaves. Available in 2-star benzin, 4-star super and diesel, and valid at any BP station and Shell stations on autobahns, these were a real perk. Petrol with a coupon cost half the UK price. With Germany extending so far south, you could motor down into Europe, fill up just before leaving the Republic and enjoy at least a day's driving on duty-free fuel.

Just before Christmas, we took over a flat in Wickrath, a village about 6 miles from the base. The other flats in the block were home to RAF officers and their families, so we enjoyed great camaraderie and support and soon settled in. Celia got a job with the Army.

It was quickly apparent that to motor the autobahns and autoroutes of Europe, we needed something a tad bigger and faster than a Mini. Fate chose us the right car. One Saturday, we drove into station HQ where I worked to visit the duty-free shop at the far end. There in my parking space sat a BMW Touring in the then fashionable Baikal Orange. We were smitten.

The local car dealers did a roaring trade in tax-free cars, but military sales for BMW were handled by one Norman Banthorpe from a tiny office about a mile from Rheindahlen. After perusing brochures and stretching the budget until it twanged, we could afford a 2002 Touring, the hatchback version of the saloon. I ordered one in orange. Three weeks later, Norman rang to say the orange one had been taken off production, so I chose white.

Some weeks passed and Norman rang again.

"Why haven't you collected your car?"

"Because I didn't know it was ready."

"Didn't I tell you?"

"No."

He was like that.

After a hectic few days, I amassed insurance, a BFG registration and plates, petrol coupons, two first-class rail warrants to Munich and some leave. We boarded the train in Monchengladbach to find it freezing.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

The guard assured me that with a new engine at Cologne, the heating would come on. Wrong. The further south we travelled, so the snow rose and the temperature fell, aided by a howling draught from around a waste bin in the compartment wall. Wrapped in sweaters and towels from our suitcase, we were yelled at by the guard for putting our feet on the seats, even though we had no shoes on.

Frozen stiff, we thawed out in Munich bahnhof buffet, then took a taxi to BMW's famous circular HQ. Plates fitted and controls explained, we elected to leave the city, rather than acclimatise ourselves to a new car in the fast and furious traffic. For two or three days, we tootled up the Romantische Strasse, delighting in the picturesque towns and villages and staying in cheap and comfortable zimmerfreis. At one stage, we took a wrong turning and strayed above the snowline. We were rolling slowly down a village street when a dog sprang from behind a parked car and jumped at us. I am delighted to say that I covered the wretched

mutt in snow from my spinning wheels.

Late one afternoon, we found ourselves beside the Mohne Dam. Photographs do not do it justice, it is huge, and put into true perspective the enormous success of the Dambusters' raid. The breach they created was clearly visible, as the stone was marginally different and missing the lichen covering the rest of the dam. We booked into a nearby hotel. The bed was fine, with the customary goosefeather du-

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vet, but the plumbing was obsolescent when Queen Victoria was quite a gel. The bath tap emitted a mere rusty trickle of tepid water. The strangest thing was that at breakfast, the German radio station was playing the Dambusters' March!

Our new wheels generally matched expectations. Spacious, a quiet and powerful engine was coupled with good ride and handling. I thought the brakes would improve with use, but they were forever the Achilles heel of the car despite many attempts to improve them. The hard seats were built for fat German bottoms; they lacked support and canted forward, forcing clenched buttock muscles. Worst of all were the headlights. Emitting a 36W glow on dipped and a dazzling 42W each on main, they were positively dangerous.

On a UK trip soon afterwards, we bought a comfortable driver's seat, inertia reel belts and Cibie Biode quartz halogen headlights. Beloved of the rallying fraternity, the Cibies set the hedges on fire.

BMW's of that era came as just the car, any extras were expensive, so I was to swiftly add a cassette player, too.

On Good Friday, we awoke and said "What are we going to do for Easter?"

"Let's go to Switzerland" said I.

By early afternoon, we were enjoying lunch well inside the Swiss border. Replete, we took the cable car to Mur-

ren. I am not good with heights and initially, the long drop below the car gave me the collywobbles. Assuring myself of the marvellous Swiss engineering, I calmed down. After sight-seeing in Murren, we took a second car up the Schilthorn to Piz Gloria. Famed as Blofeld's HQ in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, there were 007 reminders everywhere. It cost a king's ransom for coffee and cake to sit in the revolving restaurant and admire the Bernese Oberland, but you could not miss such an opportunity, could you?

As dusk approached, we looked for a zimmerfrei. Spotting a nice-looking hotel, we went in and I asked in German if they had a double room free. The lady took us up to view the accommodation. Late afternoon sun illuminated a windowsill carpeted with fly corpses. Without turning a hair, she cupped her left hand under the sill and scooped the bodies into it.

I said in English "Hygienics!"

In perfect English, she said: "You won't be wanting the room then."

We did find a zimmerfrei, but got a nasty shock when we discovered the true price. Schwyzerdeutsch is a language all of its own, allied to an impenetrable accent. I thought the receptionist had said CHF9, but when I checked again, she had said CHF29. This was far beyond the Wilds' budget, so we stayed only one night.

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

When I arrived in Germany, my A-level German was rather rusty, but lots of practice and a course eventually took me to Linguist standard. As German is spoken in Switzerland, Austria and northern Italy, it was a useful language to have.

While I am numerate, accountancy does not light my candle, so my job was not that exciting. Day after day, I handled thousands of deutschmarks and they just became pieces of paper. But one of the more interesting aspects was auditing the books of the various clubs and societies and teaching new treasurers book-keeping. One episode was a valuable lesson in trusting your instincts. Most club funds were small,

but the bar of the Wickrath Social Centre, located in an off-base housing estate for non-commissioned ranks, did a roaring trade.

Its treasurer was an Army sergeant who got my antennae twitching, even though there was nothing to put my finger on. Pre-computers, bar records were manual, with stocks maintained in a big ledger ruled with multiple columns, one column per type of drink. On reaching the bottom of a page, you brought forward those figures to the top of the next page. If you were cooking the books, you put a different figure on the new page, because with 20 or 30 columns, it was easy for an auditor to miss.

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On one audit, our man was a crate of beer short. He paid up the DM20 quite happily, but it put me on the qui vive. Next time, he was three barrels of beer light, so I told my squadron commander Roy that I suspected a fiddle.

Roy arranged for another squadron leader, a New Zealander, to do a check and I helped him as I had once been a barman prior to the RAF. The four 'erberts who served as barmen were on hand as ordered. Their body language spoke volumes.

The smell of stale beer hit me long before the door opened, occasioned by no cleaning and drip trays awash in last night's Paulaner.

"Where's your tottage stick?" I asked.

A tottage stick is like a large double-side ruler with a slot down the middle to see the level in each bottle. Gradations covering every type of spirit allowed accurate stock checks.

"We don't have one, we guess."

They had no beer scale either, which performed the same function for casks as a tottage stick.

I also noticed that all the spirits on optics had been moved to lower shelves, so the barman could obscure the optic with his body and serve short measures.

All the beer pipes were festooned with white fungus.

Proof that they were really up to tricks lay in two storerooms at the back, crammed to the gunnels with bottles. Germany has long had an excellent bottle deposit system; they were taking deposits from customers, then pocketing the money and not returning the bottles.

On my advice, my Kiwi friend shut the bar for a stocktake. The 'erberts found themselves in front of their bosses and relieved of bar duties. There was no concrete evidence against the barmen, but I thought we might have the treasurer for false accounting. Two days later, he was posted to Northern Ireland. The brown jobs were not about to let the fly boys hang out their dirty washing. Unfortunately, the officer-in-charge of the Centre was an RAF policeman. For any OIC, a fraud on his watch was bad news, for a policeman it was really bad news. All officers had secondary duties like this and our annual assessment included performance on these duties. Let us just say I no longer featured on our man's Christmas card list.

Nigel Wild

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A REPLY

To Russell, With Love
There is an old man called Fred
who suffers from thoughts in his head.
“There’s a bee in my bonnet, I must
write a sonnet
about something that someone has
said.”

So Fred sits down at his table
to write yet another fable.
He concentrates hard, but he is no bard
(though at Panto he’s more than able).

This time he picks on the Dutch
about whom he knows not so much.
His words are confusing, not really
amusing,
and they’re easily kicked into touch.

Whether Orange, Holland, or Red-
White-and-Blue,
clean or dirty, give them their due:
Almost won their campaign, lost only
to Spain,
who I think deserved it, don’t you?

But let’s look at the English team,
who resembled skimmed milk more
than cream.
They played like beginners, they’re
whiners, not winners,
The World Cup? A silly dream.

Put that in your pipe, Fred, and smoke
it.
If you have a cat, go and stroke it.

If the fire dies down and the ashes turn
brown
I leave you with this just to stoke it:

South Africa and England are playing
Down Under
And beating those Aussies with blood
and with thunder
It’s a smaller ball, yes, and I know they
don’t kick it,
But two against one, mate, that’s sim-
ply not cricket!

H Kappen



MINE IS BIGGER THAN YOURS

The severe weather in the week before Christmas produced some wonderful sights of long icicles hanging from guttering around the village. It also gave me a topic to dream about on Boxing Day. Why not hold a competition to see who had the longest icicle? As usual you have to have rules to stop people cheating.

The first thing I thought of was that they must be measured in-situ to prevent people growing them artificially. We've all read about the vegetable growers 'up north' who grow their leeks, carrots and parsnips in drain pipes to keep them straight. – Health and Safety immediately came to mind. I would hate to be responsible for all the keen competitors who fell off their ladders and sustained broken wrists and ankles or even worse. Also would they measure them correctly if they were hanging from a ladder with one hand on the guttering and the other being stretched to at least six feet below them (I have seen some whoppers!).

I then thought that they could be measured on the ground but again you have the difficulty of breaking them off, thus possibly losing vital length and possibly endangering the life of the person holding the ladder by being speared by six feet of frozen water. Photographs would be of no use either because there are many people who are

very able to manipulate photographs on computers these days.

As with all competitions you have to have a closing date when you can judge all the entries together. The logical closing date would be New Year's Eve. All icicles could then be taken to the shop to be measured. This pointed towards a need to store the icicles for a period. I could imagine all sorts of problems. Where do I put the frozen turkey now that you have put that icicle in the deep freeze? Who has used my prize winning icicle as ice in the gin and tonic?

Just imagine the closing hours of New Year's Eve with all the competitors charging along the pavements to get to the shop before closing time, with six foot spears of ice tucked under their arms like knights of old.

At this point I was woken from my reverie with a whisky and mince pie – but I did manage to think of a prize – an ice lolly every week for a year. Perhaps if we have similar severe weather next year we will publish the rules in time for a proper competition.

Happy New Year to you all.

Rob Morgan

NO ONE TELLS ME ANYTHING

During the recent severe weather the Parish Councillors have often heard the words ‘What is the Parish Council doing about it?’ To this end, we published an A4 newsletter which was delivered to every house in the village to try and keep you up to date. In addition may I respectfully remind you that the Parish Council meetings are open to the general public if they wish to attend. Finally, all the Minutes of our meetings are published on the Ascott website, www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk, in the month following the signing of the Minutes as a true record. This means, for example, that the Minutes of the meeting held in December 2010 will be on the website after they have been signed at the January, 2011 meeting.

Below are the Minutes, in full, of meetings held 100 years and fifty years ago.

100 years ago.

Ascott under Wychwood

October 21st 1910

On this day a meeting of the Parish was held pursuant to notice.

It was proposed by Mr Albert Chaundy, seconded by Mr R M Mansfield that Mr James Edginton be elected as a

representative Trustee of the Ascott Charity Estate in place of Mr Walter Ernest Moss, who resigned. This was carried unanimously.

A precept was signed for Three Pounds and cheque for £3 2s 1d. This concluded the business.

L R Hambidge.

50 years ago.

April 25th 1960

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the School on Monday 25th, 60. Minutes of the previous meeting read & signed. Arising from the minutes the Council discussed the estimate for the Notice Boards & it was considered too high to be accepted. Decided to approach a local man for a tender.

The clerk reported on a letter he had received from the Parochial Church Council re Iron Kissing gate at entrance to Church & subsequent correspondence with the R.D.C. & that he had advised the Church Council that an interview with the Surveyor was being arranged.

A letter was received from W.I. regarding the supplying by the Council of two litter baskets in the village & their offer of £1 toward the cost. The Clerk was instructed to contact R.D.C. as to our being able to supply.

Noted that Mr Lenton had agreed to act as Treasurer to the P.C. The Council were also informed that four cheques had been signed out of meeting i.e. Hadden Best & Co £1-5s-0d a/c for Precept Book etc, The Vicar £1-12s-6d i.e. 5 meetings at 6s/6d. S.E.B. £8-10s-7d & S. A. Waters £4-4s-0d Salary & postage.

S Warner, Chairman.

Rob Morgan

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YOUR SHOP NEEDS YOU!

Do you fancy contributing to our village community, by helping in our own village shop - **run by the village, for the village?**

We need villagers who would be prepared to spend a little time helping the existing team keep the shop running. There are a variety of jobs to interest people, whether it be behind the till, in the back office maintaining the computer system, ordering supplies or helping out generally, so why not spare us a few hours each month?

It is a really friendly and welcoming place, so do please contact us on **831240** or call in to see us and see where you might fit in. Thank you.

MORE THAN JUST A PANTOMIME!

On the evening of 10 December some 90 people packed into The Tiddy Hall to enjoy the Village Pantomime, written by Fred Russell, produced by Keith Ravenhill, directed by Carole Angier and 'performed' by the usual suspects. This year's panto was entitled 'Toad in the Hole' and the general consensus was that Fred had managed to exceed even his own high standards. The story followed the riveting tale of the tribulations of Princess Moanalot as she tried to find a suitable husband, despite the worst ambitions of the wicked witch. Thankfully the timely intervention of the Fairy Princess averted disaster and they all lived happily ever after. Rarely have such an unlikely combination of characters been seen on stage together! Harry Kappen recorded the event and has kindly posted some of the 'highlights' on YouTube. Simply go to YouTube and search for 'Ascott Pantomime' and all will be revealed.

In the interval, despite there being no charge to attend, everyone was treated to a glass of wine and a delicious supper.

The audience also thoroughly enjoyed songs from Mark Pidgeon, a poem written by Wendy Pearse and recited by Jim Pearse and the whole evening was rounded off with a medley of seasonal songs from the Ascott Singers.

Huge thanks have to go to all who organized and contributed to this remarkable event which is such a wonderful start to the Christmas season. There is something very special about being in the Tiddy Hall and being surrounded by the friendship of the Ascott community. The 'retiring collection' raised valuable funds for The Grapevine and the Ascott Village Charity.

The great news is that Fred has already written the 2011 Panto!

Tim Lyon





Photographs: H Kappen

MORE THAN JUST A PANTO - REALLY!

As we enjoy the Ascott pantomimes written by Fred Russell, I wonder how many of us realize that we are actually witnessing a drama form which predates Christianity and, very likely, Celtic times.

The pantomimes that Fred writes incorporate strong elements of Mummery Plays, age-old dramas performed at the season of the winter solstice. Despite these plays being handed down by word of mouth for thousands of years, and having been overlaid with additions from subsequent eras, the underlying message remains clear; they tell the story of the battle between light and darkness and the ultimate victory of good over evil.

The classic form of these plays involves the battle between the champion of the powers of darkness and, during the times of the Crusades, this character became identified as a Turkish Knight. It was logical that at the same period the identity of the champion of light should become St George. In the Mummery plays, these two characters set about each other and

often it is brave St George who is temporarily laid low. It is at this point that the third key character appears, the Doctor. He was originally the Priest or Medicine-man who with his potions and magic restores the fallen champion to life.

The battle recommences, St George triumphs and the play then takes pains to emphasize that it is the intervention of the Medicine-man and his magic powers which tips the scale and restores the world to light and warmth.



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Other characters were later introductions including the Compere and Father Christmas. Little Johnny Jack is a regular character who is replaced by the giant Beelzebub in some traditions.

So how have these plays survived for such an extraordinarily long time? Well, initially they will certainly have reflected the changing of the seasons and the defeat of darkness as the winter solstice passed and the sun gained ascendancy once more. Many cultures believed that human intervention and magic helped to revive the ailing sun and so the plays had great symbolic significance and reinforced the power of the Priesthood as they demonstrated their ability to lengthen the days. Later they were kept alive by peasants and labourers for one good practical reason, they provided an excellent excuse for an expedition to the big house to obtain the ingredients for a feast! In some traditions Little Johnny Jack concluded the performance with :

**Here comes I, Little Johnny Jack,
With my wife and my children on
my back.
My family's large, and my wife is
small,
And I am father of them all.
Roast beef, plum pudding and mince
pie.
Who likes them better than Father
Christmas and I?**

Nobody!!

**A jug of Christmas ale sir will make
our voices ring,
Money in our pockets is a very good
thing.**

**So ladies and gentlemen, be at your
ease.**

**And give us poor Mummers just
what you please.**

So you will see that Fred very skillfully interweaves the old Mummers characters and themes with the Prince Charmings and Ugly Sisters that we know from more modern pantomime to provide the unique and exceptional Ascott Pantomimes that we enjoy each year.

Tim Lyon

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APRIL 5TH
PLEASE DON'T BE
LATE**

JULIE SHORT

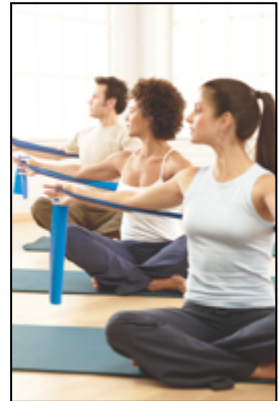
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Pilates Classes at Tiddy Hall

New for
2011

Julie Short is a certified instructor in the world-renowned STOTT PILATES® exercise method. Come and join her for a fun and effective Pilates class every Thursday at Tiddy Hall from 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

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Classes are £8 each or you can book and pay for 5 weeks in advance for only £35 (£7 each)

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Numbers are limited to a maximum of 15 people per session so please call or email Julie today to book your place to avoid disappointment on the night

**T 07761 533 969 E julie@julieshortpilates.co.uk
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Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

Animal of the Month

Reindeer

The Reindeer or “Caribou” is surely one of the most recognisable animals at the Park.



Reindeer have long been domesticated by indigenous peoples in the Arctic region for their meat, skins and fur, which has excellent warming properties. Huge herds are led to grazing grounds where they can spend the winter and this species can withstand the harshest conditions. When walking, the tendons of Reindeer make a clicking noise as they slip over the joint's, it is believed that this sound helps them to stay together when

moving in heavy snow when visibility is poor. Their large, soft hooves prevent them from sinking into soft snow.

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

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ASCOTT?

Try to solve our picture quiz by identifying each of the following photographs, write your answers in the spaces provided and **you could win a £10.00 voucher** to spend at the Ascott Village Shop. If a number of correct entries are received there will be a draw to find the winner. If there is no entry with every photograph correctly identified then the entry with the most correct answers, will be awarded the prize; again if there is a tie there will be a draw to establish the winner.

The competition will remain open until 26th February 2011.

1.....

6.....

2.....

7.....

3.....

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4.....

9.....

5.....

Please leave your entries in the Ascott Village Shop for Stuart's attention

Name

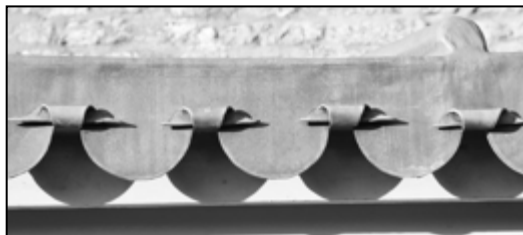
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1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



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GARDENING NOTES

Winter can be such a dreary time especially in the garden. Nearly everything looks grey, shredded or rotting. What can be done to lighten the mood and make everyone feel happier wandering round outside? This is where I think shrubs and trees come into their own, and where hard landscaping features and looking after the birds can be good focuses for helping you deal with winter and hastening its passing. Finding herbaceous plants which can bring fleeting glimpses of colour to the scene will help as well.

Shrubs can provide colourful flowers during a large part of the winter. Evergreen mahonia with yellow flowers and viburnum tinus with particularly strongly perfumed pink flowers on leafless branches come immediately to mind. Sarcococca with highly scented white flowers is worth a mention too. It is often difficult to work out where the delicious scent you can smell on the air comes from. It's the sarcococca flowers, they are minute and they hide away within the dense foliage which can often be mistaken for box. Birds love the taste of berberis berries and those of other shrubs while we love the colours. Some deciduous shrubs will provide colour too through their stems.

Willows can have orange, bright green or purple and cornus can have red, black and green stems. They are particularly showy when lighted by the glow of a winter sun. To keep them highly coloured, the stems need to be cut down severely in spring so that they have a whole growing season to renew themselves.

Trees are wonderful in winter for their bark and fruits. The trunks of birch trees shine out brightly even in the greyest day and when the sun is out they shimmer. A planting arrangement which allows birch and willow or cornus to play off each other is a scene which gladdens the heart. The leaves of some bergenias, those ground cover plants with large cabbage like leaves, turn a deep maroon colour in the cold and would add another harmonious element to the planting as would snowdrops. Crab apples trees have wonderful fruit ranging in colour from deep red to pale orangey yellow to perk up the winter scene and provide food for hungry birds.

Hanging baskets planted with foliage can raise the spirits and look very good against limestone walls. Aren't Cotswold dwellers lucky? A lot of people add colour with winter pansies and use them in pots. They are valu-



able plants for providing flowers in autumn going into winter and again as winter becomes spring but in between blooms are scarce. Whoever manages to breed pansies which continue to flower even in the worst of weather will make a fortune. In the meantime evergreen foliage is valuable for its continuous presence and variegated evergreens are the only plants which can be relied upon to provide white or yellow foliage colour as contrasts to winter green. Underplanting baskets with crocuses gives another dimension and when they emerge you can start to believe spring is not far behind.

High on everyone's garden design list should be a seat which can be reached by an all-weather path and which picks up any rays of sun that may emerge. Wrapping up warmly and taking a cup of tea or coffee with you to sit there and enjoy the sun is a marvellous winter pick-me-up. If you put up some bird feeders and scatter some feed on the ground as well and provide water, all within a reasonable distance of the seat, you can expect to see a variety of tits, finches and may be something more exotic, such as a woodpecker. You'll be much closer to them than you would be in the house. It all adds to the feeling of wellbeing so needed in the depths of winter. Arches for decoration or for plants to climb can add to your garden's winter attractiveness when so much vegetation around it has been flattened by the weather or cut down in the Autumn.

Giving the garden items to enjoy in the winter other than plants may lead you to venture out there more often and help you to concentrate on things other than the dullness of the time of the year. Some people like to make just one corner of their garden a winter delight while others try to make the whole a winter wonderland. Which way you choose to go will depend on so many elements, as budget, space and time available, inclination etc, etc. But I think that everyone would benefit from at least making some element of the garden, however big or small, special for winter enjoyment. Try it if you have not already done so and see how it helps to reduce the low spirit the season engenders.

Yvette Keauffling



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE EMAIL ALERTS ABOUT WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

Residents in West Oxfordshire can now sign up to receive information and updates about their waste and recycling collections direct to their email inbox.

Householders can choose what level of information they receive, ranging from occasional messages with important information about changes or disruptions to their service, for example due to bank holidays or adverse weather conditions, to weekly reminders about which bins to put out for collection.

Anyone who wishes to receive email alerts can sign up online at www.westoxon.gov.uk

Emails alerts have been launched by West Oxfordshire District Council as part of improvements to the 'My West Oxfordshire' section of its website. By simply entering their postcode into the 'My West Oxfordshire' search box, residents can find out about local services and facilities, information on planning applications near their home, council tax bands for their property and area, and who their ward councillor is, in addition to details about their next waste and recycling collections.

'My West Oxfordshire' has been improved to coincide with the start of the District's new waste and recycling service last month (November), with the aim of helping residents through the transition.

Cllr David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "There have been big changes for our residents with the introduction of weekly food waste recycling, free garden waste collections and non-recyclable rubbish collections moving from weekly to fortnightly, and also changes to collections days for the majority of the District.

"We have gone to great efforts to keep residents informed every step of the way to try to ease them through the changes with as little inconvenience as possible to them and are pleased that this seems to have worked. The improvements to our website are the latest measure to try to ensure that people have access to the information they need and the new email alerts will mean they get this more directly and quicker than before."

The Council is hoping to introduce further email alert options at a later date to give residents the chance to receive information about other Council services that may affect them.

The new waste and recycling service was introduced by the Council to give people more opportunities to recycle and reduce costs incurred through landfill penalties. It is hoped that the new service will double West Oxfordshire's 34% recycling rate within the first year.

The new service includes:

Weekly food waste recycling collections

Weekly black box recycling

Fortnightly optional garden waste collections

Fortnightly rubbish (non-recyclable) collections, alternating with garden waste collections

Residents can also call the Council for information about their waste and recycling collections on 01993 861025.

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WINDRUSH VALLEY SCHOOL: ACADEMIC & PERFORMING ARTS OVERVIEW



Headmaster's Voice

We have recently been through our Independent Schools Inspection, and eagerly await publication of the report. However, I would like to share two key phrases that stand out “*By Year 6 in national tests, pupils obtain outstanding results when compared with the national average for maintained primary schools*”. No wonder then that we were listed in the top 200 best performing independent schools in the recently published Times list.



Children from Form 2 through to Form 6 have been working incredibly hard on their English Speaking Board examinations (ESB). The ESB is a national awarding body, whose aim is to develop pupils' skills on speaking and listening. The children have all had to learn a

poem, prepare a talk using visual aids and answer questions before finally reading a piece from their favourite book.

There have been some fabulous presentations from Olga Korbut (for those of us who remember her), to poisonous snakes and making pasta.

Well done to all the children, and we look forward to receiving some great grades in the near future.



The whole school has been working hard on our production of Jesus' Christmas Party and carol concert, performed in St Mary's Church, Shipton-under-Wychwood.

Key Stage 1 and Foundation Unit children are performing this amusing interpretation of the Nativity.

With Key Stage 2 and the School Choir accompanying the performance. Our school band, conducted by Mr Lovell-Meade, got us all into the Christmas spirit, along with mulled wine and mince pies; a perfect way to end a fabulous term.

WINDRUSH VALLEY SCHOOL: SPORTS OVERVIEW

What a great sporting term we have had, even if the weather has tried to dampen our spirits, it definitely hasn't succeeded! We were fortunate that the weather held off enough for the children to take part in several competitive sporting events



Independent Schools Association (ISA) – Swimming Gala

Barnet Copthall Swimming Centre, was the venue for the ISA annual North London swimming gala. This year saw a record number of schools participating, so as you can imagine, a noisy but exciting day.

Nine children from Windrush Valley School travelled to North London to take part in the gala, hoping to gain a place at the National ISA Swimming finals later this year. The competition was very tough, but admirably all the children from WVS achieved excellent results, no mean feat considering we were the smallest school in the competition!

Well done to all the children, with an extra special mention to Charlotte Roscoe for an outstanding performance, coming 3rd in the Year 5 girl's freestyle, and 1st in the Year 5 girl's breaststroke. Charlotte was very excited to represent ISA North London at the National Swimming finals, there she was part of a freestyle relay team, who came 5th overall.



From l to r: Eliot Jones, Blake Richardson, Cassia Belardo, Charlotte Roscoe, Romy Dawkins, Maia Morris, Rachel Purvis, Catherine Hawkins, Augusta Townley

With a very special thanks to Mrs Vanessa Hicks, the children's swimming coach for all her hard work, patience and dedication.



The Perfect Weather for Cross Country!

What a great day 15 children from Windrush Valley School had recently at the annual St Hugh's cross country event. Windrush Valley was represented by 5 teams of boys and girls, from Under 8s through to the Under 11s.

It was wet, cold and very muddy, with slopes, bridges and fields to run through, yet all the children showed great spirit and determination in their races. Well done to all who took part:

U8 boys: Lorimer Kay, Mark Milner and Rufus Worne

U8 girls: Ella Frost, Bella Lear and Alice Smith

U10 girls: Rachel Purvis, Cassia Belardo and Eva Astor

U11 boys: Blake Richardson, Eliot Jones and Harold Lear

U11 girls: Romy Dawkins, Catherine Hawkins and Augusta Townley

Once again, well done to all runners, with a special mention for Mark Milner who came 2nd in his heat against 10 other athletes.

WVS Football Focus



Congratulations to the boys Under 8 football team, who won convincingly at Kitebrook School recently. All the boys thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and this is a making of a great senior team.

From l to r:

**James Hill, Benjamin Lewis-Ing,
Finley Pemberton, Lucas Melvin,
Geronimo Neate-James, Jack Wilson,
Mark Milner and Rufus Worne**





Netball Round-up

We have started a netball “after school” club, which all the Year 5 and Year 6 girls have enthusiastically embraced, leading to many of the girls playing competitive netball against other schools for the first time.

Unfortunately, the weather has got the better of us, and we have had to cancel some matches, but did manage to play an Under Under 11s at Sibford Ferris, coming home with a 7-1 win, unfortunately, however, our Under 10s match at Kitebrook was cut short when thunder and lightning stopping play!!



From l to r: Esme Chamberlain, Catherine Hawkins, Isabelle Slater, Romy Dawkins, Rachel Purvis, Maia Morris, Eva Astor, Augusta Townley, Evelyn Smith, Charlotte Roscoe, Rose Cooper and Hattie Cornish

Finally, we were very excited that our Year 5 and 6 girls were invited to a Pop Lacrosse training session and mini-tournament at Malvern St James School in Great Malvern. What a great experience. The girl’s received coaching from several County, England and Wales Junior players, and fully enjoyed the day. We are very much looking forward to including Pop Lacrosse in our future sports programme.



IT'S ALL A LOT OF HOT AIR!

On a crisp, clear frosty night have you ever gone outside and gazed into the glory of the heavens and wondered which way up the universe is?

Have you ever wondered why athletes run anti clockwise around a track?

Does this favour the right handed, right footed competitor? If this is so then perhaps there should be separate Olympics for left handed, left footed athletes.

Every one of us seems to like to sing. Most of us poorly and only in the bath. But why do we like to sing? When our ancestors came down from the trees, did they sing to each other rather than talk?

I think it all started to go wrong when some Germanic tribe started to sing for six or seven hours non-stop about some Nordic gods, and called it Opera. The rest of us went for a God from the Mediterranean who offered more warmth and sunshine, who we didn't mind singing to as long as the hymns were not more than three verses.

I think all working people should believe in God. God gave the Jews the Sabbath, their day of rest. Then Jesus came along and said, ' You Gentiles seem to play a lot of cricket and football on a Saturday, so you had better have Sunday off as well and come to church.'

All working people should give praise and thanks to God for giving them the weekend.

Now I am well into retirement I don't need the weekend. So I am now looking for a deity who forbids the watching of 'Eastenders' on the TV and lets the Villa win every Saturday.

In recent months people around Didcot have been using gas produced from human waste. This begs the question; should the Government encourage obesity? Perhaps they could do away with child allowance and give us all an allowance to eat more food, to produce more gas. What we need to know is what food produces the most gas. Of course those who want to remain thin could adopt an obese person and feed them till they burst. What I can see around me there would be no shortage of people to adopt.

Fred Russell

**DEADLINE FOR
SPRING 2011 EDITION
APRIL 5TH
PLEASE DON'T BE LATE**



SHOP ASSISTANT REQUIRED FOR ASCOTT VILLAGE SHOP

If you are over 18 and looking for extra income then the award winning community shop in Ascott-under-Wychwood is currently looking for an enthusiastic and friendly person to fill the role of Shop Assistant. The position offers 7½ hours per week split over three days. No previous experience is necessary as full training will be provided.

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MOTHER SHIPTON'S LEGACY

AN ASCOTT FANTASY FOR THE YOUNG IN HEART

You all must know the legend of bold
Robin and his band
Who sought to free the poor and weak
from an oppressor's hand.
But did you know in Wychwood dwelt
another gallant chap.
The deposed lord of Ascott Earl. Sir
Alexander Trapp?

Like Robin he had fought crusades on
distant heathen shores,
Only to find his home destroyed when
he came back once more.
His greedy neighbour, the D'Oyley
lord had seized all his possessions,
Turned out his wife, destroyed his
home and committed dire transgressions.

His wife and son had sought refuge
with the hermit in the Forest
Who had welcomed them sincerely as
his truly honoured guests.
Sir Alex and his trusty aide, known to
all as Lofty Will
Were guided to the hermit's cave by a
young lad from the mill.

This young lad, Tom, knew the secret
ways through copse and glade and
standings,
But was unaware that evil eyes were
watching their meanderings.

Two of D'Oyley's men, dastardly
rogues of evil reputations
Reported to their wicked lord, Sir
Alex's destination.
They came by night, the D'Oyley lord
and his ferocious henchman
To destroy Sir Alex, wife and heir, so
their rights should be forgotten.
But Lofty Will suspected that all was
not as it should be,
He'd kept good watch and glimpsed
the rogues flitting from tree to tree.

Now Lofty Will had an ancient aunt,
Mother Shipton was her name,
By the Liquorice Well her hovel stood
and witchcraft was her game.
A white witch of course, but spells she
knew, to cast on evil men.
And Lofty Will knew she would help
him, save his lord again.

The assassins reached the secret cave
where Alex stood, sword in hand
Prepared to defend his wife and son,
his honour and his land.
But three 'gainst one were not fair
odds so Will brought the solution,
A magic net fell from above and captured
both the henchmen.

Sir Alex then the D'Oyley faced, they
fought till they were wearied,
When the D'Oyley dealt a crafty
thrust, and a cry of triumph carried.
But Sir Alex at the very last, cast the
cruel stab aside

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

The D'Oyley lord tripped and fell, and
on his own sword died.

The henchmen writhed in coils of steel
as Will surveyed their plight
When a ghostly voice rang through the
woods and filled them both with fright.
Mother Shipton said ' You evil two
have murdered untold score.
T'is time the world was rid of you so
you can kill no more.

A curse I put upon you, t'will always
be your fate
To stand guard over Ascott Church
and keep the devil out.'
So the goggle eyed and the screaming
one reside by the north door
And watch you villagers pass by, then,
now and evermore.

Wendy Pearse

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Email: pam@wychwoodhealing.co.uk

Web: <http://www.wychwoodhealing.co.uk>

WYCHWOOD LIBRARY NEWS

Happy New Year to you all and with a huge sigh of relief we can say that WYCHWOOD LIBRARY IS SAFE! We will not be included in the closure of 20 out of the 43 libraries in Oxfordshire! We would like to say very, very many thanks to everyone who wrote letters and emails and signed the petitions. The general awareness of our dilemma was raised by The Friends of Wychwood Library who leafleted every household in our catchment area. We would also say a big thank you to Rodney Rose, our Oxfordshire County Councillor, who championed Wychwood Library behind the scenes.

The leaflet drop around the villages highlighted the fact that the Library does not have a very high profile in Ascott under Wychwood and we would like to change this. When you next need to come into Milton under Wychwood to visit the Co-op, etc, check that the library is open at the same time and come in and see us. We have a huge number of books to borrow as well DVD's, audio items and large print and we have a wonderful children's library. We also have free internet access with four computers available.

It has been wonderful to welcome quite a few new customers to the Library over these past few months. Changing attitudes to borrow instead of buying books is good for us and

remember if we do not have the title you want on our shelves, we can order it in for the small cost of 85p. You can also order, renew and find out what is in stock from home using the internet. All you need is your library membership card and your PIN number. One of the most useful services we offer is email reminders. We send you an email alert two days before any items that you have borrowed are due back.

This year we will be holding monthly computer classes on the last Wednesday afternoon of each month. Do book a session.

IKNIT is proving so popular that the sessions have been extended to start at 10am until 12 noon every second Thursday. All craft activities are welcome so come along and have a cuppa and a chat.

Look out for our new Baby Reading Group to include siblings. Babies love books and this will be reading and sharing time to be held out of normal library hours. Join us in a warm space with your little ones.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with our Coffee Mornings. Two hours are needed on a Wednesday morning from 10 – 12noon.

We look forward to seeing you at Wychwood Library from Ruth, Liz and Angela.

Opening Times:

Monday: 2.00pm to 7.00pm

Tuesday: Closed

Wednesday: 9.30am to 1.00pm
2.00pm to 5.00pm

Thursday: Closed

Friday: 2.00pm to 7.00pm

Saturday: 9.30am to 1.00pm

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NATURE NOTES

Animal culls have recently been much in the news with Deer being hunted on Exmoor and plans to reduce Badger numbers in order to stop the spread of Bovine TB. In a densely populated country, such as ours, it's almost inevitable that conflicts will arise between our requirements for space for housing, roads, factories and farms and the needs of our wildlife.

Looking back over the last 2,000 years we have lost the Lynx, Brown Bear, Beaver, Wild Boar and Wolf. The last Wolf was probably killed in Scotland in 1743. Two introduced species, the Muskrat and the Coypu that were considered to be serious pests were hunted to extermination, finally disappearing in 1935 and 1987 respectively.

On the plus side we have gained Rabbits (possibly brought by the Romans and certainly introduced by the Normans) and Muntjac and Sika Deer originally imported to grace the parks of the nobility. We have also gained Grey Squirrels, Mink and the Signal Crayfish, that have proved to be serious pests and extremely damaging to our native species.



Is culling ever acceptable? Can it be accepted in some circumstances but not in others?

Here are two examples and my conclusions; am I right or do you disagree? Britain has almost two million Deer,

more now than at any time since the Ice Age. Our native Red Deer and Roe Deer have been joined by the Fallow Deer, Muntjac, Sika and Chinese Water Deer. The Fallow was introduced for hunting and meat and the others to grace the parklands of our country estates. Deer have always been hunted for sport and food, often in the Royal hunting forests such as our own Wychwood, but now a large proportion of venison is produced from managed herds and the wild population is becoming a potential pest. Too many

Deer within an area have a serious impact on farm crops, and on woodland where newly planted trees are destroyed and older trees damaged because bark is stripped when other food is scarce. Where Deer populations are high the natural regeneration of woodland is halted and ground flora destroyed. By sheer pressure of numbers they can damage the environment and landscape.



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Deer are culled by shooting; farmers and landowners are encouraged to keep populations at sustainable levels, by removing an agreed number each year. There are strict rules about the sorts of rifles and bullets used to ensure a reliable, clean kill. Healthy animals may be butchered and sold to licensed game dealers. In some areas, such as Exmoor Deer stalking is encouraged as a local industry, but usually Deer are shot from 'high seats' that are situated in woodland on open rides and on the edge of clearings



Should Deer be culled? They have no natural predators keeping their numbers at a sustainable level so man must take on that task, removing the weak and sick, maintaining healthy populations that can be sustained within the local environment.

My second example is the culling of Badgers, possibly a much more emotive question. The Badger is a member of the Mustelidae family, which also includes the Otter, Stoat, Weasel, Polecat, Ferret and Pine Martin. It is widespread across Europe, Asia and Japan, but is particularly abundant in Britain and Ireland with the largest populations found in Southern England. It is a true native having crossed the land-bridge



from France at the end of the last Ice Age.

In England Badgers have had rather mixed fortunes over the last three hundred years. Before the 19th Century they were abundant but they then suffered heavy persecution by game keepers and through the so-called sport of Badger baiting, so that by the start of the 20th Century they were considered rare. Their numbers slowly recovered after the First World War until 1960 to 1970, when there was another decline, possibly caused by increasing road kills, pesticides entering their food chain and reducing levels of fertility and the use of gassing by landowners. This last decline was halted by the passing of the Badger Act

in 1973 with further amendments in 1981 and 1992, which gave the Badger protected status. Today the estimated British Badger is estimated at three hundred thousand.

Why are we considering a new Badger cull? Sadly badgers are prone to suffer from TB, probably because of their close-knit social structure, and they are considered to be the prime culprit for infecting our cattle with Bovine TB. The Farming community is pressing the Government to allow large scale culls in areas where Bovine TB is present, but there are some serious questions. Don't forget about the Ascott website:

tions about the effectiveness of this. After much research the results are still inconclusive, after all Badgers are not the only carriers of TB; others include Cats, Rats, Water Voles and Deer, not to mention cattle to cattle infection. Following a large-scale ten year trial cull (the Kreb's Trial) which took place over ten years and involved the trapping and shooting of about 11,000 Badgers, the Independent Scientific Group, which supervised the trial said "Badger culling is not likely to make a meaningful contribution to the control of TB." Indeed it has been reported



that in the areas of highest Bovine TB only one in seven Badgers has the disease and was this contracted from the cattle? In these circumstances can wholesale slaughter (sorry I know these are emotive words) be justified? It has been suggested that the best way to control Bovine TB is to tighten up on cattle testing. This is how the disease was tackled in Northern Ireland and succeeded in reducing the incidence infection by 40% in one year. In the Irish Republic there have been widespread culls, to the point of extinction on Badgers in some areas, yet Bovine TB still remains endemic and wide spread, yet in Scotland no Badgers have been culled and there is no major problem with TB. Will a cull work in England? Possibly not, it may

even worsen the situation. In the Kreb's Trial it was found that although the cull did reduce TB within the target zone it actually increased the rate of cattle infection outside. This was thought to be because the cull upset their social structure causing individual animals to scatter, roaming further in search of food and territory, increasing contact with cattle and their pastures. To be really effective a cull would have to extend over a very large area (100 square miles has been suggested), exterminating all badgers within that area and steps taken to prevent Badgers from outside that area entering it.

We must be very sympathetic to any farmer whose livelihood is threatened or destroyed by the appearance of Bovine TB within his herd and can only imagine their distress seeing them taken for slaughter. Also, the financial costs to the taxpayer are considerable with £87m being spent in 2009/10 on compensation, testing and research. Yet I wonder if the destruction of the Badger population, part of our rapidly dwindling wildlife and insignia of Our Wildlife Trusts, is the answer. Might there be an alternative, such as developing a more effective vaccine?

What do you think; am I being hypocritical to support a Deer cull and speak against a Badger cull? Does anyone have other views?

Stuart Fox

How old is it? Why is it there? What was it used for?

Probably most of you Wychwoods inhabitants have posed the above or similar sentiments about many aspects of our attractive surroundings.

But were you aware that many of your questions could be answered through the 25 Journals of Wychwoods History, the publication of the Wychwoods Local History Society?

These Journals cover all manner of subjects from prehistory to the last century and are available for any interested person to purchase.

Of course we will always be pleased to welcome you to our monthly meetings which are held alternately in Shipton and Milton Village Halls, where the Journals are available for sale. But if there is some particular aspect of Wychwoods history which appeals to you, do **visit our website** www.wychwoodshistory.org where a detailed index of the Journals is available together with a list of articles which each contains. **They may be purchased from me, Wendy Pearce on 831023 or wendypearse@btinternet.com.**

Some Journals have a high number of copies

still available so we are providing a special offer of 5 copies of your choice for £10 taken from a selected list which is published on our website. Individual copies of the Journal may be purchased at the price stated. Postage and packing as listed on the website.

Do log on and have a look, You may find that many of your queries about the history of our area have already been answered, some in fact, in great detail. We shall always be pleased to assist you.

Wendy Pearce

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WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The meeting in February 2011, on the 17th in Shipton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. is entitled the History of Crime and Punishment in West Oxfordshire and the speaker is Jane Cavell whose interesting talks we have enjoyed on previous occasions.

On 17th March 2011 Shaun Morley will be talking about Friendly Societies. The meeting will be held in Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. and the title is The Wise in Heart should be called Prudent: Oxfordshire Friendly Societies.

Then in April 2011, one of our favourite speakers, Tim Porter, will talk about Aethelflaed of the Mercians, A Local Heroine. She was a Saxon princess who was very instrumental in the establishment of England. The meeting will be held in Shipton Village Hall on 21st April at 7.30.p.m.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £7 for an individual and £10 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at £2 per head. **More information can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023 or the WLHS Website www.wychwoodshistory.org**

JANUARY 6TH 1996

January drips it's cold, damp days into the year.	Bear on them what was once but now no more.
Christmas and the revels of the New Year gone.	And still the winter's moon rolls on Through the storm swept heavens
The month lays heavy on my mind.	Recording in silence
Nights still long. Winter days go on	Our little lives without a care.
Into the darkness of rotting nature ev- erywhere.	And I gaze empty
Too many biers this time of year	But for the sense of fear, That this is all I am.

Fred Russell

WYCHWOOD FOREST FOOTBALL CLUB

Due to the appalling weather we had no football for 7 weeks!!!

We returned Saturday January 8th with the 1st team getting knocked out of the Oxfordshire Shield Cup, losing 3-1 at Ducklington. The reserves continue to perform strongly in their division and won away at Eynsham "A" 3-1. The 1st team have a chance in another cup with an away quarter-final against Chad Park.

We are currently investigating the grant process for new goalposts for the pitch, and hope to have some developments at the clubhouse soon too.

Chris
Wychwood Forest Football Club



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**IAN MARSDEN
FUNERAL DIRECTOR**

WYCHWOOD FUNERAL SERVICE

The local independent Funeral Director to the Wychwoods – Wychwood Funeral Service - is pleased to announce the opening of their new premises in Milton-under-Wychwood, relocating from the small office in Shipton.

The new Funeral Home, located at Shipton Road, Milton-under-Wychwood, provides a full comprehensive facility which enables all aspects to be handled in one place.

A dedicated Chapel of Rest is featured in the premises, which provides families with a quiet setting to sit with their loved ones for reflection or prayer.

A range of memorial masonry and plaques as well as flower vases, will be held on display, and pre payment funeral planning is also available and can be discussed at the Funeral Home or in the comfort of your own home.

Local Wychwood Funeral Director Ian Marsden said, “I am proud to be able to provide this new facility for local families and feel this is the perfect environment for them to say good bye to a loved one.”

The Chapel of Rest was blessed at a Service held on Wednesday 19th January 2011 conducted by the Revd. Anne Hartley. Members of the local community attended this service, and met the small dedicated team at the Funeral Home, who are there to serve your needs 24 hours a day.

**Wychwood Funeral Service,
Serving the Wychwood Community.**

Tel 01993 831557 email info@wychwoodfuneralservices.co.uk

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Christmas Carols round the Tree

The Christmas tree was very kindly donated by Robin Walker and with the help of Shane Barnes and the councillors it was erected on Saturday 4 December. This year things did run somewhat more smoothly with the lights being illuminated first time and the tree staying upright. The Parish Council were asked by several parishioners if the lights could remain on throughout the day and night and as they are low voltage led lights this was agreed. The singing of Christmas carols was held on Christmas Eve and once again proved to be very successful and enjoyable and the collection raised £158.06. Thank you for all your kind donations, this will be given to the Wychwood Day Centre. Thank you too to John and Debra Cull who kindly heated the mulled wine and we hope you all enjoyed the mince pies.

Planning Applications

Planning still remains quiet, apart from one application for the Swan Public House. The December meeting was attended by 26 parishioners, some of whom expressed their views about the planning application to the meeting. It is always a pleasure when parishioners attend meetings and indeed this one was no exception and was held in the Tiddy Hall as opposed to the committee room upstairs.

Community Emergency Plan

Cllr Philippa Carter continues her hard work in updating this. The heavy snowfall before Christmas dominated the emergency plan and the Village certainly pulled together to get the roads passable. The Parish Council would particularly like to thank Joe Gomm, Connor O'Brien and David Cook for all of their help clearing the snow. Cllr Morgan and Cllr Mellor walked the Village on several occasions to check the elderly and vulnerable to see if there was anything they needed and Cllr Crundwell liaised with Oxfordshire Highways and West Oxfordshire District Council to get more salt and grit delivered.

Sports Pavilion

The responsibility for the running of the Sports Pavilion has now been given back to the Parish Council and Cllr Mellor and Cllr Carter are dealing with the day to day activities. Any bookings should be directed to Cllr Carter.

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Parish Council:

Rob Morgan (Chairman) 831958
Bridgette Crundwell (Vice) 830671
Laurence Mellor 831182
Philippa Carter 830344
Pauline Marshall 830912
Angela Barnes 01608 641045
(Parish Clerk)

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

SNOW SCENES OF ASCOTT AND CHRISTMAS CAROLS ON THE VILLAGE GREEN



Photographs: Stuart Fox

NEW COUNTY-WIDE OIL BUYING SYNDICATE LAUNCHED

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is delighted to announce the launch of a new venture that we hope will be good for you, good for the environment, and good for ORCC.

We have set up a new trading arm which will be using the model of a local buying syndicate for domestic heating oil and rolling it out across the county. We believe there will be great strength in harnessing the purchasing power of the many rural communities who are without mains gas so that together, oil-buyers will be able to make significant savings. If you are paying the *average* price charged by local suppliers, you can expect savings of £40-£50 on a single (1,000 litre) order. And we see no reason why we can't improve on that as we gradually get more members.

WHY ARE ORCC DOING THIS?

As a charity, we want to safeguard our future and our ability to advise and support rural communities across Oxfordshire. Our aim is that not only will we help households to save money but we will achieve other benefits too – reduced carbon footprint (from far more co-ordinated local deliveries), fewer tankers in your village, a move towards renewable energy sources (unlike a certain well-known department store, we *do* have a plan B!) as well as a contribution to funds to support both ORCC and local community

environmental projects. And you can be entirely confident that this is not a scam.

AREN'T THERE LOTS OF SYNDICATES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE?

Yes. We have no wish to take any schemes over – but if that local purchasing power can be scaled up to something much bigger, then *everyone* will benefit. And for communities who don't yet have a local scheme, this provides an easy way for you to get one, with very little work.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Fill in a membership form (copy available on www.oxonrcc.org.uk, or ring 01865 883488 if you need a copy to be sent to you). For an annual fee of £20, you can order oil as often as you like. Orders will be placed monthly.

The key to making this work will be having *local* people who will collate local members' monthly oil orders and pass them on to us, and who will then let the local members know the cost per litre and the delivery date. That's pretty much it. No negotiating oil prices, no handling money. For doing this, the local co-ordinator will get FREE membership of the scheme – an annual saving of £20. We hope someone in your area will be willing to take on this very modest role so that we can get up and running in *your* village.

INTERESTED? NOT INTERESTED?

If you think this could be of interest to you or your community, get in touch with us on orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk or on 01865 883488. We'll be happy to answer any questions.

NEWS FROM LEAFIELD C.E. SCHOOL

In September we welcomed Jane Ridley, who joined us as Acting Head-teacher and we are pleased to announce that Mrs. Ridley has been appointed as our permanent head-teacher. We also welcomed eleven children into our Foundation Stage and two children into Class 3.

We have continued with the successful Breakfast Club which is open every morning from 8:00am. The after school clubs on offer this term have been Art Club, Engineering Club, Netball Club, Football Club, Cookery Club and Dance Club. There is always a large take up of the clubs on offer and it is good to see the children joining in.

Children in Year 6 have taken part in the Junior Citizen programme and have been on a day trip with other partnership Year 6 children, to Boulogne in October. Class 4 have been swimming since September and after Christmas it will be the turn of Class 3. The Library Bus visits every three weeks and all children are offered the opportunity to borrow books.

Our older children have taken a course in cycling proficiency, with all taking part obtaining a pass. Our thanks go to the small team of parent helpers who, every year make this event possible.

Children in our Foundation Class visited St. John's School in Carterton and Class 2 have been to University and Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford to round off their topic on dinosaurs.

At the time of writing this newsletter the children are already half way through the Christmas performances and looking forward to their Christmas Lunch and parties.

When we return in January our Key Stage 2 children will be preparing for their residential trip to Oxfordshire's outdoor education centre at Yenworthy Lodge in North Devon.

If anyone would like to know more about our school please contact the school office on 01992 878273. I wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Deb Brown
School Administrator
Governor



TIDDY HALL

Regular Activities:

Monday - Friday Mornings

Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant
07968006451

Tuesday Evenings 7.30 - 9.00

Yoga

Contact: Jan Holah 01608 810620

Wednesday and Friday Afternoons

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter
01993 774568

Wednesday Evenings 7.00 - 7.45

Circuit Training

Contact: Matt Jeffrey 07776 490647

Thursday Evenings 7.30 - 8.30

Pilates

Contact: Julie Short 07761 533969

**POST OFFICE RUNS EVERY
FRIDAY AFTERNOON**

2.00pm - 4.00pm

SPECIAL EVENTS:

January 29th

Tiddy Hall's Anniversary Dance

March (date to be confirmed)

Flix in the Stix

The Kings Speech

April 2nd

Acousticana

Quiz Night (date to be confirmed)



To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

Ingrid Ridley

01993 830612

TIDDY HALL REPORT

We had some wonderful fund raising events at Tiddy Hall during the last few months of 2010. The Coldstone Angling Club organised a Race Night on 13th November which was enjoyed by all and a fantastic £927 was raised! Well done to the organisers and Pete Moss who would like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone for all your support. 2011 is the 40th anniversary of the Coldstone Angling Club and there will be some celebrations later this year to mark this event, the longest reigning organisation in the village!

The following weekend saw Johnny Silvo and guests entertain us in superb style! What talent goes through the doors of Tiddy Hall! It was a wonderful evening and a fantastic turn out, so once again a big, big thanks to Tony and Lyn Collins for organising this event. £1200 was raised for Tiddy funds, surely a record amount?

Then in early December we were treated to the acting and writing skills of our own local thespians! Seasonal music was performed by the Ascott Songsters and others gave us some folk ballads and poetry reading. A lot of good fun and festive cheer was had by all and we'd like to thank Fred for the time and effort he put into writing such an amusing script and it seems that the Ascott Panto might have become a regular Tiddy event! All donations were shared between the Village

Charity and the Ascott Grapevine – a big thanks to everyone! If you are interested in joining the Ascott Songsters, please ring Daphne on 07946 581512, as new members are welcomed.

We are sorry to say goodbye to our Karate Class who have been meeting in the hall every Tuesday evening for the last 2 years. However, we'd like to welcome Julie Short who has started a new Pilates Class on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. Pilates builds strength without bulk, helping to create a sleek, toned body. It teaches you body awareness, improves posture, flexibility, agility and can alleviate back pain. Please ring Julie on 07761 533969 for further information and book yourself a place!

Our hall is a busy one; Ascott Pre School, Windrush Valley School, yoga, circuit-training, pilates, piano lessons and the Post Office are all regular users, not to mention plenty of children's parties and other social functions which take place during the weekends. The running costs of the hall are just about met with these regular bookings, however, fundraising is still essential to raise those extra funds to cover the cost of any unforeseen repairs and updating the hall may need. So please keep on supporting the many different functions which are held in your village hall! It's not far to go, it's a cheap evening out and there's always

great company! Future events to look out for are our Anniversary Barn Dance to be held Saturday January 29th with Pandemonium - £10 to include a ploughman's and there will also be a bar available. In March, Flix in the Stix are planning to show the film 'THE KING'S SPEECH' starring Colin Firth, an uplifting and stirring period drama documenting the friendship between King George VI and a maverick speech therapist who cured him of a debilitating stammer – date to be confirmed – supper will also be served, so no need to travel further a field to see this new eagerly awaited film. Also, another Quiz Night is planned for April. Plenty of fun entertainment at Tiddy Hall this year to look forward to!

At the end of June we will be losing our cleaner, so if any one is interested in this job, could you please contact Roger on 830227 or Simon on 831479 for further details.

‘Ingrid Ridley

THE ASCOTT-UNDER WYCHWOOD VILLAGE CHARITY

(registered number 1099078)

The start of a new year can be a difficult time for individuals and communities. To compound issues, we have just experienced the most severe December weather in living memory.

At a recent meeting of the Village Charity we felt it was important to announce, in a more direct way, what we stand for and how we can be contacted.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, you will have seen the posters on the village notice boards, in the village shop and the Church porch.

A copy is represented on opposite page.

If you think we can help in *any* way, please contact us. All communication will be treated in confidence.

John Cull
Chair of the Village Charity

DEADLINE FOR SPRING 2011 EDITION

APRIL 5TH

PLEASE DON'T BE LATE

The Ascott-underWychwood Village Charity

(registered number 1099078)

The Village Charity has funds available to help residents of the Parish.

We are able to make grants for:

- The relief of poverty, hardship or deprivation
- Assisting students with the costs of further education and training
- Works relating to the flooding in 2007
- Improving local amenities

For further information please contact one of our trustees. They are: John Cull, Rev. Mark Abrey, Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles, Keith Ravenhill, Pauline Marshall and Mark Dawbarn. Mark Dawbarn is our secretary and can be contacted on 831632 or at Brambletye in the High Street.

THE FREDERICKS FOUNDATION

I recently attended a presentation by Paul Barry-Walsh, a successful entrepreneur who wanted to help others who aspire to run their own business but who are unable to obtain the necessary support to do so. To achieve this he set up the Fredericks Foundation in 2001.

As a result of the economic downturn, as well as helping the long-term unemployed, Fredericks Foundation has branched out to assist existing companies in need of finance but who are unable to obtain it from their bank.

Fredericks Foundation will consider applications for a loan and business support from those who can demonstrate that they have made a genuine application for funds to their bank or a mainstream lender – and that they have been turned down.

Businesses can be at any stage: they may require money to start-up; capital to expand business; or funds to bridge a gap. Applicants may be eligible for a loan whether a sole trader, in a partnership or a limited company. For start-up businesses they offer up to a maximum of £10,000, though the average loan is less than £5,000. For established busi-

nesses with a financial track record the maximum loan is £20,000.

The charity is always looking for support, investors, volunteers and mentors so whether you need or can offer help, visit www.fredericksfoundation.org

Tim Lyon

**DEADLINE FOR
SPRING 2011 EDITION
APRIL 5TH
PLEASE DON'T BE
LATE**

COOK'S CORNER : ASCOTT'S FAVOURITE RECIPES

SPICED APPLE CAKE

1 Large cooking apple, peeled, cored and diced

3 oz Flora

5 oz Soft brown sugar

2 Eggs

8 oz S.R. flour

Half teas Mixed spice

Half teas Bicarbonate of soda

2 oz Raisins

2 oz Halved glace cherries

1 dessertspoon Demerara sugar

Briefly cream soft brown sugar and flora. Add all the rest of the ingredients except demerara sugar, and beat well.

Place mixture in lined 7 in round tin and sprinkle the demerara sugar on top.

Cook in the middle of the oven 180 degrees C or Mark 4 for 50-60 minutes.

Cool in tin for 15 minutes before turning out.

Wendy Pearse

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