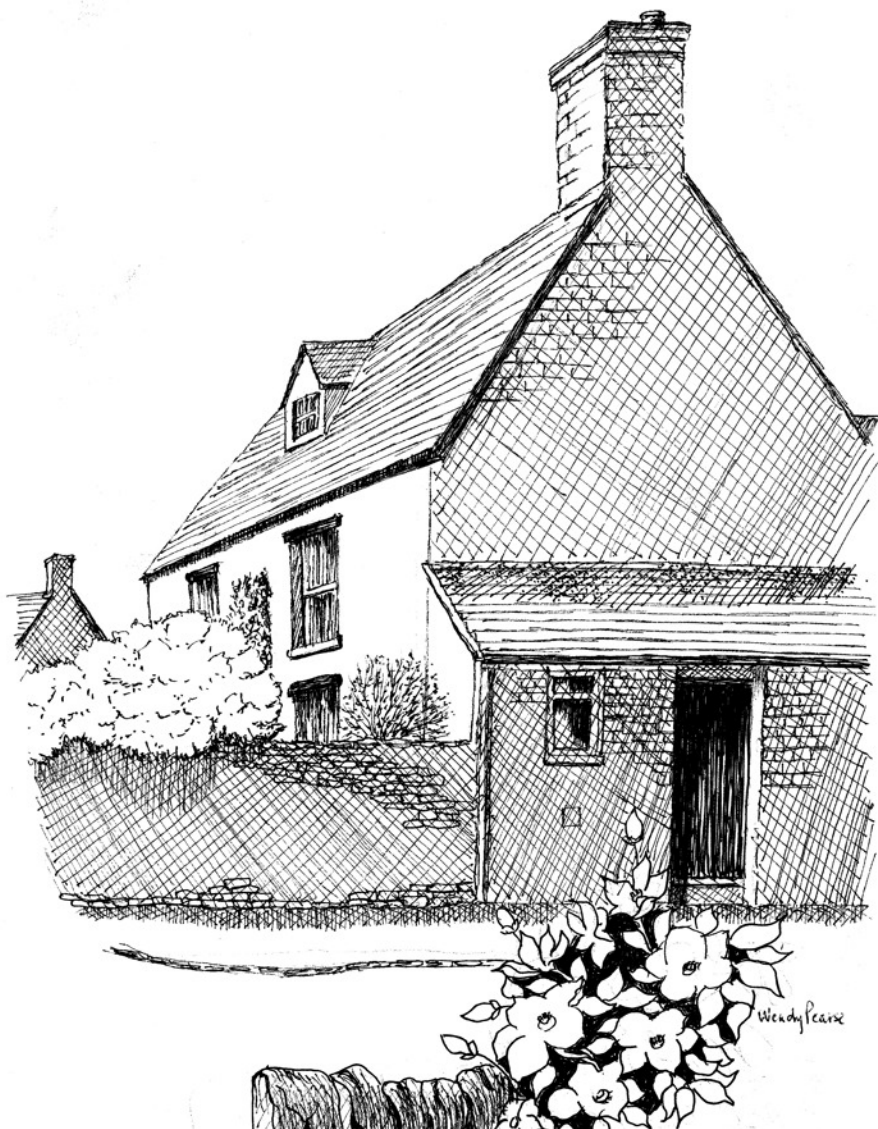


The Ascott Grapevine



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 Ascott 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 Ascott Grapevine please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas.

Articles for the next issue of The Ascott Grapevine should be submitted by 5th August 2015.

Articles submitted after this date may not be included.

Call 01993 831023 or email: wendypearse@btinternet.com

The Editorial Team:

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,
Wendy Pearse, Keith Ravenhill

Content & Editorial Policy

If you have an article, story or poem you would like to submit for publication The Ascott 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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To advertise in our Local Business Directory (see Page 76), please contact Wendy Pearse 01993 831023 or wendypearse@btinternet.com. The cost is £5 per year but inclusion is free for our existing advertisers.

SERVICES AT ASCOTT CHURCH 2015

On Sundays when there is not a service in Ascott there are services across the Benefice, normally 1st Sunday 0800 Enstone & 1000 Spelsbury; 3rd Sunday 0800 Spelsbury & 1000 Enstone. For full details see the Church notice boards. You will receive a warm welcome at any of our services.

14 th June	10.00 am	Holy Communion [CW]
28 th June	8.00 am	Holy Communion [BCP]
12 th July	10.00 am	Holy Communion [CW]
26 th July	8.00 am	Holy Communion [BCP]
9 th August	10.00 am	Holy Communion [CW]
23 rd August	8.00 am	Holy Communion [BCP]

Local Churches

Wychwood Benefice

Rev'd Kate Stacey Tel: 01993 832514

St Mary's Shipton

Churchwarden James Walmsley
01993 830842

SS Simon & Jude, Milton

Churchwarden Mike Hartley 01993 830160

St John the Baptist Fifield, St Nicholas, Idbury

Churchwarden Pat Yaxley 01993 831385

Society of Friends (Quakers), Burford

Nigel Braithwaite 01993 831282

Wychwood Baptist, Milton

Pastor John Witts 01993 832865

Burford Methodist

Minister Rev'd Peter Goodhall
01993 845322

Westcote Methodist

Tony Gibson 01993 830699
Mairi Radcliffe 01993831472

Roman Catholic

SS John Fisher & Thomas More,
Burford
Holy Trinity, Chipping Norton
Our Lady and St Kenelm, Stow-on-the-Wold
St Teresa, Charlbury

Chase Benefice

Rev'd Mark Abrey Tel: 01608 676572

News from the Church

From the Rector

Bureaucracy gone mad

I recently found a new version of the story of Noah's Ark. It was entitled *Noah's Ark – Version 2* (Version 1 of course can be found in Genesis chapter 9). It went like this:

In the year 2015 the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in England and said, 'Once again the earth has become wicked and overpopulated and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living things along with a few good humans.' He gave Noah the drawings, saying 'You have six months to build the Ark before I will send unending rain for forty days and forty nights.'

Six months later the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard – but no Ark! 'Noah' He roared, 'I'm about to start the rain, where is the Ark?'

'Forgive me, Lord,' begged Noah, 'but things have changed. I needed Building Regulations Approval. I've been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system; my neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission to build the Ark in my garden, because it is development of the site, even though in my view it is a temporary structure; we had to go to Appeal to the Secretary of State for a decision, and then the Department of Transport demanded a Bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions in order to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told

them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it!

Getting the wood was another problem, all the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders' on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific Interest, set up in order to protect the Tawny Owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls, but they would not listen.

When I started gathering the animals the RSPCA sued me. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodation was too restrictive and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space.

Then the County Council, the Environment Agency and the Rivers Authority ruled that I could not build the Ark until they had conducted an Environmental Impact Study on your proposed flood.

I am still trying to resolve a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission on how many BMEs I am supposed to hire for my building team. The Trades Unions say I cannot use my sons and they are insisting that I hire only CSCS accredited workers with Ark-Building experience! To make matters worse, Customs and Excise seized all my assets claiming I am trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species. So, forgive me Lord, but it is going to take me at least ten years at this rate to finish the Ark'.

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine and a rainbow stretched across the sky.

Noah looked up in wonder and asked, 'You mean you are not going to destroy

the world after all?' 'No', said the Lord 'bureaucracy is doing it for me!'

This is just a bit of fun, but many of us can identify with the crazy complex regulations we now take for granted. I find it so refreshing that we worship a God who is unchanging, a God who does not keep issuing new commandments and decrees; a God who does not keep moving the goal posts – that is something we do! Noah was blessed because he believed and

obeyed God. In a world of change don't forget that the Church is there for you: it is open dawn to dusk each and every day. You are always welcome to join us for worship or just come and sit and enjoy its peace. May you know God's unchanging love for you.

With my best wishes

Mark Abrey

Thames Water

Thames Water is working to reduce the risk of sewer flooding. We will be starting work to replace a section of the pumped sewer taking flow from Ascott-Under-Wychwood to Milton-Under-Wychwood sewage treatment works towards the end of June 2015. The majority of the work is in fields but there may be some disruption from a limited number of additional vehicle movements.

Come and visit us

There will be an informal drop-in session open to anyone who wants to meet the team, find out more about the project or wants to talk about any issues. The details are:

Location: Tiddy Hall, Shipton Road, Ascott-Under-Wychwood, OX7 6AG.

Date: Tuesday 2 June 2015

Time: 4pm - 7pm

Contacting us

If you need to contact us about this please call our customer centre on 0800 316 9800, quoting your address and reference number CAP2/ BB968583. The lines are always open.

Birth

On the 22nd April 2015, to Laura and Paul White, a daughter, Eleanor Mary.

Recipes

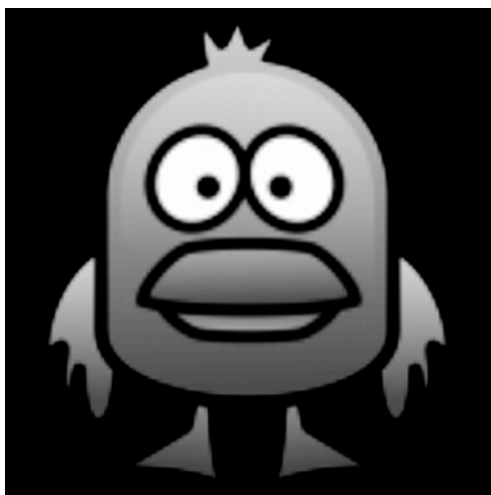
DUCK WITH GINGER AND HONEY

(Very quick and easy to make)

2 Duck Breasts
2 tbsp rice wine (or dry sherry)
Pinch cayenne
1 tbsp grated ginger
S & P
1 tsp tomato puree
125ml chicken stock
1 tsp lime juice
2 tbsp honey
Pinch chilli powder
2 tbsp soy sauce

Method:

Score duck breasts and rub with S & P and cayenne. Fry duck until crisp and brown (approx. 5 mins). Discard fat. Turn over breasts and cook for 1 minute. Put in oven and cook 200° (Reg 6) for 30 mins. Remove from oven, cover with foil and set aside. Place stock, rice wine, soy sauce, ginger, tomato puree, honey and lime juice in frying pan. Whisk over high heat and cook until it thickens (approx. 2 mins). Slice duck breasts, pour sauce over and serve.



RHUBARB FOOL

(You get the best flavour using early rhubarb)

700g Rhubarb

110g caster sugar

Juice of 2 oranges

2 egg whites, beaten until peaked

150ml whipped cream

150ml thick natural yoghurt

Method:

Place the rhubarb, sugar, orange juice and a little water in a medium pan. Boil rapidly for 10-15 minutes until the rhubarb is soft. Fold the egg whites into the whipped cream and yoghurt. Let the rhubarb cool and keep a little bit for decoration. Then fold the rhubarb into the egg whites and cream mixture. Spoon the mixture into a bowl.



Open Garden Event at The Wychwood Manor

Bearing in mind The Wychwood Manor was opened for only 2½ hours on Sunday May 10th, I never dreamt that we would see over 400 visitors through the gates, and whilst green was the predominant colour, it gave everyone a different perspective on a spectacular and beautiful landscaped garden. A large selection of homemade cakes, courtesy of many ladies from the Village, enticed the visitors to enjoy afternoon tea round the swimming pool and take in the stunning views. We were also fortunate to have several stalls, including our infamous cakes which were a sell out, Kathy and Madeline's cottage garden plants and Phil and Helen's wrought iron designs.

The amount raised to go towards the upkeep of our Church was an incredible £2,100! First and foremost I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Wilmott-Sitwell for opening their garden, Savills for sponsoring the afternoon and providing some excellent signage and last but not least the group of helpers who baked 45 cakes, plus man the cake stall, car parking, entrance gates and afternoon teas. Thank you all for being part of a very successful afternoon.

Finally, my fellow organisers, Mary, Jacquie and Louise...such fun!!

Debra Cull



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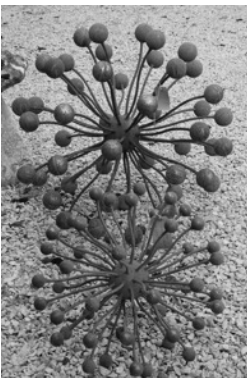
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Art Week





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Baby Rhino

Baby Rhino birth caught on camera at Cotswold Wildlife Park



Cotswold Wildlife Park celebrated two incredible milestones this week. First time mother Ruby gave birth to the Park's first male Rhino on the same day the Park celebrated its forty-fifth anniversary. The tiny calf is healthy and nursing well from Ruby, who is proving to be an exceptional mother.

Keepers and a few lucky visitors were present when Ruby gave birth at 12.30pm on Friday 27th March. In less than ten minutes, the fifteen month pregnancy was over and thankfully, after a relatively quick labour, a new baby was welcomed into the family-run Burford collection.

Curator of Cotswold Wildlife Park, Jamie Craig, commented: "Although we were expecting the birth, it still took us by surprise at the time – after careful preparations for a nice, quiet arrival, Ian was born in full view of many of the staff here at lunchtime on Friday and Ruby allowed us a full graphic view of his entry into the world – an experience we will never forget. Although still very early days, he seems strong and Ruby appears to be an attentive mother."



The calf has been named Ian in memory of the highly respected South African conservationist, Ian Player, who spearheaded efforts to rescue the Southern White Rhino from extinction. The Park's original Rhino pair, called Lebombo and Somtuli, arrived from Umfolozi in 1972 as a direct result of Ian's Rhino conservation initiatives with South Africa's Natal Parks Board. His memory lives on in the Park's Rhino family.

Father Monty and Ruby are both nine years old. In 2009, Ruby (along with another female called Nancy) made the eleven thousand kilometre journey from Mafunyane Game Farm in South Africa to the UK to join young male Monty at their new Oxfordshire home. It was hoped that, one day, they would successfully produce the Park's first ever Rhino calf. Monty has since fathered two calves.

Nancy gave birth to Astrid on 1st July 2013 and Ian followed twenty months later.

Females only reproduce every two-and-a-half to five years, so the window of opportunity for successful reproduction is limited. Unbelievably, these iconic animals were once the rarest subspecies of any Rhino and were on the verge of extinction in the early 1900s, when it was believed only twenty to fifty animals remained in their native African homeland. Thanks to excellent and sustained protection, they are now the most common of the five Rhino subspecies, although poaching in the last five years has once again escalated to serious levels, driven by demand for rhino horn from the traditional medicine market of China and the Far East.

Visitors can see the new calf daily from 10am to 6pm (last entry at 4.30pm) in the solar powered Rhino House.



NATURE NOTES

What a difference a year makes; looking back to 2014 we enjoyed, if that's the word, a very wet winter and early spring with 20.9 inches falling between December and mid-April. This year the weather has been much kinder with only 9.2 inches of rain falling during the same period. This drier weather combined with lots of warm spring sunshine from Easter Sunday has led to a veritable explosion of spring flowers and early butterflies. The previous wet winter caused major problems for butterflies and other insects normally abroad in April and May and some insect species, like the wasp population, never recovered. I know that wasps can be a nuisance in August and September, but they are the gardener's friend collecting insect pests, immobilizing them with their sting and taking them back to their nest as food.

After Easter wild flowers too appeared almost overnight. One day there was bare soil everywhere then after a few warm days we were finding Primroses, Wood Anemones, Celandines, Ground Ivy, Red Deadnettle, Shepherds Purse, Groundsel, Violets, Stitchwort, Speedwell and Bluebells. This was good news for the emerging butterflies as they need nectar from the flowers for energy allowing them to search for a mate and produce their first brood.



Normally the first butterflies on the wing are the Brimstones, the bright yellow male and the slightly paler female, but this year they were joined by large numbers of Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and Commas, shortly followed by Orange Tips, Green Veined Whites and even one pair of Holly Blues.

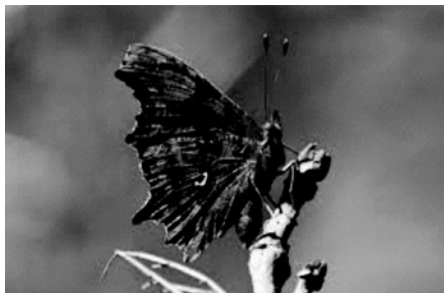
The first three butterflies, listed above, belong to the family *Nymphalidae*, sub-family *Vanessinae*. All members of this sub-family overwinter as adults. The Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell will often



spend the winter in barns, other buildings, hollow trees and even holes in the ground, hibernating

from September/October and emerging when the weather warms in April/May. Other members of this sub-group, the Red Admiral and the Painted Lady find our winters too cold to survive. Many are immigrants and although these breed in the UK at the end of the season most adults will die and others, usually from a second brood, will migrate south to warmer climes. One identifying feature of this group of butterflies are their front legs; all insects have six legs, but in the *Nymphalidae* the front pair of legs are degenerate, formed into tiny brushes, which are fold-

ed tight against the thorax and never used for walking. Peacocks and Tortoiseshells lay their eggs in large clusters on stinging nettles, the black larvae feed and grow together, protected by silken webs finally dispersing to pupate. The Comma, easily recognised by the white comma on the rear underwing, will also lay its eggs on Stinging Nettles, but singly rather than in large groups.



The Brimstone is another butterfly that hibernates as an adult, indeed apart from the *vanessids* mentioned above the Brimstone is the only other British butterfly that winters as an adult. It will spend the winter hidden amongst evergreen foliage, especially Ivy. When its wings are closed it is well camouflaged looking like an ivy leaf. Occasionally it will emerge during a warm spell in February only to re-enter hibernation when the weather cools finally emerging again in April/May. The bright yellow adults usually emerge first, followed by the paler greenish-yellow females. The female lays her eggs singly on buckthorn leaves and the green larvae resting along the midrib of the leaf harmonize very well with their surroundings and are difficult to spot. They pupate in July and emerge after two weeks hibernating in the autumn.

The Orange Tip, Brimstone and the Green Veined White are all members of



the *Pieridae*, the whites and sulphur butterflies. Unlike the Brimstone the Orange Tip and Green Veined White overwinter as a pupa the adults emerging in April and May. The Orange tip will only produce one brood each year but the Green Veined White will produce a second brood in July or August. The male Orange Tip is easily recognised by the flash of Orange as it flies past, but the female has no bright wing markings, looking like a small cabbage white as she flies past. If she settles her green mottled under-wings are quite distinctive. They act as perfect camouflage when she rests on the flower head of their food plant, usually Hedge Garlic, but also Lady's Smock and Charlock, laying a single egg in each flower head. The larvae feed from June to August, on the seed-pods of each plant and sometimes on each other, pupating attached to the food plant turning a brownish colour like the seed pods of the host plant.

The Green- Veined White is the first of the 'white' butterflies to appear and is a common butterfly of open country. Like the Orange Tip its main food plants are Hedge Garlic, Charlock and other wild

Ascott Grapevine

members of the cabbage family, although it is rarely a serious pest of garden and allotment crops. It is easily recognised by the black and yellow scales on the veins of its under-wings giving a green-veined appearance. Two broods are produced each year and they are on the wing in April to June and again from August to September. The second generation overwinters as a pupa hidden in the under-growth.

Our final butterfly, the Holly Blue, also overwinters as a pupa emerging in April or May. This is the first of the blue butterflies to emerge and because of its early start may produce three broods in an exceptionally hot year. The spring brood lays their eggs on holly flower buds, but the second and third broods lays exclusively on Ivy. The second brood passes the winter as pale-brown pupae attached to the Ivy leaves by silken threads.

STUART FOX

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LE WICKEND, OR WHATEVER THE FRENCH CALL IT

Who invented the weekend?

I have a theory. It didn't exist until the laws and rules for cricket and football were drawn up during the nineteenth century. Before this time young men had nowhere to go on a Saturday afternoon so they just remained working.

When I started my working life over sixty years ago, part of the working week for most of us included Saturday morning. I would rush home midday on a Saturday from where I worked at the Tillyard in Shipton, have a light meal, and within an hour or so, I would be on my bike, cycling to Milton to play football for their youth team. Fred Smith, my employer, would often say to me, "It's a pity you young men couldn't show the same enthusiasm and enjoy your work as you do chasing a football on a Saturday."

Over the centuries Sunday has been the day of rest. Servants were given the day off providing they attended church first, and had to listen, for sometimes two hours, to a boring sermon by the parson. I think what we need now is a longer weekend.

We are told Britain is a multi-cultural nation. What we should be looking for are those people who worship their deity on a Monday or Tuesday, they could then demand their civil rights by having a day off, to follow their faith. This would extend the weekend by two days.

Some of us could claim we are Anglo Saxons with a dash of Viking, like Hancock said. We could then claim we worshipped the old, Norse God Thor. This would take care of Thursday. Friday could be taken up by Frig, that naughty four letter word Scandinavian goddess. In fact the whole week could be taken up with Holy Days. Life could become one long weekend, a glimpse of heaven on earth.

You may be thinking, "Who's going to do the work while we are swanning about worshipping our gods?" The answer is quite simple. Atheists! And it serves them right. Most of them are cocksure, condescending, know all and unlikeable people.

Is my thinking muddled? Of course it is, but that's one of few advantages of being old. I don't care, you can think what you like.

Fred Russell

The Ascott Village Charity



Students who are moving into further education are reminded that the Charity still has funds available to award grants for books, equipment etc.

If you have an idea that you would like to be considered by the trustees you can write down your idea, put it in an envelope, address it to Stuart Fox and post it in the shop or email any of the people listed below:

johncull@wowmatters.com;
keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net
mark@dawbarn.co.uk
pollymarshall@gmail.com

elaine.byles@bioch.ox.ac.uk
stuart.john.fox@gmail.com

se.timms@btinternet.com

Flood Danger Area?

Trouble finding reasonable Home Insurance?

For the latest information on finding home insurance look up the **National Flood Forum** on

<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/trouble-getting-insurance/>

Marriage

On the 3rd May 2015, at Holy Trinity Church:

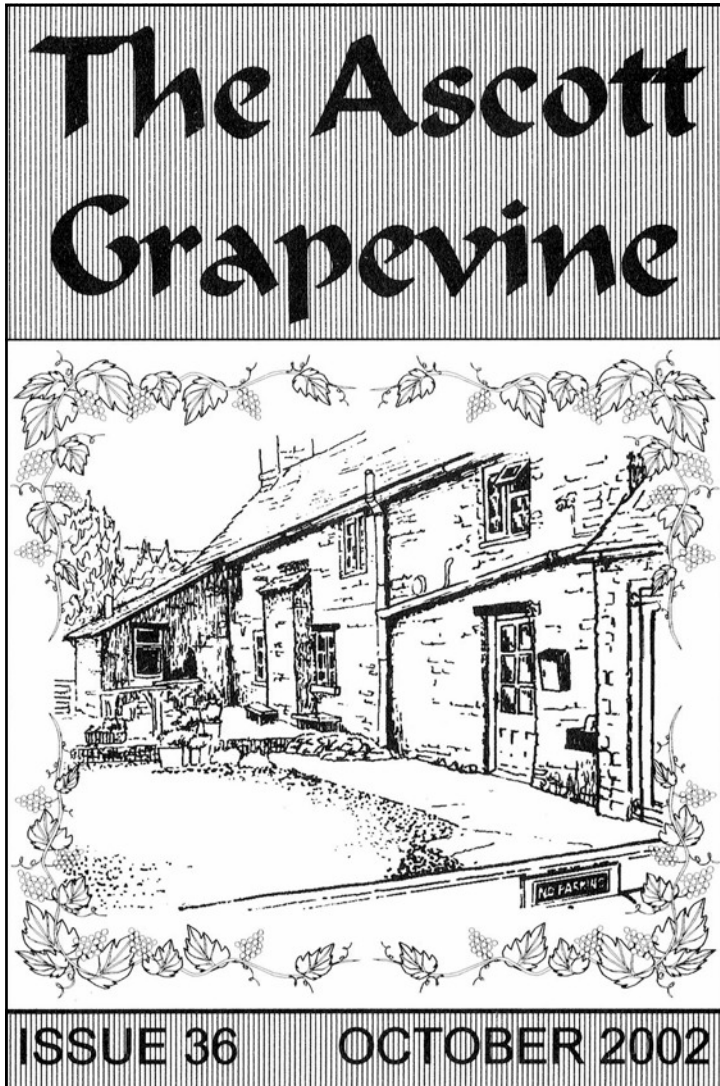
Shaun Ashley Harrison to Elysia Marjorie Ridley.



Deaths

Viv Lewis died on the 3rd April 2015.

Viv Lewis created front pages for the Grapevine in its early days and an example of his work is shown below.



Wychwoods Investment Club Invests!

After a staggering long period of at least 6 months the new Wychwood Investment Club based at “The Swan” has finally started to invest.

Chairman Paul Jackson says “you would think we were all drug dealers moving millions around the world. We didn’t quite have to have a medical to open the bank and brokerage accounts but the onerous rules to overcome were totally underestimated by the team”.

It is now made its first investments in the Man Group (a major hedge fund); TUI AG Travel; Bellway property; Skye Pharmaceuticals, John Wood a supplier to the oil industry and a small medical company Sphere.

The group which is 8 so far is seeking 4 or 5 new members who are interested in the equity markets. The joining investment is £500 with £50 added each month. The group meets over dinner the last Wednesday of the month.

Anyone who is either trading regularly and wants to exchange views, or wants to start learning, is welcome to join in the fun, should call Paul Jackson 01993 83



Ascott Wychwood PC

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

MAY 2015

The Annual Parish Meeting took place on Monday 27 April. It was very well attended by Councillors and organisations but we would love to see more of the public at future Parish Meetings, which are usually held at the end of April in Tiddy Hall. It is an excellent way of hearing about all the activities and issues of the village and there are plenty of opportunities to ask questions. There were so many positive things to celebrate this time and I was again struck by the generosity of so many residents who give so much time and effort towards the running of the community.

Neighbourhood Watch? - The recent experience of extreme anti-social behaviour (now thankfully resolved) has introduced us to a Mini Neighbourhood Action Group (Mini NAG) which holds meetings in Milton-under-Wychwood. Sandy Timms has recently represented Ascott at the meetings where our PCSO is also present. Issues and solutions discussed are often shared by all 3 Wychwood villages. It has led us to consider the possibility of setting up an Ascott-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Watch system. This would be run separately from the Parish Council. We would welcome feedback on this so please get in touch if you have an opinion either way and especially if you would like to participate.

Planning - There have been no major planning applications this past quarter. The WODC draft Local Plan is on their website and open for consultation until Friday 8 May. District Council are keen

for this to proceed for final approval and adoption by August 2015. It will give the District more planning protection than the current regulations which govern the District Planning Committee under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Under the draft Local Plan Ascott-under-Wychwood is not selected for any large developments over the period of the Plan which runs until 2031. There is potential for limited building development but we believe that WODC has no current plans or applications at this stage.

You can find out about planning applications within 500m of your property by going on the WODC website – www.westoxon.gov.uk – and entering your postcode. The website will also inform you of planning applications in the wider community and we encourage you to use your democratic right to comment if you have strong feelings. You can also use the website to send you weekly alerts about which waste collection is coming up and bank holiday changes.

Damaged Kerbstones and Verges - On at least 3 occasions this year kerb stones have been dislodged by the Waste Collection lorries. If you see this happening please complain immediately to WODC who are normally very responsive. However, do get in touch with the Parish Council if the WODC response is slow. If residents are having building works done and their builders have damaged the verge or kerb, please ask them to reinstate everything. A photograph at the beginning of the works helps to clear up any disagreements.

Sewer - Residents on Gypsy Lane have been informed by Thames Water that the

rising main (sewer) from Shipton-under-Wychwood to the top of Gypsy Lane will be replaced starting in July this year. A completely new pipe will be laid in private fields rather than under the lane.

We were told that there will be no work on the Shipton Rd itself but there may be some pumping out at times. TW land agents say that they are keen to keep the community informed about timings and disruptions.

Footpath - We heard the disappointing news that a well-trodden footpath has been closed leading eastwards along the Chilson bank opposite Ascott Mill. Oxford County Council administer Rights of Way and have informed us that this has never been an official right of way. It was opened to the public by a previous landowner under an environmental scheme which expired 10 years ago. The current landowner has the right to refuse right of way and applications for it to be made an official footpath could take 8-10 years. Personal contact will be made with the landowner, particularly with regards to the Charity Fun Run.

Buses -The Pulham X10 bus route has been reviewed and the new service contract starts on 1 June. We are pleased to hear that Pulhams have won the contract again and will run a similar service apart from discontinuing the 12.15 and 18.35 Burford – Ascott buses. The Villager V12 & V19 remain the same. The Thursday V24 is unaffected by the recent contract reviews.

Allotments - All users of the allotments have renewed their subscriptions apart from one. If there is anyone wishing to rent an allotment please contact Mark Tribe.

Local Government Surgeries - Our County and District Councillors have decided to organise regular ‘surgeries’ for anyone to come and ask questions or make complaints about local government. The surgeries alternate between Ascott at the Swan pub and Shipton at the Wychwood Inn. An Ascott Parish Councillor will also be at the Ascott surgeries. Every surgery will be from 11.30—12.30 on the last Saturday morning of each month (except December) and the next surgeries in Ascott will be 30 May and 25 July. Exceptionally, the July surgery will take place in the church, as the Swan has its Folk and Cider festival that weekend.

Laurence retires - We are very sad to announce that Parish Cllr Laurence Mellor is retiring after 6 years of loyal and very active service. The Parish Council and the village are all indebted to Laurence for his tireless work and valuable advice and we would like to say a very public ‘thank you’. We wish him an enjoyable retirement from the PC. Laurence has been making very positive progress with the drainage scheme of the playing field and we hope to have more definite news in the next Grapevine. We hope that Laurence will remain as Sports Club Chairman.

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council now has a vacancy and would love to hear from anyone interested in volunteering. As you can see from our news, the work is very varied - we are making progress on various projects and we try to always be available to help residents with their problems. Our team is very friendly and the meetings lively. They take place from 7.30pm in the Tiddy Hall upstairs meeting room, every second Monday in the month except August.

Please think about doing this very valuable community service but, if not, you can still help by making contact with the Parish Council with information that we

should be aware of. Thank you to everyone who gives us feedback and support.

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Joint Local Councillors' Surgeries

Saturday 30 May, 11.30-12.30 at the Swan Pub, Ascott-u-W

Saturday 27 June, 11.30-12.30 at the Wychwood Inn, Shipton-u-W

Saturday 25 July, 11.30-12.30 at Trinity Church, A-u-W

Saturday 29 August, 11.30-12.30 at the Wychwood Inn, S-u-W

Saturday 26 September 11.30-12.30 at the Swan Pub, A-u-W

Saturday 31 October 11.30-12.30 at the Wychwood Inn, S-u-W

Saturday 28 November, 11.30-12.30 at the Swan Pub, A-u-W

December no surgery

Parish Council:

Philippa Carter (Chairman)	830344
Laurence Mellor	831182
Peter Rance	831113
Sandy Timms	831870
Mark Tribe	359769
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)	01608 641045

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Cotswold dry stone walling

A personal perspective.

Few can deny that some of the most enduring and enduring features of the Cotswold landscape are the mile upon mile of dry stone walling, lining the lanes, dividing the fields and defining property boundaries. However, many will have noticed that the majority are now in a very poor state. These walls were largely built by artisans in periods of low agricultural activity such as during winter months. In years past there were many more stone quarries, and labour costs were low so that the walls could be built quite cheaply with local material.



Times are now quite different. Agriculture is largely mechanised and the cost of maintaining and reinstating such walls is often prohibitive; they are simply not amenable to mechanised meth-

ods and the cost per metre of a 1.2 metre (4 feet) high wall can be £100 or more. A further result of mechanisation is that fields are getting larger so that dividing walls increase cost or reduce productivity. Many are being left to crumble and will eventually become ploughed in and disappear. It's common to see, also, walls running along roads being overgrown with hedges – again they will eventually disappear.



Mechanised cutting equipment maintains such hedges at minimal cost, each hedge being trimmed perhaps once or twice per year. Such hedges can themselves be quite attractive – they are often of blackthorn which flowers in early Spring and provides a splash of colour before leaves appear. They are also a haven for wildlife. However it would seem to be a big pity if all dry stone walling were to be replaced in such a way.

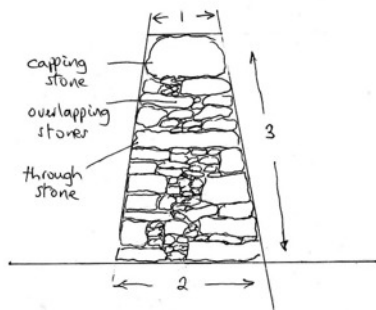
We came to the Cotswolds two years ago. I am a scientist by trade but have long been interested in building trades. I have just restored an old stone farmhouse in Southern France and developed basic

skills there working with stone. Since arriving in Ascott I have rebuilt one of our boundary walls in the Cotswold tradition and would like to pass on some of the techniques used so that some who may want to preserve the tradition might try some restoration on their own walls or even try building one from scratch. Most of the stones in a deteriorating wall may well be reusable or there may be supplies from walls no longer being maintained.

Perhaps a notable feature of Cotswold walling is that it is largely based upon sedimentary rocks- mainly limestone which had been laid down in layers and bonded over time with a natural 'cement'. Many of the bedding planes are quite thin, allowing relatively flat stones to be easily obtained. Quite slender stones are often a characteristic of Cotswold walling and assist in dry bedding. Where bedding planes are thicker, 'free-stones' might result. These can be dressed or carved with lower danger of delaminating so that they can be used for dressing or ornamental work. In general, the strength of a stone is not an issue. Much more important is durability. Coarser or open grained stones often absorb water but may be less damaged by freezing, since water, in freezing conditions, is free to migrate rather than build up damaging ice lenses. However, the same property which permits easy splitting of stones into usable thickness, can be a problem if water enters the laminations where it can freeze and cause failure. As a rule sedimentary stones are best laid with bedding planes horizontal to minimise water admission. Fully exposed stones will be at greater risk than those which form a building with a roof to protect them from rain and frost.

Basic techniques

The proportions of a wall should be in the approximate ratios 3:2:1 corresponding to height, base width and top width.



These may be varied according to stone type and wall height. Walls do not need purpose built foundations, but for load spreading it's good to have relatively large stones at the base. Any stone will have a best face which is selected to face outwards. It is debatable whether stones should slope inwards or outwards (slightly). An outward facing stone will shed water better but be at greater risk of falling out if it becomes loose. Inward facing stones make a more stable wall, but with greater risk of water penetration. Given that no stone is perfectly flat, I prefer to lay stones roughly horizontal and not to worry too much about inward or outward slope. Walls have a much better 'feel' if stones are close to horizontal as they run along the wall, though on gentle slopes they look best if they follow the lie of the land. Work tends to proceed faster if stone are roughly 'coursed' (laid side by side in equal thickness). However, occasional larger irregular stones break up prolonged courses of stone of equal thickness. It's very important for strength and aesthetics that perpend joints in successive courses do not coincide. 'One above two and two above one'.

Practicalities of building a wall.

I write these in the hope that some will embark upon a project and thereby help conserve the wonderful Cotswold tradition!

If not already predetermined, the height of the wall must be decided. Typical walls are about 1.2 metres (4 feet) high including capping. It's worth producing a template to start the wall, moving it along as work proceeds. The photo shows a typical template.



The upper and lower timbers should be horizontal (or follow the lie of the land on gentle slopes) and the frame braced lengthways and laterally so that it is stable. The frame is pinned into place to stop it moving. The foundation area should be well drained if possible and of reasonably smooth surface. There must be about a metre clear each side of the wall to allow for access. Stones can be laid out outside this area and for speed of work should be arranged with best face towards the wall (or vertical) for ease of selection. To assist in coursing they can be grouped according to thickness. Stones can be shaped with a bolster or mason's hammer according to the level of symmetry required in each

stone, though I personally prefer a more random, rustic effect with little shaping, especially if rebuilding a wall with original stones. New random stones can be obtained from local quarries. With modern extraction techniques, some may have some flat machined faces. Ideally these should not be used for facing as they look too clinical. They can be distressed with a hammer to obtain a more rustic effect.

Place larger available stones at the base. Go up one or two courses at a time working from both sides. Small stones can be used to produce firm bedding of each stone and gaps in the middle can be filled with clean rubble. (For the possible use of cement mortars to assist in bedding see later observations). It's good if some stones from opposite faces overlap for wall stability and if possible, occasional 'through' stones can be used for stability-see sketch. The correct position of each stone can be judged by sighting from above the template frame.

The wall at the top will be between 300mm and 400mm wide and is finished with capping stones. They serve to bond the wall together and may also provide some weather resistance. They may be shaped to roughly semi circular shape but this is not necessary. However they should be selected, avoiding those with obvious laminations which would admit water and lead to frost damage. Damage to these stones is often the start of deterioration of the wall as a whole.

Use of mortars

I'd like to comment on the use of cement mortars in 'dry' stone walls. While not in the tradition of Cotswold walling they do offer some important advantages.

Ease of bedding.

If thin mortar layers are used between stones instead of small bedding stones, work can proceed more quickly and the wall becomes structurally stronger. The mortar can be recessed so can be largely invisible. However, on close inspection, it will be seen that the stones are not quite so tightly bedded as in 'real' dry stone walling. If done well a wall so built will be likely to last longer as stones are less likely to become unstable and fall out.

Weather proofing

Walls bonded with cement mortar exclude water more effectively.

It is now very common to use mortars in the capping layer. These help shed water and add further to wall stability, increasing wall life. It will be appreciated that in stone clad buildings the stone is always well bonded with cement (or lime) mortar for strength and durability.

So my preference is to use thin, recessed mortar joints as I expect walls I build to 'see me out'. And the capping mortar should be well bonded and profiled, including between capping stones, to exclude water.

The above observations are personal and might be challenged by some, but I believe they assist in producing a strong and attractive wall in a reasonable time.



The picture above shows walling with a random stones sizes and a thin mortar joint. The strong mortar for the capping joint helps with stability and with water shedding. I personally feel that the assortment of sizes makes for interest in the wall.



The next wall (above) is about 2 metres (over 6 feet) high and the thin, well hidden mortar joints are considered quite important for stability. The stones are clearly coursed, each stone being shaped- this requires readily worked stones. The effect is more 'clinical' than more traditional walling. The capping mortar on this wall is effective for water shedding but not in the old tradition.

Part of the attraction of Cotswold walling is that virtually every wall is unique, reflecting the requirements of the situation, the available materials and the expertise and approach of the artisan.

It's my hope that many will be active in preserving this tradition and so help retain these outstanding features of the Cotswold countryside.

Geoff Taylor
(Ascott under Wychwood)

Coldstone Angling Club

The Christmas Competition

Saturday 6th December....

When I woke, this morning, I thought to myself “what day is it?” I gladly realised it was Saturday and I was going fishing. I packed my gear and made my way to the river at Ascott with egg and bacon sandwiches.

There was a sharp frost, but despite this ten anglers turned out with Percy Hickman only just making it in time. We each paid our pool’s money and after some light banter it was time to draw pegs. I drew pegs 38 and 39 (not great, but not bad). Pete (Mossy) Moss drew next to me on 36 and 37, which also had the scales for weighing in. I have to say this left Pete less than happy, but after I offered to help with the weighing his mood improved a little.

It was soon time to start. I threw in some maggots and dropped my bait in over the top. First cast saw me catch a small Chub, then ten more followed; a good start. I then moved down to the bottom of my peg and half a dozen more Chub were caught. By now it was 2.30pm and the sun was getting low, giving the whole valley a golden glow. A Kingfisher flew up the river, right past me; a truly great sight. As he flew out of sight the tip of my rod shot round, but sadly I missed the bite! The elusive fish didn’t give me another chance as it was now the end of the match.

Pete and I weighed in our section and returned to base to see how the others had done. Malcolm Barnes had won with 7lb 1oz, Percy Hickman came second with 5lb and Don Barnes was third with 4lb 12oz. You’ve guessed it, I was fourth with 4lb 11oz 8dr, one place out of the money. Beaten by dad by 8dr, much to his amusement, but I didn’t care as there was a prize for everyone. So armed with fifteen cans of cider I returned home, happy, relaxed and content. A great day!

Barry Barnes

Due to an editorial error this article was missed for the Spring Issue 85. The Editorial staff wishes to apologize to the members of the Coldstone Angling club for this error.

MISTAKEN IDENTITIES

When I walk in this luxuriant countryside, which has great appeal in every season, I like to keep my eyes open to seasonal changes. Thomas Hardy once said that the landscape in summer is like a painting and in winter like an engraving. Such literary observations are often in my mind as I pay attention to the details of where my feet (and my dog's feet) tend to wander.

I peered over the stone bridge recently and was dismayed to see not the heron I hoped had made a return to the Evenlode, but an abandoned large-size cardboard coffee mug. When driving over to my sister's house, my heart lifted as I saw what I thought was an unusual bird hovering round the trees at her nearby river. Was it the heron? No. It was an escapist plastic bag that had flown up into the air and lodged itself at the end of the branches of a tree.

In mid-April, when walking on the footpaths that lead from Ascott towards Chilson my attention was drawn to a stark white shape in the hedgerow. Immediately I felt an innate sense of anger welling up... 'Someone has cast aside another plastic bag' I thought. As I ventured more near to the shape, I was astonished - in a Wordsworthian sort of way - to find it was a blossoming patch of hawthorn.

It put me in mind of Hockney's hawthorn. Some years ago the Royal Academy put on the first exhibition in its history that was entirely devoted to a living artist - David Hockney. His love of nature re-

vealed itself as jubilant, colourful praise. Each time I went to see the exhibition, I came out feeling simply cheerful - as did many other people. That he devoted so many paintings to the depiction of hawthorn blossom was a reflection of how he admired and enjoyed its welcome appearance in spring.

He has spoken and written much on his experience of nature that now, in his latter years, has become a major theme of his work since returning to live in East Yorkshire. He has said:

"Every time we get the spring I get thrilled like that...there's a moment when spring is full. We call it 'nature's erection'. Every single plant, bud and flower seems to be standing up straight. Then gravity starts to pull the vegetation down. It was the second year I noticed that; the third, you notice even more. At the height of summer, the trees become a mass of foliage, and the branches are pulled down by the weight. When it falls off they'll start going up again. This is the sort of thing you notice if you are looking carefully. The fascination just grew for me here. This was a big theme, and one I could confidently do: the infinite variety of nature."

I must remember to keep my eyes in a state of naïve expectancy - the way they always have been - and to take my walks with the spirit of the artist in mind - not the cynic.

Juliet Craig

Leaffield C.E. Primary School

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175th Anniversary of signing of Trust Deed

Leaffield C.E Primary School near Witney, is 175 years old this year. The original Trust Deed for the school was signed on the 20th April 1840. To mark this occasion, the school held a week of special events and celebrations. All the children visited the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock to learn about life in Victorian times. Children and staff switched off their computers and iPads and dressed in period costume to take part in a Victorian School experience. The day began with drill in the playground and finished with a visit to assembly from The Bishop of Dorchester, dressed as a Victorian Bishop.

Local residents and former pupils who are now members of the village Evergreens club also visited the school to share their experiences, memories and old photographs with the children. The school archive was opened to explore the old copies of the Headteachers' logs too. Children were particularly interested to listen to extracts from the discipline book.

The week ended with a special service at St Michael and All Angels Church with the children and their families, governors past and present and members of the local community.

Later in the year all the children will be contributing to a piece of commemorative art work as a lasting reminder of this special occasion.



He was a gentle man that much I

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HARRY HONEYBONE

A BOY GROWING UP IN ASCOTT IN THE LATE 1880s

(With both their mother and father buried beside the path in Ascott churchyard five year old Harry and his brothers and sister now face life as orphans. In 1933 Harry then living in Yorkshire, continues with his history. He describes his father's family, the Honeybones had lived in Ascott for centuries. Then he gives details of his brothers' and sister's lives before beginning to recount the story of his life in the village which will follow in Part 3.)

My father had several brothers and sisters, one Peter who emigrated to New Zealand before I had the privilege to meet them. He did quite well out there both in farming and contracting for railways and he was also a carrier. He lived to a ripe old age being more than 82 before he died. Reuben came to live in Sheffield. He was in turn a Horse Tram Driver on the Heeley Moor Route, afterwards visited the Sheaf Market twice a week buying and selling poultry, pigeons, rabbits etc. He also had a shop in Heeley. Thomas was more of a roving character, going all over the country to places where there was greater remunerations for one's labour. He helped to make Darnall Tunnel now blown up. He afterwards married a woman from Hook Norton. They had quite a large family who are now spread all over the country. Uncle eventually died in Ascott where he had settled down owing to heart trouble I believe. Eliza was married to a shepherd by the surname Permin living at Enstone. They afterwards went to live at Little Tew. Ellen who was also married to a

stone builder by trade, by name of William Knight of Church Enstone, had three sons only. Aunt used to spend most of her time at Lord Brassey's at Heythorpe, by which method she used to keep the home going practically, they always had plenty of money to spare. They lived at the other side of Enstone, the village was divided into two. Aunt Lizzie living at Chapel Enstone and Aunt Ellen living at Church Enstone as they were distinguished from each other. Aunt Ellen developed a tumour or cancer in her left breast, she had her breast taken off but subsequently died from the result. Fanny, who was married to a horseman, a carter to Mr Groves, as I have already mentioned, lived at Milton. (*Fanny was the youngest of the Ascott Martyrs.*) They had a large family, their name being Rathbone. Another sister whose name I believe was Ann, she married a man by the name of Rainbow. He was a jack of all trades, hawker, shopkeeper and various other occupations. They also had a very large family who seemed to cling more to their place of birth, which was Shipton, rather than launch out further afield. Another sister whose name was Jane married a man named Moss who was, I believe a shepherd by calling. (*Another of the Martyrs.*) Aunt Jane died quite young soon after we went to live in Ascott. She remained in her place of birth until death. Aunt Fanny and Uncle Tom both had beautiful auburn hair, more on the red side, a relic of the Danes or Saxons. I have spent many happy hours

with all of these, they always treated me fairly decent. I often wish I could resume old acquaintances; it would be rather a pleasant reunion.

Grandfather John Honeybone died I believe soon after we went to live down there. I don't remember much about him, only as he used to wear the traditional smock frock. I often picture him in my mind's eye sat in the chimney corner, smoking his clay pipe upside down, he had no teeth wherewith to hold it the right way up. He used to get either spills of paper or poke a red hot coke from the fire onto his pipe to light it. I remember the night he died, there was a terrific thunder storm passing over at the time, vivid flashes of lightning followed by thunder, before one peel had died away another was on its heels. Grandfather said it kept lightning but he couldn't hear it thunder, his sense of hearing had passed away for all time; he passed away before morning. I do not know his age, cannot remember hearing how old he was. I believe he originated from North Leigh or Northleach, somewhere in the neighbouring country. Grandmother, a good old soul, she did her best for me under the circumstances. I believe she always had my welfare at heart, although I did not always appreciate it at the time. She used to go out, as I have said already, to either of two farms, just across the way or to the mill in the distance any day of the week when required, to help eke out the meagre income of our household. By this means we were able to exist. The Poor Law at that time was not very generous, about three shillings per week in addition to one loaf of bread was all that was allowed, but however we struggled on with a bit of help. I shall perhaps have more to say about this later.

Now as I have said our William (*Harry's stepbrother*) did not leave Handsworth but stayed behind at his work, he subsequently took up the occupation that Father did, of coachman. He married Mary Hallam, there were three sons of the marriage, they subsequently left Handsworth and took up their abode in Rotherham, he being coachman to a Dr. Robinson I believe. He stayed with these people for 12 years, went from there to Ringworth Hall, then Smalley Hall near Derby, then Chepen Hall near Retford. At this time there was a change over from horse and carriage to motors, so William had to transfer from coachman to chauffeur. He eventually moved to Pontefract where owing to his age, he being over 70, the doctor whom he was with asked him to retire about two years ago. By the way, one of his sons, Arnold by name was killed during the Great War and another one, Leonard was wounded.

Our George remained in Oxfordshire for a period, he went to live at Shipton with the Rainbows, I believe. He stayed there for a while but had a yearning for the old Yorkshire home. He eventually came back seeing as there was nothing but farm work in Oxfordshire. He married Mary Harriet Guest and settled down at Woodhouse. As Birley West Pit worked out he went to Birley East Pit and worked there for some time, then he moved to Bentley working as Banksman. His wife died there and he remarried a war widow. There were three children by the first marriage, one boy who was killed just before the Armistice during the Great War.

Brother Reuben stayed at Ascott some time working on some of the farms there but eventually he went further afield to nearby Chipping Norton. He was hired to

a farmer there for the magnificent sum of 50 shillings per year and live in. He ultimately tired of this, no doubt fed up with the slave conditions. He subsequently enlisted in the Royal Berks and Bucks Regiment, serving in Ireland, in the West Indies at Bermuda, then transported home for service in the Sudan, there being a rising there at that time. However the Royal Berks and Bucks remained at Malta, Reuben being commissioned mainly as an Officer's Servant. He finished his service, came home and settled down at Woodhouse, sister Lizzie keeping house for him for a time, then he married Mary Widdowson and removed to Eckington where he is still living.

Brother John, as I have already said, went to Dr Muller's Orphanage at Ashley Down, Bristol. I cannot exactly state how long he was there but he would be between four and five probably when he went there and I can remember the morning they went away. We caught the half past eight train to Bristol. I don't know if at that time the train would not have to go to Worcester, before they would get on to the main line from the North to the South West through Worcester, Cheltenham, Gloucester etc. the line from Chipping Norton Junction not being constructed then I don't think. They must have gone there the year that Father and Mother died. We were sent on in front, I and John and Lizzie. We had to pass a running stream. Of course we had to play about on our way just before we reached the station and eventually got our feet wet. I don't believe we saw John again from that day until years afterwards. By what we learned later after making enquiries about them we found that just before they were ready for work, if anyone of good char-

acter needed either boy or girl to adopt they had the privilege to choose one from the Orphanage if they could guarantee to take care of them and provide a livelihood. There was a man and his wife who lived at Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, who had no children of their own, made application for a boy to adopt, so they eventually adopted our John. I do not know what formalities they had to pass through before they were successful but before I knew anything about it he had gone to live with them in South Wales. It seems rather strange they should let him go to strangers when he had brothers of his own or even before we were acquainted with the idea that he was going away. However they adopted him and found him work at the colliery as an engine attendant. They brought him to Woodhouse once. They seemed quite nice people. He eventually got married, his wife's name was Lydia. I know they had one son. They both came to Woodhouse on a visit for a week. That is the last time we have seen any of them. It seems strange that after separation at so tender years never to meet again for years, that brotherly love and affection seem to pass into dissipation, never to be compounded together again. We all forsook friendship as it were when the home broke up and there grew in its place that estrangement that separated the bond of friendship and affection; the union never to knit together again and the bond of friendship and love which is so necessary for true happiness. I am confident now that affection will never be again cemented together. The aloofness has become too permanent. Death can separate but it cannot unite.

Sister Lizzie of course remained at the Orphanage for a longer period. We visited her whilst she was there only twice, but each time we were complete stran-

gers, she having forgotten us altogether, being so young when we last saw her. Probably she was no more than two years of age when we were last in her company. She didn't know anything why she was there; she did not know what the outside world was like; knew no other home apart from the one she was in then. There were four or five huge blocks of buildings of stone, clean, no smuts to blacken them, being situated right up on Ashley Downs as they were, away from the grime and smoke. The inside spotlessly clean. We had to make ourselves known, we had to produce our credentials and guarantee that we were not imposters, that we were genuinely seeking an audience with our sister. Then we were kept waiting some considerable time before we could have an interview. On our approach she would shrink from us like a child from the biggest stranger imaginable. We tried our best to explain who we were and what connection there was between us and her, whether she understood we did not know. We had to go through the same process the second time we paid a visit and she seemed no more composed in our company than the first time. There was still that shyness and untrustfulness that were exhibited on our first visit. We afterwards arranged for her liberty. Although I believe that they do well for them, they are taught to be good citizens and to be of good behaviour and if no one claims them they are put out to some kind of service. After a considerable amount of correspondence and guarantees, it was arranged for her to come out. She came to Woodhouse to live at brother George's I believe first of all. Then when Reuben came home she kept house for him, but everything was strange to her as if she had never seen anything in her life before. She had to

begin life all over again, the life she had been accustomed to was quite different to ours. Everything was treated with suspicion. She would not even trust us for anything, she might have been amongst complete strangers, which of course she was in a sense. But of course that urge, that sense of mating which takes everyone more or less in its grip, that natural propensity, that tendency we have inherited from our ancestors took possession of her and she eventually entered into the bonds of matrimony, her husband's name being Charles Drinkwater. They were not wed long, the remuneration for labour was at a very low ebb and they decided to venture out in the far West. I cannot give the date of their departure as I have never taken the trouble to enquire of even to take records. I believe they tried their luck in Nova Scotia first of all I might be wrong here, I am trusting to memory. Then they went further west to Vancouver, then after a while tried their luck in Saskatchewan. They did not settle there but ultimately found their way back to Cardiff, Alberta which is about 18 miles from the town of Edmonton. There they reside to this day on one of the government's 160 acres farmsteads. It has been a struggle all along the line. Don't go out there with the expectation of finding flowery paths and beds of roses because if you do you will reap disappointment, there is nothing but hard work and plenty of it if you mean to make a success of life out West. You are on virgin ground there and you must start at the beginning of things and make and create everything necessary for your existence. But I believe they are now beginning to reap the reward for their labours. After all these years the family consists of one son and two daughters, but as the old adage points out, one sows and another one reaps, therefore these children

Ascott Grapevine

may in all probability reap what their parents have sown.

And now I only am left. *(To be continued.)*

(In Part 3 Harry begins the story of his life here in Ascott village.)

Wendy Pearse



Back Row L to R: George, Reuben, John and Harry

Front Row L to R: Mary (nee Guest), Mary (nee Widdowson), Eliza Jane Lydia (nee Lewis), Annie (nee Guest)

George Honeybone b 1865 Simpson Bucks
d 1937 Bentley Yorks
p George John & Jane Hill
m (1) 1890 Mary Harriet Guest
(2) 1920 Alice Butterworth
c Eveline Mary, Ruby Geraldine, Allan
George, George, Iris Alice, Eric, Marion +
1 stillborn son.

John Honeybone b 1873 Fenny Stratford
Bucks
d 1971 Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan
p George John & Jane Hill
m Lydia Lewis
c William John, George Muller

Reuben Honeybone b 1868 Fenny
Stratford Bucks
d 1934 Eckington, Derby
p George John & Jane Hill
m Mary Elizabeth Widdowson
c Cyril George, Gladys Mary, John
Leslie, Cecilia Agnes

Harry Honeybone b 1871 Fenny Strat-
ford, Bucks
d 1944 Dinnington, Yorks
p George John & Jane Hill
m 1893 Annie Guest
c Albert, Irene, Cecil George, Ronald
Harry, Enid Annie, Leonard Vincent,
Connie Eileen, Arnold.

Eliza Jane Honeybone b 18775 Sheffield, Yorks
d 1957 Edmonton, Alberta
p George John & Jane Hill m Charles Drinkwater

HONEYDALE FARM – THE CHANGES.

My grandfather took on the tenancy of Coldstone Farm in 1932 and moved in with his family on the 29th September.

My memories start in the early 1940's when much of the farm work was done by horse power with carts and wagons running on wheels with iron tyres. There was also a Fordson tractor on iron wheels which did ploughing and the heavier work. I rode on it, with dad, every time I got the chance and I was able to drive it and help do some jobs when I was seven years old.

Grandfather died in 1951 and the landlord sold the farm with vacant possession. My parents bought the biggest and best part and the four of us, my parents, my sister and I, moved up on the hill on 29th September 1952. They named the new farm Honeydale after the name of the biggest field. The name goes back for many centuries when it was described as Honeydale furlong. The only buildings were two open cattle sheds and one small store shed, so we lived in a caravan for 18 months whilst a house and more buildings were put up.

We had a small dairy herd which we milked by hand until after we installed an electricity generator in 1961.

In the 1950's we were still cutting the corn with a binder which tied it into sheaves. The sheaves had to be stooked up to dry, then carried by wagon to the rickyard, built into ricks and thatched to keep the rain out. Later on the grain was threshed out by a threshing machine. It was nearly all hard work and often dusty

but a lot of traditional skills were involved and personally I enjoyed every minute of it, and it was a sad day for me when the contractor's combine took over the harvest in 1964.

Wendy and I were married in 1973 and we took over in 1974 when dad retired. We grazed the milking cows and the young cattle in the grass fields and also cut some of the grass for hay. Most of the cows I helped into the world when they were born, many of them were with us for 13 or 14 years producing 10 calves or more and giving good quantities of milk. But sadly for every one of them and me, the time came when I had to decide, "She'll have to go."

We used the four arable fields in a 4 year rotation. The first year was rye grass and red clover for hay for the cattle and also to help with the fertility of the soil when it was ploughed up. Then winter wheat, followed by spring barley for the next two years with the second barley crop under-sown with clover and rye grass ready for the following year. Most of the straw was used for bedding for the cattle and they produced enough manure to give each field a coating once in four years. While we had the milking cows Wendy did most of the tractor work and most of the time the system worked like a master plan.

By 1988 I had decided that milking cows twice every day for 35 years was long enough so then we just had beef cattle which were much less of a tie and I also had more time for tractor driving.

I always liked to keep the hedges strong and stockproof so I used to lay a hundred metres or more each year, one of my favourite jobs. I always thought of retirement as an evil day to be postponed for as long as possible, but faced with 30 cms of snow, being 350 metres from the public road, with severe frost threatening to freeze up our private water supply, while a strong blizzard could cut off our electricity, and no longer being young, we had to re-assess our situation.

Large numbers of people came to view the farm when we put it up for sale and it was a tense moment at the auction when it was sold on 30th September 2013. Would the farm become a gentleman's weekend retreat, an equine paradise for horses or just more acres added to an arable farm? No. I am pleased that it was bought by Ian Wilkinson who will keep it as a unit and be able to put his own ideas into operation. I hope that Ian and his family will gain pleasure from the farm for many years, just as I did.

Jim Pearse

Cotswold Seeds

Cotswold Seeds is a small family firm based these days in Moreton in Marsh. The company began life nearly 41 years ago in a garden shed in Fifield with a seed mixing and packing unit in Milton under Wychwood.

Robin Hill founded the company and I joined him as an agricultural work placement student in the summer of 1984. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Robin and the work, which involved time on farms advising farmers as well as all aspects of getting the seeds to customers. I left to finish my studies and to get other business experience before eventually joining Robin full time in 1987.

The company has grown a lot since those early days, but always in the back of my mind I had a desire to try to buy a farm as an extension to the seed business. I wanted to practice what I preached and to be able to show our different combination of seed mixtures in the field to our farmer customers. So after a very long wait and other missed opportunities Honeydale Farm came on the market. My wife and I

went to have a look at it and fell in love with the place instantly.

After a very nerve wracking and tense auction at the Fosse Manor Hotel in September 2013, the hammer fell and the farm was ours. We were thrilled and delighted to have got it, but very aware that our pleasure was equalled by Jim and Wendy's sadness. A farm that had been in the Pearse family for over half a century can only have been a very emotional sale. Happily though, their new cottage in Ascott under Wychwood has a brilliant view of the farm and rumour has it that Jim had Joe Gomm his builder put an extra-large window in the bedroom so that he and Wendy could continue to see their fields! I hope that they still feel very connected to the farm and able to visit as often as they wish. In our minds, we are custodians of land that they nurtured and loved for all of those years and we intend to do the same, hopefully for as many years as them.

We have been very lucky in inheriting land that has been farmed in a very tradi-

tional way and the amount of wildlife, flora and fauna present is tantamount to Jim and Wendy's farming practices. We didn't make any changes to the farm in the first 12 months, we wanted to watch and wait before starting to put our own plans into action. During that time the Swinbrook Estate helped us to carry on growing 60 acres of barley as Jim had done previously; we had Nigel and Ed Adam's ewes and lambs grazing the grass fields and had baseline counts of everything from deer to bees, trees to orchids taken. We also managed to catch and neuter all six of the farm cats with the help of the Sunshine Cat Protection Group based in Milton. They are a very healthy, pretty bunch of tortoiseshell girls who enjoy 2 meals a day and keep the buildings free of rodents in return!

After our year of observation, we have slowly begun to make our changes in order to showcase our seed mixtures to our customers and to begin experimenting with different combinations of seeds. Everything we do we will be sharing results of with our farmers and other interested parties. We have planted 7.5 acres of wildflowers at the top of the farm along the road along with several thousand fruit, nut and berry trees and shrubs, plus a new triple row hedge dividing this area from the arable fields. These we hope will provide plenty of food and habitat for the bird and insect life including the all-important pollinators.

In association with the Cotswold Rivers Trust and with help from wonderful volunteers from the Wychwood Project and the expertise of Vaughn Lewis of CEH we have implemented a very exciting flood mitigation project. This is designed to slow down and contain water

from a spring on the farm as it flows down to the River Evenlode. The original course of the spring had been diverted before Jim and Wendy's time in a bid to dry out Plum Tree field, it has spent the intervening years flowing sometimes very fast, in a straight line down the hedgerow and into the river. The spring is now running closer to its old meandering course and is being held back by a series of small dams and bunds and held up in a series of ponds. In addition 1500 trees have been planted at the bottom of the field in an area known as the infiltration zone. The tree roots will eventually form channels drawing water deeper underground and themselves will use a lot of water. These trees, a mixture of willow, hazel and alder will be coppiced for firewood as well as being another source of early food for insects.

We are hoping to use the project as an example of what can be done on farms upstream in river catchment areas to help prevent flooding of land and communities further downstream. We are really pleased with our finished result, it looks beautiful, provides a valuable wetland habitat and will hopefully play a small part in reducing the flooding of Ascott. As spring progresses, our major planting of the present arable fields will soon begin. This will include seed mixtures designed to improve soil fertility and increase humus, plus other mixtures to attract and feed pollinating insects in addition to providing another habitat for bird life. We shall eventually graze these fields with sheep and cattle which will also add another source of natural fertilizer to the soil. We will continue to grow a wide strip of barley in each of the fields for the dual purpose of having a control section to compare the state of the soil after use of the soil improving seed mix-

tures, and to keep some areas of Skylark friendly habitat.

We are very excited about the future for the farm and have plenty of ideas and plans for the years ahead, but we will be taking our time making changes. Our next big project will be the planting of

the Oxfordshire Heritage Apple Orchard which will begin in the autumn. For now though, the seeds await!

Anyone interested in following what is happening at Honeydale can follow our blog at <http://cotswoldhoneydale.blogspot.co.uk>

Ian Wilkinson

Did You Know?

‘The castle of Ascot Doilly appears from documentary sources to have been put up c.1129-50. Excavations in 1946-7 of a small mound on this manorial site showed that it had contained a stone tower 35ft. square which had been built up from the natural surface of a 4-ft. rise of Lias clay protruding through the gravel of the Evenlode valley bottom. Round this tower, as it was raised, had been piled a low mound of clay; thus the impression of a tower on a mound was created. Beside it are the remains of a bailey and contemporary paddocks. The tower had been deliberately demolished, probably c.1180.’

ActionAid Charity Concert

My colleagues from the New Wychwood Singers have very kindly agreed to support me in my fundraising efforts on behalf of ActionAid's forthcoming project in Mozambique to help the victims of domestic violence.

In October, alongside around thirty other volunteers, I am going to the district of Marracuene to help start the physical build of a centre which will house health-care and social services for abused women and their children. The centre will also give victims access to the criminal justice system. The funds we will raise will go directly to this very worthwhile cause. The concert is on:

Sunday July 5th at 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) at

The Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood

Tickets £8 (to include a free glass of wine) from Joanna van de Poll on 01993 830090 or any choir member

The New Wychwood Singers are a dynamic choir with a wide repertoire and a vibrant sound. Please come and enjoy our show stopping programme of songs from the musicals as well as classic and jazz numbers. There will be a good quality raffle with prizes including a House of Commons bottle of champagne signed by David Cameron! We look forward to seeing you. ***Beth Tarpey***

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Ascott under Wychwood Railway Station

The Present and its distant Past – Our Journey Continues

The Present

In the Spring 2015 edition of the Ascott Grapevine I had hoped to stimulate the villager's from their apparent slumbers regarding our seeming acquiescence with the minimal train service that First Great Western provide.

The one weekday 0743 train into Oxford and its return around 1800 is providing a valuable service for quite a number who commute daily for work in Oxford, and indeed for a surprising number who board it at the halts at Finstock and Coombe. As the sole all stations service down the line, that is hardly unexpected, but commuters apart, those wishing to visit Oxford for shopping or museums etc have a very long day ahead of them, the first hour or two in a café before opening time? Those wishing to go north to Moreton or Worcester and beyond, must first drive to Charlbury or Kingham despite the pretty obvious fact that lots of trains both ways roar through Ascott, affecting us only by temporarily closing the level crossing gates!

Regrettably, as the Ascott representative of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG), I haven't to date received any prompts from villagers regarding particular extra services they would support. That is except my lady wife, who would like a mid morning weekday train into

Oxford, and likewise one on a Saturday. Is she just being kind and supporting me, or are there others who share her plea?

Well, despite that, I am very pleased to record that on 22nd April at Ascott station, Councillor Carter and I met for the first time, Alan Field the First Great Western Station Manager for the North Cotswolds service, and we productively discussed services amongst many other station related topics.

Not only is Alan genuinely customer focussed, he is as we have already found, a man keen to take action quickly if needs be, and though he is never going to be able to dictate First GW policy, he shares our disbelief that more services aren't calling at Ascott. We cannot expect quick miracles, but Alan is now exploring what of the existing services that rush past Ascott, could potentially make such a call. He promised to get back to us once that review is done.

However, repeating my report on Transport to the recent Annual Parish Council meeting in Tiddy Hall (see AuW Website), even if Alan can offer potential service improvements that First GW agree to trial, they will not survive unless villagers respond very positively in using them to provide a convincing business case. An example of a business failure

was the short lived pre Christmas shopper's trains.

Yes, as a Great Western Railway Company historian I can confirm that even though it was a private company, it deliberately chose to continue many rural loss making services because it recognised it was nevertheless providing a valued "Public service".

Ummm that was up to 1947 of course....

The distant Past

In my role as Chairman and Trustee of the Great Western Trust, based at Didcot Railway Centre, I have frequently found that publishing any article, however brief or lacking in hard facts, is the very best way of prompting new information from readers, or to justify yet more research.

The latter has been the case arising from my January article about Ascott station staff, for which I am grateful to Elaine Byles, herself a Trustee of the Ascott Village Charity. She wants to know more about the history of the Ascott signal box, particularly when it was built, possibly if it used local bricks, and if indeed it replaced an earlier one.

Well, at this precise time, driven by Stuart Fox's drumbeat of "Copy Date" of 5th May, I cannot as yet, give definitive information about the signal box, as the experts always want more time don't they?

However, it is becoming clear that signalling on this line, is of itself a story reflecting social and transport history that is worthy of refined research before a complete picture can be published, but when it can, I will be glad to oblige you all.

Why should it deserve this interest? Well, for that we must go far back to the line's creators, the grandly named Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway Company (OWWR) who in their day suffered maybe justifiably the alternative use of those letters as the Old Worse and Worse Railway!

It was perpetually short of adequate funding even during construction, adopting the simple expedient of making the track formation capable of dual tracks, but only laying single and spending vast sums on legal litigation with all and sundry, not least the GWR itself, and even ignoring orders by Parliament to fulfil its obligations under its original Act of August 1845!

By the time Ascott station opened on 4th June 1853, the safe passage of trains was reliant (or at best wishfully dependent) upon the "time interval" principle. By this, once a train had left the station, another would not be allowed to follow it until 5 minutes (Danger) had elapsed, and even then only under Caution for a further 5 minutes, after which the passage was deemed safe to proceed (ie without being cautious). This applied to passenger trains but for goods trains it was 8 minutes (Danger) and another 7 minutes at Caution. Hopefully the preceding train hadn't stopped unexpectedly some way ahead!

Regrettably in 1858 the OWWR suffered what was then the worst accident in UK railway history, near Wolverhampton when 14 were killed and 50 injured. The official Inspector reported on the poor practices and staff competence on the OWWR, and it was clear no other form of signalling as we know it today, existed on virtually the whole line, although one signal at Evesham is on an 1852 print of the Station opening.

The OWR merged to become part of the West Midland Railway in 1860, and that was absorbed into the GWR in 1863. Even then, this line went onto to become the very last part of the GWR to be fully signalled around 1883.

So the first Ascott signal box did indeed come into operation in 1883 with fully interlocked signals and points. Only 30 years after the station opened!



Peter Rance

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Nick Leadbetter

I come from an Army background. I was born in the Army hospital in Aldershot and spent three years to the age of eight living in Lagos, while my father served with the Royal West African Frontier Force. I remember a lot about Nigeria, the coastal region with heavy seas, the jungle that came almost to our house, the people and the poverty, the mosquitoes at night and the crocodiles walking in the street as their swamps were drained to contain malaria outbreaks. When we came home in 1961 my mother wrote often to our ex head houseman, Simon. A lovely, gentle man, he was a friend and also a member of the Ibo Tribe. He stopped writing in 1966, an early victim of the Biafran war.

We moved to Cornwall in 1961 where my older brother and I continued an idyllic childhood. I was allowed great freedom and roamed the central part of the county by bike and pony from our home in Truro. A very keen rider from the age of six, I

loved being around horses and worked in the stables of a local riding school to earn free rides. By the age of ten I was leading tourists out hacking in the summer, and even picked up the odd shilling tip. I hunted with the Four Burrow hounds and competed in junior cross country events as often as I could. Then came grammar school and rugby, which became a second passion and competitive riding faded by the time I was 14, though I never stopped completely and later rode in a national level cross-country competition at the start of the 1974 eventing season in Germany.

The Army was always going to attract me and in 1970 I left home for the Army's own technical school, Welbeck College. I left with three poor A levels, having spent most of my time playing sport. I moved on to Sandhurst and was commissioned in 1972 to join the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

My first tour was an attachment to the Life Guards in Germany. When my new Commanding Officer asked me what I wanted to get out of my time with his Regiment I answered, "... my own Troop and to serve in Northern Ireland next year when the Regiment deploys to South Armagh". I got my wish a few weeks later and loved every moment's soldiering with a unit of consummate professionals.

I was sent to the Army's own university at Shrivenham, despite my limp A levels, and I left in 1977 with a degree in mechanical engineering and my wife, Sarah. We moved around a lot as I was posted to various units and command headquarters, many with a multinational flavour including one in the Sinai desert, patrolling the sand and rock between the Israelis and Egyptians. I was also one out of 120 foreign nationals to attend the Command and General Staff College in 1989 with 1,000 US soldiers, marines and airmen at Fort Leavenworth – that was a really great year. We lived in 17 houses in England, Germany, Cyprus and USA during our 17 years of marriage and loved it all. I was commanding my own battalion in Germany in 1993 and had recently come back from Bosnia when Sarah was killed by an arrogant and selfish young German driving too fast.

I retired early from the Army in 1996, having moved to Centuries House (now, more correctly The Old Post Office) in London Lane in 1995 – as an aside, I understand that Shakespeare probably travelled to and from London through Ascott; I would really like to meet him and hear what the village was like in his lifetime. Why did I move to Ascott? I was on the staff at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham, which is an easy commute

and my Parents-in-Law, who had a very close relationship with my daughters Emma and Hannah, lived in Swinbrook. I was also keen that Hannah should be able to do her GCSEs at Burford School – it worked brilliantly and I very soon came to love the village and the surrounding country. However it didn't stop me growing itchy feet, a hangover from my Army days, and in 1999 I accepted an invitation from the FCO to go out to the Balkans again to monitor the post conflict progress in Bosnia and Croatia, following the 1995 Dayton Peace Accord, on behalf of the EU. I spent six months in war blasted Vukovar, on the Danube travelling widely through both countries, witnessing the continuing hostility and mistrust between Croatians and Serbs in Croatia and between the Bosnians, Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia. Occasionally I had to share space with grasping politicians, many of whom were monstrous people who literally made my skin crawl. I observed exhumations of mass graves and monitored arguments about the ownership of possessed and re-possessed land and battle scarred property. But for the most part, the work was dull, uninteresting and largely pointless, and the Monitoring Mission was itself little more than a large European Gravy Train – I left at the first break point in my contract.

At home, I had volunteered in 1996 to be a member of the independent monitoring team at the co-located Grendon (closed Category B psycho-behavioural) and Springhill (open Category D rehabilitation) prisons. In the 10 years I was a member, I witnessed some truly uplifting things from prison staff and prisoners alike and Grendon's success rate on re-offending among some of the most dangerous and difficult prisoners in the country is exceptional; I remember one enormous young man, convicted of a serious crime of violence, say to

me "... it really makes a difference when people listen to you and talk to you like you're a human being, you know?". I am also a volunteer fundraiser for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and was county Chairman from 2005 until handing over last Christmas. Since leaving the Army, I earned my living by working privately as a management consultant, for the NHS as a PCT non-executive director and, since 2005 as an advisor to Cranfield University at the Defence Academy on the military utility of proposed new equipment (largely weapon systems and vehicles) in the early stages of design. I retired in 2014.

On the recreational side, many of you know that I have enjoyed going on riding safaris in Kwa Zulu Natal and Malawi and last year I rode across the Namibian desert. It was really good to return to some serious riding and I plan to ride in Botswana next year. Some say Africa gets in your blood; I don't know but I certainly find it exciting to track a herd of elephant, canter along among Eland, Zebra and Roan Antelope and watch Hippos come out of the water at night to graze. However, of all the places I have been in the world I don't think there is anywhere more beautiful than the cliffs of the north coast of Cornwall around Port Quin and Trevan Point or more wildly lonely than Brown Willy on Bodmin Moor.

My daughters are both married now, and I have three wonderful grandchildren who are all a joy to spend time

with. They surprised me at Christmas 2007 with a present I had not expected – my black Labrador, Nyika. What an inspired move; he is lying by me now while I type this in my holiday rental cottage on the Northumberland coast, while the wind howls and sleet bashes the windows. But there seems to be a break in the weather



and he is looking at me with those liquid brown, expectant eyes, so time to exchange the laptop for the hat, boots and waterproof.



Nick Leadbetter

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Wychwood Library

SUMMER 2015

It is summer time again in the Wychwoods and the annual book sale at the Milton under Wychwood Fete on Saturday the 4th July so if you have spare books/dvds/audio items to clear off your shelves we can happily recycle them for you. This is always such a successful village event made possible by your generous donations. We share our takings with the Fete committee and purchase new books for the library with the balance.

Summer Reading Challenge 2015 "Record Breakers"

This year the Reading Agency will be working with the Guinness World Records books bringing together the worlds of fact and fiction. Young readers will be encouraged to explore some of the real-life achievements and world records featured in these famous books. This annual reading challenge helps over three quarters of a million children throughout the country to maintain their reading skills and confidence during the long summer break. This year "Record Breakers" will also encourage information skills, engage reluctant readers and inspire wider reading. So be prepared to see your children break all previous reading challenge records and send them along to Wychwood Library.

We will be challenging our young readers to read at least six books collecting stickers and amazing rewards on the way. They will discover weird, wonderful and wacky records from around the

world in six different categories: Cool Tech, Way to Go, The Big Stuff, Animal Magic, People Power and Action! Adventure! On completion the children will receive a medal and a certificate. Visit us here at Wychwood Library three times to complete the challenge. It is fun and it's FREE and we have lots of fantastic new books, exciting puzzles and fun activities at the library as well.

We are also offering a volunteering opportunity for 13 to 24 year olds to help run this year's Summer Reading Challenge.

We are offering training, workshops and support and also we can provide you with references for your CV and you can work towards the Oxfordshire Young People's Award. Come in and talk to a member of staff for more information.

Reminiscence Session

Come along to a Reminiscence session at Wychwood Library on Thursday the 25th June at 2.30pm. Oxfordshire Heritage will be providing reminiscence from the Museum Service with a carefully chosen selection of interesting objects, photos and documents. This 'hands-on' session can stimulate memories and enable everyone to have a great time recalling days gone by.

Increase in charges!

The cost of overdue items for adult users has been increased from 20 pence per day to 25 pence. Children's charges have not been changed.

Ascott Grapevine

Fines are an avoidable charge by simply renewing your items online or by leaving a message on our answerphone.

Photocopying costs, which haven't changed since 1991, have also increased from 10 pence for an A4 sheet to 20 pence. An A3 copy will cost 40 pence now.

Replacement library tickets will now cost £2 each and the hire of audio books has also increased.

Come and visit us at Wychwood Library. We have a great selection of new books available for your summer reading and lots of regular activities. Reading groups, Poetry Club, The Wychwood Circle, IKNIT and Late Spring which is an Age UK support group open to men and women aged 60+ who have lost a loved one.

From Ruth and all of our wonderful volunteers.

Opening Times

Monday	2.00 to 7.00 pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	9.30 am to 1.00 pm 2.00 to 5.00 pm

Thursday
Friday
Saturday

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Stop Press

From the Village Shop

The villagers have shown their generosity by donating, to date, £100 in the Oxfam charity box in aid of the Nepal disaster fund.

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The Village Shop

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In our 12th year of trading, the management committee, volunteers and staff send their greetings to the village community and we thank you for your continued support.

How are we doing?

After our bumper year in 2014, where we ended the year with almost £3000 profit, our start to 2015 has been rather sluggish although I'm pleased to say sales have picked up since Easter. Its hard to put our finger on why this might be the case however, you have only to look at the daily parade of delivery vans through the village to know that shopping habits are changing. When you combine this with the very competitive pricing war amongst the major supermarkets then you start to understand what we are up against. No business can survive on sales alone, we have to manage our costs and according to our finance guru, Stuart Fox, we are doing the best we can considering all the outside pressures we face.

Shop environment

In order for the shop to survive and indeed sustain itself for the long-term, we need to stay relevant and show where we make a difference. We have a marvellous 'hardcore' group of customers, loyal staff/volunteers and we continually reach out to the wider community whether it is simply picking up a paper, collecting medicine from the Wychwood Surgery or a place to congregate and have a good old chat about village life. Like the pub we are open every day of the year (well almost!) I'm sure you will agree the shop is consistently welcoming, the fruit & veg are fresh and the shelves are well stocked. Now in stock; new season asparagus, strawberries and a range of Toms Pies!

Shop news

The shop AGM will be in the Swan. Thursday June 11th starting at 7 for 7.30pm. If you fancy joining the committee, please drop a note to secretary Rosemary Dawbarn. Since appointing Bridgette Crundwell as shop manager in 2014, this is no longer a shop run by a committee and our operating style is much more to do with providing support, setting policy and ensuring we can pay our bills!

Come and join us!

In order to stay profitable, we are totally reliant on our dedicated band of volunteers who support Bridgette, Jane and Dorothy – our paid staff. If you have ever thought of helping out in the community, come and join us. Why not have a chat with one of our volunteers and find out what the job is all about. Shifts are usually 2.30 hrs and 3 hours on Sundays. If you want to have a more confidential chat, call me on 831621.

Thanks again for your custom and we look forward to serving you soon.

John Cull Village Shop Chairman

Vet's Advice

Toby has passed away.

He lived in our village for a short period and spent his final years with a wonderful couple in Stonesfield, Anna and John. He was a great guy and a wonderful example of how the human-animal bond can work.

Toby was a large black Labrador who spent the first part of his life as a "sniffer dog", working with a group searching for explosives, keeping us safe. He was forced to retire after years of work and was taken under the wing of a group of volunteers who rescue Labrador dogs. They asked us to find a home for him, which we did.

Like many people I know, Toby relished his retirement and the only times he was prepared to use his sniffer ability was to find food (obviously not the food in his bowl) in an act we can only call 'stealing'. At least he was blatant about it, and utterly unashamed. He also had an uncanny ability to find water to jump into, regardless of whether he could climb out unassisted. As I mentioned, he was a big lad and it was not always easy to drag or lift him out of rivers and ponds.

In his old age he fulfilled the role of companion with verve, and was a good and reliable friend.

Toby was a gentle soul and we shall never forget him.

Animals fill so many roles in our lives and can have an enormously positive effect on our well-being and health. A number of years ago I had a client who was advised by his cardiologist that having a pet would



help with recovery post surgery. It helps to relieve stress, and patients who have pets tend to recover quicker and live longer (according to statistics.....).

My client decided against getting a dog or cat and settled for a rabbit. Sounds good, sounds relaxing, sounds like a reasonable choice.

Unfortunately Buttercup turned out to have a killer gene and tried to go for the poor man's throat even when he was trying to feed her.

Female rabbits can be a bit hormonal so we arranged to neuter her. Her behaviour didn't change much and their relationship remained difficult. That messed up the statistics a bit!

We do, fortunately, have far more examples of the positive benefits of pet ownership. Our dogs get us out of the house, and they make it easier for us to meet people. We usually remember the names of the animals we meet rather than that of their owners, but we have common ground to start a conversation.

Our pets provide us with someone to talk to at home (surely it's not only me?!) - after all, you don't feel silly talking to a dog or budgerigar, and talking to the wall just doesn't hack it.

And whatever it is they give us - some call it "love", I prefer "devotion" - it is unconditional.

Karen Kappen

Dear Editor,

I would like to inform everyone in Ascott-Under-Wychwood that Marie Curie speakers are available to give talks about the Charity. It is a great opportunity for local clubs, groups, schools, churches and companies to learn more about the organisation, the work we do and our impact on the local community. These talks can vary in length and can be tailored to suit your requirements.

Marie Curie Nurses provide free hands-on care to people with terminal illnesses in their own homes as well as vital emotional support for their families. It can make such a difference for patients to be able to be cared for where they normally live, surrounded by the people and things they love and cherish.

If you are interested in someone from Marie Curie coming to talk about our work, please contact Rebecca Dade on 01179427132 or rebecca.dade@mariecurie.org.uk.

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Free Speech

The Grapevine is your magazine and as such you can contribute by writing an article about anything you feel will be of general interest or a subject that you feel should be aired. For example:

- Do you subscribe to a charity that you think more of us need to know about?
- Have you a rant about the way we are governed at national and/or local level?
- Do you want to praise or thank the work carried out on your behalf?
- Is there a group of villagers striving to improve the village that we are not all aware of?

You can contribute in the form of an article or as a letter to the editor for village related subjects.

Please Note:

The editorial staff reserve the right to correct or remove any inappropriate words or phrases.

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KEEPING OUR VILLAGE BEAUTIFUL

On a glorious morning in February a whole army of volunteers appeared on the Green to help with picking up litter from all the verges around Ascott. There were more people than I have ever experienced, including 3 children – everyone eager to take their bags and ‘grabbers’ and stride off to all points of the compass in search of the offending paper, bottles and cans.



‘Some of the Early Birds’

Winter is the ideal time to spot any litter on the verges and in the ditches, especially after Xmas and New Year when the bottle count seems to go up, for some unknown reason! Because of the number of volunteers we were able to collect farther afield covering some footpaths as well – this is a good job for dog walkers. Even the road signs had special attention courtesy of Mark Tribe.



All kit is provided by WODC and all the rubbish bags collected by them. Unfortunately we found nothing valuable this year but someone did find an artificial Xmas tree complete with baubles. As so often is the case, I was thrilled by the support and must thank everyone who turned up. It is a good way to take some exercise and contribute towards this lovely village, so do look out for the notices next winter and get involved!

ASCOTT WALKERS



Next walks!!

Sunday June 7th Bourton-on-the- Hill/Longborough 4.5 miles.

Optional Lunch: Horse and Groom 01386 700413 Book Ascott Party

Sunday July 5th Addelstrop/Chastleton 5 miles

Optional Lunch: Mill House Kingham 01608658100 Book Ascott Party

We meet at the village green at 9:00am sharp on the first Sunday of the month.

Local residents and visitors to the village are welcome to join us. Dogs are also welcome on all walks.

All walks require cars to and from the starting place. Some transport will be available from regular members of the walking group who will normally car share. There is no need to book in advance. Please bring refreshment for a mid-point break
PLEASE BOOK "Ascott Party" DIRECT FOR LUNCHESES

For further information about any walk, or availability of transport, please contact Paul/Pauline Jackson 01993 83 1967 07974 565 618

Tiddy Hall News

Regular Activities:

Monday – Friday AM

Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant 07968006451

Wednesday Night 6pm – 6.45pm

Circuits

Contact: Simon Gidman 01993 831479

Thursday Night (From April 9th)

Quigong 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Contact Pam Quirke 07780 572283

Friday PM

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Post Office 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Special Events:

Saturday 13th June

Roseneath School of Music Annual Concert

7.30pm Tickets are £8, £5 under 18

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Saturday 20th June

Folk Night

The Jigantics

Sunday 5th July

New Wychwood Singers Concert

Doors open 7pm, tickets £8 from Joanna van de Poll

01993 830090

Wednesday 8th July

Tiddy Hall Trustees AGM - 8pm

Summer Yoga will start Tuesday July 21st 7.30pm – 9pm and run for the next 6 weeks.

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TIDDY HALL – Annual Dinner Dance

This year's event was tinged with considerable sadness for those of us who knew the late Ken Smith, who amongst many other things in his busy life was our Honorary Secretary. As I'm sure everybody knows Ken died last year from Pancreatic Cancer and it was decided that the whole event would be organised to raise money for the Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund.

The two Bands who played for us, Beatcop and Ragged Edge both gave their time for free and all the proceeds from the Bar and the Raffle were donated to the Charity and what a great evening everybody had. The hall was decked out with balloons, posters and banners for the charity and the Hall looked splendid. Beatcop, a local jazz funk combo band (whose drummer is well known to the author of this article !) started off the evening with their eclectic mix of trad. and funk and after supper we were entertained by the multi talented Ragged Edge with their diverse array of songs spanning the decades from 1950's to the new century – what talent. This was their last “gig” together as their drummer Terry Tew is leaving the band – but don't worry Ragged Edge pop pickers, they have already found a replacement and will be carrying on the good work in entertaining us all in the years to come.

We were very honoured to have Maggie Blanks, the Founder of the Charity attend the evening and she gave us a very moving and interesting account of the evolution of

the charity and the research work the charity are funding. Her own husband died of the disease fairly recently and it was as a result of this and the surprising lack of research into the disease that prompted her to set up the charity. It really is amazing how one person, or a small band of like minded people, can get together and create such a noble venture.

Robert Fellows, a good friend of Ken's also gave a lovely recital of the poem he wrote for Ken's funeral entitled “Never make friends with your dentist” – a lovely and touching tribute.

The evening in total raised £ 1000.00 for the Charity and this was presented to Maggie by Roger Shepherd, the president of Tiddy Hall.

So – our Annual Dinner Dance was something slightly different to the norm but despite the sadness that prompted the occasion, everybody had a lovely time and I think Ken would have been proud of us all – though perhaps in true Scottish fashion – in a slightly reserved way.

Thank you to everybody who gave their time for nothing, particularly Ragged Edge and Beatcop and to all those who contributed financially and just being there on the night.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL

Simon Gidman

Chairman - Tiddy Hall

Gardening in Ascott

A number of kind readers told me they enjoyed reading the extracts from my garden diaries in the last Grapevine edition, so with such encouragement here are a few more entries covering the summer months, plus a topical tip and recipe along the way.

3rd May 2008

Warm day, 25C in the shade! Cooked 2 wholemeal loaves in the outside wood-fired oven. Planted out a big pot of Moroccan mint from runners potted up in March. Turned the leaf mould pile made in the Autumn - rotting very well.

4 May 2008

Started to clip the box hedging. Tulips in pots look lovely. Set the Codling moth traps in the apple trees. Broad beans have flowers. Sowed dwarf beans in pots under cover in the greenhouse. Applied the 2nd dose of slug nematodes to the vegetable garden and around the hostas.

13 May 2008

Taking the Dahlias (in pots) outside during the day to harden-off before planting out at the end of the month. Then all back into the greenhouse for the night - hard work!

16 May 2008

Cold overnight. Sowed more beetroot in lengths of guttering. (For planting outside later) Untied and loosened all the ties on the fruit tree.

(It is good idea to check the ties on all trees once year. If the tie is too tight it

can restrict the growth of the tree and damage the bark).

17 May 2008

Sowed 2 rows of Florence fennel and a row of mixed salad leaves.

21 May 2008

Started to harden-off the dahlias, cosmos and courgettes by bringing them out of the greenhouse and putting them in the sunshine during the day. A bit of a job having to take them in and out of the greenhouse every day.

29 May 2008

The weather today is dry with a little bit of sun. Planted out courgettes, cosmos and dahlias. Cut the first of the outdoor lettuce and six spears of asparagus!

17 June 2008

The first peas of the season. Paul cut the front hedge and mowed the lawn. The weed killer and feeding of the lawn has very much improved the grass. Good combinations at Waterperry Gardens today - Artemisia Powis Castle, with purple salvias looks lovely. The rose garden looked absolutely beautiful - at its peak.

19 June 2008

The raspberries are beginning to ripen. Dug with hands in the earth under the potato plants, and found treasure- small golf ball size nuggets ready for the pot!

22 June 2010

A blissful day - in the garden from almost dawn to dusk. Hedge cutting and watering. Julie brought round a recipe for elderflower cordial.

20 June 2011

Opened the garden this weekend for part of the Village Garden Open weekend. Went very well and good fun, but extremely tiring to get the garden looking at its best! Paul's birthday present to me this year is a lovely sculpture of a young lady called Chloe, who is to sit at the end of the lavender walk, placed as if she's looking over the gate into the garden. She arrived just in time to surprise the garden visitors.

27 June 2008

The first of the potatoes are very good size. (Variety - Charlotte) Supper tonight was Broad and French beans in a cream sauce seasoned with summer savoury and parsley and poured over the new potatoes and topped with crispy bacon. Divine!

28 June 2008

A fine English summer day, breezy, some cloud but warm. We visited Hidcote and Kiftsgate Gardens today. Both are wonderful and demand another visit in July. Silver with purple planting at Hidcote makes a great picture and the roses at Kiftsgate looked absolutely wonderful. Purchased 2 kg of strawberries at the Hidcote 'pick your own' farm for jam.

29 June 2008

Made eight jars of strawberry jam to Raymonde Blanc's recipe, two sachets of pectin and preserving sugar to get a good set. Sowed wall-flower seeds in seed trays

2 July 2014

Picked the first cherries of the year (Variety Stella) and the tree is only in its second year. 1 pound, 5 ounces of ripe beautiful cherries. A fine birthday present!

5 July 2014

Lots of Broad beans! The very best is Masterpiece Longpod - must remember this for next year and grow only this variety.

10 July 2013

Picked the first cherries from the espaliered tree, very good flavour, but perhaps another week to fully ripen and they would be even better.

11 July 2014

At 8pm a hedgehog trotted through the garden. The first we have seen in many years. Came down from the car park gate, down the path, and then all around the garden. A delightful sight!

13 July 2008

First crop of tomatoes picked from the outside plants. (Variety: Tumbling Tom)

14 July 2008

At last, a long dry day. Spent all day weeding and catching up with the garden

tasks that have been left because of the rain. Planted out Nasturtium 'Black Velvet' to grow among the sunflowers and Perovskia. Courgettes for supper with home-made pesto on spaghetti.

Lavender Biscuits

8oz butter

4oz sugar

12oz self-raising flour

3 tablespoons chopped lavender buds

Cream sugar and butter together until fluffy. Add flour and lavender buds. Knead on floured surface. Chill for 30mins and then roll out to about 1/8in thick. Cut into heart shapes with biscuit cutter. Press a lavender petal into the centre of each biscuit. Bake at 180degrees C for 6 to 8 mins.

15 July 2008

Sweet pea tunnel looks fabulous - picking bunches every day.

18 July 2014

The resident garden hedgehog is much seen in the early evening and in the morning going home to bed. He could be living in the leaf mould pile at the back of the shed. The slugs have been very bad this year so hopefully he will have plenty to eat. Last night I heard him snuffling in the borders when I was on my slug hunt with my torch.

19 July 2009

Took cuttings of lavender, rosemary, sage and thyme.

21 July 2009

A little bit late in the year to do so, but I cut back the Philadelphus today. Very wet windy day, not much sunshine of late.

26 July 2013

Cut back the roses and geraniums. Finished planting out some of the late fillers in the borders such as cosmos and dahlias. Kathy and Mike gave me a new rose and I planted it today. Rose de Rescht.

27 July 2013

Planted out an assortment of brassica seedlings from Mike. Rained overnight. Moved the turf pile today - it's rotted down beautifully, but I dug up two very sleepy bumblebees who were nesting in the pile.

28 July 2013

Finally managed to water-in the second batch of slug nematodes for the year. (No rain for a while and the nematodes need moist conditions to operate). I haven't had the opportunity to liquid feed the roses. More deadheading of the roses. There is a gap in the lettuce production, it's been too hot for the seed to germinate.

27 July 2009

Picked lots of climbing French beans, cut into 2 inch lengths and froze them. The runner beans are setting well and about 2 to 3 inches long. Cut a lovely large bunch of dahlias for the house. The sweet peas continue to produce flowers, but I should have watered and fed them more.

28 July 2009

Two woodpeckers seen in the garden this week on consecutive days. The first, a Lesser Spotted, and then a young Green on the lawn. Dinner tonight made from garden produce - chard tart with carrots and lettuce.

31 July 2008

It's been a busy time of late and I've neglected the garden. Spent the day dead-heading all the flowers. The storm has caused a few plants to sag. Need to stake better next year! Geums and the Achillea especially need more twig supports.

(Dead heading and cutting back perennials such as geraniums after flowering, must be one of the most important summer garden jobs. It will extend the flowering season for many plants and keep others looking fresh as the new growth appears).

7 August 2008

Another wet start to the day and very humid. Took cuttings of penstemons, also cistus and tarragon. Paul flew over the garden with Alan today and we now have some great aerial photos of the house and garden. A lovely sunny afternoon.

9 August 2009

Hummingbird Hawk moth seen in the garden this weekend. The first we have ever seen here in Ascott-under-Wychwood. The last time we saw them was in East Sussex when we lived there. A wonderful year for butterflies - Peacocks, Commas, Painted-Ladies, Tortoiseshells, Brown Skippers and Cabbage Whites.

12 August 2009

Picked off caterpillars from the sprouting broccoli and washed the eggs off the leaves. Must remember to cover them with fleece next year!

21 August 2009

Pruned all the lavenders.

Pruning of Lavenders Hardy Lavenders

*There are many different varieties of lavenders and perhaps the most hardy is the English lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*). It flowers in the early summer on stubby flower spikes which are held on short stems a few inches above the narrow leaves. Varieties such as Hidcote and Munstead are often used for hedging because they have a nice compact habit. All *angustifolia* types should be pruned back by at least 9" in August, so they will have time to regenerate before the winter. NB: If there are a good smattering of side shoots below where you cut, these will grow away strongly, but beware, no shoots below your cut, means no growth for next year. If we were all conscientious pruners and did this every year, they should survive for many years. As it is, most of us aren't brutal enough and over a few years they become woody at the base and sprawling.*

If you have one of these old gnarled lavenders, with a length of bare wood topped with a mass of growth, you have 2 options:

Prune to within a hand's width of the bare wood to see if this encourages sprouting further down the plant and use the top

growth for cuttings to make new plants should no re-growth appear;

Or, dig it out and buy a new plant promising yourself to remember to prune hard next time!

Frost Hardy Lavenders

Typically these have little ears at the ends of the flower buds and are usually known as French or Spanish lavender. They are showy and have a long flowering period, but can be killed in a severe winter. A general guide to these types of lavenders is to prune hard to 9 inches immediately after the first flowering. Don't forget to observe the small side shoots rule as for Hardy Lavenders. These lavenders will then flower again if deadheaded during the flowering period. At the end of the year

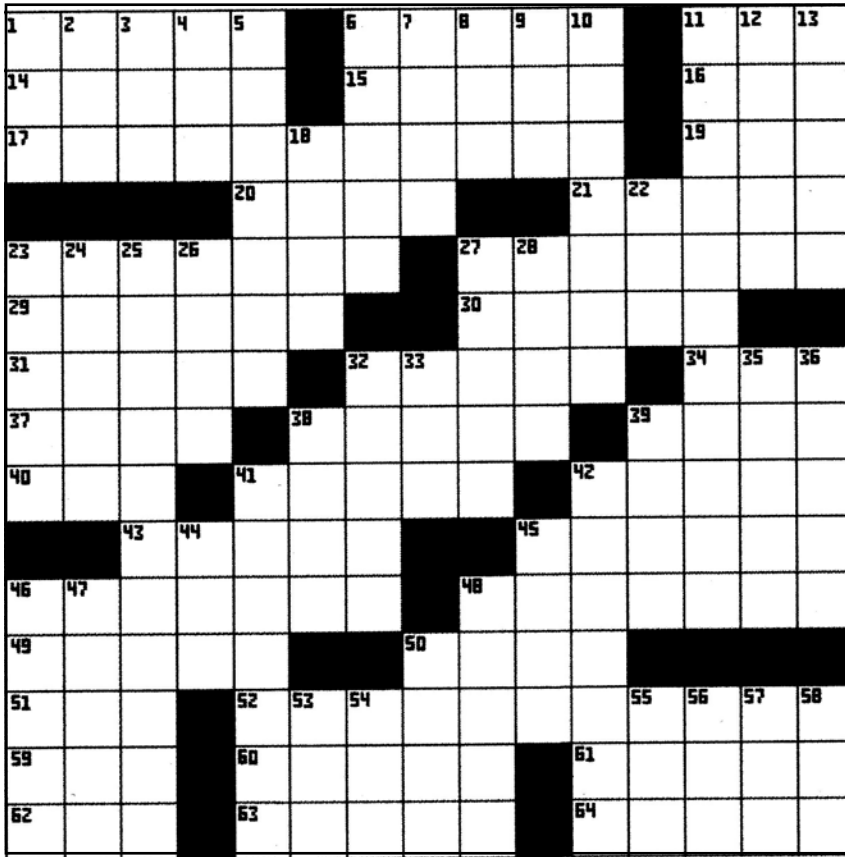
possibly just a light trim to polish off the season but don't do this any later than mid-September. You can expect the lavenders to last about five years if you follow this regime.

Half-hardy and Tender Lavenders

These soft leaved and three headed exotics will flower almost continuously throughout the summer. Lavenders dentata and x ginkinsii are excellent subjects for containers, giving a long period of interest. Dead-head throughout the summer and then give a more severe pruning at the end of the season. These will then need to be placed in a frost free place for the winter and kept rather on the dry side. In the spring they can be watered a little more to bring them back to life, before placing them outside in your containers after the last frost. Cut-



Crossword



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Across

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Big dipper | 31) Unrefined | 48) Listen, in literature |
| 6) It may be French | 32)"? well" | 49) Be a parasite |
| 11) Pipe contents, sometimes | 34) Second person | 50) Take care of yourself |
| 14) Wound up | 37) Many deer | 51) Japanese sash |
| 15) Seasons with lots of singing | 38) Dead-on | 52) They're all rational |
| 16) Certain flightless bird | 39) Caroller's syllables | 59) Came in first |
| 17) It's not up for haggling | 40) Cigar residue | 60) Bouncing off the walls |
| 19) Some fraternity characters | 41) It goeth before destruction | 61) Lofty home |
| 20) Dairy farm declarations | 42) Muddies the water | 62) Cabin type |
| 21) Have an impact on | 43) Internet messages | 63) Talk pompously |
| 23) Persian governors | 45) Pudding like dessert | 64) Military academy freshman |
| 27) African pullover | 46) Common office supplies | |
| 29) Common chalet style | | |
| 30) Ancient Greek theatre | | |

Down

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1) Pastoral place | 22) Exclamation of surprise | 42) Old glove-compartment item |
| 2) Mandela's party | 23) Pelvic parts | |
| 3) Banned insecticide | 24) Big dos | 44) Automobile sticker fig. |
| 4) Romanian currency | 25) Clockwise from due north | 45) List of dishes |
| 5) Japanese soybean | 26) Physics units | 46) Expression of displeasure |
| 6) Proofers catch them | 27) "La - Vita" | 47) Off-limits |
| 7) Belonging to both of us | 28) Mine passageway | 48) Beginning of a conclusion |
| 8) Ryan's "Love Story" co-star | 32) Angles between leaves and branches | 50) Move quickly and lightly |
| 9) "Hold on a ?" | 33) Schoolboy | 53) Serving of corn |
| 10) Dangerous African flies | 35) Ravel work (with "La") | 54) Santa in California? |
| 11) Derby-winning filly | 36) German industrial city | 55) _canto |
| 12) In a wild and crazy fashion | 38) Lake near Niagara Falls | 56) Before, in palindromes |
| 13) Type of bar | 39) Band's schedule | 57) Umbrella stiffener |
| 18) Bound along | 41) Sicilian capital | 58) "Wait" partner |

Solution to Crossword in Edition 85

Across

- 1 Quinine
- 5 Formal
- 9 Intense
- 10 Andrews
- 11 Ray
- 12 Lyrics
- 13 Iceland
- 14 AWN
- 15 Nostril
- 17 Gist
- 21 Hail
- 24 Follies
- 27 Ago
- 28 Halibut
- 29 Haiti
- 30 Ted
- 31 Chianti
- 32 Implant
- 33 Rebate
- 34 Gwynedd

Down

- 1 Quisling
- 2 Interest
- 3 Ionic
- 4 Eternal
- 5 Flaying
- 6 Redress
- 7 Age Gap
- 8 Aside
- 16 Ill
- 18 I Do
- 19 Militate
- 20 Assisted
- 22 Albania
- 23 Lattice
- 24 Folding
- 25 Chico
- 26 Sluice
- 29 Happy

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Events Calendar - 2015

Date	Event	JLCS = Joint Local Councillors Surgery	
June 2 nd	4-7 pm	Thames Water	Tiddy Hall
June 7 th	9.00 am	Ascott Walkers	Village Green
June 11 th	7.30 pm	Shop AGM	The Swan
June 13 th	7.30 pm	Roseneath Concert	Tiddy Hall
June 20 th	8.00 pm	The Jigantics	Tiddy Hall
June 27 th	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	Wychwood Inn Shipton-u-W
July 5 th	9.00 am	Ascott Walkers	Village Green
July 5 th	7.00 pm	Action Aid Charity Concert	Tiddy Hall
July 8 th	8.00 pm	Tiddy Hall Trustees AGM	Tiddy Hall
July 25 th	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	Holy Trinity Church A-u-W
July 25 th	2.00pm	Swanfest headline Barbara Dickson	The Swan
August 15 th	8.00 pm	Bruce Gomersall	The Swan
August 21 st	7.00 pm	The Wurzels	The Swan
August 29 th	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	Wychwood Inn Shipton-u-W
September 5 th	8.00 pm	Eleanor Ellis	Tiddy Hall
September 26 th	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	The Swan
October 3 rd	8.00 pm	Jim Moray	Tiddy Hall
October 17 th	8.00 pm	Benita Johnson	The Swan
October 31 st	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	Wychwood Inn Shipton-u-W
October 31 st	8.00 pm	Martin Carthy	Tiddy Hall
November 7 th	8.00 pm	Steve Turner	The Swan
November 21 st	8.00 pm	Marie Dunn	Tiddy Hall
November 28 th	11.30-12.30 pm	JLCS	The Swan
December 5 th	8.00 pm	Paul McClure	The Swan
December 19 th	8.00 pm	The Hut People	Tiddy Hall