

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION FRIDAY 4th JULY 2003 TO ANNE BRAITHWAITE AT THE MILL, Tel. No: 831282 [e-mail: ascottmill@bopenworld.com].

There has been a response to the need to establish new management for the Grapevine, and it appears that future production is most likely to be organized by a committee. Two volunteers have come forward combining editorial with I.T. skills - but it is felt more help will be needed. Would you be willing to become involved in the new situation where shared responsibility will result in a lesser time commitment - I.T. skills are not necessarily part of the job description! Do please contact Anne Braithwaite [831282].

WATCHING THE BULBS GROW

I saw a parishioner in the Doctor's waiting room the other day and they commented on how they haven't seen me around the village lately. Well, as some will know, for nearly three months, due to a recurrence of M.E. [now called *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome*], my world has consisted of the Vicarage, our garden and the view of the meadow behind, occasional trips out to Burford Priory where I go for Communion, and it seems likely to do so for at least another month or so. Lots of music and Radio Four drama, some good novels, wondering if Guinness and Lucozade really *are* good for you, being at the receiving end.

'At least it will give you time to pray,' wrote a friend. To a point that is true; but when you are ill you also need others within the Body to do that with you and I am enormously grateful to all those who have and are continuing to do so.

So what have I been going? Well, I have been watching the bulbs grow, forcing their tender stems through the hard dry soil, rocked by the wind, rejoicing in their splash of colour. I have patiently waited for the broad beans to germinate and unfurl their dark green leaves in the glorious spring sunshine, resisting the temptation to dig them up to see if anything is happening!

I know at what time the great spotted woodpecker will chase the tits away from the peanut feeder and take an easy meal; and where a pair of wrens are nesting near the compost bins; and the flight path of a pair of sparrowhawks as they swoop low over the hedgerows. I

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witnessed one of these thugs take a blue tit from the peanuts leaving a puff of blue and yellow in its wake. I have watched too the spectacular sunsets over the valley when the sky has seemed to be on fire.

Am I about to draw a conclusion, point a moral in good '*Thought for the Day*' fashion? No, not this time. I leave that to you. I simply send much love this Eastertide and thank you for your support and prayers. Christ is Risen – Alleluia!!

Mark Abrey

SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

Full details of times of services in Ascott and the rest of the Chase Benefice can be found on the notice board in the Church porch and on the various boards around the village. Our normal pattern of worship is:

Sunday	Time	Service
1st	11.00 a.m.	Matins
	4.00 p.m.	Family Service
2nd	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
3rd	11.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
4th	11.00 a.m.	Holy Communion

Morning and Evening Prayer are said in Church every Friday at 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.

For further details, or to book a Christening or Wedding, please telephone Nigel Hawkes on 01608 676572

PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE

**The Church Fête will be held on
Saturday 12th July 2003
on the Recreation Field at 2.00 p.m.**

**Cakes, Preserves, Plants, Books,
Beer Tent, Children's Games and lots more
Chipping Norton Silver Band**

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ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council have been corresponding with the Environment Agency at West Oxfordshire District Council and Thames Water concerning the sewerage problem in Shipton Road. A report has been received from Thames Water stating that a study into causes and possible solutions will be ready by autumn this year but depending on priorities the work may not be carried out for several years. This is not considered acceptable and our District Councillor, Mrs. Hilary Hibbert-Biles, is meeting with West Oxfordshire District Council Environmental Services to discuss the situation further.

You may have seen notices about bringing BT Broadband services to the area. We are liaising with neighbouring Parish Councils to encourage people to register on the web site (www.btbroadband.com) as BT require 250 people to register their interest before they will supply the service to the area. Registering on the web site does not commit anyone to subscribing to the service.

West Oxfordshire District Council are running a cash award scheme for young people who have achieved in Sports or the Arts. If you can demonstrate commitment and dedication in your chosen field from sports to dance, drama, music or art or know of anyone you think might be deserving of an award please give me a call or contact Cultural Services on 01993 861558 for more information. The deadline to be considered for the awards is 27th April 2003.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the litter blitz on Saturday 22nd March. The approach roads into the village now look much cleaner.

Following the village survey and public meeting on 10th February the Village Shop Association has now been registered with the Independent Provident Society and many fund raising events are planned for the next few months.

Margaret Ismail, Parish Clerk, Tel. 01993 832829

ASCOTT'S STORY

INTO HIGH STREET

In the 1850's when work started on the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway along the Evenlode valley through the Wychwoods, a way of life that had existed for centuries must have been seriously disrupted. The Manor House of Ascott D'Oyley which

had been a significant feature of village life was abruptly separated from its region of influence as was the mill. But the manor unlike the mill, was not given a direct access route into the village. Nevertheless, the angled bridge to the mill distorted the line of the old track which had originally run through Down Field or the Moors, one of the three large fields of the centuries old Open Field System. In this field landed one of the five bombs dropped on Ascott in August 1940. It is believed that the German plane was following a train along the railway as the target for its bomb load. Today as this old track, now Mill Lane, reaches the village houses it passes into High Street. But High Street as a name is comparatively new. The town street had become Upper Street by the mid nineteenth century, followed by Mill Lane by the end of the same century. Still called Mill Lane during the First World War, shortly afterwards the name High Street had come into use.

On the north side of High Street Yew Tree Farm has a date stone of 1698 on part of the building but probably earlier buildings stood on that same site over many centuries. It was one of the farmhouses belonging to the Manor of Ascott D'Oyley under whose dominance the majority of the village continued well into the twentieth century. Chaundy appears to be the oldest continuing village name dating back to at least the late fifteenth century and Chaundys can definitely be identified at Yew Tree Farm from the earliest Census returns of 1841. David Chaundy aged 40 was the farmer farming about 200 acres. His wife Amelia was 35, daughter Belinda 12 and son John 8. John Chaundy took over from his father in 1864 and whether as a result of the disastrous farming situation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century or a certain family disposition, he committed suicide by drowning himself in the river in 1897. By 1901 the most recent Census we can study, John's son Thomas was the farmer aged 29 and lived at Yew Tree with his brothers George 24, Harry 23 and sister Mary 28. Thomas married and had three daughters but another family tragedy accrued when he shot himself on the farm and his brother Harry added to the family misfortunes by hanging himself at Shipton. Reg Barrett married Thomas's daughter Kathleen, took over the tenancy and remained there for many years.

The second German bomb landed in the garden of the farm, near to 37 High Street. Yew Tree Farmhouse and barns are all shown on the Ascott Enclosure Map of 1838 together with the following houses at

the east end of High Street. No. 37 then two cottages, 35, 33, 31 Yew Tree Cottage, 32, 20 Doyley House, 22 The Priory House, 16 and 18 then three cottages and no. 1 Priory Lane.

The east end of no. 37 was occupied by Walter Moss's family in 1901 but some time after the First World War, David Simmons who worked at Ascott Mill, lived there with his family. Next door lived Jack Pratley a shepherd born in Ascott around 1850. He appears to have been a long term tenant since the 1881 Census lists John Pratley aged 32, Ellen 32 a glove maker born in Leafield, John 11, George 7, Charles 5, Phillip 4 and Frank 1. Ellen, Albert, Lily and Ernest were born later. Dorothy Harrison, David Simmonds daughter recalls a particularly bad storm. Across the road from the two cottages where the tenants had their gardens, the newly planted potatoes were washed out of the ground. Jackie, despite by then his age and somewhat hunchbacked body volunteered to re-plant all the potatoes. He died in 1935 aged 85. Alongside these gardens was the spout where water could be drawn for local use.

Another Chaundy Family were long term tenants at no. 35. Emma Chaundy was already a widow in 1871 at the age of 39, with a daughter Annie aged 8 and son Osbert aged 7. Her husband Thomas had died the previous year aged 77. She also looked after her sister Selina Timms for at least 20 years. Selina is described as an imbecile and was kept by the parish. Emma must have had a pretty tough life. She is still listed in the 1901 Census aged 68. Daughter Annie continued as tenant and lived well into her eighties.

Ben Cook born in Asthall Leigh about 1860 was living at no. 33 in 1891 with his wife Elizabeth aged 31, Ellen 7, Charles 4 and Sarah 2. By 1901 Agnes, William and Celia had been born. The cottage has been occupied by the Cook family ever since.

Early in the twentieth century the Thorntons came from Charlbury to live at Yew Tree Cottage no. 31. The children attended Ascott School and ultimately both Frederick and Frank served in the First World War. Frank Thornton became one of the war dead of Ascott serving in the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. He died of wounds on 10th July 1916 in France and is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery. His brother Fred worked on the railway all his life and his two sisters continued to live on at Yew Tree Cottage. Long narrow closes stretched from the above properties down

towards the river. The one behind Yew Tree Farm was called Home Ground, that behind the two cottages Chaundys Home Ground and behind no. 35 was Betts Ground.

Another war casualty is associated with no. 32 the first house on the south side. William Maling aged 28 a carter at Yew Tree Farm lived there in 1901 with his wife Hannah aged 32, Margaret 7, Henry 4, William 2 and Victoria 3 months. Margaret Maling married Albert Longshaw from Church View in 1912 at Ascott Church. Margaret's two brothers like Albert served in the First World War but unlike Albert, they survived. He died on 16th April 1918 in France, also of wounds and is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery. During this war Eric Pratley's grandfather came to live at no. 32 and took over as carter at Yew Tree Farm. When Eric's father Bert left the army he also found work on the farm and continued working there in all areas of general farm work from 1920 to 1958 After Eric's grandfather, the cottage was occupied by the Honeybone family and later still by Fred Alden, then a signalman on the railway. In 1838 behind the cottage and to the west was Drapers Close with the Lanket running uphill alongside. Later these two closes became one field.

With grateful thanks to Cyril Edginton, Sonia Edginton, Dorothy Harrison and Eric Pratley.

Wendy Pearse

WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

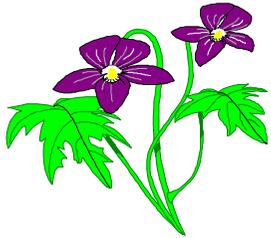
On Thursday 15th May 2003 at 7.30 p.m. at Milton Village Hall, Derek Potter will give a talk on "150 Years of the Cotswold Line".

On Thursday 19th June 2003 at 7.30 p.m. at Shipton Village Hall, Dorothy Wise will give a talk entitled "more about William, an 18th Century Footman".

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £5 for an individual and £8 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors welcome at any meeting at £2 per head. Further details from Wendy Pearse on 831023.

NATURE NOTES

After the dull, damp days of winter the arrival of spring, especially with the glorious sunshine that we have enjoyed during March, is very welcome. As the weather improves and the days lengthen the tempo of change in the natural world increases. The first of the spring flowers to appear are snowdrops and aconites that brighten the early days of February, not only in our gardens but in the countryside too. Although they are not considered to be natives, coming from Eastern Europe, they have now established themselves in the wild. Around Ledwell, on the Tew Estate, aconites flourish in small patches of woodland and snowdrops have taken over the verges.



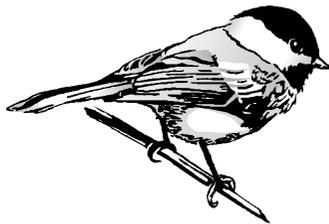
woodland and snowdrops have taken over the verges.

Celandines and daffodils soon follow and if the weather remains warm, violets and primroses make an appearance before the end of March.

I have a love, hate relationship with the lesser celandine. I love its bright yellow flowers glistening in the spring sunshine, but hate its overwhelming invasion of my garden each year! Trying to dig it out is impossible as it reproduces, all too readily, from masses of tiny bulbils that cluster around its roots remaining in the soil when the parent plant is removed, so that one plant becomes many. This cluster of bulbils give rise to one of the plants less flattering common names, pilewort.

Spring brings significant changes in the behaviour of our garden songbirds, robins, chaffinches, blackbirds and great tits. Throughout the winter they share my garden and any available food in peaceful harmony, but from February onwards the males become argumentative trying to chase away others of their own species. The dawn chorus is part of this struggle to create a breeding territory.

The males choose a prominent vantage point and sing to indicate to others that they are in ownership of this particular patch and also to attract females. An ideal territory will include a tall tree, from which to sing, other trees and shrubs to roost and forage for food, a supply of twigs, moss and leaves for nesting material and a suitable site for a nest.



Not all birds rely on song to establish their territories. In February and March, in the quiet time just after sunrise, I regularly heard a sound like distant machine-gun fire. This was the rapid bill drumming of the greater spotted woodpecker, using this signal to tell rivals that he was there first and to advertise for a mate.

Most garden songbirds will raise two or three clutches in a season. It's not unknown for a male to be feeding his first brood, with one female, whilst courting and nest building with another. Only when the entire clutch of eggs has been laid will the hen start to incubate. This is different behaviour to say, a tawny owl, where incubation starts as soon as the first egg is laid. Therefore all of a songbirds chicks will hatch together. They are naked, blind and helpless and need constant care from their parents. Small songbirds will require this attention for 8-12 days and for larger birds such as woodpeckers this can be up to 30 days. The technical term for this is *altricial*.

Not all chicks are so helpless, owls, mallard and pheasants have *precocial chicks*, that is to say that they are born covered in warm down and are alert and mobile almost immediately they hatch.

Moving from the air to the ground, or rather underground, moles seem to be particularly active and abundant this spring judging from the number of molehills to be seen in pastures and on verges. These small heaps of soil are the excess earth from the excavation of underground runs. If you find a larger mound, possibly partially hidden in a thicket, this may be the proper molehill containing the nesting chamber. Moles are solitary creatures and once mated, in March, the male leaves the female to raise the litter of two to seven young. They are born blind, naked and pink. As they grow their skin darkens to slate grey and their eyes open after twenty-one days.

The main food of the mole is the earthworm, caught in their underground runs. They have a voracious appetite and eat half their own bodyweight in food every day! Although they spend most of their life underground they do come to the surface, particularly at night, to search for food and it is then that they fall prey to barn and tawny owls. Otherwise they have few natural predators, other than golf club green-keepers! Glands in their skin make them distasteful to other predators.

The mole is built to be an efficient tunnelling machine, with its powerful, front feet set well forward on its cylindrical body. The individual hairs of its thick velvety fur are set vertically, so that they

will lie forwards or backwards or to either side and not impede movement through the mole's tunnels.

Moles eyesight is poor but their sense of smell and probably hearing is acute. On the surface they move clumsily in a somewhat seal-like manner but surprisingly they are strong swimmers.

Perhaps the recent series of mild winters has allowed their numbers to increase. I just hope I don't find them heading towards my garden!

Stuart Fox



PROGRESS REPORT

Since the recent newsletter was distributed a few weeks ago, the management committee thought it would be helpful to update you on progress.

We are still on track for to take ownership of the shop sometime in September and then we will be working against the clock to get ready for Christmas. Clearly, the time taken to complete finishing and install equipment depends on available cash. We will therefore, be writing to you in the very near future asking you for your interest in buying a £10 share in the shop as well as the possibility of further donations. We are currently looking at the 'gift aid' route as the most advantageous but we are mindful that other needy groups in the community may wish to pursue this also. All will be explained in the next few weeks!

From a building point of view, many of you will be intrigued to know what is going on behind the green screens. Anyone, who has seen the Empire Homes brochure, will have had a glimpse of the artist's impression for the shop – and a very smart shop it looks too.

We now have the various sub committees working at full stretch in the areas of fund raising, facilities and operations. We are also highly active in sourcing and completing applications for the various grants necessary for the project to be viable. This is where a huge 'thank you' is due to Peter Swann who has shouldered the responsibility for grant applications and has become quite an expert in his 'field'!

Closer to home, as many of you are aware, local fund raising is well under way. So far, we have had a successful coffee morning at

Wychwood Court and we hope you were also able to take advantage of a walk around Wendy Pearse's field at Honeydale Farm.

A car boot followed on Easter Monday at the village playing field. Although, the weather forecast was not too good, the showers held off and quite a number of villagers went home with a bargain or two. (Also, other villagers took a 'boot' and found that clearing out unwanted clutter has its profitable side!) Thanks go to Sue Boyer and the Funding Committee for organising this event. Forthcoming events will be posted on the various notice boards so please continue to support us.

So you see, a lot is happening! We certainly could not have achieved so much, so soon, without the active support of the Ascott community (too many to mention by name, but you know who you are!!).

Lastly, we will be announcing a date shortly for a meeting at the Tiddy to answer any questions and show you how we expect the shop to look ... from the inside!!

Thank you for your continued support ...

John Cull (Chair – Village Shop Project)

Forthcoming Events:

Sunday 11th May Open Mills Day - Ascott Mill 12 noon – 6 p.m.

Riverside Walks [dogs welcome], Cream Teas, Cake & Plant Stalls

Saturday & Sunday 14th & 15th June - Village Open Weekend

Would you like to open your garden - call Mike Pearce on 830058

ROCK AND ROLL DANCE

AT TIDDY HALL

7.30 pm SATURDAY 17th MAY 2003

DANCING TO THE SOUNDS OF

REGENERATION

TICKETS £10 INCLUDING SUPPER

PROCEEDS TO THE CHURCH

Tickets from Margaret Ismail 832829 or

Kathy Pearce 830058

LEAFIELD SCHOOL NEWS

More News from the Neighbours!



Since our last contribution there is lots to report. The residential trip to Yenworthy in North Devon was a tremendous success. Mrs. Ryde and Mr. Staines took 30 children for a week in January and were amazed to watch individual children grow in independence, tolerance and many other qualities whilst all having much fun. Mrs. Kenyon, Mrs. Flear and Mrs. Cain together with the remaining staff looked after school and the younger children admirably while the older classes were away, enjoying a very quiet and productive week. Class 1 and 2 took part in a Creative Literacy Workshop at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock where they met a real poet and the work that they did was displayed in Witney Library at the beginning of February. Class 3 and 4 learnt much about waste and recycling during their trip to Hill End Field Study Centre in Oxford. Mrs. Kenyon took Year 5 and 6 to the Swindon Steam Museum as part of their history curriculum work on

Victorians.

The school is very pleased to learn that at last it is to receive funding to build a new classroom and play area for the foundation year. This is excellent news and will involve some changes where the old sheds

are and ultimately vast improvements to the school. All we need now is a start date!

The Governors have decided, due to our enviable staffing levels that all new entrants in our next admission year, those children born between 1/9/98 and 31/8/99, will have the opportunity of spending all day in school if they so wish. This will be reviewed at this time next year when we will take into account any changes in the LEA policy and our current numbers.

The children starting after Easter, together with their parents, enjoyed a very entertaining and informative morning at school when the youngest were celebrating the Chinese New Year through dance, music and art. Following on from this our Japanese Day was a great success with all children involved at some point during the day in a variety of activities, Haiku poetry, map work, singing, dancing, cooking and then trying to use chop sticks and origami. The school welcomed eight Japanese visitors who kindly gave up their time to inspire the children. The playgroup children also joined us for the morning and were fascinated with the huge Japanese harp that one of our visitors brought in.

The School Council recently distributed some more play equipment for each class for playtime and with the excellent weather we have been having it has all been well used. They are also going to be holding a competition to see which class has the least waste and the healthiest lunch in their lunch boxes to encourage more fruit and less rubbish!

For further information please contact the School Secretary, Mrs. Deb Brown on 878273.

Vicky Greves, Governor

THE WYCHWOODS DAY CENTRE

We would like to keep you up-to-date with what is going on at the Day Centre. As you may, or may not, know the Day Centre meets every Thursday at the New Beaconsfield Hall in Shipton. Up to 20 elderly residents, mostly from the Wychwoods, but also from neighbouring villages, meet together for the day and are provided with a home-cooked meal prepared by one of our teams of cooks. The Day Centre was set up 5 years ago to cater for local elderly folk who are not able to get out much and therefore may be lonely, or whose carers perhaps could do with a break. It is an opportunity for them to

meet friends, old and new, and to participate in various activities. There are weekly games of cards, dominoes and scrabble, crosswords, quizzes and sometimes bingo. Craft activities are regularly laid on and then speakers and entertainers are arranged. In the summer and at Christmas time we arrange outings to places of interest and to the Pantomime.

The Day Centre has been set up as a charitable company, and is run by volunteers who employ a co-ordinator to deal with the day-to-day running of the organisation. The Day Centre receives a small grant from Social Services but otherwise relies on donations and various fundraising events.

At present our books are full but if you are aware of anyone locally whom you feel would benefit from joining the Day Centre, we do have a waiting list and would be very pleased to hear from them.

In addition, we are always on the look out for people who can help in any way – as a driver giving lifts to our members to and from the Hall on occasional Thursdays; as a helper spending the day from 9 until 3.30, or part of the day, helping at the Centre or as a cook as part of a team providing the midday meal. Some training can be provided and we always welcome new friends of the Day Centre.

If you are interested or feel that you may be able to help in any way, please contact Elizabeth Watts on 01993 831759 or call in at the New Beaconsfield Hall on a Thursday.

CRICKETERS REQUIRED!!!

Ascott Cricket Club is on the look out for fresh talent (CRICKETERS!!) to join our friendly club. Young or Old, fit or unfit, it doesn't matter.

Membership to the club involves an annual subscription of £25 for over 16's and £12.50 for under 16's. Match fees are £3.50 for over 16's and £2.50 for under 16's.

Our season starts in May and apart from the National Village Knockout competition we only play Sunday friendly matches.

Come and enjoy the best Cricket teas in Oxfordshire and post game chat down the Pub!

If you are interested, please contact Clive Jowett on 01993 831916, if I am not available, please leave a contact number and I WILL get back to you.

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SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Burford - Friends Meeting House, Pytts Lane (off Witney Street)
- Sundays 11 a.m.
For further information, contact Nigel Braithwaite on 01993 831282

Charlbury - Friends Meeting House, Market Street - Sundays
10.30 a.m.
For further information, contact Andrew or Patricia Pymmer on
01993 882848

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASSES

Burford - Church of SS. John Fisher and Thomas Moore
Sundays at 9.15 a.m. & 11 a.m.; Holy Days 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.

Chipping Norton -Holy Trinity Church
Sundays at 10.30 a.m.; Holy Days 9 a.m. & 7 p.m.

Charlbury - St. Teresa's
Sundays at 11 a.m.; Holy Days 9.30 a.m. & 7.30 p.m.

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Dates for your Diary:-

Sat./Sun. 14th & 15th June Open Weekend
Saturday 12th July Church Fête, Recreation Field
Saturday 1st November Folk Night, Tiddy Hall
Saturday 8th November Craft Fair, Tiddy Hall

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