
The Ascott Grapevine



Grapevine Appeal

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

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

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in the Grapevine please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas. Articles for the Spring issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by April 5th.

Call 01993 831023 or email: wendypearse@honeydale.freeserve.co.uk

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles, Kingsley, Wendy Pearse, Yvette Keauffling

Church Services

The details and times of the regular services are advertised on the various notice boards around the village and in the church porch:

1st Sunday of the month

10.00am Holy Communion - Common Worship

2nd Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion - Book of Common Prayer

10.00am Family Service

3rd Sunday

10.00am Benefice Service

4th Sunday

10.00 Holy Communion - Common Worship

5th Sunday of the month

10.00 a.m. Benefice Service

Please see details of special services on the various notice boards around the village and in the church porch or telephone the Church Wardens - Anne Braithwaite 831282 or Fred Russell 830972.

We look forward to welcoming you and worshipping with you.

Anne Braithwaite

Chase News

The *Chase News* can be found in the centre of this issue of *The Grapevine*.

Content & Editorial Policy

If you have an article, story or poem you would like to submit for publication the Grapevine editorial team would love to hear from you. Material for publication is gratefully accepted. Due to space considerations material may not be used immediately but may be held over to be included in a later issue.

The Grapevine editorial team reserve the right to shorten, amend or reject any material submitted for publication.

The Ascott-under-Wychwood Charities

Residents of Ascott-under-Wychwood are sure to have heard at some time or other of the ancient charities operating in their area. These were known as “The Poors Estate” and “The Educational Foundation” and they were set up in the early 1800s or even earlier to help the poor and to provide some basic education for the children of the Parish. In more recent times needs have changed and a new charity was set up a few years ago named the “Ascott-under-Wychwood Charity”, with much wider aims. The ancient charities still exist because they have been merged with the new one so that all can now operate together with one set of trustees and the same purposes.

More recently (in partnership with the Sports Club) the Village charity has been responsible for organising the Annual Village Fun Run. Both these events netted over a £1000 of which 50% of funds

were retained by the Sports Club.

The trustees would like to hear the views of the residents of Ascott as to how the charity might spend its money for the benefit of the community. The available money is still fairly modest but there may be some smallish projects that the local and other authorities do not get round to, that could benefit from a few hundred pounds from the Charity.

The sort of area of help might include for instance: any residents suffering financial hardship, any educational projects that have a particular link with the village or any environmental ideas that would improve the appearance or amenities of the village.

Another area to consider is the floods that hit the village last July. Of course we don't have the resources to carry out major works, which are the responsibility of various authorities such as the Environment Agency and local Coun-

cils. But there may be some piece of equipment or facility that would have been of help to some individual in the village had it been available at the time.

The names and phone numbers of the Trustees are shown on village notice boards (including the community board in the village shop). Why not get in touch with your ideas?

Mark Dawbarn
Secretary - Ascott
Village Charity

Marriages

At Holy Trinity Church on 11th October 2007, George Berry to Sara Tucker

Deaths

On 12th October 2007, Robert Allan Salmon aged 58 years.

Robert Allan Salmon 1949- 2007

On 12th October 2007 Robert Allan Salmon sadly passed away. He had been suffering with bone cancer for the past 12 months. Robert was probably better known in the area as PC Bob Salmon, a local beat officer who patrolled the Wychwoods for over 10 years.

Bob was born in Ealing on the 8th April 1949 to Doris and John Salmon. Growing up in London, he spent holidays in the Devon countryside and decided at a young age that he wanted to leave the big city and work with animals. He attended agricultural college and after graduation decided to try his hand at pig farming. Whilst farming, he met his wife Sheila at a young farmers' party. Neither of them were looking for love that evening but something sparked between them and

a year later they were married.

When pig prices started to drop in the early 1970s, Bob decided to look for a new profession and this is when he joined the police force. He served as a police constable for 30 years, starting his career in Oxford and later moving to cover the Wychwoods, based in Chipping Norton.

Bob was a well- respected police constable and a good role model for the younger recruits. When he wasn't out fighting crime, he was honing his ping pong and snooker skills. Apparently, he was unbeatable. As a community police officer, Bob's work took him to many schools in the area, teaching the children all about the police force. He relished this role and will probably go down in the annals of history as being the only police officer who

allowed a small class of children to draw round him as he lay on the classroom floor. Bob was well known for his cycling, often seen in the early hours frantically cycling out of Ascott up the steep hill towards Chipping Norton. One morning, he was lucky enough to receive a tow from some of his colleagues. Holding on tightly, the car pulled him and his bike up to a speed of 40 mph . Apparently, at this speed, the road bike will be rather wobbly. Clinging on all the way to Chipping Norton, he arrived at the station looking considerably 'windswept and interesting' not to mention having numerous flies stuck to his face and teeth.

Following the death of his father-in-law from cancer in 1982, Bob decided to help raise money for cancer research by doing a

sponsored bike ride from his home in Ascott-under-Wychwood to his mother's home in Fareham, Hampshire, a 98 mile journey and no easy feat. Following a story in the local paper about this ride, Bob earned himself an admirer who requested the very shorts he cycled in - unwashed. This, of course, led to hours of ribbing at the police station but he always gave as good as he got, and I don't think he ever sent those shorts.

Retiring in 2004, Bob decided to take life easy for a while but not able to sit around too long, he took a job at Certikin in Witney. Here he made many more friends and was known for often causing a comical raucous in the canteen at lunchtime. Bob had a real zest for life and wanted to travel the world. He was surprised on a recent trip to China to discover some fellow Manchester United fans living in the heart of Beijing. Producing his Man U membership card from his wallet created a furore of excitement as his new friends were convinced that this made him

a personal friend of Sir Alex Ferguson. They insisted on having their photograph taken with him for posterity.

Bob's love of music was evident throughout his life. In his younger years he was in a band with three of his closest friends. They never made number one but they did manage to entertain the neighbours on numerous Sunday afternoons. From classical to rock, he loved it all. He was even to sit through Cliff Richard concerts as surprise treats for Sheila, now that is love!

Although Bob has now gone, he will not be forgotten. He was a loving hus-

band to Sheila, father to Caroline and Natalie, grandfather, son, brother and uncle. He was also a wonderful friend. His compassion and understanding always shone through, along with his wicked sense of humour. We will probably never know how many lives he touched but one thing is for certain, he truly was a remarkable man and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

*Natalie Salmon
Sheila and family wish to thank everyone who donated so generously to the sum of £2000 which was given to the Katherine House Hospice, Adderbury, near Banbury in Bob's memory.*

Not Sunday! Not School!

Not Sunday! Not School! is our Benefice wide Children's Club which meets between 1.30 - 3.30 p.m. on the 1st Saturday of the month in one of the villages. Fun activities for children between ages 3-12 ending with a short act of worship to which parents are invited.

For venue please see list in the Church or for more

information contact the Church Wardens or the Clergy [Rev. Mark Abrey 01608 676572 or Rev. Mary Crameri 01608 678424].

Anne Braithwaite

Garden notes

At the moment I am dwelling on how to make the winter garden more attractive, at least that part we can see from the house, rather than planning for the spring and summer as I would normally do at this time of the year. I suppose it is because being back in the downstairs of the house and having a window to look out from onto the garden is a novelty and we are probably spending more time sitting and looking out than is usual. Winter pansies, dogwoods and willows with brightly coloured stems and topiary come to mind as do polyanthus although I associate them more with early spring. Anyway, though robust, I don't think they would be very happy in the wind and rain of today (mid January). I rather fancy it's the dogwoods or willows on which I should be concentrating because as shrubs they are better value living a lot longer than flowers. Some have red, amber or yellow stems others green or even deep purple to black. Any or all these would look good against the bleached grasses

that are still standing in view of our window. These shrubs can be kept in check every spring by cutting the stems down to the ground which also ensures that new growth with brightly coloured stems is available for the winter months.

Then nearer the house I could have pots of grasses with stripey evergreen leaves which will last for a long time together with snowdrops or the Christmas rose *helleborus niger* which always seems to come out in January not December. Even though I am looking to value I do not expect I should be able to resist buying some colourful pansies. However I have read recently that violas suitable for winter are more floriferous than pansies so I would try to find them instead. The winter shrub I have had a huge desire for for several years is the Chinese witch hazel, *hamamelis mollis*, which has yellow, amber or red sweetly smelling flowers in winter. It would have to be planted in a pot as it does not like a limey soil. It is an expensive shrub and would deserve a good qual-

ity expensive pot which is why I have only thought about it - but perhaps it could go on my birthday list.

I leave ornamental grasses standing through the winter, not cutting back until early spring. In fact I do not cut a lot of things back until then, for three reasons. Seeds are left for birds to eat, the crowns of plants such as penstemon which can be slightly tender are protected by their stems and other plants such as fennel look really attractive with a frost on them. I do try to remove as much decaying soft growth and fallen leaves as possible to discourage slugs and snails. The frosts this year and late last have been the best deterrent against the slimy creatures. There have been a reasonable number of frosts although I do not think any of them have been very severe. At least I am hoping not because for the first time ever I decided to leave dahlia tubers in the ground over winter. A number of garden writers and ordinary gardeners had stopped digging theirs' up since the

series of mild winters we have had. I have left gladiolis in the ground for the last two winters more because I was not sure whether I really liked them rather than any conscious decision on my part to experiment. My logic was that if they survived 'Fine' and if they did not 'Well I really did not like them, did I?' Of course, they survived and led me into the false path of putting in jeopardy the dahlias which I really do like. I shall just have to wait and see.

Waiting and seeing what will happen is what so much of gardening is about. I was determined to concentrate on writing about the garden now in winter but it's no good I can't think about it without thinking ahead and being impatient for the spring to arrive. I've started looking at seed catalogues and making some choices. I was disappointed with Thompson and Morgan's and a number of the other companies'. There is a trend towards selling young plants at the expense of seeds. I have bought young plants in the past when I have left it

too late to sow certain seeds or my seeds failed or if I have had too much else to do. I am sure all these things will happen again but I do not want to see the variety of seeds available, diminish. At least I can rely on the very comprehensive Chiltern Seeds catalogue or I hope I can. Even they who have a vast choice of seed have begun selling young plants but at least the variety and number of seeds they are selling has not fallen yet. I suppose we have to play

our part in ensuring a wide choice of seeds remain available by continuing to buy and sow seeds and picking unusual or different ones with which to experiment. Small nurseries need our help too to ensure a variety of plants remains in cultivation. For some reason certain plants are considered more marketable than others. Perhaps they travel better, they propagate more easily or simply they die off every year so have to be bought again. The large garden cen-

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tres and DIY stores love them. Other less profitable varieties are edged off the shelves. Ultimately less and less varieties of plants could be available to gardeners unless we support small nurseries who work to grow good quality plants of all shapes, sizes

and kinds to keep our gardens interesting and attractive. So when you are thinking about buying plants for this coming year consider an afternoon's trip out to a nursery or make it the opportunity to eat out and go for the day. There is a good sprin-

gling of nurseries within an easy drive which I am sure you will be pleased you explored. The Plant Finder either in bookform or at the RHS website will show you where they are and what plants they grow.

Yvette Keauffling

From Daylesford to Adlestrop to.....

I awoke on 23 November 2007 to a lovely clear blue sky and sunshine. The weather forecast for the weekend was wet so there was only one thing for it – pack a lunch and drink in my knapsack and head off. But where would I go? I had often seen the footpath and bridleway signs around Daylesford while travelling to Stow so I decided to explore the area further.

I drove to the village of Daylesford and parked at the telephone kiosk next to the church. Looking at the map I saw that I could walk from Daylesford to the A436 (Stow to Chipping Norton), cross over into Adlestrop Park and then

walk a circular route via the 'Macmillan Way', Fern Drive and the bridleway through the Daylesford estate back to the car.

Suitably booted and with my lunch on my back and map in hand off I went. The walk to the Park entrance took ten minutes and then I was on the Macmillan Way strolling through the one hundred acres of Henry Repton landscape known as Adlestrop Park. I decided that, as I had not been in the area before I would have a good look around. The track I was walking on was gravelled and about 3 metres wide. Ancient oak trees were scattered about and the path gen-

tly curved around to the right to skirt the cricket pitch in the distance. Behind the cricket pitch was a lake which drains into the river Evenlode. As the track reaches the far boundary of the cricket pitch there is a kissing gate that allows access to an ancient lane that climbs towards the church. The lane is paved with stone and bounded on the left by a fairly new mixed hedge and on the right by a mixture of trees which include holly and snowberry. The lane slowly climbs to the church and as it does so the vegetation is replaced by stone walls. As you climb the views to the left are more and more open giving views

towards Broadwell and Evenlode. Just before the entrance to the churchyard the track becomes a road.

The gate to the churchyard is interesting in that it has a vertical latch rather than a horizontal one. Above the gate is a wrought iron arch with the dates '1837 - 1897' celebrating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. To the right of the gate is a yew tree which has been trimmed to the shape of a six foot high cross. On the same side as the cross and just behind it is a sundial on a plinth erected 'To commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth 2002' If you visit the church stop and look up at the bell tower. There are only two clock faces, one facing north and the other facing east. Both are surmounted by a crown and have the words 'Jubilee 1887' at the bottom of the clock. If my memory serves me right this was Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. At the entrance to the

church is a step created by half a millstone, complete with grooves.

Inside the church is the explanation for only two clock faces - they are the only two sides of the tower that can be seen from the village. There are also various leaflets one of which links Jane Austen and her novel 'Mansfield Park', to her visits to Adlestrop. There are also the 'Rules of Adlestrop Belfry'

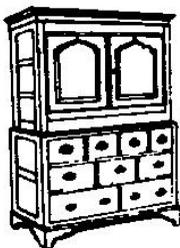
1. 5 ringers hold 5 bells respectively, and each man be responsible for the preservation of the rope and appurtenances belonging to the bell.

2. The ringing to take place at such hours and on such days as may be deemed expedient, except in the Season of Lent, when no ringing is to take place, under any consideration.

3. That every Ringer be punctual in his attendance at the time appointed for the Ringing. Any Ringer being absent (except on the plea of sickness) to be fined 1d.

4. No Smoking or Drinking to be allowed in the Belfry. Any Ringer transgressing, to be fined 1d for each offence.

5. Any ringer making use of an oath or improper language in



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the Belfry, to be fined 2p for each offence.

6. Any (whether regular Ringers or not) assisting to chime the Bells on Sundays, must remain for the Services.

7. The Fines to go towards the expenses of oil, candles, and other requirements for the Belfry.

No date is given as to when these rules were written but if it was when Queen Victoria came to the throne (1837) the value of the fines at today's prices would be 3 pounds and 6 pounds respectively

according to one computer program I have used.

On leaving the churchyard I turned right and followed the road to its junction with the main road that leads through the village. At the junction the Post Office is on your left. The opening hours are limited and in fact it was closed during my visit. I followed the road down the hill and crossed at the junction to join the 'Macmillan Way' again. There is a bus shelter at the junction containing the old

railway station nameplate. I followed the path over undulating ground heading towards Chastleton. After crossing three fields I diverted to the right and followed a footpath to Fern Farm. As you pass Fern Farm you join Fern Drive which is paved with tarmac and takes you down through a wooded valley with a stream at the bottom and then climbs to join the Evenlode to Adlestrop road. I continued uphill to the junction with the A436. Turning left then imme-

Coming soon...

THE

ASCOTT VILLAGE FETE

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MORE TO BE REVEALED OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS...

diately right I was walking along a quiet, level stretch of the road to Cornwell. The road is lined with mature beech trees and the fallen leaves rustled under my feet. I could have taken a signed footpath that runs parallel with the road but I wanted to be sure that I met the bridleway through the Daylesford estate. After a kilometre I reached the bridleway and turned right to walk downhill through the estate. The bridle way is paved and is used as the access road through the estate, which is extremely well maintained. In fact as I was walking a mechanical sweeper passed me sweeping up the leaves which had fallen. There were open views over Kingham, Bledington and Icomb.

The Daylesford Estate was the ancestral home of Warren Hastings (1732-1818). The family had to sell the estate and Warren Hastings travelled to India as a clerk aged 16 to make his way in the world and to seek fame, power and

enough money to buy his home back. He became Governor of Bengal in 1771 and Governor of British India in 1773. He resigned this position in 1784 and bought Daylesford in 1795.

The bridleway meanders downhill through the estate until it meets the Kingham to Addlestrop road. Turning right along the road I passed the Daylesford complex and continued to Daylesford village and the end of my walk. There is a footpath from the Daylesford complex to Daylesford village. In all I had covered about 7 kilometres (3.5 miles). I used the 1:25000 scale O.S. Explorer OL45 map of The Cotswolds and all footpaths and bridleways were very clearly marked both on the map and on the ground. There were only two stiles which were on the stretch north of Adlestrop. The only refreshments are at the Daylesford complex.

Finally, a poem by Edward Thomas-

Adlestrop

Yes, I remember
Adlestrop -
The name, because one
afternoon
Of heat the express-
train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was
late June.

The steam hissed.
Someone cleared his
throat.
No one left and no one
came
On the bare platform.
What I saw
Was Adlestrop - only
the name

And willows, willow-
herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and
haycocks dry,
No whit less still and
lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets
in the sky.

And for that minute a
blackbird sang
Close by, and round
him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all
the birds

Of Oxfordshire and
Gloucestershire.

Rob Morgan

Wyehwoods Day Centre in 2008

The Day Centre continues to thrive in the more-than-capable hands of Katherine Gidman with a large band of volunteer helpers, cooks, and drivers. It caters for 20 members every Thursday at the Beaconsfield Hall and always has a healthy waiting list.

A year ago a 100 Club draw, properly registered with the authorities, was started. It has proved to be an effective way of raising funds for the Day Centre. For £24 a year (paid in a lump sum or by

regular standing order) you can buy a number which will go in the draw every month - for a monthly first prize of £75, and second prize of £25, with a bonus at Christmas of £100. Margaret Hartley, who organises the draw, will be renewing membership in January/February so if you would like to support the Day Centre in this way, then please contact Margaret on 830306.

One other request on behalf of the Day Centre - is for more helpers,

particularly cooks. Cooks generally work in pairs to provide a two course cooked lunch with a teatime cake for around 25 people. The rota is currently set up so that your team of two should only have to cook every 2 months. Obviously the more on the rota the less often you will be called upon. There is no need for any formal training - given the membership of the Day Centre traditional family cooking is what is called for. If you are able to offer to help with the Day Centre in any way, but particularly as a cook, please contact the co-ordinator Katherine Gidman on 831479.

Anne Braithwaite

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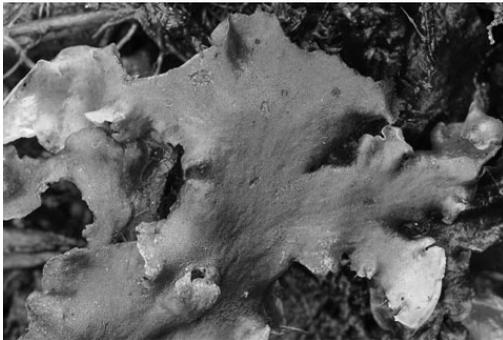
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Nature notes

We live in a world surrounded by living things and yet we only seem to notice the most obvious, the showiest, noisiest or perhaps the most rare. Yet, there is a whole background of life, exploiting every niche in the environment, which tends to be overlooked; it's simply there!

I look at my lawn and complain that it's more moss than grass, something to be eradicated in the spring,



without thinking that this is one of the most ancient of plant species that in some form or other would have shared the earth with the dinosaurs, together with another primitive plant group, the liverworts,

(collectively these two are known as Bryophytes). In Britain 1,000 different varieties are to be found, that's 60% of the European total.

Mosses thrive in moist environments but have the amazing ability to survive becoming totally desiccated, returning to life when moistened. Look at moss growing on a roof, it will be baked during a summer heat wave, turning brown and

crisp, but after rain will soon become green and re-

proper roots, nor do they possess a vascular system to transport water and nutrients throughout the plant, relying instead on their "spongy" nature to retain moisture. Their leaves too are very simple, often only one cell thick and with no pores (stomata) for gas exchange during photosynthesis. Instead, oxygen and carbon dioxide pass directly through the thin surface of the leaves.

Of course the most obvious difference between moss and the higher plants is that they don't have flowers. So how do they reproduce and grow, especially in my lawn, if they don't produce seed? They have two mechanisms,

turn to life.

Unlike the higher plants moss doesn't have





the first is asexual or vegetative, small fragments will break away from the parent plant and in the right conditions establish a new plant. So if you want to remove moss from a wall, don't use a wire brush, you might just be propagating a few hundred more plants!

The second is more complex. Male and female organs are produced, usually on separate plants, within whorls of specialised leaves. The male organ produces cells, called gametes, which are mobile, swimming through surface water to fertilise the female egg cells. When fertilised a spore capsule, a bit like a miniature pepper pot with a lid, grows, held above

the moss on a thin wiry stalk. When mature and when conditions are right the lid falls away and the spores are shaken from the capsule by the wind. Being very small and light they can travel a considerable distance in the air currents before falling to earth and producing a new plant. The peculiar thing is that the moss we see growing only contains one set of chromo-

somes, the fertilised egg contains two sets, just like us, but as the spores form the chromosomes halve their number so the spores have only one set.

When the spores germinate two tubes are formed, a rhizoid, which is a primitive root-like structure and a green filament, which will branch out and bud, forming a new moss colony.

Liverworts flourish in very damp situations, such as the edges of streams and ditches and are occasionally troublesome in the garden and in the lawn, especially in compacted and stale soil. They are often found growing on the soil surface of potted plants, particularly if



they have been over-watered and the soil has become sour. They usually form a mat of green lobed, almost succulent, growth, although some species show evidence of leaves. Like the mosses liverworts reproduce by producing male and female cells, sometimes on the same plant, and sometimes not. It is believed that liverworts were the first land plants to evolve, possibly around 475 million years ago.

Economically these primitive plants have few uses. Historically mosses have been used to stuff bedding, along with straw and as packing and insulating material. Sphagnum moss, when dried, sewn up in fine muslin and sterilised, was once widely used as a wound dressing. During the First World War a whole industry sprang up based around the Scottish borders supplying Sphagnum Moss for the British Forces.

Of course the use of peat, which is com-



posed of the decayed remains of Sphagnum Moss, as a fuel and in horticulture is the major commercial use. This is a finite resource and is produced very slowly. It started to form after the last ice age, some

10,000 years ago in waterlogged areas where the ground water was acidic. It is estimated that a depth of 80cms is produced every 1,000 years.

Stuart Fox

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Chadlington Dance

Some readers may have noticed the posters and leaflets advertising Chadlington Dance that appear regularly in shops and on notice boards in the Wychwood area. However, in case you haven't, we offer a programme of sessions once a month featuring a variety of

dance styles taught by experienced teachers. Partners are not needed. We meet on Wednesdays from 7.30pm to 9.15pm in Chadlington Memorial Hall and there is a session charge of £5. Our next session will be on Wednesday 12th March for Balkan Circle Dancing - great music -

excellent teaching - enormous fun! Do come and join us, you will have a very friendly welcome. For further information contact Ann Morton on 01608 676302.

Ann Morton

Langley House Trust

As the Communications and Marketing Manager of the Langley House Trust, I was delighted to read Nick Leadbetter's article on 'Prison Visiting' in the last issue of the Grapevine. As we are a Witney based charity, I thought readers might be interested to hear how the Trust seeks to build on the excellent work being carried out in prisons by IMB members and prison staff.

Our central services building and administrative heart is in Witney but we have 16 projects across the country, each providing housing and resettlement support for

prison leavers (and those at risk of offending). As Nick points out, whatever our personal viewpoint, the majority of prisoners will at some stage be released into the community and this is a transition which needs to be carefully managed to prevent re-offending. The Trust was founded almost 50 years ago (we celebrate our anniversary in 2008!) precisely to prevent the 'revolving door syndrome', whereby currently up to 75% of prisoners re-offend within a short period and return to custody.

Research has shown that, despite the hard work of dedicated and

often over-faced resettlement staff in prisons, a large proportion of prison leavers have no accommodation on release. This can be for a variety of reasons - perhaps because their family situation has broken down, either as a result of their offending or as a consequence of their imprisonment. It may be that poor financial management has resulted in debts which mean they are unlikely to be able to take on a tenancy. Even if this is not the case, someone with a history of offending is unlikely to be welcomed by a potential landlord and without a fixed address, however

willing to work one might be, it just isn't possible.

There are, in fact, a number of 'catch 22' scenarios which make it difficult for the most motivated and repentant prison leaver to make a successful new start. We do not condone the offending behaviour which resulted in the original offence, nor are we a soft touch when it comes to dealing with ex-offenders (many of whom have learned to play the system and cultivate sympathy) but we are deeply realistic about what must be offered in order for individuals to stand a realistic chance of rehabilitation.

A core component of our work therefore is the provision of accommodation, since without a roof over one's head it is almost impossible to stay safe, healthy and remain out of trouble. We then work with the individual (we call them residents whilst they are with us) to help them examine and confront

the issues which contributed to their offending behaviour. We develop a proactive Support Plan which sets out the steps by which they will move on into crime-free independence. For most, this will include learning opportunities and training for employment or voluntary work. Residents are expected to play a part both in the life and the daily running of their project and this provides a valuable opportunity to learn or rein-

force basic life skills such as laundry and cooking. I am proud to say that fewer than 2% of our residents re-offend whilst with us and each year, we see large numbers move on to settle successfully and live crime-free. If you would like to know more about our work or would like to support us, please visit www.langleyhousetrust.org or call (01993) 774075.

Cathy Hill

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830227

Columbia: A different view

I write in response to an article in the last Grapevine entitled 'Another Banana Republic.' I would like to be able to 'set the record straight' and tell a little of the charms of modern Colombia, a far cry from the 1980s.

In February last year, a friend and I flew to Buenos Aires, guide book in tow, and in possession of a return ticket seven months later, from Mexico City. Not being ones to plan ahead, Olivia and I had not spent much time discussing routes, making only one commitment - that we would not set foot on an aeroplane until we reached Mexico City, the 5000+ mile journey would be done across land.

Despite initial hiccups hindering our progress (there was the small matter of having both our passports and nearly everything we possessed of value - bar my ipod - stolen within the first ten days) we were soon marvel-

ling at the splendour of the Andes and enjoying the Argentinean steak and red wine. As is customary in hostels, we spent our evenings chatting to the other backpackers discussing all things



important; the local laundry service, problems associated with carrying everything you need in one large rucksack, stomach issues and more excitingly discussing routes. Fairly quickly it became apparent from all those that had been, that Colombia featured as one of the highlights of their trip. By default (we didn't want to take any flights) we would have to pass through Colombia, something that we had both been excited about, but listening to the comments of oth-

ers, it seemed that we would love it.

Borders are hectic places, the obligatory horde of yelling money changers, the men eager to carry your rucksack for a small fee, taxi touts reeling off destinations and charges, all amount to quite a commotion, especially as you try to find the immigration desk (never signed), queue, fill in appropriate forms, and calculate if you are being ripped off by the offered exchange rate. And amid all this hubbub, with your passport in hand,



you know, and it is evident to all around you, that you have all your documents and belongings on you; rucksack in toe, snail-like, you are easy pickings, especially coupled with the fact that one invariably arrives at a border at the crack of dawn after being deposited from a night bus.

True to form, we reached the Colombian border at 6.30am after a 12 hour night bus from Quito, (the capital of Ecuador) on which we had been stopped five times by the police to empty the bus to search for drugs and check identity. The idea that this would set the standard for Colombia was mildly daunting considering the vast dis-

tance that we needed to cover to reach the north of the country, and the number of night buses that that would entail, but we were largely undeterred, and excited at what awaited us. Was it going to be, as many believe, a cocaine fest, controlled by drug barons, bullets and completely impossible and unsafe to traverse, or were we to find a hidden, largely unvisited gem as those travellers who had visited before us, had led us to believe?

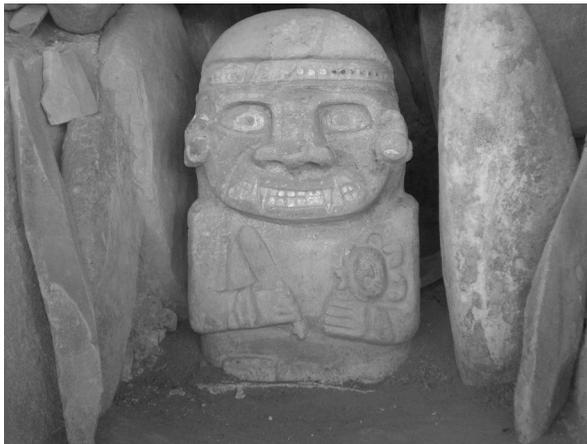
Our first few days were spent in Popayan, a old Spanish colonial city, that surprised us by it's affluent atmosphere and clean, freshly white washed houses, with no stray dogs and relatively few beggars. The only

sign of its recent past, the common site of police on motorbikes, the driver with his gun slung over his shoulder and his passenger sat, gun in hand, eagle eyed. Although this police presence sounds very threatening, the reality is that they occupy a very low profile, and you come quickly not to notice them.

Our second day in Popayan coincided with the Champions League Final. Unsure where/if European football would be shown, we chased a teenager in a football shirt along the street, in the hope that he might know. Not only did this boy lead us to a bar that normally showed sport, but when that was closed, hailed a taxi for a ten minute drive to a bar (looking more akin to a petrol forecourt) trying to pay the driver before sitting with us for the first half, and buying us each a beer. Incredibly, this confident boy, who gave us his number and insisted that we call him if we had any problems,

was just 14! We were to find that this level of kindness is commonplace in Colombia.

There is much to Colombia that has been overshadowed by drugs. It is an incredibly beautiful country. According to the foreign and commonwealth office, only 18,000 British Nationals visit the country annually; giving it an aura of unspoilt, undiscovered charm, where tourists are fairly few and far between. We visited the ancient stone statues near San Agustin in the south west of the country. Only five years ago this area was out of bounds to tourists due to kidnappings, but recent political moves and changing government attitudes towards terrorism, mean there is no longer a significant threat to tourists. They are now able to travel to all the main 'sights' without any concerns, and move freely within the country, with the exception of the Venezuelan border and the Darien Gap which



remain difficult to access. Deep within the jungle of the south west they have discovered only about 5% of the total number of large, very ancient carved statues and tombs. Varying in size from 1-3m with plain carved face symbols and hands, the statues date from between 300bc-300ad. Horse riding through the thick jungle to visit these giant carvings was beautiful, as we rode through small coffee and banana plantations, amongst humming birds and flocks of butterflies that were so plentiful they resembled leaves blowing in the wind.

Next stop was Cali, the 'salsa capital' of Colombia, but fed up

with salsa, we headed to the only bar in town that did not play it. Chatting in English, a Colombian man our age overheard us and came to our table to ask why we were in Colombia, and if we were enjoying ourselves. He had just returned after spending three years studying in England and knew only too well the bad press that his country receives here. We were introduced to his cousins, and once he realised that we were planning to travel north to stay near his home town, he unhesitatingly invited us to stay with him. Giving us his contact details, he told us to call him when we reached the bus station in his town, and he

would come and collect us, telling us that we could stay for as long as we wished.

Some risks are simply too great opportunities to turn down, and so two days later we duly arrived in Armenia and called him. As luck would have it, we fell on our feet and were given a real insight in to the life of a middle class Colombian family, right in the centre of the old drug smuggling heart of the country. Welcomed like long lost members of the family, that evening we found ourselves doing shots of the local spirit with his

mother, and aunts! We spent two weeks in the company of Carlos, and over that time were introduced to many members of the extended family.

One evening we visited a cousin who lives in a penthouse apartment overlooking the town. A surreal situation; sat in a sitting room, with a group of Colombian men, all in their early twenties, the maid ferrying drinks in the background, when Estefan (the cousin) casually opens his Louis Vuitton satchel to reveal a pistol! At our alarm they tried to tell us that

it was just a water pistol, on closer inspection of the bag, evidently not the case as the bullets rattled around in the bottom! Olivia and I are generally hard to faze, but driving around in a bullet proof 4x4 and casually carrying a gun in a satchel had both of us questioning. Once out of the flat, we were quickly quizzing Carlos as to the course of events.

The story: Estefan's father was a drug dealer(!) who was shot dead in a night club in the mid 1990's. His mother had also been shot at three times; one bullet going through her cheek, another hitting her hand, and one ricocheting off her! The family did not want this to spark a 'drug war' as would normally ensue, so issued articles in the Colombian press stating that they would not be looking for revenge for his death. The whole tale begins to take on story book qualities, when Estefan's mother decided to prosecute these

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men for shooting her husband. The gunman was arrested; but last year he managed to hire a marksman to kill the mother. Luckily for Estefan and his family, this man could only afford a 'third rate' marksman whose gun did not fire! Since then Estefan's mother has insisted that he always carry a gun.

There were times in those 10 days that we spent in Armenia that it really did feel that we were caught up in some Godfather style drama, (not least when we met Carlos Lehder's daughter - one of the most prolific drug dealers of the 1980's,) but these experiences are by no means representative of the whole of Colombia. We found ourselves in the heart of what was 'drug land' with a particularly affluent family. In the six weeks that we were in the country, aside from the above story, we did not see many guns, and we were not offered cocaine once, in stark contrast to much of the rest of

Latin America. Colombians will not touch the drug, recognising the way that it has destroyed their country, largely blaming the West, and its demand for cocaine for providing such a lucrative business which until recent years, has crippled their country.

From Nigel Wild's account in the last edition of the Grapevine, it would appear that Colombia is much changed from the 1980's. 21st century Colombia is not controlled by drug barons, it is not lawless, and it certainly cannot be described as uncivilised. The Colombian people are proud of their country, as they rightly should be. It is beautiful, unspoilt and populated by one of the most welcoming and friendly people I have had the pleasure of meeting. Of course there are still problems, but moving about the

country it is easy to forget just how tumultuous their recent past has been, especially in the cities where there are high levels of investment and on going development. Colombia is a hugely charming country, offering some of the most developed and western cities that we found in South America, alongside many unique experiences, and if the wind ever takes you that way, I highly recommend that you stop to experience for yourself putting a bet on a guinea pig race on the streets of Bogota, sleeping in hammocks strung between palm trees on a deserted Caribbean beach, or visiting the world famous Gold Museum in the capital.

Leisha Braithwaite



Chipping Norton Music Festival

The 2008 Chipping Norton Music Festival is packed with variety and offers something for everyone.

The **Charleston Chasers** open The Festival on 29th February in The Theatre with music of the 20's and 30's. Chastleton House provides an atmospheric venue for The **Phoenix Recorder Orchestra**, a rare opportunity to hear the whole range of instruments. On Sunday 9th March 4.00pm at Chipping Norton Town

Hall an exciting family concert by James Stretton: Orichalcum (World of Brass) presents 16 different brass instruments.

This concert is a must for anyone who plays (or has ever wanted to play) a brass instrument! Tickets: £7.50 (under 16s £3.50) from Jaffé and Neale, 01608 641033 (the bookshop in Chipping Norton) or telephone the Festival Secretary on 01993 831810

Festival Concert Saturday 15th March 7.30pm at Chipping Norton Town Hall (Tickets £4.00 concessions £3.00) from Jaffé and Neale, 01608 641033 (the bookshop in Chipping Norton) or telephone the Festival Secretary on 01993 831810

For more information about these and other festival events see leaflets in Chipping Norton Library and Jaffé & Neal or the website www.cnmf.org.uk

Wychwoods Local History Society

The Wychwoods Local History Society with the support of the West Oxfordshire District Council has already arranged two 'Teatime Memories' afternoons in Shipton and Milton when older villagers have helped identify past inhabitants of the villages featuring on old photographs. It is possible that such an event could be organised for Ascott if enough support could be found.

The next meeting will be at Shipton Village Hall on Thursday 21st February 2008 at 7.30 p.m. when Jeremy Bourne will talk about The History of the Silk Mills of Blockley.

Then on Thursday March 20th at 7.30.p.m. at Milton Village Hall, Mike Boyes will talk about A Victorian Rector and Nine Old Maids of Little Rissington.

In April on Thursday 17th at 7.30.p.m. at

Shipton Village Hall Stanley Jenkins will give a talk entitled Local Railway History.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £6 for an individual and £9 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at £2 per head. More information about the Society can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023.

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

On behalf of the Parish Council, may I wish everyone a "Happy New Year". Flooding remains foremost on the Parish Council Agenda each month and I can report the Council are still working hard with the Ascott Recovery Committee and the various authorities, together with the strong support of our District Councillor, Hilary Hibbert-Biles. It was confirmed by our District Councillor that Ascott-under-Wychwood is now listed under the First Priority group along with Witney for flood repair and prevention works.

Planning remains quiet with only a few applications outstanding. The Post Office arrangement in the Tiddy Hall appears to be working well, albeit the Government still insisting on closing some of the rural offices.

Work on the Pound is now well underway and the Clerk is still in talks with the electricity company to have the

electricity pole removed or re-sited. The rebuilding of the stone wall is now complete and the ground has been levelled ready for the next stage, which will be the placing of the Ascott Barrow, the erection of a set of gates and an information board, together with a bench.

RoSPA have carried out the Autumn inspection on the play equipment in the Playing Field and it would appear that the see-saw is in need of attention. The Clerk has contacted the original suppliers of the equipment and can confirm that the See-Saw will be replaced with the new design, free of charge.

Finally, I am pleased to be able to report that Lord Rotherwick attended the December meeting to discuss the various issues reported on in the last edition of the Grapevine. Lord Rotherwick firstly apologised to all in the Village and sincerely hoped that, as neighbours to Ascott, the fu-

ture would be much more positive. He confirmed that a contractor had been appointed to re-build the wall by the Green, which has now been started. He also confirmed that all of the hedgerows, footpaths, bridleways and ditches that belonged to Cornbury Estate would be looked at. Lord Rotherwick advised the Council that the Estate had now appointed a new firm of land agents, Bidwells and was optimistic that communications would improve greatly.

Finally, just to remind the Village that all are welcome to the Parish Council meetings, which are held on the second Monday of the month, with the exception of August, at 8.00pm in the Tiddy Hall room. On the note of staying in touch with the Village - should anyone wish to receive a copy of the Parish Council Minutes by email, I will of course send you a copy, once they have been ap-

proved. My email address is:

barnes@babyglwanadoo.co.uk, this is also noted on the Village Website, so please do not hesitate to ask.

Parish Council:

Stuart Fox

832004

Elaine Byles 831427

Bridgette Crundwell

830671

Sally Franks 831432

Angela Barnes - Parish

Clerk: 01608 641045

From the desk of Cllr Hilary Biles.....

This year has been particularly challenging as a result of the flooding at the end of July. In West Oxfordshire a total of 1,600 homes plus many businesses, Care Homes, offices and public buildings were affected resulting in huge disruption, distress and costs to all. Ascott was a village very severely hit.

On the night of Friday, 22 July, I was out on the A361 at Shipton Bridge directing traffic away from the village and directing people whose vehicles were stuck, to my house and those of others. I watched the water get higher and higher, and the current stronger and stronger. Sandbags were distributed to no affect! Then, as we know, all that water that had accumulated at Shipton swept down to Ascott flooding virtually the whole village.

My thoughts particularly go out to those people who have had to move out of their homes, many who have not yet moved back. Such was the damage! The distress, worry and the upset to people's lives has been enormous. The concern now is the possibility of a recurrence and what can be done to avoid it happening again.

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working with the County Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water to identify what can be done in the short term to make a difference and in the long term to prevent such devastation as we had in July. This isn't easy as no one body has sole responsibility. Clearing ditches and waterways can make a difference however in my view capital investment will be needed to protect vulnerable properties. I also believe that the flooding needs to be looked at in conjunction with Shipton and Milton, as if the problems are not sorted out up stream whatever is done in Ascott may not make a difference given the same set of circumstances.

I am aware of all the flooded properties in Ascott and just before Christmas walked the length of the river from Ascott to Shipton with the engineers from WODC and the Environment Agency. I would like to say I leapt over the fences - but I



didn't. I realise I am no spring chicken any more and certainly by the time I got to the electrified fences nearer Shipton (and having fallen full length in the mud) I was conscious I was nervous of having those fences anywhere near me. We will be walking the stretch of river from Shipton to Milton and perhaps beyond in the New Year.

Thankfully there was no loss of life and the only accident I am aware of was to a Fire lady who crushed her fingers in a fire door while rescuing the elderly at Prebendal House in Shipton. In West Oxfordshire, 350 people had to be found temporary accommodation

(that we are aware of - I am sure there were more)

WODC will shortly publish an interim report into its findings on the floods and a final report will be produced when a complete assessment of the problem areas have been completed in conjunction with the other statutory authorities in the Spring. I know it is a long time, but the job is a huge one.

Looking at other issues, we are making decisions about the collection of Waste. This is necessary to avoid financial penalties we must pay to Government if we continue to send current levels to landfill sites. There is no alter-

native but to recycle more and throw away less or we face a fine of £150 per ton.

In April 2008 a full fare free concessionary bus pass scheme begins. WODC have chosen to start this at 9am rather than 9.30 to help rural parishes that have few buses, and of course that applies to Ascott. You will still have the option of taking tokens if you prefer.

We have just been notified of the Government Rate Support Grant for West Oxfordshire. It means a below inflation allocation putting pressures on our budgets. Government also require us to make 3% efficiency savings, fund additional responsibilities handed down to us and we do not wish to cut any services. No easy task.

My pet issue is that of access to services for those of us in rural areas. I have fought long and hard to retain Chipping Norton Hospital and the plans should come to committee in

January. We have not managed to get everything we want but it is essential we retain medical services in the area. There are now serious plans being made for Langston House and Greenlands in Milton under Wychwood after I had reminded the County Council we had been promised Extra Care Housing in the Wychwoods at the time of the Homes for Older People consultation some years ago. And a new Nursing home is in the process of being built at the Tall Trees site in Shipton. This will bring jobs to our area and also there will be some beds for local people. Facilities in our rural areas are always under threat and the latest of these are the forthcoming closures of Post Offices which the Council are fighting hard. There is no doubt that the service in the Wychwood will be changed but as yet I am not aware of what they have in mind for us.

I am so pleased that the Ascott shop is doing so well and that is credit to you all for supporting it in so many ways.

This year saw me making a change in my Cabinet Portfolio and I have added Sports Leisure, the Arts and Children's Services to Supporting People and Health from my old portfolio. I am also still a member of the Up-lands Planning Committee. The work gets more and more with all the changes to Local Government the Government have made. There are an abundance of new committees that are partnerships with the County Council in areas where previously the District Council were not involved. However the best part of my work is meeting you and trying to sort out your problems.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy and healthy 'New Year'.

Hilary Biles

Desert Song

I love Algeria, it's beautiful. Not a chocolate box cuteness, but a stark beauty of rocks and sand and the light on the desert at dawn or dusk. The religious divide that now threatens it really saddens me.

During the late 70s and early 80s, I travelled the country by air and by car in temperatures from the stifling heat of summer to the bitter cold of winter. Algeria was using its revenues from oil and gas to modernise and improve standards of living and there were and still are many sites devoted to oil and gas exploration and production.

The national airline Air Algerie had very few aircraft, so used them on international routes by day and internal flights by night. With long distances involved, flying had become second nature to the Algerians and the check-in queues at 2am were as long as those at 2pm.

Most planes were 737s but on one flight

to Oran, we were surprised to find a DC-8 of Transworld Airways, complete with American crew.

'What are you doing here?' we asked.

'Trying to get the hell out!' was the unequivocal reply.

The Algerian tribesmen who were often my fellow passengers suffered from two problems – BO and smoking. The former was because both they and their camel-hair djellabahs, a kind of full-length poncho with a hood, rarely, if ever, had a wash: the latter was because the licence to the old Craven 'A' cigarettes of the 50s and 60s was sold to Algeria, who produced

a derivative called 'Deux A'. This was a cigarette of such ferocity that even hardened smokers said it took the roof off your mouth in one lump. Imagine being crammed into a 737 with about 100 others, most of whom smoked Deux A. Smoking was at the front, non-smoking at the rear and the aircon ran front to rear.... I used to pull up the hood on my anorak and pray for deliverance.

The Sahara Desert does not become the ergs and dunes of folklore until you are quite far down. For 1000 miles or more, the desert is grey shale, relieved by the occasional erg of yellow sand. These are very

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dangerous, as the sand blows across the road until it is inches deep. Hitting several inches of sand at speed would cause you to barrel roll off the road. Winters in Algeria are very bit as cold as UK and people have looked at me in abject disbelief when I have recounted driving through the desert in a snowstorm.

My company provided hotel and catering services to the oil and gas industry and we had American, Dutch, Italian and Japanese clients. One American company was constructing a gas plant about 70 miles from In Amenas, a small town south of Algiers and as far from Algiers as Algiers is from London.

Bill and I flew down to In Amenas one December night, arriving about 2am. Bill was the general manager for Algeria. The coach which was to collect us broke down and we spent the night in the airport arrivals lounge. Bare, totally unheated and very draughty, the word

lounge was a misnomer. In Amenas airport is just a concrete strip and some sheds in the middle of nowhere. I have been very cold both before and since, but never for so long. We took everything warm from our cases - sweaters, towels - and wrapped ourselves in them in a vain attempt to stave off the bitter cold. We had nothing to eat or drink. Not until mid-afternoon of the following day did the coach finally appear and rescue us, winding its way up the desert hills to the site.

Three days later, my attempt to escape was thwarted. I was driven down to the airport to fly to Hassi R'Mel, a centre of oil and gas exploration. It was a typically bright Algerian winter day, with a temperature of about 60 °F. The airport was totally deserted, save for a young soldier. Nothing had been seen or heard of the aircraft, so after 2 hours, we took the soldier and went to the Air Algeria office in town.

'The aircraft has not arrived' we said.

'So' came the reply, 'it often happens!'

That meant flying back to Algiers that night in the same way that I had arrived, except I would be on standby, the aircraft would be full of expatriates going on leave and I might end up stuck in In Amenas again, as the bus bringing the outgoing collected the incoming and left before aeroplane seats were allocated. Despite the cold, I sweated in fear of not making that flight - the site had no phone, no radio and no telex. I got the second to last standby seat. Phew!

A couple of days later, I flew to Hassi R'Mel. 'Hassi' means well in Arabic. It was not the first time I had been there and this time, I stayed with an American company that were experts in drilling. I always found it interesting to see how companies operated their sites. This one was Portakabins, but beauti-

fully engineered; they demanded (and received) similar standards from us. The Italians had a gorgeous setup, complete with panelled walls; the Dutch had very nice buildings; the Japanese site was unbelievable, a complete tip. Even by Algerian standards, the kitchens and accommodation were awful and electrocution in the kitchens an ever-present threat. My boss was very tall - 6' 6" or so - and the Portakabins Japanese with door heights to match. Unsurprisingly, John had cracked his head at frequent intervals during our earlier visit.

Drilling requires pumping 'mud' down the hole at high pressure. To achieve this, the drilling company had imported big and powerful Kenworth trucks from the US. I love big trucks and was delighted to be offered a drive in one. The 'KW' is strange in that the gearchange is operated by compressed air and you just move

the tiny lever back and forth to change up or down. Lights on the dash indicate the gear you are in. That drive really was a big 10-4. Big boys toys and all that.

One of the loveliest places I visited was Ghardaia, an oasis about 500 miles south of Algiers. Approached by road, Ghardaia was almost invisible until you were on top of it, as it lay in a natural bowl. Palm and fruit trees abounded and the locals offered good craft

products. I still treasure a copper table top I bought for £25. The local hotel was nice by Algerian standards. The first time I went was in winter and the heating did not work. The manager said the pump was faulty; a year later I returned and guess what....

Nigel Wild



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From MONDAY 10 DECEMBER, Shipton Station sees an additional train!

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A return train service leaving Oxford at 22:52 allows time for a leisurely meal out, a visit to some of the many hostelries, the cinema or theatre, or even a night out at Oxford's Ice Rink, (a 10 min, walk from the station.) Ask for a Combined Oxford + Ice Rink ticket to obtain Entry + Skate Hire for just £1. (Mon, Tues & Wed) - (£2. on Disco nights Thurs, Fri, & Sat.)

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Note: Shipton is a request stop.

A Mini pocket timetable shows all train times between Paddington and the Cotswold and Malvern Line. *booklet C shows all services in the area.

Please spread the news & enjoy your evening out!

*Cotswold Line
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Congratulations

The winners of our Christmas Word Puzzle are Bel (6) and William Lovel (9). They share two gift boxes of assorted chocolates.

Runners up were Jasmin (6) and Amelie Meaden (3 ½) who share one gift box.

Both prizewinners correctly solved the puzzle, but Bel and William were the first out of the hat.

Our thanks go to Timothy Ryan, who created the puzzle and donated the prizes.

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Ascott's fetes

This issue's cover illustration of one of last year's village scarecrows, reminds us in the dark days of winter of the warm balmy days of summer and one of it's most evocative occasions, the village fete.

The time when signs begin to sprout on village approaches and posters adorn any available vantage point. Over at least the last century Ascott has done it's best to perpetuate this tradition and a legacy of pho-

tographs survive from the first decades of the 20c to illustrate these events. Ascott's fetes were held at various venues, the grounds of the old vicarage, the gardens of Chestnut Close (Wychwood Manor) and at least one seems to have been located at the back of Crown Farm. Although today the fund raising is mainly for the church, earlier ones seem to have sponsored other bodies such as the Nursing Association. Wouldn't it be great if we could identify more people in the photographs? But we can only assume that many of those seen on the photographs spent their lives amongst the streets, houses, cottages and gardens where we do today.

The Ascott children with their Maypole and Country dances were always very popular at the fetes before and after the First World War. Initially they were trained by Reginald Tiddy who bought the

Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

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The Park is open daily from 10am.



land and had the original Tiddy Hall constructed for dancing before his death in the trenches in 1916.

The photograph below was taken at the 1913 Fete in the vicarage grounds. Again the children dancers are

prominent together with some of the adult dancers who in the first few decades of the 20c





were in great demand at events around the area.

The plant stand at the 1914 Fete held again at the vicarage, presumably

as war clouds were gathering over Europe. Large hats and long dresses the order of the day.

Another pre Great War Fete which would appear to have been held at the back of Crown Farm.





THE FETE AT CHESTNUT CLOSE
AS SCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD

Cloche hats and shorter dresses after the Great War. This time at Chestnut Close (Wychwood Manor) where the opening cer-

emony was performed by the Duchess of Marlborough (centre) in July 1923 at a fete in aid of the Nursing Association.

Back to the vicarage in 1926 when the Fete was opened by the Countess of Eltham.



THE GARDEN FETE AT ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD VICARAGE - JULY 10, 1926. I
— OPENING CEREMONY BY THE COUNTESS OF ELTHAM —

PICKER PHOTO



Same event, looking over the vicarage wall where the childrens' tea was held, several dancers

amongst those posing for the photographer.

The adult tea was served at the back of the

vicarage where it looks as though the adult female dancers were acting as waitresses.



The 1939 Fete was opened by Oliver Watney from Cornbury. His wife holds a bouquet whilst Rev. Bartlett with his wife and daughters stand to each side.

It looks as though a fancy dress parade was held at this fete and presumably this photograph was taken before the opening ceremony since Mrs Bartlett and her daughters are still in charge of the bouquet.

Wendy Pearse



Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Jamaican Jerk Pork Tenderloins

Jerk seasoning makes a unique, delicious rub for pork.

Makes 8 main-dish servings.

Preparation time 15 minutes plus marinating. BBQ or Grill 18 to 22 minutes.

Ingredients:

1 bunch green onions, cut into 1 inch pieces
3 bay leaves, broken into pieces
3 garlic cloves, peeled
2 jalapeno chillies, seeds and membrane discarded, cut up
2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
1 tablespoon dried thyme
2 teaspoons ground allspice

1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
2 whole pork tenderloins (1 pound each)
2 small or 1 large ripe pineapple

Method:

1. In a food processor with knife blade attachment, blend green onions, bay leaves, garlic, jalapenos, vinegar, thyme, allspice, salt and pepper to a thick paste.
2. On a large plate, rub tenderloins all over with jerk paste, cover and refrigerate 1 hour to overnight.

3. Just prior to cooking, cut pineapple lengthwise through crown to stem end into 8 wedges, leaving on leafy crown.

4. Place tenderloins on a BBQ or under a hot grill and cook 18 to 22 minutes until browned on the outside and thoroughly cooked in the centre, turning tenderloins over once. Whilst tenderloins are cooking, cook pineapple wedges, cut sides down on the BBQ or cut sides up if grilling and cook for 5 to 8 minutes until tender and slightly browned.

5. Serve

Phil & Helen Pratley.



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Stormont XC

Being only 45! I had been putting off running in the masters scene until I was really old, but the XC race in Belfast seemed very tempting (ladies/men compete in the masters from the age of 35) and when I received an email to run 1st reserve for England I couldn't refuse!

The flight to Belfast airport, that has recently been renamed George Best city airport, was very quick & smooth. We soon found our way to the team hotel 'The Europa' in the centre of the city.

After a quick team talk and collection of numbers we enjoyed the peace & comfort of the eleventh floor room, with the views across the City.

We later found out that the Europa held the unfortunate record of being bombed 10 times during the troubles!

The morning of the race quickly dawned and we were soon boarding the coaches laid on by the organis-



ers, and on our way to the venue, via the famous City docks.

The 6K race was held in the parkland setting of Stormont castle. The undulating 3-lap course ideal from a spectator viewpoint.

On the day of the race it became apparent that all the athletes in the England team were fit and well so I got ready to run in the open race. My race was 1st on the timetable. The heavy rain that had been predicted managed to hold off, but it was very cold & windy.

The open race is always hotly contested and got off to a fast start on the first of 3 laps. I settled into 2nd place and although in the

wind I felt like I was working hard I could make little inroads into the leading ladies position and just kept going to hold position. It was a relief to see the finish after what felt like a hard race.

After being whisked back by coach to our hotel, the day was rounded off by a lively dinner and prize giving. Guest of honour and making the presentation was Olympic athlete Dame Mary Peters CBE.

It was wonderful to see how a City can turn itself around, and you could sense the pride, and enjoy the friendliness of the people. Belfast is a City I would love to return to.

Nicola Gomm

Memories of Ascott Football 1945 - 1960

When Ascott Football Club was reformed after the Second World War, the first time I saw them play, the pitch was in a field behind what is now the old vicarage. They played in red and green quarter shirts, the shorts were either blue or white, long and baggy, which reached below the knee. The socks seemed to be of various colours. The boots were of a thick light brown leather with a hard toe cap, ideal for toe poking the ball which is not the best way for kicking a football. The studs were round layers of leather about the size of a 20p. These were held together by long thin nails which were then hammered into the sole of the boot. When the leather began to wear down, it exposed the nails. Often players would finish the game with deep scratches down their legs. No subs in those days, they had to hobble on through the game, or leave their team to play

the rest of the match with ten men.

What were the matches like to watch? Even when I was young I thought it should be different from what it was. It seemed the object was to boot the ball as near the opposing goal as possible, then dash after it like wild men.

Many village pitches were not suited to passing the ball along the ground. They were rough and uneven and often cattle and sheep had to be driven off the pitch before the game could start. When the leather ball got wet and heavy, it would ricochet off the ground like a cannon ball.

Funny isn't it, one of the useless things I can remember about one history lesson, we were told the Armada was driven back by the smaller ships of the English fleet by use of the tactic of firing the cannon ball so it ricocheted off the sea to hit the Spanish ships with great force.

Now back to Ascott football. The shouts of encouragement most heard from the touch-line were "Get stuck in". This was meant to give the opponents a hefty shoulder charge to send them sprawling across the pitch, often getting covered in what the cattle had left behind. By the time Ascott had moved to the field behind the recreation ground which then was one large meadow, the village colours had changed to green and yellow and the football had improved but generally the pitches had not. By then Ken, Jack and Jimmy Bridge, Geoff Barnes and Bob Webb had joined the team. They had a better idea of how the game should be played. Jimmy Bridge and Geoff Barnes went on later to play senior football for Chippie.

There were also one or two German ex-prisoners-of-war who played for the village. I have seen the minutes from the meeting of the club

just after the War when it was greatly opposed that Germans should be allowed to play. Later when some of them did it was easy to see they had played a better class of football. They didn't stop to play for Ascott for long.

What was the most dangerous position to play in those years? It was goalkeeper. Once he had caught the ball he stood every chance of being knocked into the back of the net by the centre forward who usually was the heaviest and most aggressive player in the team and he wasn't considered much good if he couldn't employ these tactics.

When Chris Scully married Beryl Pratley and moved into the village, he joined the football team. One match he was picked in goal. Chris having the temperament of the Irish didn't wait to be knocked over by the centre forward, but went after the said player and knocked him over instead. He gave away two penalties that

day. He wasn't picked in goal again .

Ascott could only afford two balls. Make what you will of that statement. They had one match ball and one practise ball. Norman Edgington looked after these. He lived with his sister Hilda and brother Charlie who was as deaf as a post. They lived in what is now 'Michaelmas Cottage' in the High Street. In the early evenings of spring and autumn I was sent by the older boys and young men to get the practise ball. I walked up the garden path with a certain fear before knocking on the door. It was opened by Norman. Timidly I would ask, "Can I have the football please Norman?" In a gruff, deep voice he would ask, "How many on ya be in the club. If ther yent more than five, you yent getting the ball." I would then have to recite to him who was waiting on the road outside the garden gate. Reluctantly he would hand me the ball,

shouting to me as I ran down the path," And dunt kick it along the road and scratch it." This warning was ignored as soon as I handed the ball to the other boys. Sometimes when Norman was working late on the farm, Charlie would answer the door. Shouting I would ask for the ball. Shuffling off he would return with the ball, no questions asked. Later Norman would meet us down the village. "You lot wunt get the football agen. Our Charlie give you the match ball. Now thers a gret scratch down it."

When I first played for the village team in 1956 we had a new playing field opened in 1953 and a decent pitch to play on. We played in the same colours as the WOLVES. If you follow football you know what they were, so I'm not going to tell you. I think we played in these colours because Donald Fletcher our team captain was a Wolves supporter. We also had a new pavilion, now

pulled down, where we could change for the match. There was a deep sink with hot water where we could wash the mud off our legs after the game and electric light to see to find our clothes on dark winter afternoons. Some villages still didn't have this luxury. When Ascott played Dean, a small hamlet near Chad, our changing room was amongst the empty bottles and beer barrels in the outbuilding of the Malt Shovel pub in

Chadlington. On a dark November afternoon after the match we would grope around in the dark trying to find our trousers and jacket. If we were lucky there would be an old tin bath full of hot water to wash the mud off. By the time we left it was cold and the colour of thick brown soup. It certainly tested our love of football.

Many years on it all seems very amusing and like all things everything is relative. I am sure we

enjoyed our football as much as young men do today. You might ask what sort of player did I shape up to be? I will answer like this. I was never as good as I thought I was or as good as I wanted to be. Only a few years later an old man shouted at me from the touchline, "We might as well have an empty bottle playing for us as you." By then I knew I was too slow and well past my sell by date.

Fred Russell.

Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter

Most people know they are more likely to catch a cold or flu during the winter but did you know that as the weather gets colder a lower body temperature can lead to an increased risk of heart and respiratory problems, and that cases of depression also increase?

Derys Pragnell, a Health Improvement Practitioner at Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust says:

"As the weather gets colder many people turn the heating up and stay indoors but the people who are most susceptible to ill health during the winter are often those living in housing least prepared for the cold. There are some simple measures we can all take to stay healthy, live well and keep warm in winter. What we eat and drink, the exercise we take and the clothes we wear can all make a big difference and, to

prepare your home to be as safe and warm as possible, some financial help is available."

Derys has the following top tips for coping with the cold and staying healthy this winter:

Keep active during the day. Try and move around at least once an hour and if you can, don't sit for long periods of time.

When you are outside don't take risks. If it is wet or icy be careful not to fall, wear

plenty of layers, gloves and a hat.

When you are at home wear several thin layers of clothing and a hat or headscarf if you feel cold.

To keep your feet warm and prevent you falling wear flat, dry, non-slip shoes or boots inside and outside of your home.

Remember 'food is fuel' so eat regular hot meals and have a hot drink before bed.

Set your thermostat to around 21°C (70°F for rooms you use during the daytime and heat your bedroom to at least 18°C overnight (consider using a hot

water bottle or electric blanket if your bedroom is cold)

Stop Smoking as this will improve your circulation.

Get a flu jab. If you are aged 65 or more, have a serious respiratory condition, heart, kidney or liver disease, diabetes, lowered immunity, multiple sclerosis or other nerve affecting disorder or if you have had a stroke, you are entitled to a free flu jab from your family doctor.

Prepare your home for the winter months. Find out if you are entitled to financial sup-

port by contacting The Warm Front Scheme - telephone 0800 072 0151. If you are over 60 there is money available towards winter fuel bills - telephone 08459 151515. Your energy supplier may also be able to offer financial support to improve heating at home.

As well as contacting your family doctor, health advice and information is available from NHS Direct on 08454647 (or text phone 0845 606 4647) and local pharmacies. Advice to give up smoking is available from 01865 226663.

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Reopening of The Swan at Ascott

2008 brings exciting news for those of us who have missed our local pub! After a long absence, and an extensive refurbishment, The Swan at Ascott is set to reopen its doors in March.

Under the ownership of Richard Lait, the Swan will offer great food with a gourmet twist, alongside a full range of local and guest ales, wine and more in its two bars. Says Richard: "I want to put the pub back at the heart of the community. It will be a great place to meet



friends and neighbours, or just to pop in for a pint. We've got an exciting menu planned for our restaurant and we'll also offer more casual food for those times when you just don't want to cook." Six stylish en-suite rooms mean there's no excuse for not inviting friends and

family to come and sample the delights of Ascott too.

The pub will open on March 19th at 6pm for drinks, and on March 20th at 7pm for food. For more information or to book a table, please call 07973 727162.

Jo Court

Tiddy Hall

Regular Activities:

Monday – Friday

Mornings

Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant 07968006451

Wednesday Afternoons

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Wednesday Evenings

Badminton

Contact: Chris Morgan 01993 831958

Thursday evenings

Yoga – 7.30 – 9pm

Contact: Jan Holah 01608 810620

Friday afternoon

Post Office 2pm – 4pm

Special Events:

Friday 8th February

Ladies Night Out –

Film & Supper

Saturday 1st March

Race Night

Saturday 29th March

Folk Night

To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

**Ingrid Ridley:
01993 830612**

Village directory

Allotments 01993 832004	Pre-School/Mothers and Toddlers 07968 006451	Burford School 01993 823303
Badminton 01993 831801	Village Shop 01993 831240	Leafield School 01993 878273
Bell ringing 01993 832004	Sports Club/Pavillion 01993 830227	Wychwood School 01993 830059
Church Rev'd Mark Abrey 01608 676572	Swan Inn (undergoing refurbishment) 07973 727162	B&B Ingrid Ridley 01993 830612
Rev'd Mary Crameri 01608 678424	Tiddy Hall -bookings 01993 830612	B&B Sally Walker 01993 831900
CLPG	Village Charity 01993 831621	Bluebells at the Barn - florist 01993 830730
Cricket Club 01993 831090	Web site www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk	Crown Farm – equestrian centre 01993 832083
01993 831621	Wychwood Day Centre 01993 831479	Forge Garage 01993 830025
Discussion Group 01993 830358	Wychwood Library 01993 830281	Minor Parts of Oxford
Fishing Club (Coldstone Angling) 01993 830758	Wychwood Local History Society 01993 831023	-Richard Plant 01993 830349
Flix In The Stix 01993 831860	Wychwood Surgery – reception 01993 831061	Robert Gripper – antique furniture restorer 01993 831960
Football Club (Wychwood Forest) 01993 779523	out-of-hours 0845 345 8995	Windrush Valley School 01993 831793
Grapevine Magazine 01993 831023	Friends Of Wychwood 01993 832004	Wychwood Wrought Iron 01993 832850
Mobile Library (every other Wednesday) 13.55 to14.15	District councillor 01993 831822	
NAG 01993 830227/831621	County Councillor 01993 830584	
Parish Council Clerk 01608 641045	Police non-emergency 08458 505 505	
Post Office (mobile) Tiddy hall, Fridays 2:00-4:00pm		

The answer my friend is blowing in the wind

If patriotism is the last resort of a scoundrel, what would you say I am? Whenever I watch England play football on the television, I always stick a book under one end of the set, so they are always kicking downhill. It's not proved much good since 1966. Perhaps I should use a bigger book like War and Peace or The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire.

Have you noticed how these foreign players fall about the field trying to get a free kick or penalty? Sometimes I think it's a bigger farce than Shakespeare's death of Hamlet. I have ways of stopping the shirt tugging that goes on. Make the shirts give off an electric shock if they are touched, or better still, the players should be naked and body paint used in the colours of the team they play for. It would be interesting what they would try and grab at a corner or free kick.

Oh for the days of Stanley Matthews and

Tommy Lawton. I wish I could travel back in time to see these old footballers again. I did try time travel once when I was a little boy. I climbed into a Grandfather clock, but after a short while I soon fell out, gasping for breath, but I had moved forward in time. About four minutes!

What would be a good April Fool joke when thinking of time, would be to dig someone's lawn up, then put a notice saying Time Team from Television had been there trying to find a Roman Villa and to contact Tony Robinson for more information. All this makes me wonder, is the world bigger than 10,000 years ago? I think SPIKE would have said, it must be, it's older. I ponder this because when they excavate for Stone Age or Bronze Age settlements, why do they dig down 3 or 4 feet? Does this mean the world is 3 or 4 feet bigger than 10,000 years ago or is

there just the same amount of soil which just gets moved around from time to time? It's all to do with intelligence. If I were intelligent I would know the answer. But I'm not! What I write now thankfully is corrected both in spelling and grammar by Wendy Pearse. But I have some excuse for my backwardness. I understand fish is good for the brain. If this is so, does this mean those living around our coast are more intelligent than those who live inland and if fish is really good for the brain why don't parents who bore people by boasting what intelligent children they have, go and live in Blackpool or Southend where their offsprings' IQ could be improved by feeding them jellied eels and whelks?

I am a great admirer of wind turbines that seem to be spreading across the hills of the English countryside. I think they look imposing and elegant. I know

many people don't like them but what perhaps would help make these wind turbines become more acceptable would be if they were adapted to play music like a pipe

organ. Each county in England could have its own signature tune. What would be Oxfordshire's I wonder?

Finally if music is the food of love, why did so

many of us only seem to hear Colonel Bogey when we wanted to be romantic?

So long for now.

Yer old Lubberyead.

Wychwood Library

Wychwood Library has a new manager, Ruth Gillingham. Many of you will know me as I was Beryl Brown's assistant for 10 years and I am very pleased to be following in her footsteps and looking after this valuable village asset.

If you haven't visited Wychwood Library come in and see our well stocked bookshelves, DVD's, Videos, large print books and Books on tape or disc as well as our delightful children's area. Also, check your e-mails or surf the internet in our extended computer area on our brand new machines.

New to Wychwood Library in 2008 will be coffee mornings on Wednesdays. Take a break and meet your friends here between 10.30 and 12noon

every week. Good coffee, delicious eats and wonderful surroundings but remember to bring your membership card to top up your pile of books.

Oxfordshire Libraries also have Online facilities. You can join the Library online, access a wide range of information sites including: Britannica Online, Grove Art Online, Grove Music Online, Times Digital Archive and several others. Reserve and renew your books online, discover the history of your area and check out our services for children. Come on in and pick up our information pack along with a PIN number.

I look forward to seeing you here. We need your support.

*Ruth Gillingham,
Library Manager*

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Monday:

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Tuesday:

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Wednesday:

9:30am to 1pm/

2pm to 5pm

Thursday

Closed

Friday:

2pm to 7pm

Saturday:

9.30am to 1pm

Phone: 01993 830281

*Ruth Gillingham,
Library Manager*

A Happy New Year from all at Leaffield School

The term ended with the usual flurry of Christmas activity. The older children put on a contemporary pantomime of Snow White and the Eight Dwarfs. The wicked step mother (dame) was a sight to behold. The younger children's Nativity did not disappoint, with the seasonal 'ah' factor at Christmas. Not a dry eye in the church.

The whole school also attended the Christingle Service.

The Friends of Leaffield School once again organised a Christmas disco, where Santa paid an early visit. The Friends also organised a quiz night at the school, raising money towards much needed equipment. Many thanks go to all the volunteers who give up their time to make events like these such a success for all.

Leaffield School's commitment to raising money for others has meant that a variety of events took place last term. 'Pink Day' helped a national charity, 'Breakthrough Breast Cancer', with all the children dressing up in pink for the day. Local children have also benefited from a sponsored Sports Skills day, in conjunction with Oxford United.

The school has been working hard to secure grants and funds to help set up a 'walking bus' to and from school, to aid the safety of the village children. All preparations are nearly in place and we should soon be able to see a snake of neon tabards walking down our pavements.

The Head, Lesley Ryde, has asked that all parents are reminded to get their requests for school places in as soon

as possible. The success of the school has meant it is becoming very full and places are limited, especially in the foundation class.

Charlie Marshall
Community Governor

Wychwood Forest Football Club

Not much to report from the touchline at the moment I am afraid. The weather has put a damper on virtually all of our football over the last months, the first team haven't played since the last week of November, the reserves have got in one game and the Sunday side have managed a couple.

The first team have advanced to the fourth round of the Oxford Junior Shield having beaten Chipping Norton 8-1 and Wooton 3-2, the last round was abandoned before half time and the opposition Hornton, from Banbury cried off in the rearranged game so allowing us through.

In the league the first team are undefeated since the opening two games of the season including an 8-0 win away at Aston, picking up the Giles Sports Team of the month award for November in the process.

The Reserves have had a more up and

down season so far, the nature of reserve teams means that they seldom field the same team two weeks running but their results are encouraging and they play some very good football, winning some and losing some, but always entertaining.

The Sunday side have had a disappointing start to the season but they are a young side, some as young as 16 and play with refreshing freedom. They are playing in a very competitive league and travel long distances to play games but they have good team spirit and this first season is all about consolidation.

A word of thanks here to our regular supporters, Vicki and Amelia Godfrey, Adie Barnes, Dave Halls, Chris Morgan and Adam Scully who turn up in all weathers to cheer the teams through thick and thin.

Also thanks to the Recreation Club committee who have made our transition to

Wychwood Forest so smooth and to Mary and Shane who keep the pitch and changing rooms pristine for us, making us the envy of most clubs in the Witney and District Leagues.

Finally thanks to *A s c o t t - u n d e r -* Wychwood for making us so welcome.

So come along and see us, player or spectator, you will be very welcome.

Jem Johnson



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