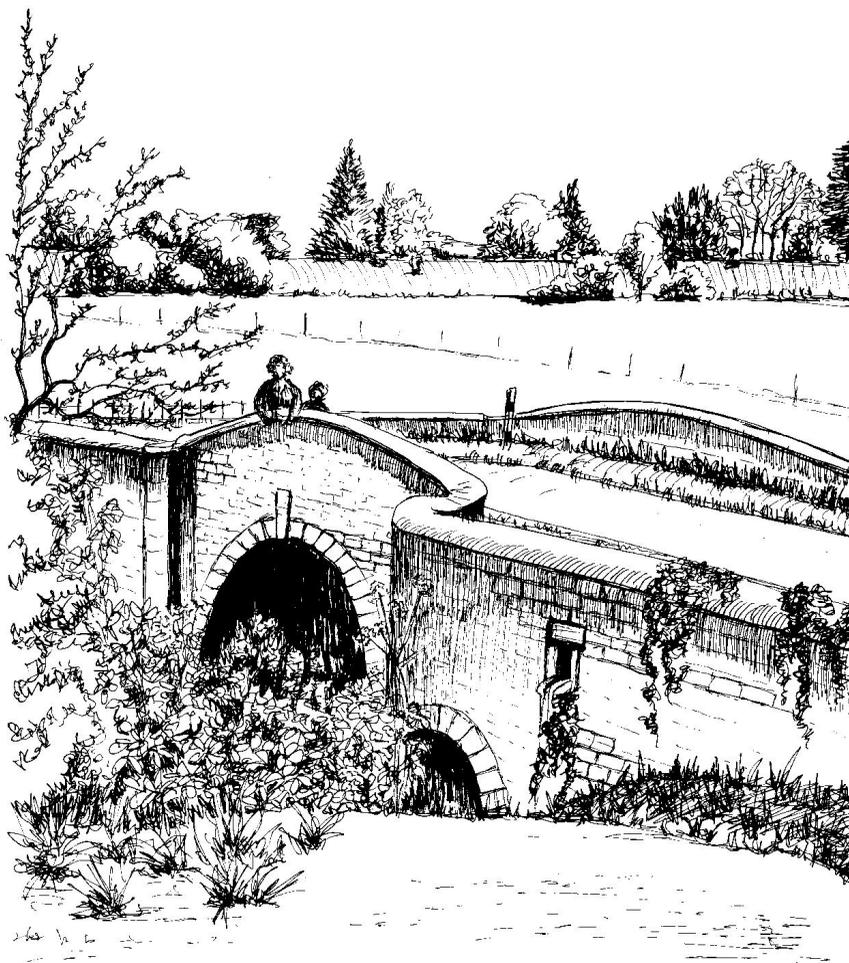

The Ascott Grapevine



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 Summer issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by July 5th.

Call 01993 831023 or email:
wendypearse@

honeydale.freeserve.co.uk

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

Church Services

1st Sunday of the month

10.00am Holy Communion -
Common Worship

2nd Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion -
Book of Common Prayer
10.00am Family Service

3rd Sunday

10.00am Benefice Service

4th Sunday

10.00 Holy Communion -
Common Worship

5th Sunday of the month

10.00 a.m. Benefice Service

Details and times of the regular services and details of special services are advertised on the various notice boards around the village and in the church porch or telephone the Church Wardens - Anne Braithwaite 831282 or Fred Russell 830972.

We look forward to welcoming you and worshipping with you.

Anne Braithwaite

Content & Editorial Policy

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

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

ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD
VILLAGE CHURCH FETE

**COME JOIN US AT THE SPORTS PAVILLION ON JUNE
7TH @ 2.00PM
FOR AN AFTERNOON AT "ASCOTT" RACES!**

Even more attractions than last year:

FOALS CORNER for the children including an activities zone, Bouncy Castle, lots of stalls and a very special guest!

ROYAL ENCLOSURE for refreshments and strawberries and cream

STUDS BAR for beer and Pimms
ON THE HOOF BBQ

SHOW ARENA: Dressage display, Morris Dancers, Punch and Judy, Chipping Norton Brass Band and singing
THE PADDOCKS for penalty shoot out, go-karting and tractors

PLUS

THE STABLES including white elephant, cakes, plants, bottles, cards, jewellery and many more stalls.

THIS YEAR'S GARDEN SCARECROW THEME:
FIT FOR A DAY AT THE RACES.

**To be displayed from 31st May onwards.
Judging will take place Friday 6th June.**

1066 and all that

'We've got to move 6 heavy crates of classified equipment to Scotland' said Don, looking quizzically at me.

'Classified' meant escorting them all the way and I did not fancy several days in an RAF 3-tonner, maximum speed about 50 mph, comfort factor slightly below that of an RAF coach.

I was nearing the end of my first year in the job and by now, had quite a few contacts. One of them ran operations at RAF Lindholme in Yorkshire for Hastings aircraft, used to train pilots on multi-engined aircraft.

Lindholme matey agreed that shifting the crates would be a good training flight and at the appointed time, I arrived at Northolt. Shortly afterwards, a truck turned up with the crates and another 'crate', the Hastings, landed. The Hastings was a venerable aeroplane that gained fame during the Berlin airlift, when it flew countless missions into the beleaguered city with cargoes ranging from grain to coal.

Mine, from the appropriately numbered 1066 Squadron, looked as though it was still fighting World War II. Its flanks bore the scars of innumerable hours of flying and a million hailstones; the cowlings of its four radial engines were blackened by exhaust heat and heavy streaks of burnt oil; instead of sitting level on a tricycle undercarriage, it rested at an angle on its tailwheel. At any moment, I expected dear Johnny Mills to come

bursting out of the fuselage door, flying helmet in hand and shout 'Whizzo prang' or 'Angels One-Five'.

Crates loaded, it was time for the off. I strapped in, facing backwards and was given a headset for communication. The RAF has always had a policy of putting its passengers facing backwards, because in the event of a crash, your upright spine is braced against the back of a relatively strong seat. This policy has proved itself on a number of occasions. The RAF suggested to civilian airlines that they follow suit, but all have declined on the premise that 'the passengers would not like it if they could not see where they were going'. To me this is poppycock. You can see just as much facing backwards as forwards and for much of the time, if you are flying at night or with the shades drawn, it does not matter anyway.

One by one the engines cranked into life, shuddering, roaring and spitting flames from the exhaust stubs. The captain sat on the threshold, wound it up against the brakes, then let 'er roll. Northolt is surrounded by buildings, so engine failure is not funny. With a deafening roar, the old dear gathered her skirts and wallowed into the air.

Once we reached the top of the drop, the captain said I could leave my seat and come forward to the cockpit. Captain was a grizzled Flight Lieutenant who looked as old as his

aeroplane, whilst his co-pilot was a fresh-faced Pilot Officer. Modern aircraft have just one set of throttle controls for the pilots, but this one had a separate set for the flight engineer, whose task was to monitor gauges and set the throttles on the pilot's instructions. It was eerie to see the engineer alter the throttles and for the pilots' set to move in ghostly unison. This aircraft also sported an astrodome, a bubble at the top of the cockpit canopy for a navigator to take a starsight. No VORs and beacons in those days!

Flying in this old warhorse was an object lesson on what it must have been like for flyers in the 30s and 40s. The engines were incredibly noisy, even at cruising settings and there was little in the way of sound deadening. Sitting back in the passenger/cargo area, your ears were assaulted by sound, including creaking noises as the fuselage flexed.

First stop RAF Machrihanish, about 130 miles west of Glasgow. This NATO airfield boasted a runway of 10,000 feet, big enough to take any size of aircraft. My contact there I rated and sure enough, greeted me on arrival with a tractor, low-loader trailers and a forklift. A quick coffee, then airborne to Leuchars, next to St Andrews golf course. Golfers at Leuchars loved the posting - they got dirt-cheap honorary membership of the Royal and Ancient. Our man at Leuchars I did not rate and we had crossed swords in the past. We pulled to a

halt on the apron to find not a soul in sight, let alone any kit to unload the crates. I sent one of the groundcrew off in search of our missing officer and meanwhile watched the Royal Navy pilots practising carrier landings with their Phantoms. Landing on a carrier is, I understand, decidedly hairy. The flight deck is narrow and pitches wickedly in bad weather. Getting it wrong means hitting either parked aircraft or the 'island' which contains the ship's bridge. Alternatively, you plunged off the side or end of the flight deck and into the sea with a low chance of survival.

RN pilots were taught to land hard and make it stick so that the plane did not bounce, otherwise the arrester hook was likely to miss the arrester wire. Leuchars had mocked up a flight deck complete with arrester wire so that the pilots could practice in safety before trying the real thing. At first, it made me wince to watch them slam it onto the deck, but I knew the undercarriages were specially strengthened to take these hard landings.

At last my man hove into sight. He claimed not to have received my signal. I did not believe a word of what he said. The station had only one forklift, presently engaged on the other side of the airfield. The only solution was to manhandle the cargo onto the top of a tractor and thence to a trailer. The contents of the crates were both delicate and very expensive but somehow we managed to offload them safely.

Highly relieved, I strapped in again and looked forward to our last stop, RAF Kinloss. Kinloss man was of the same ilk as Machrihanish, so we had but a brief respite before setting a southerly course for Northolt. Now I could relax and enjoy the rest of the flight. I talked to the aircrew and asked questions about their almost vintage steed. They were very insistent that I strapped in on every landing and I asked why.

‘Because when the tailfin dips below the nose on landing, the airflow over the rudder drops away and the aircraft sometimes dives off the runway!’ came the reply.

I de-planed at Northolt with the engines still running and the last I saw of the Hastings and indeed any Hastings, it was spitting and roaring along the runway on takeoff. Must go to the RAF Museum again sometime – probably my aircraft is there!

Nigel Wild

Ascott Bridge

I wonder how many of us when we jump into our cars and take to the roads ever stop to consider the various bridges that we cross and what we should do without them.

Last July gave us an indication when many of our local bridges were affected by the floods. But what would people in the past have done in the same situation? Probably they would not have taken the bridges for granted as we do and certainly 200 years ago there would have been no railway bridges and no flyover and motorway bridges. Their main preoccupation would have been to cross water, be it merely a stream that was too wide to jump or too deep to ford, or a river that was either wide or deep flowing.

Ascott was lucky enough to have been blessed with a bridge across the Evenlode from fairly early times. The first documented evidence of one is in the Hundred Rolls of 1279. We

have no idea what this bridge would have looked like. It could have been built of either wood or stone. The close proximity to Ascott D'Oyley Castle and later Manor, may well point the way to the D'Oyley family as the builders, providing them with instant access to the north without a detour to probably Burford or Charlbury.

It is possible that earlier bridges may have stood on the site. When the Romans built the villa at College Farm they would have needed access across the river to the south towards the village, or vice versa when the Open Fields type of Agriculture was established by the Saxons villagers, they would have needed some way to take their plough teams and hay carts across to the land called Water Field which rose from the northern bank of the Evenlode to the present A361.

But of Roman and Saxon bridges we have no evidence whereas when

the Normans took over and England evolved as we know it today, the Hundred Rolls definitely confirm the existence of a bridge in 1279.

The next documentary evidence comes 300 years later in 1589, when it appears from the Ascott Manor Court Book that the “towne bridge” was apparently falsely damaged and in need of repair, and the record also tells us that the bridge was made of stone. Whether the bridge was the same one as that mentioned in 1279 we cannot tell.

Again we move on two more centuries before the Ascott Court Books of the early 19c raise the issue of “Ascott Great Bridge”.

In July 1822 at the Manor Court held in the village, possibly in the public house that later became Corner House Farm, the Jury “presented a Bridge called Ascott Great Bridge at the end of the Town and leading from thence to Chipping Norton which is in a dilapidated state and requires repairing”. Unfortunately at the next Court held in August 1823 the Jury presented “the Bridge.. was since the last Court ..repaired.. but that it is again become out of repair and dilapidated” Again in August 1824 “the Bridge..is much out of repair and in a very dangerous state for Persons passing and repassing over the same.” Could this have been a very old stone bridge that had seen better days?

It seems however that enough was enough. At the time Lord Churchill of Cornbury was the Lord of Ascott

D’Oyley Manor and owner of the major part of the village, and possibly his steward may have convinced him to provide the cash. It’s hard to imagine that the cost would have come from other sources. But by 1836 when a survey shortly before Ascott’s Enclosure, was made for the Reverend Marshall Hacker who owned Coldstone Farm and a large acreage of land scattered in strips about the parish, a new bridge is mentioned. He owned “three lands above the new bridge” and “Four lands by the new bridge”. These lands lay just to the right of the current bridge on the north side of the river. So it seems that Ascott’s problems with it’s “Great Bridge” were finally sorted and this construction is probably the bridge that is there today.

When the villagers of Ascott in 1591 were asked to make a perambulation of the boundary of the parish, they stated that at the western end where the boundary crosses the river, there was a ford. And the ford was still mentioned in 1836. But when the Enclosure Award was made two years later, it was recorded that a Bridleway led from the western end of Ascott across the newly erected bridge across the Evenlode. So it seems that the brick bridge was constructed in connection with the Enclosure Award to ensure access to the fields on the north bank of the river and to provide easy walking along the Bridleway.

Wendy Pearce

A day in the life of a newspaper photographer

The vocation of a press photographer used to be thought of as an interesting and exciting job. But when Princess Diana died, the perception of photographers changed over night and the phrase paparazzi came into common usage. I worked as a tog (photographer) for thirteen years and noticed the change in how the public incorrectly perceived “us”.

Paparazzi (paps as they call themselves) do a completely different job from the snappers you may see working for the local rag. The paps follow the rich and famous around and have been known to bribe hotel staff and others to tip off on their movements. A single photo can earn them thousands.

The job of the snapper is low paid, over worked and generally involves getting very wet. A typical day for a snapper normally starts very early, usually 7 in the morning. We don't refer to appointments to take photographs as “shoots”, that's what the mostly useless (not including my wife!) PR people call these engagements. Instead we just call them jobs.

The early morning jobs are often road traffic accidents (RTAs), bodies found, police raids on the drug dealers, and of course the early weather picture. These jobs normally appear in that day's paper if it is an evening edition. These pictures have to be sent back to the office electronically - or

wired, as we call it. We normally do this on the way to the first of our diary (or pre-planned) jobs.

Sometimes the diary jobs get dropped by better stuff that comes into the picture desk during the course of the shift. I was on my way to a court snatch (I will explain this another time) in North Shields, in North Tyneside, when the picture editor, Rod told me to hot foot it to Alnwick Castle in Northumberland where, according to a friend of the local district reporter, the Duke of Edinburgh was getting some practice in for the horse-carriage racing that was taking place at the weekend.

Picture Editors are well known for a vague sense of time and space and believe that every distance can be covered in about twenty minutes. So, about 38.2 minutes later I arrived at Alnwick, and there indeed was Prince Philip racing around the field like a madman in his horse and cart with the picturesque castle as a backdrop. The reporter, Christine was chewing her pen anxiously when I arrived. Nothing causes bigger arguments between tog and wordsmith more than a picture missed when the reporter was already on the scene. She looked very relieved to see me arrive and pointed rather theatrically at Phil as if I were stupid or blind and hadn't already noticed him.

I jumped out of the car and got out my very heavy and impressive 300mm 2.8 aperture four thousand pound Cannon lens and attached it to the camera body. I then started snapping away as the mobile phone rang (the fourth time in the last 15 minutes) with Rod on the phone asking what the hell was I doing and was I there yet. I kindly told him where to go and got on with taking the pics. The reporter and I edged closer. Philip was running the horses ragged, splashing through the mud and appearing to be really enjoying himself, then as he came round one of the cones, he noticed me - I suppose the foot long eighteen inch white lens sort of gave me away. Why Cannons insist making their longer lenses white still baffles me considering what they are normally used for. He stopped his horses and trap, jumped out, and picked up a very big thick walking stick from the cart and proceeded to march purposefully towards us. We couldn't quite make out what he saying as he was

waving his big stick in the air, but "What the \$%* do you think you are doing here, bugger off" came over loud and clear. I prepared to bolt - I mean, I knew he was getting on, but the headlines

"Snapper kills Prince Phillip" or even worse - "Prince Phillip kills snapper" kept flashing before my eyes. Luckily, I was saved as two enormous Range Rovers came charging across the field between me and his Royal Highness, and he was pacified and ushered into the back of one of them. The other vehicle spewed out four rather large men without necks who appeared to be having conversations with their wrists. They kindly and respectfully asked me to leave the area, which I was more than happy to do. Shaken and feeling ashamed of myself for being afraid of a pensioner, I retired to the car to check what I had taken on my laptop and then send through the photos to the picture desk.

The afternoon was a bit less exciting with a series of diary jobs, including a fashion feature, and a job about an art exhibition called "Nothing". This was was one of my (now) wife's bizarre stories. It was basically a terrible "art"show featuring a black bin bag



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in one corner, an empty glass tank, and a number of other objects which you would usually find at any local refuse tip. The story was planned as a light-hearted page three, so Rod came up with the idea of getting me to plumb the depths of my creative soul for some extra pictures for the page. Artistic inspiration led me to taking a picture of my boots, fag butts in the gutter, and a TV aerial shot from a particularly interesting angle.

By the end of the day, I was quite looking forward to a couple of well-earned pints, when I heard two bits

of bad news, one - the late man had called in sick, and two - that Newcastle, the toon army, were playing at home that night. I tried to make a swift exit, but was collared by Rod, who kindly said I could have the time back in lieu possibly within the next 10 years, but I'd have to cover the crappy Newcastle v Everton game. This meant I wouldn't leave the office until midnight, and, worse still, as I am a Sunderland supporter would have to watch the rival Newcastle play for free.....

Trevor Craig

Ascott Community Shop Thrice a winner

Winning one award is cause for celebration, but three in as many months, well, that's a real champagne and caviar moment!

Just before Christmas, the Ascott Community Village shop learned it had won Best Village Shop for the South Region in the Best Rural Retailer competition.

Less than a week later came a second award, Best Village Shop for Oxfordshire in the annual competition run by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

And in February 2008, it was party time once more, runner up as "Best Village Shop" in the Best Rural Retailer National Finals.

First conceived in 2005, the Countryside Alliance's Best Rural Retailer competition was established to sup-



port and promote rural communities. Awards are divided into four categories and the UK into 12 regions. First, Ascott Shop won Best Village Shop in the South, a region stretching from the Isle of Wight through to Northamptonshire. Then at the regional awards ceremony at the House of Lords in February, we were overjoyed to come second in the national finals.

The Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is one of 38 rural community councils in England, whose aim is to promote thriving, sustainable rural communities.

Oxfordshire Village Shop of the Year is an annual competition, with a cheque for £250 to the winner. In

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

2005, the Ascott shop was runner-up. The judge for Best Village Shop commented how taken he was by the passion and commitment shown by so many people.

Opened in November 2003 by Radio Oxford's Bill Heine, the shop has starred in BBC's *Countryfile* and ITV's *Heart of the Country* programme on the nationwide revival in sourcing and buying locally.

We have always promoted a strong policy of purchasing goods from businesses in the area and encouraging local shopping. The shop is a member of the Local Food project, purchasing from outlets such as the Foxbury Farm Shop at Brize Norton and Callow's Farm at Stonesfield, buying Huffkins bread and cakes from Burford and rape-seed oil from Gloucestershire. Twenty one of our 30 suppliers are within a 30 mile radius.

In our continuing drive towards eco-friendly shopping, we introduced jute shopping bags to replace plastic. Prices are continuously monitored to compare favourably with local supermarkets.

Your shop is run by a group of over 40 volunteers who are passionate about serving and uniting the Ascott community and devote countless hours to supporting the business. New volunteers are always most welcome. No experience is necessary, we give full training.

During the floods in July, the shop acted as a lifeline, donating emergency

packs to the needy and serving a never-ending stream of customers with staples, ready meals and some wine to calm shattered nerves. Not only that, the store became a centre for help and information.

So, come and taste some of that award-winning magic for yourself. You'll discover a warm welcome, scrummy bread and cakes, tender meat, fresh fruit and veg, sandwiches and rolls made daily, local beers, good wines. And that's just a fraction of our range!

We are open seven days a week, from 7.30am - 6.30pm weekdays, 8am - 4pm Saturdays and 9am - 12 noon on Sundays.

See you soon!

Nigel Wild

Bed & Breakfast

In Ascott

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Gardening Notes

Well, I'm late planting potatoes and sowing seeds outside because we are doing another major change in the garden. I can't wait until the day when we are satisfied with the garden layout for long enough for me to be able to concentrate on plants and seeds. I know gardens are never finished but there must come a point when structure is how you want it, surely. At the moment we are continuing to remove sections of gravel path. I really like the look of gravel but I cannot cope with the continual battle with weeds which sow themselves into the gravel. I do not want to use weedkiller every year and nothing else seems to work. For us gravel is not the easy option. When we have rid ourselves of the portion we are working on now we will only have one gravel path left which is more easier to deal with than several paths but I expect it will have to go as well.. Mostly we have replaced gravel with grass. I expect many readers will think that grass is more difficult to look after than gravel but not for me. I don't mind weeds in grass, I'm only interested that the overall effect is green so weeds and moss are fine with me. As it has worked out my tardiness with sets and seeds has been fortuitous because last night was the night it snowed so early efforts could have been lost to cold.

Over the winter I've been thinking back as to what has influenced me the most with regard to garden structure and style. I have read lots and lots of

books on the subject. Dave would say I'd looked at hundreds and hundreds of garden pictures rather than read the books. I suppose he would be right because I'm very interested in how plants and colours combine. I'm not so much a greenfingered gardener taking cuttings all over the place and succeeding with them. I'm more interested in the overall picture.

I have visited loads and loads of gardens either under the 'yellow book' scheme; or as we have done through villages opening their gardens for a good cause; or because a particular garden in one of the garden books has made we want to go and see it in the flesh. The first garden which really set me alight was 'The Thatched Cottage' in Lugershall not far from Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire. Sadly they no longer open but do still have a nursery just outside the village. I was particularly attracted to the garden and nursery because at the time we lived in an Elizabethan cottage just like theirs and I wanted to ensure our garden suited our cottage in terms of plants and colours. Garish modern colours and hybrid modern plants did not suit. Their garden showed me what would be suitable and their nursery sold the plants.

Another more famous garden 'Great Dixter' in East Sussex has inspired me. I learnt of it through the books of Christopher Lloyd, the owner. His long border is world famous for the plants and bold colours

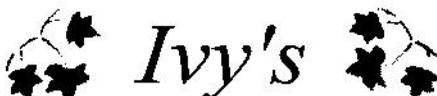
Don't forget about the Ascott website:

he combined. Although he died in 2005, his head gardener, Fergus Garrett, has carried on the tradition. It was a garden I had to go and see once I had learned of it. It was quite a thrill to see it at first hand. How I would like to be able to emulate his style and colour combinations. Not very likely but I can keep trying. Sarah Raven at 'Perch Hill' once again in Sussex has also given me lots of ideas. She particularly likes bold and brilliant colours. She has a mail order nursery where she sells the seeds, bulbs and plants to achieve a stunning effect. The dahlias, gladioli and tulips she has sourced have fabulous, luxurious colours to die for. What I have gained from her is that she has found and tried the plants with colours I like so has already done the work for me.

Coming nearer to home, the walled garden of Broughton Grange near Banbury has been another must-see. It is set out more in prairie style than formal borders which is another style I identify with because I like grasses and I like a more relaxed style of garden with plants flowing into each other and moving as the breeze blows through them. With this style of garden I always think your mistakes are less detectable than with a more formal garden which can be very high maintenance to keep it looking its best.

Even nearer to home is Andrew Lawson's garden in Charlbury. He is a garden photographer which must give him a wonderful eye for the dramatic and pleasing plants he chooses and combines. I have never forgotten the tulips he planted one spring en masse in pots; one colour to each large pot with an amazing array of colours which looked wonderful up against each other. He is also very fond of plants with cow parsley type flowers such as angelica. He seems able to hunt out new and bigger versions each year. His wife, Briony, is a sculptor whose works are placed throughout the garden showing just how such structures can enhance a garden.

Those are some of the people and places which inspire me, now I have



Ivy's

01993 830268

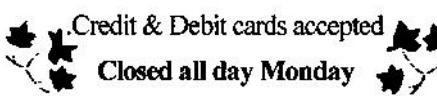
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to get out there and see what I can achieve. Thank goodness, it is such a delightful hobby and thank goodness every year I have the opportunity to try to achieve a garden which gives pleasure in the trying as well as the

achieving. I hope it is the same for you.

I know it will never be finished but oh how I wish we could stop filling up skips - with discarded gravel.

Yvette Keauffling

Litter collection

Many thanks to all the villagers who turned out on a rather dull and chilly morning, early in March, to help tidy our village streets and the surrounding roads. Over twenty bags of rubbish were collected plus some dumped tyres which were retrieved by the District Council on the following Monday.

Hot spots for rubbish were Heritage Lane and the road off the A361

leading down to the level crossing. Why don't drivers take their waste home rather than throwing it out of their car windows?

Several collectors mentioned the increase in dog mess that they encountered this year; please remember to clean up after your pet!

Once again, thank-you.

Ascott-Parish Council

Trinity Churchyard

Our churchyard is looking a little tidier these days, thanks to Siobhan Tustian and Mary Barnes. These two ladies have been holding regular work

parties, clearing weeds and ivy from overgrown areas of the churchyard. Thanks too, to Fred Russell and Mr Morgan their stalwart assistants.



Flood clearance work - working party at Gypsy Lane

Ascott signal box

Always curious to know how things work I visited the Ascott Signal Box and chatted to the relief signalman, watching whilst a train passed through on its way to London.

Our signal box has responsibility for operating the level crossing at Bruern as well as the gates and signals at Ascott.

Once a train leaves Moreton a signal is sent to Ascott, via a telephone line, to a device that looks like a Morse key with a bell, attached. The ringing of the bell, in a certain sequence, alerts Ascott that the train is on the way and our signalman responds by sending an agreed response. Altogether over fifty coded responses have to be learnt. An indicator is set at Ascott signal box showing that the line is clear. This registers at other local signal boxes.

Once the train passes through Kingham the barriers are lowered at Bruern and this is watched on closed circuit TV. There is an emergency button which can be used should anyone try to cross the line whilst the barriers are coming down. This raises the barriers and changes the signals to stop the approaching train.



When the train is seen to pass Bruern, on the closed circuit TV, the gates are lowered at Ascott, and our signals are changed to go by moving

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one of the large levers shown in the photograph. Until the barriers are down the lever controlling the signals is locked and the approaching train would be halted.

Unless strict procedures are followed in the correct sequence the le-

vers just outside Wolvercote and the signalman had to remain until 3.00am. I don't suppose he was amused, but I had to chuckle imagining a train driver thumbing a lift to the nearest garage with a few jerry cans.

Stuart Fox

Forest Fair 2008

The Friends of Wychwood will once again hold Oxfordshire's renowned Forest Fair on the afternoon of August 31, 2008 at a site near Ducklington, south of Witney.

The Fair has been held annually since 2000, reviving an eighteenth century tradition, and it gets better every year. Hatwell's Fun fair will be there as it was at the ancient fairs. There will be the celebrated mix of stalls and rural crafts, with the emphasis this year on conservation and community. Local farmers, food producers, service providers and traders will be represented, demonstrating "food

from field to table". Come and try your hand at breadmaking!

Don't miss this great family event - one day only. Make a date in your diary.

For more information contact:
The Wychwood Project on
01993 814143 or
Wychwood@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
Or Ken Betteridge, Chairman of the Forest Fair Committee, Friends of Wychwood (01993 878615)
Or Jeanette Cayley, Hon. Publicity Officer for Forest Fair Committee (01993 878 893) or
jeanettecayley@hotmail.com

294220

No, this is not my telephone number. At this Grid Reference on O.S. Explorer 191 is a triangle of land with a stone seat in it with a slate inscription on the backrest which reads:

To the happy memory
of
HENRY HAUGHTON
REYNOLDS
LORD MORETON
who farmed this land
for more than 30 years
and loved this view
1857 - 1920

I have often sat on this seat 'for a breather' during my walks in the area and admired the same view. At this time of year there are snowdrops and winter aconites out and hellebores are beginning to show their heads. In summer pink and blue flowers replace them. A few metres away, in the same enclosure, are four animal graves- the first reads ' KILCRONEY KRISTIN, Great Dane, Died 9.1.1993', the second reads 'MAJODANE MARTINI, Great Dane, Died 14.10.1992', the third reads 'SPIDER' and the fourth is unreadable.

Who was Henry Haughton Reynolds, Lord Moreton? His mother was Julia Langston, the daughter of James Haughton

Langston who held the office of Member of Parliament for Sarsden. She married Sir Henry John Reynolds-Moreton, 3rd Earl of Ducie, son of Henry George Francis Reynolds - Moreton, 2nd Earl of Ducie and Hon. Elizabeth Dutton on 24 May 1849. She died on 3rd February 1895. From 24 May 1849 her married name became Reynolds- Moreton. As a result of her marriage, Julia Langston was styled as Countess of Ducie on 2 June 1853.

They had two children:

Lady Constance Emily Reynolds-Moreton, d 27 February 1929; and Henry Haughton Reynolds-Moreton, Lord Moreton, b 4 March 1857, d 27 February 1920.

Henry Haughton Reynolds-Moreton, Lord Moreton was styled as Lord Moreton. He held the office of Member of Parliament (Liberal) for

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Gloucestershire West between 1880 and 1885. He was Deputy Lieutenant of both Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. He was also a Justice of the Peace for both Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. He was also one of two wealthy patrons associated with the birth in the autumn of 1883 of Bristol Rovers Football Club.

Henry Haughton Reynolds-Moreton's wife was Ada Margarette Smith who was the daughter of Dudley Robert Smith. She was born on 4 May 1863 and she married Lord Moreton on 18 December 1888. She died on 22 January 1944.

Henry Haughton Reynolds-Moreton died in 1920, aged 62, predeceasing his father by one year. Since he did not have any children his un-

cle, The Hon. Berkeley Basil Moreton later succeeded in the earldom.

In St Leonard Churchyard, Tortworth (near Wotton under Edge), Gloucestershire are the following Memorial descriptions:

Henry Haughton Reynolds,
Lord MORETON

Son of Henry John, 3rd Earl and
Julia,
4 March 1857 -
28 February 1920.

And

Julia, Countess of Ducie,
17 October 1829 died at Nice
(France), 3 Feb 1895
Buried at Tortworth,
14 Feb 1895.

Henry Haughton Reynolds-Moreton, Lord Moreton studied Oxford flora and is listed in the Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturalists. He was also responsible with John Robertson Drummond for 'Glossary of dialect & archaic words used in the County of Gloucester', edited by Lord Moreton (Volume 25) (1890).

How can you get to the seat from Ascott under Wychwood? The simplest way is to walk up the hill from The Green to the A361, turn towards

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Chipping Norton and walk for about one kilometre until you find the public footpath on the left-hand side of the road. Take the footpath (taking care when crossing the A361) and walk across five fields. You should then see two large stone columns, similar to those that guard the Churchill Junction with the A361. This is the location of "Lord Moreton's seat". A quieter way to get there is to follow the river from Ascott to Chilson and when you meet the road, Pudlicote Lane, turn left up the hill to the A361. Cross the A361 and follow the footpath down the hill until you meet a footpath on your right-hand side. Follow the footpath for three fields to the stone columns. Once you have taken your rest at the seat there are many ways to continue. You can walk down to Merriscourt Farm and on to the Sarsden road turning left at the junction. Take the next footpath on the left, which will take you through the Stud and bring you out near Lyneham Golf Club. Another way is to continue to Churchill for refreshments at The Chequers, or you could take a circular route by continuing past Fairgreen Farm to the small lake on the right-hand side of the footpath. Just before the lake turn right up the hill until you reach a footpath on the right (be careful because it is easy to miss it), follow this footpath until you meet the road that will take you back to Fairgreen Farm. Happy walking.

Rob Morgan

After the party

Your hands tight on the steering wheel
as we drive home through pelting rain
and I sit back, tense and restrained
- I know just how your hands can feel.

Your silence thickens; I conceal
my growing fear behind light patter;
what I'm saying doesn't matter,
I just know how your hands will feel.

Music still rings in my ears,
but someone touched me and I
smiled.

Across the room I saw your eyes;
laughter always ends in tears.

It covers all my days and dreams,
your love for me - it's so complete.
We're home, and as I leave my seat
I hear my head fill up with screams.

I'm still standing, but I reel
from the force of your first blows.
The silence that's inside me grows;
I feel my skin turn into steel.

We lie in bed; I feel the weal
throb where your gold ring struck my
cheek.

I sense you reaching out for me -
And I breathe deep, I shut my eyes,
unclench my fists and compromise
our hands touch and our fingers feel
our fingers heal, skin deep.

H Kappen
Ascott-U-Wychwood

Local Business

Wychwood Wrought Iron

Wychwood Wrought Iron was established five years ago by Philip Pratley to manufacture a wide range of decorative ironwork, including curtain poles with decorative finials, wall lights, table and standard lamps, garden obelisks and arches plus many more decorative products.

Philip has always worked in the engineering industry, formerly as a partner, with his father, in D H Pratley & Son working under contract to Smiths Industries. When Smiths closed their plant in Witney Philip decided to move away from heavy engineering work and instead use his skills to produce decorative but useful products for the domestic consumer.

His showroom in London Lane displays many of the items produced and adjoins a well equipped workshop with a traditional forge and anvil plus



a lathe, power hammer, plasma cutting equipment, welding tools and a sand blaster to clean the products at the end of the production process.

The only operation not completed on the premises is the final powder coating of the finished product.

Philip's customer base is truly international with products going to Barbados, USA,



Italy and Japan. A recent order was to produce mediaeval style candle holders for an Italian castle. Other special commissions have included rose arches, well winding gear, weather vanes and a water chute for a Japanese-style garden.

An extensive range of products is illustrated on Wychwood's web site

www.wychwoodwroughtiron.com and it's this site that generates 80% of sales.

If you are looking for individually crafted decorative ironwork of unique design then visit Wychwood Wrought Iron or take a look at their web site.

Stuart Fox



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Ascott Recovery Committee

After the Floods: Newsletter No. 5 – April 08

Dear Ascott Resident,

Since our last newsletter in February, a significant development has arisen which may well change the shape of the ARC. With the re-structuring of Parish Council membership and a new chair (Stuart Fox) we have been invited to form a sub-committee reporting direct to the Parish Council. The benefit is that it will formalise our activities and allow the village to speak with 'one voice' on flood matters.

We will be focussing our efforts on ACTION to minimise future risk and PRESSURE (used as a last resort) to force agencies/councils to honour their responsibilities. We will also assist the Parish Council with active support and, where able, the mobilising of resources in the event of further flooding in the village. The 'small print' is still being worked out, so by the next Grapevine, instead of the ARC, you may well find an update from 'Son of ARC'!

So, on behalf of the ARC, we would like to thank you for all your continued support. Our 'voice' has been heard and we hope that concrete results will follow. The Environment Agency have promised to upgrade the Evenlode at Ascott to 'high priority' which should mean that they carry out annual maintenance and Network Rail have signalled their intention to

improve the railway arch, clearing away debris at the same time. The Parish Flood Plan prepared by WODC for Ascott has been delayed, but the village has had numerous visits from WODC engineers and our councillor, Hilary Biles, so we are hopeful that the Plan will be published soon. Riparian owners have been made aware of their responsibilities and have started to respond. ARC and the PC intend to move forward with a plan we can all sign up to, so that momentum is not lost and the agencies/councils do not forget their promises.

We sincerely hope that, by the time you read this short article, everyone affected by the floods will be back in their homes – or well on their way to moving back in. There is much still to be done so watch this space

*John Cull & Philippa Carter
- on behalf of the ARC*

PS Thanks to everyone who helped out on Sunday 24th February. Much of the debris from the July flooding was cleared from fences and hedgerows along Gypsy Lane. As one villager said "after all that has happened, we just wanted to get stuck in and do something positive". As a result, we hope to do more of the same. And now we have a great village pub, finish up there for a rewarding glass or two!

Ascott-under-Wychwood

Parish Contingency Plan for Flooding and other Emergencies

“A plan is only valid up to the time the action starts”

General

Maintaining an updated contingency plan to help individuals and the village as a whole in times of emergency will serve to reduce the impact of the incident and speed recovery and a return to normality. There are two types of emergency:•

A Localised Event. Affects only a few properties and a small number of people. In this case individuals should be given the information they need to take immediate action (IA) themselves. After the incident, the Parish Council (PC), with the help of volunteers of the Ascott Recovery Committee (ARC) will help recovery if required.•

A Major Event. Affects many properties and large numbers of people. In this case the PC and ARC will take the IA by forming a Coordinating Team (CT) to: warn the village as soon as is practicable, mobilise volunteers and establish a central Coordinating and Refuge Point (CP). The CT will provide liaison with Emergency Services and the Local Authority, control logistic resources and work to mitigate damage to property and provide care for those who are suffering. Subsequently to help in the recovery programme. This plan seeks to help people help themselves in case of a localised incident and to identify the coordinating measures and logistic resources needed to handle a major incident occurring in the village. It is not a blueprint to dictate detailed activity, which must be decided at the time of the incident in the light of the prevailing circumstances.

Localised Incident.

Typically this will be either localised flooding caused by overflowing feeder streams, blocked drains or burst pipes, or accidental damage to private or village owned property resulting from a fire or a traffic accident. The suggested procedure for individuals suffering a localised incident and a contact telephone list to ensure the fastest response is at Annex A.

Major Incident.

Recent experience suggests that flooding offers a serious risk to the wider community. Other major events might include a major accident, gas leaks, a long term failure of the power/water supply or a serious fire. The list is not exhaustive but in all cases other than flooding there is little the community will be able (or even allowed) to do other than offer refuge to those affected until after the incident is contained and dealt with. In a major incident there will be a need for volunteers with specialist skills and centralised, accessible logistics to help the helpers and support the victims in the immediate aftermath of the incident. A detailed list of skills, equipment and facilities at Annex B is held by the CT. Volunteers are central to the Contingency Plan. Essential Tasks include:•

- Receiving warning of the incident (when applicable)•
- Warning the village•
- Establishing the Coordinating and Refuge Point•
- Contacting all relevant services and authorities•
- Deploying help teams (when applicable)•
- Providing refuge for victims

Major Incident Immediate Actions.

Early Warning. In the case of flooding, the councils of Moreton-in-Marsh and Shipton-under-Wychwood have agreed to notify named individuals when the river level reaches a critical point. It is estimated that a timely warning from Moreton might give up to 8 hours notice before the river floods here.●

Warning the Village. Ringing the Church bells and the use of a loud hailer for general warning followed by a cascade of door-to-door warnings of all those likely to be affected by the emergency.●

Establishing the Coordinating and Refuge Point. The most appropriate CP is Tiddy Hall. It has a telephone, kitchens, WCs, parking and ample accommodation for victims and helpers. An alternative CP is the Village Shop, which has a telephone and WC with the Sports Pavilion providing Refuge Accommodation.●

Contacting Relevant Services and Authorities. Establish contact by telephone from the CP and confirm: the location of the CP, the nature of the emergency, the number of people affected, the scale of damage, effects on the wider community (e.g. blocked roads) and activity in hand.●

Deploying Help Teams. Identifying specific skills of volunteers and ensuring the teams are properly equipped and are directed to the properties where help is needed on a priority basis as far as possible.●

Providing Refuge for Victims. Essentially providing hot drinks, dry clothes and a warm environment to help people recover from the incident. This might be a short term requirement (no more than a few hours) or long term (up to 12 hours) depending on the incident.

Recovery from a Major Incident. After the incident has been contained and the immediate effects dealt with a period of recovery will begin. The early recovery period will last from the time of the incident until the situation is stabilised; probably no more than a few days. The later recovery period will last until everything is returned to its normal state and could last for many months. This latter period will need longer term coordination of people, resources and other assets. This will be the subject of a separate Action Plan, to be drawn up at the time. Some volunteers have specific skills which will be of considerable value, particularly during the early recovery period. In particular, mechanical and civil engineers, builders, electricians, plumbers, tree surgeons, vehicle recovery and plant operators. Coordination of the specialist volunteers will fall to the CT. The specialist volunteers' list will be kept by the CT at all times to save those on it from being asked for free help unnecessarily.

ANNEX A TO PARISH CONTINGENCY PLAN
FOR EMERGENCIES

Procedure for Handling a Localised Emergency Incident

Task	Activity	Action
1	Establish type and extent of damage and whether other people are involved.	
2	If immediate assistance is needed	DIAL 999
3	If expert advice and/or help is needed call the relevant organisation. Always be prepared to give directions to where you are and to the site of the incident if this is different. Also make sure you leave a contact telephone number. Contact the organisation from the list below	
4	If the incident forces you to leave home, consider whether there is a need to open a refuge in the village. If you are struggling, even with the help of neighbours and friends, consider whether there is a need for additional immediate help. If either is the case, contact a member of the PC or ARC from the list below.	
5	Keep a log of actions and responses so we can all learn from experience.	

Contact Telephone list

Service	Organisation Name	Tel Number
Medical	Wychwood Surgery	01993 831061 (office hours)
		0845 3458995 (out of hours)
		08444 773605
Sandbags	WODC: (CEO David Neudegg) (EPO Bill Oddie) (Engr Mgr Martin Ralph)	01993 861000 (office hours)
		01993 705056 (out of hours)
		01993 861339
Police	Community Police Team (PCSO Kirstyn Tyrer)	0845 8505505 Ext 7278729 Mobile 07800702513
Flooding	Environment Agency (EA) Floodline EA General Enquiries	0845 988 11880
		8708 506506 (office hours)
Water Supply	Thames Water	0845 9200888
Water Pumps	Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	0845 3101111
Highways	Oxfordshire County Council	01865 815930
Power Supply	Southern Electric	0845 7708090
Gas Supply	National Emergency Number	0800 111999
Rail Service (track)	Network Rail 24 hour Helpline	08457 114141
Rail Service (trains)	Great Western Customer Service	08457 000125
Media	BBC Oxford	08459 311444
Media	Fox FM	01865 543350
Parish Council	Stuart Fox	01993 832004/825704 (H/O)
	Elaine Byles	01993 831427
	Bridgette Crundwell	01993 830671/832592 (H/O)
	Peter Greening	01993 831757
	Nick Leadbetter	01993 831571
Flood Sub-Committee	John Cull	01993 831621
	Keith Macaulay	01993 830707
	Dave Wilkinson	01993 832144
County Councillor	Rodney Rose	0777 1710759
District Councillor	Hilary Biles	01993 831822

Notes:

1. When flood warnings are in force, local information can be found using the Floodline Service

2. All properties at risk from flooding can register for the EA's free flood warning service: "Floodline Warnings Directed", by telephoning the Floodline and asking to be registered.

ANNEX B TO PARISH CONTINGENCY PLAN
FOR EMERGENCIES

Specialist Skills, Essential Equipment and Facilities

Specialist Skill	Volunteer(s)	Contact Details
Medical		
Mechanical Engineer		
Civil Engineer		
Builder		
Electrician		
Gas Fitter		
Plumber		
Tree Surgeon		
Vehicle Recovery		
Plant Operator		

Essential Equipment	Quantity	Availability	Held
Telephones	Minimum one	Held in CP	One
Loud Hailers	Minimum one	Held in CP	/
Two way Radios	Minimum 4	Held in CP	/
Medical bag	Minimum one	Held in CP	
Sandbags	500	Logistic Stockpile	
Sand Pile	3 tons	Logistic stockpile	
Baler twine	500 lengths of 20m	Logistic stockpile	
Shovels	Six	Logistic stockpile	/
Axes	Six	Logistic stockpile	/
Rope	Minimum 3 x 15m	Logistic stockpile	/
Torches	Minimum 6 (two per team)	Logistic stockpile	/
Luminous Vests	Minimum 12 for teams	Logistic stockpile	
Waders	Minimum 2 pairs	Logistic Stockpile	/
Flood signs	3 (Earl; Level-Xing; Bridge)	Logistic stockpile	Three
Emergency Rations	Tea, coffee, soup, bread	To be taken to the Refuge	
4x4 vehicles	As many as available	To be driven to the CP	
Water Pumps	As many as available	Direct to flooded properties	/

Facility	Location	Access
CP 1	Tiddy Hall, Shipton Road Grid Ref SP297183	Key Holders:
CP 2	Village Shop, High Street Grid Ref SP303187	Key Holders:
Refuge	Sports Pavilion, High Street Grid Ref SP304187	Key Holders:

Upstream Contact Moreton in Marsh Council Ken Jeffrey 01608 650644 (O)
01608 650387 (H)

Downstream Contacts Cornbury Estate Office
Lord Rotherwick 01608 811276
07785 992500
email : rr@cpark.co.uk

Grapevine Quiz

Here is a rather tricky quiz to see if you know the collective nouns for groups of animals. I've given you the first answer; have a go at the rest. Leave your answers in the village shop; ask whoever is on the counter to put them in Stuart's tray.

The prize for the most correct answers is a bottle of wine if you are over 18, or chocolates for anyone younger.

Animal

Collective Noun

Hens

Brood

Deer

Goldfinches

Breeding Gulls

Partridges

Swallows

Pigeons

Geese (on the ground)

Lions

Whales

Herrings

Geese (In flight)

Bees

Monkeys

Nightingales

Quails

Rooks

Sheep

Sparrows

Leopards

Some are easy, others rather obscure. Enter the competition even if you cannot answer all of them. In the event of a draw, the first received wins!

Name.....

Age (if under18).....

Telephone Number.....

Memories of Ascott Cricket from 1945-1953

When you go over the level crossing, look to your right when you get to the dew pond. About 50 yards from the pond, the only bit of level ground, was the Ascott cricket square. On this uneven hump backed field the village played it's cricket matches, until moving to the playing field in 1953.

Although the field was rough and uncut where the cattle grazed during the week, the wicket was fenced off when there was not a match, and kept like a soft rich green carpet and treated like hallowed ground by Freddie Alden who looked after it. Ascott was quite successful for a small village team, thanks mostly to the bowling of Mike Shayler and Freddie Alden. For a team to score 80 runs was usually enough to win. There were no straight drives through the covers, batsmen had to hit the ball in the air to score runs. If the ball hit the wire fence which separated the field from railway property, it was 4 runs, if it cleared the fence it was 6.

I remember seeing a player from Chadlington catch an Ascott batsman out by leaning back over the fence. There was a big argument for a while, the Chad player said he was going home if the Ascott player was not out.

I enjoyed watching Charlie Moss bat. I always knew we were in for some excitement. He would go to the crease and shape up like a good batsman. Blocking the first couple of balls, he would then open his shoulders and with an almighty swing he would whack the ball over to the out buildings of the manor. After two good hits he was usually clean bowled.

Charlie was a big strong man who was station master at Ascott railway station. He and his wife Muriel were keen supporters of Mr Atlee and LABOUR and often organised social evenings in the Tiddy Hall. They were on the black list of some in the village by challenging their authority, whose blessing had to be given before any event took place. Most like my-

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self, accepted this, because we knew where we were in the pecking order. Some things are unchanging. In 1948 Charlie proved all us doubters wrong, when he got a new cricket bat and got it signed by Don Bradman and all the Australian team. It was raffled off to raise money for the cricket club. I do not remember who won the bat, or what happened to it, but I wonder what it would be worth today.

There was no pavilion on the cricket field, only a small wooden hut given to the club after the War by the Home Guard. The front would open up, where the two scorers would sit on an old wooden box in which were kept the old bats and stumps with which boys and young men used to play cricket most evenings during the summer. With the two scorers sat on the box and the marking out equipment and the lawn mower in the hut, there was only room for about four other people. Frank Slatter was the village scorer and Jimmy Andrews the village umpire. Jimmy was the last blacksmith in Ascott.

There was great interest in the village for cricket. Many people sat watching by the fence running down from the crossing. Also from the platform on the station. Most of the team had cricket boots, but very few had white cricket flannels, most played in dark grey trousers and white shirt. Freddie Alden owned his own bat but he was the only one. If there was an innings collapse, bat and pads were

quickly exchanged half way to the wicket.

Tea was taken at the Churchill Arms. The landlord was Vernie Fletcher. The Churchill was the cricket headquarters, the Swan for football. The Churchill regulars were conservative in their views and supported the country pursuits of hunting and fishing, whereas the regulars at the Swan were more raucous and loud and had no pretensions of being country gentlemen. When I was old enough to go for a drink, I went from pub to pub to annoy both.

It is with great affection that I remember them all now, whether they were from the Churchill or the Swan. If you are bothering to read this article, these are just my recollections. I think it some what of a virtue to be stubborn and bloody minded, and I think you will find these virtues amongst old village families where ever you go in the country.

In the late summer of 1948 Ascott won the second division of the Witney League. The final game was played at Milton. I did not go to see the match but throughout that afternoon I was anxious to hear the result. When I heard they had won I remember asking if they carried David Hanks, the captain, shoulder high from the field like they do in the F.A.Cup Final. I do not think they did. That evening with a group of other small boys, we sat on the wall outside the Churchill Arms listening to the cel-

ebations going on in the taproom of the pub. Later the Cup was brought out full of a cocktail of drinks, for us all to toast to the success of the Cricket Club. I went home that warm summer's night very happy, thinking life could never be any better.

STOP PRESS.

I have since learned from Cyril Edginton that George Moss won the cricket bat. For a more authentic account of sport in Ascott in the 1940's ask Cyril to write something.

Fred Russell.

On becoming a miserable old git

Ten things I dislike

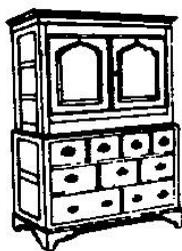
Now I have drifted into the backwaters of life, I can now take stock as to who I really am. I find I am a bit of a killjoy who finds it very easy to take a dislike to things. So here are just some of them. I could think of many more.

1. Tea in plastic cups. It ought to be banned. It tastes nothing like tea especially that poison, powdered brew you get from machines.

2. Fifty years ago in Ascott you would not have heard the word guy used when talking about or to other men. What puzzles me today, young ladies will often greet each other, 'Hi you guys.' I may be wrong but I always thought guy was the male of the gender. I cannot imagine June Holmes calling the W.I. Meeting to order by saying, 'Come you guys we've got to decide what jam we're going to make for next month.

The only person I am prepared to accept using the word guy is Carole Angier. It wasn't her fault she lived next door to them. I admire much from the U.S.A. but to copy their spoken English isn't one of them. So those who use the word guy in my presence, I want you to know how much it annoys me. I be Oxfordshire I be and proud on it.

3. Doctors. Why do they only laugh at their own jokes? It's been my experience never to go into their surgery



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trying to be funny. They will look at you in disdain, like an headmaster who would like to give you one hundred lines for insolence. What is even worse, they seem to know more about you than you do yourself.

4. Politicians and people in authority who use phrases like ‘moving the goalposts’ or ‘playing on a level playing field’. It’s either done to appeal to the lower classes or my guess is, it’s used as a smoke screen to hide the truth.

5. People who are ashamed of their place of birth, be it mansion or mud hut, town or country. Such people should never be trusted.

6. Pop singers, who when they talk can have an accent from anywhere in Britain. Then they start to sing in this whining mid-Atlantic accent. I just wish they would go there and sing.

7. People who want to put traffic control humps and road signs all over the countryside, when we all know that if we really wanted to cut speeding, then the answer is to cut the ca-

capacity of the motor engine, so the maximum speed cannot go above 50 miles per hour. No vehicle should do above 40 on country lanes.

8. The word pretty. To me something is either beautiful or attractive. Pretty is a word ladies use when they are choosing new curtains, usually in pastel shades. I hate pastel shades.

9. Those cheerful souls who over the years have said to me, ‘Cheer up. It may never happen.’ I wanted to reply, ‘Look to yourself and mind your own business. If I want to feel depressed, then I shall do so,’

10. People who say, ‘I do enjoy a good laugh.’ This is usually at someone else’s expense, something that I have been guilty of myself.

So there you are. These are only ten. I can hear you saying, ‘He ought to get out more and get a life.’ I want you to know, I have a life. The engine may be a bit worn now and I have a job getting a spark some mornings, but it is still mine.

Fred Russell.

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 [Revd. Mark Abrey 01608 676572 or Revd. Mary Crameri 01608 678424].

Anne Braithwaite

The Swan at Ascott

At last we have our pub back! When Tony and I first met Richard Lait in June 2007 we were very pleased to learn of his plans to refurbish The Swan. If we had been offered the opportunity to say how we would like the pub to turn out we would have chosen exactly how Richard has done it, as I am sure many villagers will agree. He didn't have the best of starts with the July floods, but like all of us affected by them he 'weathered the storm'.

Spurred on by many people he set a date for the opening on Wednesday 19 March 2008 at 6pm, just in time for the Easter holiday. We arrived at 6.40pm to find an amazing number of people there already. It wasn't long before both bars were shoulder to shoulder, and what a great atmosphere. Nibbles from the kitchen were served throughout the evening and many enjoyed the opportunity to have a look in the lovely new bedrooms.

On the Thursday the serving of food commenced and Richard and his staff were kept extremely busy right through the Easter weekend. On Easter Saturday we were involved in a party of 21 villagers who all enjoyed a splendid meal. The restaurant was full and lots of people were eating in the bar. On several visits since we have been really pleased to see so many vil-



lagers enjoying our 'new' pub, as well as many people unknown to us.

Richard has to be congratulated on the refurbishment and his lovely staff who are so welcoming, as, of course, he is too.

We all want to see The Swan go from strength to strength so if you haven't yet paid a visit give it a try, I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Lyn Collins

To contact Richard at the Swan to book a meal ring 01993 832332

Having been to the Swan a few times myself now, I can heartily vouch for the quality of the food, the drink and the warm welcome! Thank you Richard for making 'The Swan at Ascott' such a welcoming place to be. - Ed



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Scoop that poop...

Once upon a time when I lived in a town far, far away, I was standing in my front garden when a neighbour passed, taking her big brown dog for a walk. She turned the corner at the end of the road and I returned to my weeding. A couple of minutes later I looked up to see a very angry lady holding a shovel. She demanded to know where the owner of the big brown dog lived and when I pointed to the house she stormed over and deposited, on the door step, the big brown poo that the big brown dog had left on the pavement outside her gate. When the lady with the big brown dog came home she looked very embarrassed because she knew that she was wrong to have left the big brown poo on the pavement.

Since Charlie the Labrador had an operation on his knee, he has not been able to get into the car and so Maggie & I have been walking the dogs around the village. Frankly we have been appalled at the amount of dog fouling on the pavements and verges. It looks and smells horrible; it is a danger to health and is totally disrespectful towards the rest of the community. Collecting dog poo isn't perhaps the most pleasant of jobs but it is not difficult and is a part of dog ownership. If you are not prepared to do it, don't have a dog. We even have collection bins on The Green and in Church View to make disposal easy. Allowing your dog to foul pub-

lic areas is also illegal and local authorities can now impose on the spot fines.

The moral of the story is not to leave anything in the street that you would not want to have dumped on your front door step.

AND another thing.....

Maggie was looking out over the churchyard recently when a well dressed, middle aged woman emerged into Church View holding a large bunch of daffodils that she had picked in the churchyard and then proceeded to collect more as she walked along the road. When Maggie pounced the woman claimed that she 'Didn't realise that she couldn't pick them'. Well believe me she does now but for goodness sake! Is it me???

Tim Lyon



Nature notes

I first became interested in natural history when I was a schoolboy; the long summer holidays allowed me to explore the countryside surrounding the market town where I grew up. In truth a five minute cycle ride or a fifteen minute walk was all that was needed to travel from the town centre to open fields. Now with its many housing and industrial estates and access to the M40 motorway that same journey would take many times longer, even if parents considered it safe for a youngster to cycle on the main roads out of town.

We used our nets to search ponds for newts and diving beetles; caught and identified butterflies; hunted for beetles in rotting tree stumps and spent a great deal of time turning over stones, looking for insects, ants nests, field mice and if we were lucky the occasional slow-worm. We also tackled more unsavoury tasks, searching semi-dried cow pats and part rotted animal carcass for dung beetles and burying beetles, not something I've done for many years!

I find that I still have the urge to check under large stones to see what I might find, though now, with more care for the natural environment, the stone is replaced promptly and carefully in its original position.

So what will I be likely to find when I turn over the stone? First, I enter a very particular kind of environment; dark, cool and most impor-

tantly, moist. In these conditions a group of creatures, mainly arthropods, make their home.

Usually the most common creatures are woodlice, often called pill bugs or sow bugs; indeed they are so common that little notice is ever taken of them and yet they perform a vital task, feeding on dead and decaying plant material, recycling it back into the soil. Wood-



lice are not insects, they have too many legs; seven pairs in an adult.



They are crustaceans that in the very distant past left the sea to colonise the land, still breathing through modified gills. They need to seek out cool, damp places to live and breed and are usually most active at night. The female carries fertilised eggs in a brood pouch and when these hatch they look like small versions of the adults. In order to grow they have to shed their shell-like exoskeleton and this is done five times with each moult being completed in two stages; first the back half then two or three days later the front.

Another creature to be found is the millipede; it too lives on decaying vegetable matter, although it's not



averse to helping itself to tender young seedlings, and is also descended from a group of sea creatures. Its thin worm-like body is protected by a dark, shiny exoskeleton, but its most notable feature is the number of legs that it has. Its name suggests that it should have one thousand but actually in a fully grown adult the number is more likely to be one hundred, with two pairs on each body segment. Millipede eggs are laid in the soil and in some species the female or occasionally the male will stand guard until they hatch. The young are born with no legs; these appear after their first moult, at which stage they will have six body segments and three pairs of legs, adding one body segment and two pairs of legs at each moult until they reach adulthood. Millipedes are slow moving creatures, but are powerful burrowers. When they are threatened they will curl into a ball to protect their softer under parts and secrete an irritant fluid from pores along their flanks.

A much more active creature may also be found; the centipede. Again

the name is misleading as it doesn't have one hundred legs, but more like thirty to fifty. Two common species are likely to be seen; the pale red or yellowish snake or garden centipede with its 7 cm long thread-like body and the brown centipede with its



more flattened 3 cm long body. Unlike millipedes centipedes only



have one pair of legs on each body segment and they are carnivorous hunters,

with a pair of stout poison claws on the first body segment. They use their speed to catch a wide variety of insects and other small creatures, including spiders, worms and slugs. Eggs are laid in the soil and in the case of the snake centipede a brood chamber is constructed with the female looking after the eggs until they hatch. The hatchlings have a full complement of legs, although these are little more than short stumps to start with, elongating with each successive moult. The poison claws also become more developed with each moult. The brown centipede mother does not construct a brood chamber nor does she guard her eggs, coating them with soil particles and leaving them singly within the

leaf litter. Her young are born with seven pairs of legs, gaining another pair at each moult, until they reach adulthood and have fifteen pairs.

If you are lucky you may also find a ground beetle and perhaps a devil's coach-horse.

Ground beetles are fast-moving voracious hunters. The largest, the violet ground beetle, can be up to one inch long and is easily recognisable because of its size and metallic violet sheen. The devil's coach-horse is the largest member of a group known as rove-beetles and will grow to one inch long. Their distinguishing feature is their short wing cases, leaving the bulk of their soft abdomen exposed, unlike most beetles where the hardened wing cases (elytra) protect the whole of the body. The devil's coach-horse is also a fast-moving hunter with powerful jaws, often associated with carrion, where it lays in wait for other insects visiting the corpse.

I'm always amazed how so many creatures have evolved to take advantage of every ecological niche our world offers. Please remember, if you go searching for wildlife keep disturbance of the environment to the minimum and try and leave everything as you found it.

Stuart Fox



Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

The following events take place during May:

Birds of Prey flying demonstrations over the Bank Holiday weekends 3rd, 4th, 5th and 24th 25th and 26th.

Static display by Geoff Dalton from Cotswold Falconry from Tuesday 27th – Sunday 1st June of birds not usually seen at the Park. This is an opportunity for visitors to learn more about these beautiful birds and the art of falconry. .

Reptile Awareness Days (weather permitting) over the Bank Holidays and every Sunday from 4th May – 31st August from 2pm – 4pm. .

Daily penguin feeding at 11am and 4pm (not Fridays) accompanied by a short commentary.

In the Madagascar enclosure an informative short talk will take place at noon on the plight of the very endangered lemurs.

See website www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk for full information.

The Park is open daily from 10am

Ascott Barrow



News from Holy Trinity

Keep your money clean

It is well known in medical science germs can be spread in various ways. To make sure the church cannot be accused of spreading these viruses the Ascott Church Council will be asking members of the congregation when they make their money offering, they wipe the bank notes to be given with a damp cloth impregnated with Jeyes

Fluid. To those members who only give coins we ask that they should soak these coins overnight in a cup of warm water, one Steradent tablet and a teaspoon of bleach. These must be thoroughly rinsed the next morning before being used as the offering at church on Sunday.

*Church Warden
Fred Russell.*

Are you age 16-25 and passionate about the environment?

Would you like to join other young people working outdoors or indoors on wildlife and habitat projects?

Maybe you are an indoor person with great IT skills and you could help us to design a special Wychwood V logo or eye catching display materials, website pages, newsletters etc. Or you are one of those really organised people who can help to manage some of the projects and get some valuable experience for your cv.

Maybe you are a writer, film maker, photographer or musician with a love of the area that you would like to capture in a work of art. All things may be possible. We have three years to have a go at making some really creative productions in and around the Wychwood Forest.

If you are aged 16 - 25 and have an interest in the environment get in touch to see if you would like to join the Wychwood V team. We are part of a national programme designed to find more exciting and innovative places for you to try out new volunteering activities. We have made some suggestions here but we are hoping that you will have some original ideas that we can help you to put into action. There will be short term taster sessions as well as opportunities to join in on a part time or even full time basis.



The key principle of the project is that the ideas will come from young people and be organised and run by young people. So if you think it could be fun and a valuable use of your time please contact:

Jane Bowley,
Wychwood V Project Officer on
01993 814131 or email:
jane.bowley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Less energetic but just as valuable we can show you how to survey and record fantastic trees, beautiful flowers, mammals and invertebrates.

Whatever your interests we have plenty of things to try. Do you like getting muddy and wet? If so tree planting beside the River Windrush might be the thing for you or you could try coppicing, fencing, scrub clearing, dry stone walling and much, much more out in the great outdoors

Jane Bowley

Ascott CC – Home Fixtures 2008

18 May OCFE Fancy a game?

1 June Appleton

8 June Chipping Norton

15 June Shipton

22 June Charlton

13 July FGCC

If you are interested in playing please call John Cull on 01993 831621 or drop him an e-mail john@wowmatters.com

20 July OCFE

John Cull
Club secretary

03 Aug Don Barnes XI

10 Aug Peter Gross

24 Aug Coombe

7 Sept Bladon

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Leaffield School

Another busy term is coming to an end and, despite the snow flurries, the summer will be upon us soon. The children have had a fun filled and varied few months and are now beginning to prepare for the National Tests. We wish them all luck.

After-school clubs continue to be successful and are offered and changed regularly. These now include: dance; art; choir; gardening; netball; cooking; sports and the exciting new Lego club. Breakfast club is still offered on a Friday.

There have been lots of events and activities in school as well as external visits. Classes 1 and 2 take their curriculum to the woods on alternate Mondays and get wonderfully muddy! Class 2 has had a qualified tennis coach for several weeks as well as visiting the local shop as part of their geography topic. Year 3 have attended a multi-skills workshop at Burford, with other schools from the partnership. Cycling Proficiency has started with Year 5 and will move to Year 6 later in the year. Some of the children in Year 6 and their parents were invited to attend the Town Hall as part of the Wychwood Tapestry Project, to celebrate their contributions.

The whole school benefited when the Wild Waste Bus, from the Northmoor Trust, visited the school. Some wonderful recycled artefacts were produced and the catchphrase

‘Reduce, Reuse, Recycle’ resonates through many households!

The good work continued with World Book Day, where the children all dressed up as a book character, and took part in the national reading wave with other children from across the country.

The Friends of Leaffield School have organised two quizzes with a third later this month. The children’s quiz was a new venture and proved to be very successful. Their general knowledge was astounding and they could give the adult quiz teams a run for their money. The FOLS also held an Easter egg hunt at the Millennium Woods on Sunday - many village children attended and there was a great community spirit. Many thanks go to all the organisers and committee members, who give up free time from their busy lives to help all the children of Leaffield School.

Carole Bartlett

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

On behalf of the Parish Council, I hope you all have had a peaceful and happy Easter, despite the intermittent blizzards! Moving on to business; after the sad departure of Councillors David Wilkinson and Sally Franks I would like to welcome returning Councillor Nick Leadbetter and Councillor Peter Greening, both of whom have already been bombarded with issues to tackle. These include the designing of a “Disaster Contingency Plan”, a nominated “Transport Representative” to name but a few. The Disaster Contingency Plan, once approved and finalised will be implemented, if and when, a disaster occurs such as the flooding that Ascott fell victim to in July 2007. Obviously all ongoing issues are being dealt with on an ongoing daily/monthly basis by all Councillors.

On a very very disappointing note, I have to report the following and would ask all to take note and action where appropriate;

Litter Pick

The Parish Council carried out the annual litter pick on Saturday 8th March, which proved very successful. However, on a very very disappointing note, I have to inform you all, as a Village, that whilst this voluntary task was carried out it was extremely evident that the amount of “Dog Mess” around the Village has now become a major problem. The minor-

ity of responsible people are picking up after their dogs and disposing of the contents, but it would seem that the majority are still failing to pick up, after their dog has fouled! Then there are those that have been responsible in picking up, but then decide to throw the bags into the hedgerows. This quite simply is not acceptable and the Parish Council, along with all of the responsible dog owners, would ask that whoever you are, you clean up after your dog and dispose of its contents responsibly!!!!

On a happier note, the Parish Council would like to report the following;

The Pound

We are pleased to be able to report that the Pound project is now well under way, the ground having been levelled and made good. The Ascott Barrow has been delivered from the Museum and the next stage will be to erect an Information Board, a Bench and some Gates so that all in the Village and those that visit can enjoy this piece of magical history. The Parish Council would like to extend their thanks to District Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles for helping in the administration of obtaining grants to completely fund this project.

Allotment Plots

For all you gardening enthusiasts, there are still two allotment plots available. If anybody is interested, please contact Stuart Fox on the number below.

Should anybody wish to contact the Council, the contact details are noted below and the Parish Council meet on the second Monday in the month, with the exception of August.

Parish Council:

Stuart Fox	832004
Elaine Byles	831427
Bridgette Crundwell	830671
Nick Leadbetter	831571
Peter Greening	831757

*Angela Barnes
(Parish Clerk)
01608 641045*

Flooding

Since the devastating floods last July and through the smaller, but still unpleasant for those affected, flood in February, the Ascott Recovery Committee has done much to help prepare the village to meet any future heavy flooding. The Parish Council has now taken the lead on this and has drawn up a contingency plan to handle any future major incident affecting the village. The plan is in the centre pages of this edition-please keep it handy. If anyone has any comments on the plan your input will be welcome; please write (not telephone) to the Parish Council

Wychwood Library

Coffee and brownies on Wednesday mornings in the Library are proving to be a real hit so come along with your friends and bring your membership card to stock up on books at the same time. Real coffee and freshly baked cakes are served from 10am until 12. The cost is £1 with proceeds going towards new book stock.

We have had a huge number of new books over the past few months. Something I'm sure to suit all ages and on all subjects and we also have had several collections

To all our younger readers, look out at the beginning of July for the next Summer Reading Challenge. This year the theme is 'Sport'. Last year 6782 children took part and we issued 301,609 junior books across the county from 7th July until 15th September. This was an increase of 14% on the previous year so quite an achievement.

Just to remind you, there are several ways to avoid paying book fines. Items can be renewed, unseen by us, three times, either online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries or via the 24hour Renewal Hotline, 0845 1202811. Of course you could also give us a call at Wychwood Library during opening hours or call any other Oxfordshire Library and they will help you.

DVD's and audio items cannot be renewed without having to pay extra rental costs so it is important to re-

turn these on time. Just pop them through the letterbox if we are closed.

I look forward to seeing you at Wychwood Library.

Ruth Gillingham, Library Manager

Opening Times

Monday:

2pm to 7.00pm

Tuesday:

Closed

Wednesday:

9:30am to 1pm/

2pm to 5pm

Thursday

Closed

Friday:

2pm to 7pm

Saturday:

9.30am to 1pm

Phone: 01993 830281

From Shipton to Ascott in one easy stride

About 18 months ago, we embarked on the huge relocation from Shipton to Ascott. I use the word huge advisedly but ironically it takes almost as much effort to move 3 miles as it does to move 200 miles minus a lorry full of diesel. Accompanying the move came a good deal of banter from our Shipton friends about passports and entry permits but we pressed on regardless and eventually settled into our old cottage in Ascott.

It was really the unusual move from one village to another which prompted Yvette to ask me to write something which reflected the move. Initially thoughts were to compare life in the two locations, however, on reflection, that seemed a little like sitting in the Stretford End at Manchester United wearing a Chelsea scarf, or vice versa.

So my thoughts turned from rivalry and comparisons to diversity which is really a nice way of saying that everyone and everywhere is different but not necessarily better or worse. In fact we come from a much deeper level of diversity, as our original home up to about 15 years ago was West Yorkshire, or Hebden Bridge to be precise. Traditionally the town was famous for fustian cloth and clothing manufacture and has more recently become notorious for certain other pass times which I will not go into here but leave it to the more curious reader to make their own enquiries.

In the spirit of diversity, it might be useful at this stage to confirm or refute certain perceived stereotypes of Yorkshire people, which I must say we have been accused of relentlessly since moving to the Cotswolds.

Yorkshire men wear flat caps - TRUE but not on Sundays.

Yorkshire men breed whippets - UNTRUE - whippets breed whippets IN Yorkshire.

Yorkshire families keep coal in tin baths - UNTRUE we have now discovered enamel.

Yorkshire men keep ferrets in their trousers - UNTRUE - terriers are much easier to train and are safer

And so on I just thought I should set the record straight.

So with this truly Northern inheritance we moved south with our two daughters and discovered Shipton on a reconnaissance visit one weekend. It was purely by chance that we stumbled across the Wychwoods, but the surrounding hills and picturesque villages were hugely attractive and once we had seen the area we became determined to settle here.

We were lucky to land in Shipton at a very interesting time as the village was extremely active raising funds for the new Beaconsfield hall. We inevitably became involved with a lot of the events taking place, and before I knew it I was in the Wychwood Players, the Shipton pantomime and taking part in various music concerts in

the village with Ragged Edge, our local "Boy Band".

The main benefit of pantomime is that you can leap about on stage dressed as a chicken, a Genie or Darth Vader and people rarely recognise you when you pass them in the street, although my most memorable dramatic part as a village drunk, merely invited the comment that it was a piece of good type casting !

As a result we felt that we had become part of the village very quickly and made a lot of new friends whose company we still enjoy. Of course we were a long way from being "local", that requires a 40 year apprenticeship and rite of passage for which we will never qualify, but we felt welcome and that counts for an awful lot.

So 13 years on we found the cottage we had always wanted here in Ascott and it's fair to say the welcome here has been equally warm and friendly. With gems like the village shop and the Tiddy Hall it is a true village with superb character and atmosphere.

But that sounds a little too much like an estate agents brochure, and I was determined at the outset that this would not be a comparison between Shipton and Ascott, we value the friends we have in both villages, and also my personal safety so I am not about to take any risks.

The real winner for me is the Wychwoods, the unique nature of the shallow valley, the river, the woodland and of course the villages themselves evoke a real warmth and genuine sense of comfort. Hardened as we have been by the dramatic but harsh nature of the Yorkshire climate and countryside, the Wychwoods have provided a welcome contrast particularly as we do a lot of walking and you can venture out into the fields here without resuscitation facilities and a full survival pack. In fact a morning walk through the fields provides a great start to the day at any time of the year.

So we have spent 14 and a half years in the Wychwoods and look forward to many more, with a golf club on the doorstep, the prospect of a fully refurbished village pub, a cinema which comes to you, it doesn't get a lot better - does it ?

Charles Marshall

Wychwood Local History Society

The speaker at the meeting of the Society at Milton Village Hall on Thursday 15th May at 7.30.p.m. was James Bond, and his subject was The History of the Parks and Gardens of Oxfordshire.

In June Muriel Pilkington will talk about The Mitfords in the Cotswolds at Shipton Village Hall on Thursday 19th at 7.30.p.m.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £6 for an individual and £9 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are

welcome at any meeting at £2 per head. More information about the Society can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023.

The latest edition of the Society's Journal, Wychwoods History, includes the story of the Ascott Martyrs, who they were and what became of them. So if you are interested the Journal will be available in the latter half of April, from the Society, at the price of £3.50.

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:

Saturday 14th June

Roseneath School of Music Annual
Concert - 7.30pm

Wednesday 25th June

Tiddy Hall AGM -

8pm in Committee Room

To book the Tiddy Hall contact:

**Ingrid Ridley:
01993 830612**

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Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Ascott Shop Lamb's Liver & Bacon

Ingredients (serves two)

- Packet of Lamb's liver
- Two to three medium onions
- Four rasher of back bacon
- Couple of knobs of butter
- Tablespoon of R-Oil, or olive oil
- Three tablespoons of red wine vinegar or a couple of dashes of balsamic vinegar
- Plain flour
- (Optional) a teaspoon of dried sage

You can get all of the main ingredients from the Ascott shop. The liver is about £1.50 for a large portion; this is easily enough for two. The bacon is more expensive, but it's good quality bacon; not injected with water that spits out whilst you're grilling it. If you're on a budget you can omit the bacon and just have the liver. R-Oil is a locally sourced (Cotswold Farm near Stow-on-the-Wold) cold-pressed rapeseed oil. This oil is produced in a similar way to extra virgin olive oil. It can't match the peppery olive oil flavours but its advantage over olive oil is that it doesn't break down when heated up, keeping its nutty flavour and colour.

The secret to a successful liver and bacon dish is sweet and sticky onions and not over-cooking the liver. Slice the onions, not too thinly and cook them in a frying pan over a slow heat in the oil and a knob of butter. You'll need to cook the onions for about thirty minutes, just stirring once or

twice. When the onions are golden in colour and sticky transfer them from the frying pan to a dish and keep warm.

Whilst the onions are cooking get the grill hot and dredge the liver in the flour that's been seasoned with pepper, salt and optionally, the sage. Put the other knob of butter in the same frying pan that you cooked the onions in (don't clean the pan) and turn up to a high heat. When the butter is sizzling, throw in the liver and cook for about two to three minutes per side - you want the liver red in the middle, not brown. Put the bacon under the, now hot, grill at the same time as you start cooking the liver, grill two to three minutes per side.

When the liver and bacon are cooked, transfer both, along with the onions to your serving plates and keep warm. Add the red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar to the frying pan, keep the heat high and scrape up all the bits of onion, liver and flour into the vinegar. You'll probably want to add a couple of tablespoons of water if you're using balsamic vinegar. You won't get much gravy but it will be full of flavour. When the gravy starts to bubble, that's it; pour the gravy over the liver.

Serve with mashed potatoes, spinach wilted in a knob of butter and a glass of fruity red wine.

Paul Cunningham

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*Printed by Information Press
Tel. No: 01865 882588*