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# The Ascott Grapevine

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## Grapevine Appeal

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

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

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

**Articles for the Spring issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by 5th April 2009.**

Call 01993 831023 or email:  
wendypearse@  
[honeydale.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:wendypearse@honeydale.freeserve.co.uk)

***Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,  
Wendy Pearse, Maggie Lyon.***

## Content & Editorial Policy

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

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

Opinions expressed in contributions are not necessarily those of the Editorial Team.

## Advertising Rates

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**BOOK AND PAY IN ADVANCE FOR FOUR ISSUES AND YOU ONLY HAVE TO PAY FOR THREE.**

## **Exciting changes to Church services in Ascott and beyond!**

Mark Abrey explains a radical new look for forthcoming Sunday services in the area:

From February 2009 there's going to be quite a big change to the way church services are organised in the Chase Benefice – and Ascott will be playing an important part.

Up until now every village in our area has hosted a small local service on three Sundays each month. On the other Sunday, everyone in the surrounding villages has been getting together for a larger Benefice Service where the congregations from the Churches of the Benefice (comprising the churches of Chadlington, Heythrop, Ascott, Spelsbury and Enstone) meet altogether for worship at one of these churches.

But after much discussion and thought, the Parochial Church Councils of Chadlington, Ascott, Spelsbury and Enstone (who work with the Clergy to organise church life) have decided to trial a new system, whereby every Sunday service becomes a Benefice Service which moves around the villages in rotation. In other words, instead of there being sometimes four services in different churches in the area at 10am each week, there will now only be one.

So instead of going along to your village church and sitting in a congregation of perhaps 15-20 people, you'll be joining the 50-70 worshippers in the Benefice at one of the local churches,

belting out hymns with gusto, backed by an organ accompaniment.

The downside is you may have to travel to whichever Benefice church is hosting that week's service (lifts will be gladly provided to those who don't have transport), but the upside is you get to worship as part of a larger thriving community.

We are also making a few changes to the services to make them more inclusive for children and families. So although there will always be a traditional Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) which lasts about 40 minutes, at one of the churches every Sunday at 8am, the 10am service will become more varied and will use contemporary language.

We plan to vary the format throughout the month, offering perhaps a Communion Service with sermon and hymns one week, with Altogether Worship another (a service without Communion which will have something for adults and children), we might add in a less formal and shorter Altogether Communion Service (where children take a more active part in the service), with an occasional "Liquid Worship" which encourages everyone to respond to the Bible readings in a more creative way than simply listening to a sermon.

A small team will meet regularly to discuss the themes for worship and the

aim is to develop a continuity of worship from one week to the next.

There will also be a once-a-month “Quiet Communion Service” at 6.30 on a Sunday evening for people who might appreciate a little silent contemplation. It will be a simple Communion Service for the end of the day, with few words and plenty of silence. There will be music, a short talk, but no hymn singing – it’s going to be “*space to breath, time to think, room to be*”.

The idea behind varying the services like this is to provide the reassurance of tradition and convention to those who want it, but to open things out a bit to make worship more appealing to all ages and especially to families and young people. It is often said that ‘children are the church of the future’. They are not: they are the church of the present and if we don’t find a way to encourage and engage with them now, the popularity and relevance of the church will really dwindle.

Why are we doing this? Perhaps surprisingly in the current economic climate, this is **not** a cost-cutting exercise. In fact it’s not about money at all. We just want everyone even from the smallest villages with few regular attendees to enjoy the feeling of a being part of a big group of worshipers. It gives us the opportunity for the Chase Benefice to become more inclusive, to cater for as many people as possible whilst maximising our resources. Worshiping regularly in a larger group helps build a sense of a thriving, confident church commu-

nity, which is so much healthier than self-conscious hymn singing in a declining congregation whose sustainability may be challenged.

This isn’t a necessarily a permanent arrangement. We just thought we could trial the new system for a nine-month period, then get together in November to see what everyone thinks. During this time the parishioners of Heythrop will continue to have a monthly traditional service of Holy Communion.

We’ll make sure that each church notice board clearly states where the Benefice Service is going to be held each week, what type of service it is, and who it is likely to be aimed at. The services will move around the Benefice in rotation, with each church having a service once a fortnight: one at 8am and two weeks later one at 10am. For Ascott this will mean 8am on the 2nd Sunday of the month and 10 am on the 4th.

The plan is for Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Sunday to continue as it always has, with each village having its own smaller individual services. But for the first time this year, Mothering Sunday (on March 22nd) and Harvest Festival (on September 20th) will be great big Benefice affairs held at one of the Benefice Churches, but to which everyone is welcome.

You will find a full list of all the services printed elsewhere in the magazine. We’ve also put together a leaflet at the back of the church which we hope will answer specific questions that people might have – please do take one!

Mary and I are really excited about these new plans, and we hope you will approach the changes with an open mind and a willingness to give things a try.

Mark Abrey

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### **Pattern of Worship across the Benefice for February and March 2009**

Below you will find a list of all our services and where they will be held. If you would like to attend but need transport please contact Anne Braithwaite [01993 831282] who will put you in touch with someone who is organising lifts.

(note: BCP = Book of Common Prayer [traditional]; CW = Common Worship [contemporary])

<i><b>Date</b></i>	<i><b>Time</b></i>	<i><b>Where</b></i>	<i><b>Type of Service</b></i>
01 Feb	0800	Enstone	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Chadlington	Communion Service with sermon [CW]
08 Feb	0800	Ascott	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Spelsbury	Altogether Worship [CW]
	1000	Heythrop	Communion Service with hymns [CW]
	1830	Chadlington	Quiet Communion Service [CW]
15 Feb	0800	Chadlington	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Enstone	Altogether Communion Service [CW]
22 Feb	0800	Spelsbury	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Ascott	CW Communion Service with sermon [CW]
01 Mar	0800	Enstone	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Chadlington	Altogether Communion with Youth Band [CW]
08 Mar	0800	Ascott	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Spelsbury	Communion Service with sermon [CW]
	1000	Heythrop	Communion Service with hymns [CW]
15 Mar	0800	Chadlington	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Enstone	All Age Worship with Baptism [CW]
	1830	Ascott	Quiet Communion Service [CW]
22 Mar	0800	Spelsbury	Communion Service [BCP]
	1000	Ascott	Altogether Communion Service [CW]
29 Mar	1000	Spelsbury	Liquid Worship [CW]



## Ascott Village Shop

Did you miss our late night opening and product launch in December? If so don't worry as we are now stocking a range of products from the Upton Smokery near Burford.

The products are available including trout, salmon, duck, chicken, pheasant, partridge and many others. If we don't have it in stock we will be happy to place an order for you.

Don't forget we stock a wide range of products at competitive prices and can order newspapers and meat from local suppliers for you to collect from the shop.

We look forward to serving you in 2009.



# ASCOTT VILLAGE SHOP SURVEY ANALYSIS

## NARRATIVE

### 1. Number of Surveys Returned

The average of 53% is much higher than expected. Some respondents did not answer all the questions.

Encouragingly, the response from all the streets was pretty evenly matched.

Overall, it is an excellent return and a tribute to all the volunteers who worked so hard.

### 2. Demographics

It is perhaps no surprise that we are a predominantly older population, with 66% aged 50 plus, and of those, 30% aged 65 or over. Only 10% are 21-39 and 19% 40-49.

Fifty nine percent of houses have two adults and 62% of houses have no children, which accords with a rump of population of 50 plus whose children have grown up and moved away.

Nonetheless, the responses showed 60 children in 108 houses, so we are not totally an aged village!

### 3. Use of the Shop

The good news is that 71% use the shop regularly and many actually wrote 'Daily' or 'Several times a week' in their comments.

But, 32% report fairly frequently, not much or never.

Twenty four respondents consider the shop fair or poor value for money

and we will be looking to try and find the reasons why.

Not unexpectedly, the main use of the shop is for top-up or emergency, with only 9% buying their main shop.

Do the 44 who ticked 'Newspapers' buy other things too? Watching the traffic in the shop, the answer in most cases seems to be 'Yes', but it is a point to debate. Are some customers newspapers only?

### 4. Value for Money

In terms of value for money, 75% rate us as 'Excellent' or 'Good', but 21% as 'Fair' or 'Poor'.

### 5. Range of Products

Opinion is pretty evenly split between 'Excellent' and 'Good', 40% and 42%.

Those 15% who view the range as 'Fair' come from all over the village.

### 6. Opening Hours

These seem to suit 83%, although there are a couple of comments. One suggests opening to 7pm weekdays, another would like opening on Sunday earlier than 9am.

We are open long hours, far longer than many similar establishments, and with a mainly volunteer staff, extending those hours would be extremely difficult.

## **7. What if the Shop were not there?**

Good that 42% would really miss it, but to 48%, the shop not being there would make only a little difference. Five percent would not miss it at all.

We examined the figures for the 48% who said that the shop not being there would make only a little difference, because the question was framed 'A little difference – I find the shop handy'.

Of regular users, 32 would miss the shop a little; fairly frequent users, 9; those who do not use the shop much, 1.

Of those who do not use the shop much, 1 would miss it a lot and 10 said they would miss it a little. Four said they would not really miss it at all.

Given that the shop is invariably used as top-up or emergency shopping, the responses of the 48% seem to reflect that. They regard the shop as a handy place, but do have other sources outside the village as well, so are not wholly dependent on the shop.

Nonetheless, we will be discussing usage of the shop and the villagers' reliance on it during the coming year.

## **8. Main Grocery Shop**

A tie between Waitrose and Sainsbury's, no surprises there. More significant is 34% for Co-op, with some answers stating it is the Co-op in Milton. Locally, is our main rival the Milton Co-op?

Don't forget that in many surveys, respondents named more than one supermarket as a source of main shopping.

## **9. Likes and Dislikes**

The surveys confirm that the really warm welcome and friendly service from all the staff, combined with the ambience, make it a really great place to shop. We have several specific comments in favour of our range and being at the heart of the community.

On the minus side, some find it too expensive, there are a couple of requests for more whole and organic milk and two people would like to use their cards for sums of less than £10.

## **10. Information and Ordering by Email**

Not a popular idea, it would seem.

## **11. Summary**

Overall, the surveys would appear to largely confirm what we already know or at least suspect.

We are delighted that our warm welcome and ambience please so many and likewise, that our range of products find general favour and that we offer excellent or good value for money.

We will be addressing the question as to why 48% would only miss the shop a little to see if the figure reflects top-up or emergency shopping, or whether there are other reasons and any changes that can be made to increase our attractiveness.

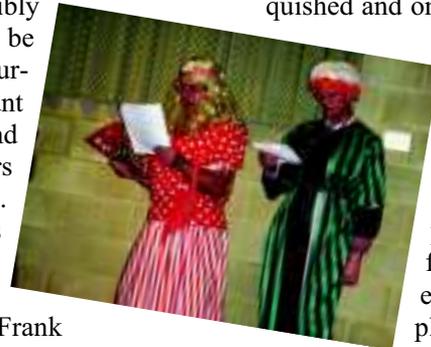
## The Ascott Pantomime

Ah, the magic of Pantomime! I can still remember the thrill. As a child visiting grandparents in Bristol for Christmas, the trip to the Hippodrome was

all part of the ritual. Going out when it was already dark; anxiously finding somewhere to park; walking through cold, busy streets; the brightness of the foyer; the unique smell of the theatre; climbing

ep stairs to the balcony; finding flippy up seats; begging for sixpence to release the little red opera glasses. Then there was the cacophony of noise from the orchestra pit as they tuned up, the safety curtain (what could possibly lie behind that had to be contained by safety curtain?), then brilliant colours and music and dancing and two hours lost in world of magic. Oh yes it was. Pantos starring George Formby, Cliff and the Shadows, yodelling Frank Ifield.

How fantastic then that all that fun was offered to us at the Tiddy Hall. The script was another great Fred Russell production and how privileged we were to



have the author himself launch the proceedings by reading a couple of his always entertaining poems. The poetry was followed by haunting music and song that sounded as though it had come from a time long ago.

And so the scene was set for the players to perform; part folk story, part mummies play, part panto. All our favourite characters were there; the goodies, the baddies, the sillies, the fairies,

the witches, the lovelies, the ugly sisters and magically they were all very, very funny. The plot twisted and turned and then just when all seemed lost, brave St George came to the rescue (as we rather thought he might), the dragon was vanquished and once again good triumphed over evil, the baddies got their just rewards and the good folk lived happily ever after.

It would be wrong to pick out any one of the players and praise them for this skill or that. Rather let us thank them all, the players, the singers, the musicians and all who helped and lent themselves to an evening of entertainment the like of which could not be bettered for sheer fun and neighbourliness, not on the West End stage, or

helped and lent themselves to an evening of entertainment the like of which could not be bettered for sheer fun and neighbourliness, not on the West End stage, or

helped and lent themselves to an evening of entertainment the like of which could not be bettered for sheer fun and neighbourliness, not on the West End stage, or

even the Bristol Hippodrome. What thrills and excitements await us in 2009? I for one can't wait.

**Tim Lyon**



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### **ASCOTT DISCUSSION GROUP**

The Editors of the Grapevine would like to congratulate the Ascott Discussion Group for producing an entertaining and original pantomime. We also extend our grateful thanks for the £60 donation that was made to the Grapevine. Generous donations like this, plus the support that we receive from the Parish Council and the PCC enable us to continue to produce the magazine and deliver it free-of-charge to every household in the Parish.

## Births

On 30th December 2008 to Kerri and Christopher Morgan, a daughter, Cathryn Anne.

## Deaths

On 25th December 2008, Mikio Abe, aged 68 years.

On 27th December 2008, Robert Peter Goodchild (formerly of Shipton Road), aged 71 years.

On 18th January 2009, Vera May Pumfrey, aged 87 years.

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## Mikio Abe (1940 – 2008)

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mikio's paternal grandfather came to London to learn about the banking system of the West. He remained in London for seven years after which he returned to Japan. He had studied the way of life and many aspects of Western culture, and, of course, the business of banking. He impressed upon Mikio's father that he "should feed his sons plenty of red meat as well as fish, so that they would grow strong and tall, and they should learn at least two languages so as to be able to communicate fully".

It was obvious that these lessons were taken on by his family. They led to life-long ambitions for Mikio – to travel and become the international man that he was.

Mikio had sisters, Kazuko and Keiko and a younger brother Masao. His mother Fumiko was a delightful, talented artist.

Mikio was born in Tokyo and educated through to university, studying law. He travelled extensively worldwide accompanying the president of his pharmaceutical company, acting as translator and smoothing the way, wherever needed. He was a big man, carried himself with pride and elegance, never appeared fazed by any event and always had a few words for any situation.

In the hot summer of 1976 he met Daphne. She was acting as "chauffeur" (taxi driver) for "two important Japanese businessmen who were visiting London for the purpose of setting up a new Anglo-Japanese venture". Daphne had been advised that she should be "polite and deferential" and just concentrate on the driving. She did not expect Mr Mikio Abe to elect to sit in the passenger seat and advise her on the best route to take! By the end of the long day of many visits, the two presidents in the rear of the car were observing an easy

flow of conversation between Mikio and “the driver” – totally instigated by Mikio – the man from Tokyo! It was the beginning of many letters and telephone calls between Japan and England.

Between the early 70’s and up to the early 80’s, Mikio travelled throughout the States, Europe and the Far East. In Japan, in one particular year, he was voted ‘International Businessman of the Year’ by a leading TV station N.H.K. He was recruited to work for Rhone Poulenc in the late 70’s and was travelling to and from Paris every 6 months or so for business. This was a chance for Daphne and Mikio to meet, to explore the chances of living in either Japan or Europe in their future life together. Daphne decided to travel to Japan to see if she could live there and continue her work in music. Her biggest worry was leaving her sons Nick and Tim behind.

There followed many trips back and forth and finally in 1980, Mikio was granted his life-long ambition to live and work in the United Kingdom. He was, as the chief partner of Knight Frank described him, “the exotic Japanese setting up the Japan desk in the city office”. In due course he moved to various competitors in the property industry, but always maintained good relations with previous firms.

Daphne and Mikio married in 1981 and settled in Sevenoaks. Mikio so enjoyed getting to know Daphne’s eldest son Nick and daughter-in-law Sallyann. In due course, their daughters Hayley and Gemma were born and he was affec-

tionately known as Grandpa Mikio; he was always ready for a game of “hide and seek”. He followed their lives with keen interest. Mikio was totally distraught when dear Sallyann was taken from us all last year. He did his level best to help the family through this tragedy.

He also delighted in getting to know Daphne’s younger son Tim, and later, his partner Pepa. He loved them both and always shared a laugh or two with them, and would support them in any way he could.

To Daphne, he was her soulmate, her champion, her loving, sentimental “Mik Chan” and she was so proud and felt honoured to be his wife.

**Daphne Abe**



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## FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS – A FULL CIRCLE

For five years the Editorial Team has very much enjoyed producing the Grapevine magazine for the village and hope that you also enjoy the fruits of our efforts. Most of you will remember that for ten years previously, Anne Braithwaite made a sterling job solely on her own, of producing the first forty issues. But something of which you will be totally unaware is that the Grapevine has a much longer pedigree and for the beginning of the story we have to go back 130 years to 1878.

The Rev. Samuel Yorke preached his first sermon in Ascott in May 1876. We know the exact date because John Simpson Calvertt who farmed up at Fairspere at the time, made the following entry in his diary. 'May 28. Miss M Fowler & Elizabeth Anne accd. me to Ascott Church, the new Minister Revd. York preached, it being only his second Sunday's Duty.' The diary was published in 1973, edited by Celia Miller and entitled *Rain and Ruin, The Diary of an Oxfordshire Farmer, John Simpson Calvertt 1875 – 1900*. You will remember Tim Lyon's article about the book in the last issue. Several entries in the Diary mention Rev. S. Yorke and Rev. T. Lee of Leaffield attending all manner of meetings and occasions, so presumably they became fast friends and sometime during 1877, they must have discussed the possibility of producing a combined parish magazine covering Ascott and

Leaffield. In January 1878 the first issue of the Leaffield and Ascott under Wychwood Parish Magazine was published, price 2d. This would be equivalent to 92p today and at that time when labourer's wages were only around 12s per week, the subscribers must all have come from the middle class. It was printed in Witney by J. Knight, Printer, High Street.

Whilst Anne was editing the Grapevine I wrote three articles covering the ensuing three years of this production. I had found part copies of the magazines in the Parish cupboard whilst acting as Parish Clerk. The copies had been made by Harry Mortimer, a previous Clerk, from originals held by Doris Warner who lived in Centuries House for many years in the middle of the twentieth century. Presumably the originals had been handed down through her family since their original publication.

It had always puzzled me why the copies only covered the three years 1878-1880, but now I know why and so we can move up another step of the Grapevine's pedigree.

A few months ago, John Rawlins, a fellow member of the Wychwoods History Society Committee, asked me if I would like to look through some copies of the initial editions of the Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine. And therein I found the answer to my puzzle.

In the inaugural copy of the Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine, under *Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

Parochial Notes, Ascott under Wychwood, is the following, presumably written by Rev. Samuel Yorke. 'It will be seen that, with the New Year, our Parish Magazine has assumed a new aspect, and formed a new alliance. After having been united very happily with Leaffield during three years past, it has been wooed and won by the Rural Deanery Combination, and, though our readers must not look for three pages connected solely with Ascott matters, as heretofore, yet it is to be hoped that the records of the doings of our neighbours will be found of much interest, and that our Magazine will obtain no less or even an increased support from our former sixty subscribers.'

The Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine included the villages of Ascott, Chipping Norton, Charlbury and Shortampton, Chastleton, Chadlington, Churchill and Sarsden, Cornwell, Daylesford, Enstone, Fifield and Idbury, Finstock and Fawler, Great Tew, Great Rollright. Hook Norton, Kingham, Leaffield, Little Compton, Little Rollright, Little Tew, Milton and Lyneham, Ramsden, Salford, Shipton and Langley, Spelsbury, and Swerford. So a very much larger distribution area and it seems that the vicar of Milton, the Rev. A.W.N. Deacon took over compiling the magazine. The price it appears was also reduced to 1d, for in the January 1882 issue, Rev Yorke records:-

'This is the fifth year of our Magazine and the interest taken therein seems by no means to have abated in our parish,

but rather to have increased. It's publication involves no little trouble, it is very ably edited and it's circulation should be encouraged: grand illustrations and very many pages of matter cannot be reasonably looked for at so small a cost: the 'Penny Reading' exhortation seems suitable for our Magazine's plea:-

*"Think of our modest charge, and  
then  
Relax your critic clutch,  
Only a penny! Gentlemen  
So don't expect too much."*

These Deanery copies which I borrowed from John Rawlins covered the years 1881-March 1883, and the final edition reads under Ascott under Wychwood, 'The present Vicar announced in his sermon that he was about to leave for the living of Fifield, to which he has been presented by the Bishop.' Again confirmed in 'Rain and Ruin' by J.S.Calvertt. 'June 3 Rode down to hear Mr Yorke, preach the last time at Ascott, before he enters upon Fifield,'

And so the instigator of the Parish Magazine left Ascott, but the Deanery magazine carried on undaunted for over 100 years, recording various happenings and events, and births, deaths and marriages throughout the Chipping Norton Deanery. When it's publishing finally ceased, Anne Braithwaite took on the task of keeping the village informed by the production of the Grapevine, until

finally handing over the task to the members of the Editorial Team.

So Ascott's parish magazine has a great deal more provenance than anyone would ever imagine and like so many people today, researching their family history, it has come back to its roots. But with one enormous bonus. Today the Grapevine is delivered for FREE.

Perhaps I should just add. If you do enjoy our magazine which we lovingly produce for you every three months, and want production to continue for another century.

**REMEMBER** To ensure the Grapevine's continuing survival, we are always truly grateful for all donations.

**Wendy Pearse**

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## OUT AND ABOUT

Some time ago, not long after moving into the village four years ago, Wendy Pearse asked me whether I would be willing to write an article about a pastime I had resurrected from my childhood since moving into this beautiful rural county of Oxfordshire. I had been relating to her my enjoyment of cycling but I was somewhat sceptical that my enjoyment would be seen in the same light by others.

Since that discussion, the general economic and environmental atmosphere has changed and I have found myself cycling to work in Long Hanborough as often as is practicable. The lack of facilities at work has made the weather a controlling factor, do I or don't I? Arriving at work wet and bedraggled is no fun.

As a child in the 50's my only means of transport was a bicycle, although my father had a car, it was for work only and its use as the children's taxi, as is common today, was out of the question. My first bike was a Dawes, costing about, if I remember correctly £26, for which I paid the bike shop 10s a week from my paper round money with my father as guarantor. I parted with that bike in the 60's when I,



along with what seemed most of the population, had a car – how I now regret that parting.

About 9 years ago I had a total hip replacement on my right hip and the surgeon advised that physical activity was to be encouraged but it was best to avoid joint impact sports, basically anything involving running and horse riding, because of the danger of dislocation with the legs spread so wide. 'What about cycling?' I asked, that's fine he said. I bought a cheap cycle and starting cycling to and from work in Southampton, a 20 mile round trip, for two reasons, city traffic was diabolical and the exercise was essential for my well being.

When my wife and I moved here we walked a great deal to soak in the rural outdoors and we found that very rewarding. However, some of my colleagues at work were keen off road cyclists and I as an engineer was impressed with the technicality of modern cycles and soon I bought a mountain bike and joined them on riding the bridleways in the local area, the Chilterns and also trips to the Welsh mountain trails. I became hooked. My cycle has become like the old garden broom, several changes and additions but it is still the same bike!

Cycling off road is a real joy, with a good cycle you can tackle most

terrains, it's quiet so the wild life is not frightened any more than it would be by walkers, horse riders or general farm work. You can clearly see, smell and feel the countryside, observe what is going on around you and slow or stop without worrying about following 'traffic'. The countryside is full of bridleways allowing many miles of road free riding and with careful planning a circular route can be followed giving a variety of views.

With the state of the roads and the density of vehicles throughout the area it is difficult for families to plan a cycle ride where the children can ride with a degree of safety. From this village families can very quickly access suitable

bridleways that cater for different skill levels. Nothing around here is 'technically' difficult but there are some bridleways that require some effort but are easy enough for the rider to dismount and push until reaching a level stretch. As riders get fitter and more confident they can range further and take routes that take them from the village to Chilson, some road work through Charlbury from where there are two main interim detinations out of Charlbury. Starting on the Enstone road but branching off to meet with the old Salt Road and making



way through Rights of Way north of Chadlington and then dropping into Chadlington passing the fishing pond and then making way to Pudlicote and thence across the fields reaching the bridge over the Evenlode at Manor Farm and then home. The more adventurous can ride through Charlbury towards the Woodstock road and then branch off towards Stonesfield and then join the old Salt Road eventually joining to the previous route. The majority of these routes are off road and although a stretch of the

Salt Road has been ruined with deep ruts by four wheel drive vehicles, it is still very rewarding to complete the circuit. I have on, several occasions, stopped on the ride between Kingstanding Farm and Leaffield and watched the antics of

Hares, particularly in Spring and observed deer looking at me trying to decide whether I am a threat to them. The silence is broken at times by the calls from circling Buzzards as they communicate with one another.

For thrills and adrenaline rushes there are trails in the Affan forest in South Wales where long climbs through evergreen forests reward you with stunning views across the Welsh valleys, prior to rock and tree-root strewn single tracks taking you back down the mountain side at speeds such that you emerge

at the end totally shaken, stiff armed from hanging on and braking hard as you negotiate tight corners and one metre drop off over boulders, wondering why on earth you even considered going down the track; but then you start to grin and realise how incredibly exciting it really was and you are ready for the next trails after a bite to eat and a long refreshing drink. There are two types of trails in the mountains, some are exclusively for bikes whilst the walkers are given their own pathways so that there is no danger of the two pastimes clashing.

My riding colleagues are all younger than me but I can maintain contact with them up hill but down hill I must admit to being more cautious than they. I suppose that at 62, reaction times have lengthened a little and the fear factor is stronger. I could probably go faster but I still get a thrill at the end and get down in one piece!

**Keith Ravenhill**

## **Helping others to help themselves**

Happy New Year

### **An update from the Village Charity**

Although there has been a charity for many years in the village, it was really as a follow-on from fundraising for the village shop, back in 2003, that the modern day Village Charity was formed. This Charity has now been merged with the Poors and Lower Green charities to form a single entity.

The charity is managed by the following trustees; Rev. Mark Abrey 01608 676572, Elaine Byles 01993 831427, John Cull 01993 831621, Mark Dawbarn 01993,831632, Stuart Fox 01993 832004.

The aims of the charity are quite broad; it is there to help those who need some help in the areas of education, recreation and general need.

Last year, for example, we were able to pledge funds to help the pre-school make their play area safer, purchase a marquee for general hire and provide a grant to the Wychwood Day Centre.

In order to help others, we do need a flow of funds. To date we

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have organised two fun runs (in conjunction with the Sports Club) and plan to organise a third this October. In addition, we are planning to hold an outdoor musical evening in June - details to follow when we have it finalised. We meet regularly to consider requests for support and would be pleased to hear from individuals or organisations that need a little extra funding for specific projects.

If you would like to discuss your idea further, please contact one of the trustees.

We would love to hear from you.

Best wishes

**John Cull**  
Chairman

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## **BANG, YOU'RE NOT DEAD**

This is not about my flying trips, but a collection of anecdotes based around the ejector seat, an invention that has saved many lives.

The ejector seat was born post WWII, when fighters changed from piston engines to jets. With speeds rising from 400 mph to 1000 mph and more, aircrew simply could not get out of the cockpit in such high-speed airstreams and even if they did, were likely to strike some part of the aircraft and be killed. Besides, at higher speeds, things happened so fast that sometimes it was only the ejector seat that gave the split-second separation from the aircraft that was the difference between life and death.

Known as the 'bang-seat' in RAF jargon, the original design improved over the years. The first seats only worked if the aircraft was in the air. Many emergencies happened during takeoff, so the next version was the O/90, which worked at ground level, but needed 90 knots of speed. Then came the O/O or rocket seat, which even from a stationary aircraft, would send its occupant soaring into the air to a sufficient height to separate from his seat and deploy his parachute. These days, I should say his/her, but aircrew were exclusively male in my time. I am told the rocket is also kinder to the spine of its occupant, as the acceleration is less abrupt than the previous models, which used an explosive charge.

A key factor in any ejection is the cockpit canopy. If you have never seen one, the plexiglass of a jet fighter canopy is frighteningly thick, especially the windscreen. Despite this, I have seen many photos of windscreens shattered by a birdstrike at several hundred miles per hour. Canopies weigh a ton and were craned off for major servicing of the aircraft. During an ejection, the canopy separated first, blown off by explosive bolts, then the pilot/navigator et al followed. Occasionally, the canopy did not blow completely clear or was caught in the airstream and would kill or maim the crew. I have a friend who lost his right forearm in just this way.

I always thought the Vulcan bomber and its cousin, the Victor tanker, rather unfair, as only the pilot and co-pilot had ejector seats. The rest of the crew had to dive out the rear door as in olden times and take their chances. Some aircraft with multiple crew were fitted with command eject – if the captain ejected, it automatically ejected the rest of the crew. Command eject was not popular for a number of reasons and was stopped. It was not liked on one type of American plane because the radio operator ejected downwards. If the captain ejected during takeoff, the radio op got splattered all over the tarmac.

Ejector seats have two handles, one overhead called the hood, because a

hood dropped over the occupant's head during ejection as protection and the pan, a handle between the knees. For pilots especially, dropping your hands from the control column to the pan was a matter of inches rather than feet and often proved a life-saver.

Ejector seats are enormously powerful and care had to be taken not to set one off during servicing on the ground. To prevent this, safety pins were placed in the fuse or sear and removed as part of start-up procedure. Some pilots died because they forgot to remove the pins..... I heard of one aircraft mechanic who was working in the cockpit of a



fighter when he heard the pan sear go. In that fraction of time he realised, too late, that he had not inserted the sear pin. Fear of death does incredible things and he managed to stuff himself

into the minute space of the rudder-pedal well. Miraculously, the seat missed him. When his mates came to investigate he was jammed so tightly, they had to lever him out.

John, a fellow kart racer in Germany, was an Air Traffic Control officer and recounted the tale of a Harrier on the runway at Wildenrath that was well alight. The radio was still working, but the pilot ignored orders to eject and con-

tinued to try to quench the fire. At last he did eject and the sight of him soaring into the air to land safely on his parachute was something John said he would never forget. When looked at objectively afterwards, it was actually only 20 seconds between being ordered to eject and doing so, but John said it felt like a lifetime.

The early Harriers were not fitted with a relight system for the engine. If the engine suffered a birdstrike, it would flame out and a Harrier glides vertically rather fast. Standing orders were for pilots to eject on flameout. One pilot was flying over Germany, flamed out after a birdstrike and ejected. To his horror, the engine recovered and descend-

ing slowly on his parachute, he watched the now drone flying serenely on towards the East German border. The Cold War was still very icy, so the German Air Force had to scramble and shoot it down. Whoops!

My last tale shows the old saying, the higher you go, the harder you fall, is oft too accurate.

Dick was the Aide de Camp to the Commander in Chief of RAF Germany. This was a very good thing for a young pilot to do, because if you did a fine job, it would help your career no end. Dick was, shall we say, ebullient. No doubt

having 'fluence at just the right level, he wangled himself a follow-on tour just down the road to RAF Bruggen, flying Phantoms. Unfortunately for Dick, the Bruggen aircraft complement included some ex-Royal Navy Phantoms. Because of limited space on aircraft carriers, these Phantoms were fitted with wings that folded part way along. One of the pre-flight checks was to ensure the wing locks were in place and secure.

Dick and his navigator took off and at about 500 feet, discovered two things. The first was that they had not checked the wing locks and the second was that a Phantom with part of its wings

vertical flies like a housebrick. They ejected to face a spell in hospital and for Dick, the wrath of his former boss.

And finally, the flight safety magazine of the Royal Saudi Air Force (in English) reported an accident to one of its Lightnings, but that the 'the pilot ejaculated safely'. Must have been really exciting!



**Nigel Wild**



*Then and now!*



**DEVELOPMENT OF 2A SHIPTON ROAD**

No one in Ascott can have failed to notice the bright red hoardings around the development site that was formerly occupied by the bungalow, 2a Shipton Road. Indeed many have complained both to the Parish Council and Hills, the developers.

The Parish Council have been in discussion with the District Council and Hills to see what can be done. We had hoped that as Ascott was part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, that there might be planning issues, but so far this has not been confirmed.

We contacted the developers to see what changes could be made so this was less of an eyesore and also to find out when the land might be developed.

There is no timetable for the development and given the present problems in the housing market I suspect that the hoardings may be part of our landscape for some time to come.

Hills have offered to repaint the hoardings, but still wish to retain their corporate colours, which are red and silver grey. If we accepted their offer they would repaint the boards silver grey and the posts would be painted red. We thought that it would be useful to consult with the village to ascertain the majority view and so we are asking you to complete the following brief questionnaire and return it to the Parish Council.

**2A SHIPTON ROAD – Village Survey**

**I'm happy with the hoardings surrounding the development site. Yes/No**

**I would prefer the hoardings repainted silver/grey and the posts red. Yes/No**

**I'm not happy with either of the above and my suggestion is:**

.....  
.....

**Name.....**

**Date.....**

**Please return your survey forms to Stuart Fox. Forms may be left in the Village Shop**

## **The Swan at Ascott**



Following a very busy Christmas and New Year at the Swan we are now facing the bleaker times of January and February. If you are looking for a bargain, and most people are, we have a good one! On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout January and February we are offering two main courses for the price of one. (And you don't need to buy a paper or collect tokens!). Please spread the word and a Happy New Year to everyone.

**P.S.** Our next Quiz Night is on Tuesday February 24th and is a **Quiz and Curry Night** at £6.50 per head starting at 7.30pm. Booking is essential : 01993 832332.

Teams can be from two to five people, half time refreshments will be served and there will be a prize for the winners.

**Richard Lait**

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## **WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

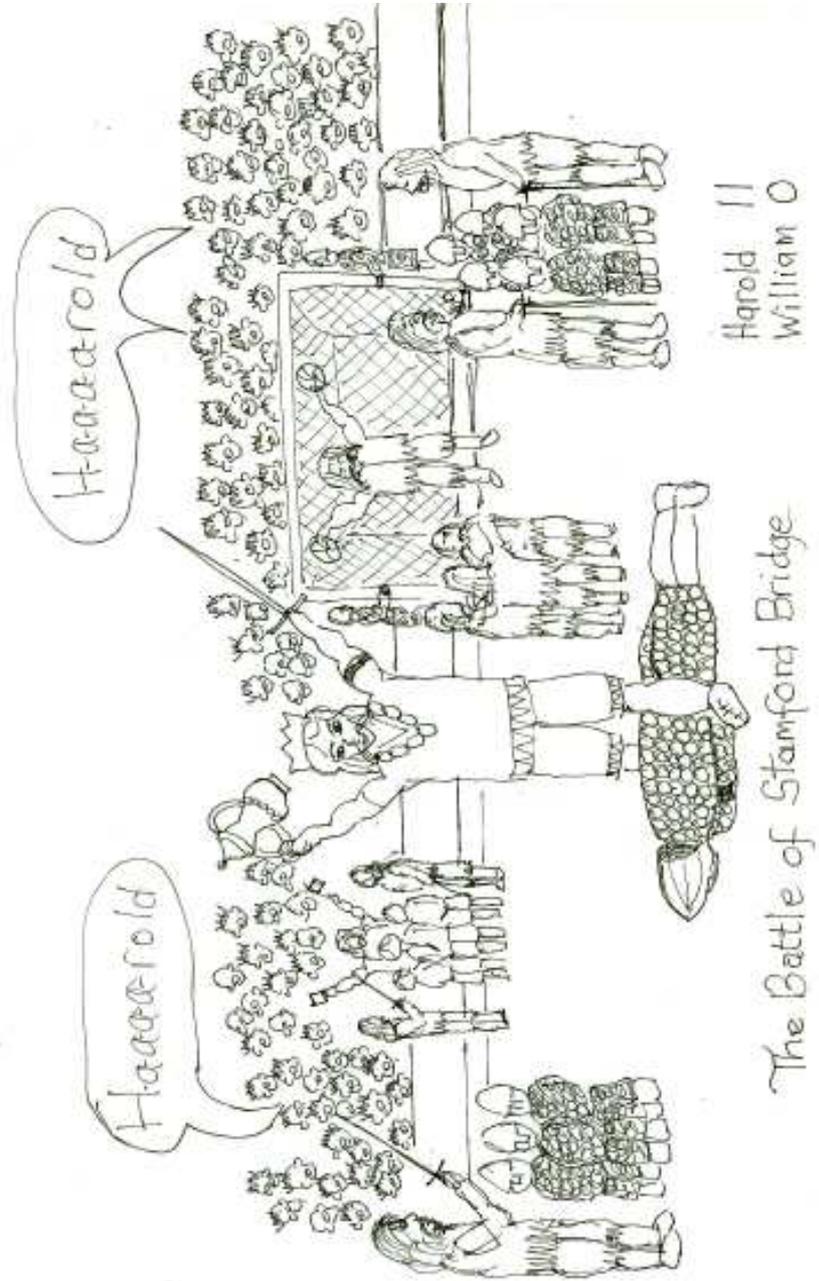
The History Society speaker in February will be Richard Lethbridge. His talk will be about the Historic Churches of Oxfordshire and the meeting will be held at Shipton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Then on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. Jane Cavell will give a talk about The Witney Madhouse.

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, Russell Cherry's talk is entitled Oxford On Foot, at Shipton Village Hall 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 or see [www.wychwoodshistory.org](http://www.wychwoodshistory.org)**



## HISTORY IS BUNK (HENRY FORD)

When the Romans left these islands, it plunged Britain into the Dark Ages. It was called the Dark Ages because when the Romans went home, they took their matches with them.

1066 soon came, while over the Channel it was already 12 noon. This was unfair. It gave the Normans an hour's start at the Battle of Hastings. In Spain it was already mid afternoon and time to siesta, but Esther being a good Jewish girl, would not come out. While in Holland, a little boy stuck his finger in the Dyke and blocked all the drains.

William the Conqueror called his men to order. 'Get to attention and get in single file.' he shouted. So they all got up and stood behind each other. Thus began the long line of Normans. 'Although I'm William I am going to be Frank and Ernest with you. We are going to invade Albion.' One of his soldiers shouted, 'I hope it will be Brighton and Hove. West Brom play in a higher division.' They then spent hours in training, marching on the right hand side of the road to face oncoming traffic, and making sure they did not go round a roundabout the wrong way.

Back in Old Blighty, Harold was calling his men to arms, the Butcher's Arms, the Mason's Arms and the Bricklayer's Arms. In fact they were in pubs everywhere, all using foul four letter Anglo/Saxon words. The most disgusting of these words was the word

WORK. Harold told them, 'We've got to go to Stamford Bridge and beat Chelsea and drive all those foreigners out. Defence is strong so we will open degate and get in that way. In those days they spoke what is known as Middle English. It was called Middle English because the words on the outside were over an inch long and difficult to spell.

Later the Renaissance began to flower in Europe. Marco Polo had discovered a mint with a hole in China. Galileo raised his glass eye to look at the stars. Michelangelo had painted the Sistine Chapel on his back. Shakespeare had written Hamlet. Many great actors have played Hamlet, most of them lost. This is a very old joke which can still be seen today, stuffed and on show at the British Museum.

Meanwhile Leonardo with a fine paintbrush was touching up the Mona Lisa, and putting a smile on her face. I am proud of my heritage. My roots are in the rich, well manured soil of old England. I can prove this by the smell when I take my shoes and socks off.

If you want to know more of history. On a very wet day, confront Professor Richard Crampton when he is soaking wet on his bike and ask him if Walter Raleigh rolled his own or smoked a pipe. I'm sure the Professor would love to fill you in.

**Fred Russell**

## THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE.....

Alright I admit it, I have now reached that time in life when the world of my youth seems to have been more desirable than the world of today, but was it really? There is no doubt that things were simpler, just because there was so much less technology. It was not until about 1976 that I could afford my first pocket calculator which cost the equivalent of £140. I would take it to parties to impress my friends! So do I look back with rose tinted specs? Perhaps, but the 70's were fun (and very warm & sunny!).

Way, way back in the mid 1970's I worked at the National Westminster Bank in Chipping Sodbury as 'Safe Custody and Foreign Clerk'. Basically that meant that if you wanted to lodge your valuables in the bank safe, buy or sell shares, invest or withdraw from your Building Society or buy or sell foreign currency, I was your man. Of course times were tough then. We were suffering the secondary banking crisis, there was recession, inflation was rife, interest rates were high and there was shortage of mortgage funds. Hmm... sounds a bit familiar.

Foreign currency for holidays was very re-

Page 28

stricted and you were only allowed to take £50 worth of currency abroad each year (about £280 today). I had to record the amount taken in customer's passports and then note any that they brought back.

Chipping Sodbury was not a large office but at that time there were some 22 of us working there and the camaraderie was splendid. There were some real characters; my pal Tony who never started work until he had read his Racing Post and laid his bets for the day. Chris, the Manager's Assistant (who was also a Baptist minister) who smoked some evil herbal concoction in his pipe and

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*Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

Les, the Administration Manager who restored antique clocks (the safe was full of them) and who played the electric organ in The Oak public house on Saturday nights for charity.

There always seemed to be something slightly off the wall going on but one day in particular sticks in my memory. It was about 11.30am on a glorious summer's day. We had summers then. All was quiet in the bank; flies buzzed lazily in the window, the secretary's typewriter clacked steadily and bored staff cupped their chins and dreamed of holidays spent or to come.

The calm of the morning was disrupted when the aforementioned Les emerged briskly from the manager's office and summoned me into his presence. "Right" he said, "It is Mrs Peterson's funeral at 12.00 and the manager wants the Bank to be represented. He asked me to go but I am going to the pub so he's said that you can go instead. Just make sure that reporter from the paper gets your name as a mourner."

Now at that time (even as a bank clerk) I was a dedicated follower of fashion and no one had wider lapels, flarier flares or livelier floral kipper ties than young Tim. "Oh no Les!" I cried, "I can't go to a funeral with a tie like this! Ask Tony, he will go." Tony then made it very clear that he would not go and, since none of my entreaties would dissuade Les, it was with a heavy heart and my jacket buttoned, I trudged down to the C of E as instructed. Upon arrival it all seemed suspiciously quiet and

noon came and went with no sign of a funeral. Now, being an alert young man, it occurred to me that all was not well and I decided it best to trot along to The Oak to find Les and report my apparent failure.

The news was not received well with Les expressing the opinion, in fairly robust language, that Dick, the manager, would be less than pleased with us. I seem to remember 'guts' and 'garters' being mentioned. "What's the matter Les?" enquired a chap at the bar and the sorry tale was told. "Now, where you've gone wrong," he said, "is that the funeral was at the Congregational Church and you've missed it. But, as luck would have it, I was the reporter on duty, so all we have to do is to add Tim to the list of mourners and keep him out of Dick's way for a couple of hours." So that plan was decided upon and calm returned. Beer was poured in to me at regular intervals until 2.00pm (it may have been later) and I was smuggled out of the back of the pub so that I could approach the bank (rather unsteadily) from the correct direction.

My name duly appeared in the newspaper and, when the manager asked me later if all had gone well, I was able to answer, with almost complete honesty, that it was the finest funeral I had ever attended! And that is how to be in two places at once.

Our relationship with authority also seemed to be more relaxed. In those days the Bank held an annual Area

Dinner in Cheltenham and all staff were expected to attend. One year Les hired a dodgy old coach to get us all there. Upon our return at about 1.00am it refused to start and I well remember us all pushing it along Chipping Sodbury High Street to 'bump' start it. With the coach gone and just Les and I standing in the street he announced that we were going for a drink.

Now Chipping Sodbury was famous for its pubs but I pointed out that it would be highly unlikely that any would be serving at that time of night. "Right" said Les, "we will go down to the Police Station and ask if they have left any open". So off to the Police Station we went and Les explained our quest. "Sorry Les" said the sergeant, "we closed the last pub about half an hour ago but come in and have a cup of tea". So we did. Tea and biscuits consumed and gossip swapped, I actually had a twelve mile drive home and so had been reasonably careful with how much I had had to drink but I need not have worried too much. The sergeant reassured me that I was alright if I was stopped on his side of the A38 but then to be careful because he couldn't help me on the other side!

About three weeks later I was woken up in the middle of the night by a phone call from the same sergeant. The bank alarm had gone off and, since I had the keys that night, he wanted me to come and

reset it and to stop the "blessed" noise. He then remembered where I lived. "Here, you know that if you have the keys you are supposed to live within 15 minutes of the bank, don't you? You will never get through the lanes and be here in 15 minutes". "I bet I can" said I. "Bet you can't" said he. "Right, I'll give you 5 minutes to put your trousers on and you had better be outside that bank in 20 minutes". I had a Mini Cooper, I could and did.

So come on, please share your stories or I might have to dig back into my memory and find some more. You have been warned!

Tim Lyon



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## Gardening Notes

Spring is round the corner, what a delightful thought. Winter has been a mixed bag so far. Lots of rain in November, followed by dry weather up to Christmas and then some cold hard frosty but sunny days ushering in and following New Year. Now towards mid – January the rain is back. I have never liked January because of the weather which makes it nigh on impossible to get out in the garden and do anything useful. For as long as I can remember I have vowed to go away to somewhere warm and dry to avoid it. For various different reasons this has never happened - perhaps next year.....

This year I can say I am glad to have been at home during the frosty days. The garden and the countryside were so beautiful with hoar frost glistening on the trees and on the ornamental grasses in the garden. A couple of springs ago I added a tall ornamental grass, about 6 feet high, with fluffy seed heads waving away like small flags at the tops of the stems. It reached its full height last Autumn and I didn't cut it back because I really liked the look of it and it could be seen clearly from indoors. In its frosted state it looked at its very best, such a picture to view

from the warmth of the house. On the downside, I fear a number of plants may have been lost to the low temperatures. Of course they weren't so very low compared to say 20 or so years ago but recent mild winters have lulled some gardeners, including me, into a false sense of security encouraging us to leave vulnerable plants outside the whole time. I've left dahlias and French tarragon outside for a couple of years. I got away with it last year but I don't think I shall be so lucky this time. Other plants may have been badly affected by the constant wetness of the soil. Despite the fairly long period without rain in December the earth seemed not to dry at

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all. There may be quite a number of gaps to fill later in the year.

Coming back to Spring, there will be small daffodils coming up through the grass for the first time under some of the trees in the garden. Planted last Autumn, they will make another part of the garden attractive in Spring. I've rather taken against growing large daffodils like King Alfred because they look so tatty when the leaves are dying back and I have to resist the temptation to lop them off too soon and miss out on flowers the following year. I love to see bold daffodils on roadsides and happily their dying leaves always seem to get hidden by other vegetation sprouting up. Part of me says it's a bit dangerous to want 'tidy' plants because such attitudes if adopted wholesale could lead to the demise of some beautiful and majestic plants which need more care and effort like clever staking to keep them looking attractive, and could lead to the breeding of innocuous plants which don't provide the 'wow' factor. Some plants, for example, nicotiana – tobacco plants, could be on the slippery slope. Short varieties have been bred which cause no trouble but have no perfume. They are easily available at garden centres and by mail order as plantlets for growing on. The tall varieties which have the most delicious scent can never be found as



plants to purchase but only as seeds which a lot of people do not have the time or confidence to grow.

So what is being planned for the coming year. Well, firstly winter jobs need to be finished off. The front garden has got as far as being cleared of weeds so needs replanting when the weather permits. In the back garden cutting back of shrubs and trees has yet to be started and has greater priority than the front garden because if it is not done before everything else starts to grow we'll never be able to fight our way into the chaos that will ensue. Once we get going it should not take too long but again the weather dictates when it can be done. We have almost finished removal of the last gravel path and we have a skip outside again so all is right with the world! Then we will be ready to lay grass in its stead when April comes around.

I am pleased to report that garlic and onions planted in the Autumn are doing well, seemingly unphased by the cold and wet but what other vegetables should be grown this year? Very much the same as last year as I have a lot of last year's seeds left. I am going to be satisfied with those and not try to grow something different and unusual. I feel the climate is too unsettled at the moment to grow something untested and I'd rather fall back on vegetables that have given success in the past. Last year in the greenhouse I tried a different variety of tomato Italian 'Costoluto Fiorentina' because I loved the name which conjured up for me Tuscany and the sun

and scents of the Mediterranean. And the tomatoes looked big and delicious from the photograph on the seed packet. The experiment was not a success only very few, smallish tomatoes grew which were in no way succulent. But was the failure due to how I looked after the plants or was it the climate? By chance the magazine 'Gardening Which' grew the same variety as a trial last year and had had results too. Since their plants would certainly have been looked after properly I can let myself off the hook and definitely blame rain and lack of sun. On the other hand, I do resolve this year to give better care to the brassicas I grow. Virtually all my cabbages, broccoli and sprouts were wiped out by the six to eight pigeons which invaded the garden last year. I can only blame myself for not protecting the young plants immediately after they had been planted out. The pigeons are still making their presence felt by Hoovering up seed put out for more genteel birds therefore this summer I will protect the brassica plants properly and try to

move the pigeons on - neighbours beware!

Seed catalogues are coming in the post thick and fast now and despite my resolve to grow nothing new I cannot resist browsing through them, may be just one new packet would not be so bad. I think I'll just go off and take a look.

**Yvette Keauffling**



**THE QUAKER TAPESTRY**

As part of the celebrations to mark the tercentenary of  
**Burford Quaker Meeting House [1709 – 2009]**  
 there will be a photographic exhibition of  
 some of the panels from the Quaker Tapestry  
 in the Meeting House in Pytts Lane, Burford

11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

All are welcome - admission free

## **ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD FLOOD REPORT**

**Grapevine Article: Parish Council Flood Sub-Committee (FSC)**

Nick Leadbetter, member Parish Council ([naleadbetter@aol.com](mailto:naleadbetter@aol.com) Tel: 831571)

The Parish Council wrote to WODC on 29 July 2008 recommending that six of the options identified in the Parish Flood Report, released in May 2008, for flood alleviation work should be given priority. This is to inform the Parish about the current status of work on these and also on one further initiative identified by OCC Highways in Nov 08 and one request for action by the PC to Cornbury Estate.

<b><u>PRIORITY WORK<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b><u>SITUATION ON 12 January 2009</u></b>
<p><b>Area 1 Options A and C:</b> Re-route the spring fed stream at Ascott-Earl into Coldwell Brook.</p>	<p><b>Status: Work completed week 12 Jan 09</b> The riparian owner has dredged the brook and returned it to its original course and the culvert under the drive to Coldstone House has been enlarged by OCC (Highways). The spring has been fed into the brook by OCC Highways as planned.</p>
<p><b>Area 1 Options G and H:</b> Repair the railway bridge and improve the river's flow by smoothing the banks on approach and removing the old farm track.</p>	<p><b>Status: Work due to start Feb 09</b> There have been many delays in this work, which will be carried out by NR and is now linked to the EA's recommendation (made following a detailed survey in Sep 08) to create a swale and bund across the field to the southwest of the bridge to improve the flow of the river when in spate and thereby reduce the risk of flooding along Shipton Road to the Green and London Lane. NR is due to give a presentation on the plan in Tiddy Hall on 29 Jan (time to be confirmed by EA). <b>Action: PC's FSC to monitor progress</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> Area and Option designator refer to the Parish Flood Options Table Reference A.

<p><b>Area 1 Option J:</b> Remove choke points on the river between Gypsy Lane and CN Road Bridge including stone banks 40m north of rail bridge, fallen trees, trailing branches and riverbank debris and clear the entrance to the third arch of the road bridge.</p>	<p><b>Status: Work largely completed</b> EA carried out some work clearing debris from the river during October and Mr Walker, the riparian owner of the north bank, carried out extensive clearing of dead trees, overhanging branches and riverbank debris and also cleared the entrance to the north arch of the Chipping Norton road bridge, thus improving flow, between 17 – 21 Nov 08. NR will clear the stone bank in the river when repairing the rail bridge in Feb 09. OCC Highways will dredge under the bridge arches once the entrance to the south arch and exits from the north and south arches have been cleared (agreed between EA and Mr Izod, the riparian owner on 9 Jan) – Note: Mr Izod very kindly volunteered to clear the south arch exit for the Village Charity) <b>Action: PC’s FSC to monitor progress</b></p>
<p><b>Area 3 Options I and J:</b> Clear the drainage ditch and return to a positive gradient and jet blast culverts under the road and rail embankment at the level crossing in the centre of the village.</p>	<p><b>Status: Work largely completed</b> That part of the ditch next to London Lane remains partly blocked and still has a negative gradient. OCC Highways agreed (12 Jan) to investigate. Cornbury Estate, the riparian owner, has completed extensive clearing of the important drainage ditch to the north of the embankment. <b>Action: PC’s FSC to monitor progress</b></p>
<p><b>Area 3 Options K and L:</b> Investigate foul water network capacity and upgrade as necessary.</p>	<p><b>Status: Investigation is complete. Work to upgrade is currently programmed for funding period 2010 – 2015</b> TW is responsible for this work. A delay in undertaking this work for at least another year is unacceptable. Problems associated with the sewer capacity and ingress of surface water overloading the system have been reported to TW by home owners for up to 20 years (evidence from Mr and Mrs Smith and Mr Collins). <b>Action: PC to write to TW, copy to WODC, OCC and MP, to expedite this essential work</b></p>

<p><b>Area 4 Option N:</b> Enlarge capacity of the culvert under the High Street at Easter Cottage.</p>	<p><b>Status: Work completed Sep 08</b> This work was completed by OCC (Highways). The brook to the south of the High Street has been cleared by Cornbury Estate, the riparian owner, which has also laid a porous pipe to the south of Easter Cottage to drain the field into the brook.</p>
<p><b>Additional Work:</b> Priory Lane drainage</p> <p>Slurry blockage at embankment east of the level crossing</p>	<p><b>Status: Work to be done</b> OCC Highways (footpaths) has accepted responsibility for piping the surface water run-off in Priory Lane. It appears the existing pipe is severely blocked. There has been no action since an inspection was made in Nov 08.</p> <p><b>Action: PC to speak to OCC Highways for a situation report</b></p> <p>Cornbury Estate, the riparian owner, agreed at the PC's Dec meeting to investigate the drainage problem in this area east of Wychwood Court.</p> <p><b>Action: PC to monitor progress</b></p>

WODC Operations Team will supply sand in a large sand bin and bags at the Village (Tiddy) Hall early in 2009 for use by residents to protect property in the event of further flooding. It has been agreed the bin will be in the NE corner of the car park (telephone conversation with WODC Operations 12 Jan 09). The bags will be stored in Tiddy Hall, which can be accessed by members of the Parish Council and members of the Tiddy Hall Committee.

The Parish Council is investigating the possibility of placing a flood depth gauge on the Chipping Norton Road north of the level crossing to warn motorists about the danger in times of flood. The flood signs will continue to be put out on approaches to flooded roads when appropriate.

The emergency plan for dealing with future severe flooding and other emergencies will benefit from named individuals who are willing to help in a crisis. We have some names, but could do with more. If you are prepared to volunteer, please let me know by email or telephone.

**Nick Leadbetter**

**The following list of “Who Does What” is extracted from the WODC  
Final Report released in December 2008**

---

**Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

- Planning for national flood emergency
- Funding Environment Agency flood management activities
- Grant aid for land drainage works
- Established a task group to look at the resilience of key infrastructure such as electricity sub stations

**Environment Agency (EA)**

[Enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) Enquiries: 0845 9881188

Incident Hotline: 0800 807060 (24 hours)

- Assess Flood Risk
- Maintain and operate flood defences on main river and structures at lock sites on the River Thames
- Monitor water levels and flows
- Issue flood warnings
- Respond to pollution incidents and advise on waste disposal issues
- Clear trash screens on main river culverts and remove obstructions/debris from main river channels
- Keep emergency services and local authorities up to date with local facts
- Provide an emergency response during flooding
- Support joint response

**Thames Water (TW)**

[www.thameswater.co.uk](http://www.thameswater.co.uk) Enquiries: 0845 9200 800

- Emergency over-pumping at pumping stations
- Clearing blockages in public sewers and outfall grills
- Repairing burst sewage and water pumping mains
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the public water mains or discharges from the public sewerage systems

**Thames Valley Police**

[www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)

0845 8 505 505 - non-emergencies      999 - emergencies

- Report an incident which is not an emergency or give information to Thames Valley Police on this number
- It is an emergency if a crime is being committed, there is a risk of injury or a risk of serious damage to property.

**Fire Service**

[www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/flooding.php](http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/flooding.php) In an emergency, always dial 999

Oxfordshire County Council

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) Enquiries 0845 3101111

- Maintain safe conditions on the roads
- Put flood warning signs on the highway
- Organise road closures and traffic diversions
- Clear blockages on highway drainage systems including watercourses in culverts beneath the highway
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the highway where there is a failure of the highway drainage system
- Maintain safety of road bridges over culverts
- Lead in major civil emergency arrangements

**West Oxfordshire District Council**

[www.westoxon.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/flooding) Enquiries: 01993 861000

- Coordinating role for the district council area
- Activating the council's emergency plan if necessary
- Emergency assistance (Local Government Act 1972, s.138 sandbag provision)
- Clear blocked watercourses etc. (Land Drainage Act 1991 enforcement powers)
- Environmental health issues - pollution
- Blocked road channels - street cleaning
- Emergency planning support groups

**Town & Parish Councils**

- Assist in identifying riparian owners and passing on information regarding riparian duties in relation to watercourses
- Flood warning dissemination (by local agreement with EA)
- Parish Emergency Plans

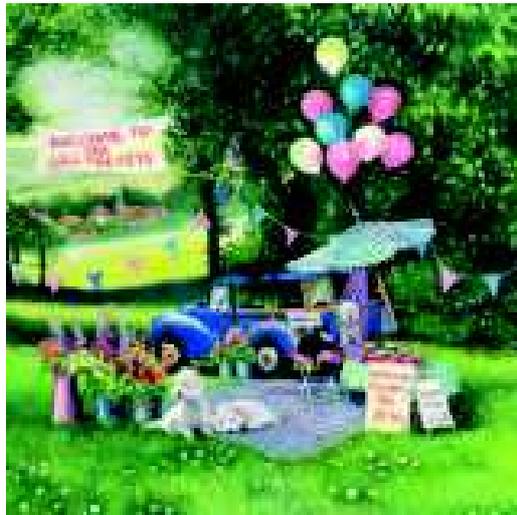
**Private householders and land owners**

- Move to a safe area if life is at risk
- Prevent water from entering property if possible
- Switch off electricity and gas supplies at mains
- Move valuable possessions above areas liable to be flooded

## A snowy February in Ascott-under-Wychwood



***A SUMMER DATE  
FOR YOUR DIARY***



***ASCOTT VILLAGE FETE***

**Ascott Village Fete in aid of Church funds  
will take place on Saturday 13th June 2009**

## **BUSINESS NETWORKING – IT’S THE BIS**

If you are out and about in your car at 6.30 of a morning, you may wonder where everyone else is going. Chances are they are on their way to a business networking club. They will be getting together with other business people to have some breakfast, exchange news and views and find ways in which to support and trade with each other. Networking is the BIS because it should be about **B**usiness and also **I**nformation and **S**upport. That is, it is about recommending and referring people with whom you like doing business, it is about being prepared to help others by sharing your expertise and it is about being there to offer help and advice when the going gets tough. Local networking means that local people trade with each other and this keeps the cash local too. It is a great way to promote your business and to find suppliers you can trust. There are many networking clubs in the area but a good start would be the **729 Club** which **meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month** in Chipping Norton. Book through the website [www.729club.com](http://www.729club.com).

See you there!

**Tim Lyon**



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[www.newtricks.co.uk](http://www.newtricks.co.uk)

**New Tricks Training Ltd**

[www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk](http://www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk)

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## The Ascott Mothers

The Ascott mothers, and some fathers too  
Don't live in Ascott (well, some of them  
do)

They drive to our village in cars so big  
They could carry an elephant and still fit  
a pig

But it's not elephants they daily cart to  
our village

It's children ("our kids") that are causing  
the spillage

And spill out they do, from all sides of  
the car

Like drunks kicked out of an underage  
bar.

"Mummy will drop you in front of the  
gate

It's not really allowed, but I know how  
you hate

To use your own feet, and why should  
you, my lamb,

Life is for living, it's not an exam,  
And thank goodness for that, is all mum-  
my can say

You don't want to be tested, it's just not  
our way.

Just go on, get out, ignore the traffic  
Live your own world, the real one's too  
graphic"

"Mummy should not park the car on this  
corner

And she'll ignore the villager trying to  
warn her,

But it's just such a hassle to walk more  
than a metre

When that attractive father is trying to  
greet her.

Say hello to your friends and be kind to  
the teacher

Rather her, mummy thinks, than me,  
poor creature.

All day, with those children, without  
respite

But it's as hard for nanny, who takes  
care of the night."

The Ascott mothers drive off in their  
tractors

And while I'm sure there are mitigating  
factors

I'm thinking of building some nuclear  
reactors

In the back of my garden, instead of a  
shed,

It'll pose a challenge, might be seen as a  
threat

But mostly it'll show them how up I'm  
fed!

H Kappen

---

**DEADLINE FOR SPRING  
2009 EDITION**

**APRIL 5TH**

**PLEASE DON'T BE LATE**

## Leap into Spring at Wychwood Deli...

Fabulous Cheeseboard, best of British Artisan producers and a strong local line-up!

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[tasty@wychwooddeli.co.uk](mailto:tasty@wychwooddeli.co.uk)

[www.wychwooddeli.co.uk](http://www.wychwooddeli.co.uk)

Open Monday-Saturday 8am-6pm

## **Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council**

Happy New Year to one and all and on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to report as follows;

One question that the Parish Council were asked at the end of 2008 was if a Christmas Tree could be erected on the Village Green and a community carol service conducted. Unfortunately this was a little too late to organise for 2008, however they are hopeful this is something that can be done for December 2009.

Planning has been and is still particularly quiet, with the exception of 2A Shipton Road and a proposed development in High Street. The Parish Council continue to do what they can supporting the Village. Bridgette Crundwell has attended a course "How Local Councils fit in to the Planning System". Bridgette has reported that this was a very interesting and viable course, which should help the Parish Council considerably when discussing and replying to planning applications within the Village.

### **The Flood Sub-Committee and Flooding**

The sub-committee continue their hard work and have continued to meet regularly to discuss progress within the Village. Nick Leadbetter has now produced several reports on progress including that of the relevant agencies. The most local report and summary has been attached to the approved, recorded

November minutes and are now displayed on the Community Website. Indeed all recorded minutes, once approved are displayed on the Website for you to view.

I am pleased to report that Lord Rotherwick, Cornbury Estate, attended the December meeting and presented a report to the Parish Council of the repairs and ongoing maintenance within the Village that the Estate are carrying out. This includes works with riparian owners to improve the numerous water courses within the Village. The Parish Council would like to thank Lord Rotherwick very much for this and the time taken to attend the meeting.

Peter Greening has been looking into the possibilities of a new play/sports area for the older children of the Village. This is still very much in the early stages and there are lots of issues to address, however with local fundraising and grants from West Oxfordshire District Council it is hopeful that this will be an achievable project. Should anybody have any ideas or input to this please do not hesitate to contact Peter or indeed any of the Parish Council members.

Finally, just to remind you all that the Parish Council meet every second Monday of the month in the Tiddy Hall at 8pm, with the exception of August. It is good to see so many parishioners attending the meetings to have their say and to listen to how issues are being

dealt with by their Parish Council. Should anybody wish to contact the Council, the contact details are noted below and of course on the Village Website.

**Parish Council:**

Stuart Fox  
832004  
Elaine Byles  
831427  
Bridgette Crundwell  
830671  
Nick Leadbetter  
831571  
Peter Greening  
831757  
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)  
01608 641045

**Bed & Breakfast**

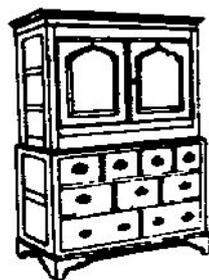
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## EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Following Tim Lyon's insight into the diary of John Simpson Calvertt in the last Grapevine, the picture on the left shows a workforce which would have been typical on farms at that time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The photograph which was taken by Frank Packer of Chipping Norton, is almost certainly a local view and perhaps in the Evenlode Valley.

Two pairs of horses are harnessed with trace chains to pull sets of harrows and the other pair is attached to a roll. The scene was obviously staged for the occasion, as the farmer with his bowler hat, watch chain, jodhpurs and terrier dog, is shown with his favourite horses, whilst the young chap who works with these horses stands empty handed in the centre of the line.

The three older men each have a four grain fork (forks with four tines). These were not pitchforks or hay forks, four grains were used for heavy work like manure carting or muck spreading, or handling short material which would fall through a two tine fork.

The picture tells me that these workmen were going squitching, a task often carried out in dry spring weather. In those days there were no chemical sprays to kill squitch grass and other weeds so when a field was badly infested, they would often try to 'clean' it before sowing the seed. Heavy harrows were used first to pull the grass out of the soil, then light harrows followed to

*www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk*

knock the soil from the roots, and the job was finished by men with four grains forking up the loose squitch and weeds into rows of small heaps about six metres apart. These were then all set on fire and although they only smoked and smouldered, all that would be left was a small heap of burnt red soil.

It is interesting to see that the older men took charge of the forks whilst the younger men in caps had to walk in the dust over the loose uneven ground behind the harrows. As the harrows filled up with squitch, they would pick them up to empty them, while on the move. A tiring job and not that easy especially when going downhill!

The men with forks would work at their own pace and discuss the local gossip at the same time. The roll has some soil sticking onto it so it is likely that they used it to crush the lumps, before harrowing out the squitch.

**Jim Pearse**

## WYCHWOOD LIBRARY

A very happy new year to you all and celebrations at Wychwood Library with news of an MBE for services to local government to Beryl Brown, retired, library manager here for more than 30 years.

Following on from the success of our adult book group we have started a junior one called **Wychwood Word-peckers**. The first monthly meeting was in November when 21 young people aged from 8 – 11 brought along their favourite books and discussed them with enthusiasm with Liz.

The December author chosen was Michael Morpurgo with a number of the group reading **The War Horse**, the moving tale of Joey the farm horse who is conscripted into the army in 1914. The next meetings are: **January 21** and **February 25**, from 3.45 until 4.15pm. Come along and join in.

The adult book group also welcomes new members. We meet on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm. The book to be discussed on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> will be **Diary of a Provincial Lady** by E.M. Delafield. Come and join us for lively discussion, nibbles and drinks.

This month we are highlighting library facilities for Disabled Borrowers and Borrowers unable to leave their homes. If you are unable to leave your home unaided you can borrow free of charge: Books, DVDs (for 21 days), Audio books on cassette and CD, Music CDs (for 21 days) and Language courses.

Also some Playstation games, videos and CD-Roms but these items are gradually being withdrawn from service. You will not be charged for overdue items or reservations.

If you have mobility, sight or hearing problems or find reading a book difficult, you can borrow free of charge as above, however DVDs and Music CDs will only be issued for the usual seven days and premium rate (blue spot) items are excluded. You will not be charged on overdue items but will need to pay a concessionary charge (currently 40p) when reserving books. To take advantage of these benefits to your membership you need to tell us so that we can update your records.

Our special thanks to the Wychwoods Local History Society for their kind gift of the Oxfordshire Parish Register Transcripts for our locality. These are on CD and cover Baptisms, Marriages and Burials variably from 1569 to the present time. We also hold a copy of the archives of the Local History Society, the Shipton-u-Wychwood old churchyard survey and Milton-u-Wychwood monumental inscriptions. Use this research material along with the Ancestry online database, free of charge and available at all Oxfordshire Libraries, for all your family history research.

Join us as usual on Wednesday mornings for coffee and brownies.

**Ruth and Liz**

*Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

## HEROES FOR ASCOTT

For the first time the **Wychwood Players** visit Tiddy Hall on **Saturday 14 March at 7.30pm** for a special performance of “Heroes” by Gerald Sibleyras and Tom Stoppard.

“Heroes” won the Olivier award for Best New Comedy in 2006 and is a wistful and witty piece about three veterans from the first world war who dream of escaping from their soldiers’ home.

Alice Burns directs “Heroes”, which is her first play for the Players since her highly successful production of “Oh, what a lovely war” in 2003, and she is delighted to be working again with Dudley Thompson, Mark Jessey and John Drew who are now all ex-soldiers!

During the evening there will be a raffle with proceeds in aid of Ascott Pre-School.

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## Ascott-under-Wychwood



**How it may look again with the two track system !**

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ALL AT LEAFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

2008 ended with the usual flurry of Christmas activity. In the Church, we had Nativity performances from Key Stage 1 children and Carol Concerts from the older children – in both cases the children delighted us both in the afternoon and in the evening, giving working parents a chance to join in the fun too. There was also a beautiful Christingle Service and a Nativity Performance from the Foundation class in the school. At all events, the children made a fantastic effort and got everyone into the Festive spirit.

The Friends of Leaffield School once again organised a Christmas disco, to which Santa paid an early visit, and a raffle for the children - these treats were very much enjoyed by all the children and many thanks go to the volunteers who give up their time to arrange these events and make sure they run so well.

To round off the year, the school received some fantastic news. The Local Authority, having taken into account evidence from the last year, has put Leaffield Primary School into the 'outstanding' category. This is a wonderful result which recognises the hard work and dedication of all the staff at the school. Our children are very lucky to have

such a great place in which to grow and learn.

The children are settling in to the New Year well, with plenty of extra-curricular activities on offer; Forest School for Class 1 and a range of after-school clubs, including Music Club, Dance Club, Construction Club and Breakfast Club on a Friday morning.

**Carole Bartlett**

Wychwood Wrought Iron 

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# Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens

## Animal of the Month

### Asian Short Clawed Otter

The Asian Short Clawed Otter is rare amongst its kind in that it lives in highly social family groups. They lack claws on their digits, instead they have hands very similar to our own which they use for searching for prey along riverbeds and carefully manipulating their food. This species has a large range throughout Asia and has been trained to catch fish by Malay fishermen.



The Otters at the Wildlife Park have bred successfully many times and both female, Rosy, and the male, Archie, have proved to be excellent parents. They currently have young in their holt being cared for by the adults and last years youngsters! In a month or so the new pups will begin to explore their enclosure – an excellent time to view this charming animal.

**Visit during half-term** – the Park is open every day from 10am.

**See the lemurs in the Madagascar enclosure** – listen to a short talk on their plight in the wild at mid-day.

**See the penguins being fed** at 11am and 3pm (second feeding time will be 4pm from March) – not on Fridays.

The restaurant will be open for hot or cold meals and snacks.

For full information on the above see the website.

**Burford Oxon OX18 4JP Tel 01993 823006**  
**Please see our website for more information**  
**[www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk)**



## CHIPPING NORTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

There are classes in Chipping Norton Town Hall most days between these dates, anyone is welcome to come and listen to the performances and the adjudications.

Some of the Festival highlights are featured below

### **Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> YOUTH JAZZ BAND CHALLENGE!**

**Chipping Norton School Hall 7.00pm**  
A new event for 2009, this promises to be an evening of foot tapping music as talented young jazz bands compete for a prize of £250 donated by The Rotary Club of Chipping Norton.  
Tickets £2.00 available on the door

### **Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30 MIKE BARDSLEY - HARPSICHORD**

**Chastleton House**  
A perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon: the dulcet tones of the harpsichord with music from the first hundred years of Chastleton House's history, from Byrd to Purcell and continental contemporaries, in this magnificent setting with log fire and pleasant company.  
Tickets £15.00 (price includes a glass of wine or fruit punch and canapés)

### **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 STRINGS MASTER CLASS**

**Chipping Norton Town Hall**  
Viviane Ronchetti with a group of young, local musicians.  
Tickets £2.00 available on the door

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30  
PIANO MASTER CLASS  
Chipping Norton Town Hall**  
Graeme Humphrey with a group of young, local musicians  
Tickets £2.00 available on the door

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March at 4.00pm  
GUY JOHNSTON (cello) &  
TOM POSTER (piano)  
Chipping Norton Town Hall**  
A wonderful opportunity to hear the highly acclaimed playing of these superb musicians in concert designed to inspire young and old alike. The programme includes music by Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, Janacek as well as the Martinu Rossini Variations and will be introduced by Tom & Guy.  
Tickets £10 adult and £5 under 18

**Saturday 21st March 7:30pm  
FESTIVAL CONCERT  
Chipping Norton Town Hall**  
A celebration of Festival entries featuring items from various classes.

Tickets for all events available from Jaffè & Neale ☎01608 641033 or for further information email [secretary@cnmf.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cnmf.org.uk)

## **SWYCH (SUSTAINABLE WYCHWOODS)**

SWYCH is a new community group, set up in October 2008. Our aim is to make sustainability much more of an issue within the community, this may cover areas such as recycling, a local exchange trading scheme, transport, food, composting, green energy, etc. and we hope in time to set up a wide variety of projects which we can continue to expand on. If you are interested in any of these projects, or indeed any others that come under the umbrella of 'sustainability' please feel free to come along to one of our meetings.

We are planning to run regular Swap Shops in the Wychwoods, probably two a year. The general idea of a Swap Shop is to bring along things that you don't want anymore and Swap them for something else, there is no money involved, it is simply a case of giving homes to unwanted or unused items and saving them from going into landfill. Our first (Christmas) Swap Shop went very well, and the quality of the items brought was extremely high. **Our next will be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> March** at the New Beaconsfield Hall and will be alongside a 'Green Fayre'.

### **NO MORE PLASTIC BAGS**

We are trying to encourage the local shops to stop giving out plastic bags. Please ask your local shop if they would consider not giving out new plastic bags.

We are also hoping to have a 'free cloth bag giveaway' at some point over the next couple months.....so please keep an eye out for details!

### **TETRAPAK & BATTERY RECYCLING**

These things, if put in your black recycling box, will very likely not be recycled. We are providing a battery box at the Co-op and a Tetrapak collection point outside 1 The Sands. We will then take them to the Recycling Centre at Dean where they will definitely go for recycling!

### **PRINTER CARTRIDGE**

Printer Cartridges can be taken to Groves office (door opposite their shop) to be put in the collection box there. You can take most original and refill cartridges, but **NOT** toner cartridges, lazer cartridges, Epson or WHSmith cartridges. Every cartridge recycled through this scheme raises money for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Thank you very much to Groves for supporting this scheme!

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**FEBRUARY Wed 25<sup>th</sup>** - February meeting – please contact Jenna for venue details.

**MARCH Sat 7<sup>th</sup>** - Countywide Swap Shop and 'Green Fayre' – New Beaconsfield Hall.

**MARCH Tues 24<sup>th</sup>** - film showing 'The Inconvenient Truth' – Milton Baptist Church Hall.

*If you would like to join SWYCH or would like to know more about our projects, please contact Jenna on 831338 or Heather 831909. Alternatively you can go to our website [www.swych.org.uk](http://www.swych.org.uk)*

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## NATURE NOTES

I usually try to be topical in these articles, but looking out on a grey December day, I've decided to break with tradition and look back to the warmer, sunnier days of late summer and to a close encounter with a creature that can trace its ancestry back at least 320 million years. Dragonflies first left their mark in the fossil record during the carboniferous era, when the coal seams were being created from decaying plant remains. The oldest known fossil was found in an English coal mine. It's quite amazing that they arrived long before and survived long after the disappearance of the dinosaurs. The prehistoric insects were somewhat larger than their modern counterparts, with wingspans of up to 24 inches; not



something that you would want to find by your local pond!

The modern dragonfly family, scientifically named Odonata, which means toothed mandible, is divided into two families; the true dragonflies (Anisoptera, unequal winged) and the damsel flies (Zygoptera, paired winged). Both have similar life styles and share a common ancestor, and it is easy to distinguish one from the other.

Dragonflies hold their wings flat when at rest, have very large eyes, which almost meet at the top of their head, are very strong and fast flyers and will travel far from the pond or stream where they hatched, whereas damsel flies usually hold their wings closed when at rest, have much smaller widely spaced eyes and a weak fluttering flight, rarely straying far from their watery birth-place.

They both have a similar life cycle, which like other primitive insects, such as grasshoppers, is an incomplete metamorphosis. That is to say that the young larval nymphs grow by shedding their skin several times until the complete adult emerges at the last moult, unlike butterflies which have a complete metamorphosis, which involves a chrysalis where the larval stage undergoes a complete bodily change.

Dragonflies spend most of their lives underwater as nymphs, living mainly in ponds, slow moving streams and canals. They can only breed in un-

polluted water that is rich in oxygen. Depending on water temperature and the availability of food the larva (nymphs) will spend 2-5 years underwater in the case of dragonflies and 1 year for damselflies. They are carnivorous hunters, laying in wait and ambushing passing insects, tadpoles and small fish with their extraordinary, extending lower jaws, impaling their prey with the sharp hook-like mandibles on the end of the jaw. This lower jaw is called a mask.



Once the nymphs have undergone the requisite number of moults they leave the water, climbing a plant stem, usually at night. Early the following day, after their final moult, they emerge as fully formed adults. When they first emerge their wings are crumpled and their colours dull. Fluid is pumped into the veins of the wings to expand them, but their final brilliant adult colours may take several days to appear.



After their long period under water their adult life span can be quite short, perhaps just a few weeks, but they still remain effective hunters catching flying insects, using their legs to form a basket and scooping-up their prey in mid-flight. Their meal is usually consumed whilst they are in flight. The position of their legs is so much modified for hunting that

they cannot be used by the adults to walk.

Dragonflies fall into two groups; the hawkers and the chasers. Hawkers have long slim bodies and will regularly patrol a territory searching for food, whereas chasers have fatter bodies and will rest on a vantage point only taking to the wing when a flying insect passes by. Both types are strong flyers reaching speeds of

up to 20 miles per hour and with all four wings being able to move independently of each other they can change direction at high speed and hover like a helicopter. They catch butterflies, mosquitoes, midges, flies and bees, consuming up to 20% of their body weight each day. Their eyesight is remarkable; dragonflies' enormous eyes contain as many as 30,000 individual facets and they are able to detect a small flying insect's movement up to 15m away. It has been estimated that up to 80% of a dragonflies brain is devoted to processing signals from their eyes.

Both dragonflies and damsel flies have interesting mating habits. Before pairing the male transfers sperm from the genital opening at the end of his body to a special organ on the second and third segment just behind his thorax. The female is then grasped by the male, just behind her head, using claspers at the end of the male's body. The female then

bends her body forward to collect the sperm and they then fly off in tandem, with the male still clasping the female, looking for an area of water to lay her eggs. The eggs of some species are scattered on the water, whilst others will fix their eggs to the stems of plants, either just above or just below water level.

Today, 27 species of dragonfly and 16 species of damselfly can be found in Britain, but some are very rare or geographically restricted. Will they still exist in another 300 million years? Who can say? They are under pressure in many areas because of pollution and the run-off of agricultural chemicals into rivers and streams as well as the loss of ponds, drainage of farmland and increasing urbanisation.



Finally a couple more facts: despite their common name “horse stingers” they don’t possess a sting and although they are called flies, they are not true flies as they only have one pair of wings!

Stuart Fox

.....  
**Woodstock Museum:**

**To 1st June 2009**

Soldiers of Oxfordshire “Bugles to Buses”

**1 February - 29 March**

Display of Amazing Russian Kinetic Sculptures

Page 56

**4 April - 26 April**

Display of Paintings, Drawings and Video

**Local Museums:**

**Witney Town:**

Will re-open in April 2009 Wednesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sunday 2pm to 4pm

**Chipping Norton:**

Will re-open at the end of March 2009

**Concerts:**

**Wood Green School:**

**13 February**

Bobby Chen, Pianist

**13 March**

Inventus String Quartet

**Burford Parish Church:**

**5 April 2009** at 7.30pm

Handel’s Messiah

**Cotswold AONB Walks:**

**14 February 2009**

Coombe: Start 10.30am - meet Village Green

**7 March 2009**

Kingham: Start 10am - meet Village Hall

**29 March 2009**

Charlbury: Start 10am meet Spendlove Car Park

West Oxon Field Club

**14 March 2009**

Meet at Fox Inn 2.30pm

**Coombe Mill:**

**15 March and 19 April 2009**

In Steam Days

*Please check with the organisers to ensure that these details remain unchanged.*

*Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

# RH Transport Services

# X8

From 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Monday to Saturday except Public Holidays

## Chipping Norton-Kingham Station-The Wychwoods

notes	NS	NS	NS	S							
Chipping Norton, West Street	06.07	06.45	07.15	08.00	08.30	09.30	10.35	11.35	12.35	13.35	14.35
Churchill, Bus Shelter	06.12	06.51	07.21	08.07	08.37	09.37	10.43	11.43	12.43	13.43	14.43
Kingham, Church Street	06.15	06.55	07.25	08.11	08.41	09.41	10.47	11.47	12.47	13.47	14.47
Kingham Station	06.19	06.58	07.28	08.14	08.44	09.44	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50	14.50
Kingham Station						09.55T	10.55T	11.55T	12.55T	13.55	14.55T
Idbury						09.58	10.58	11.58	12.58	13.58	14.58
Ffield						10.01	11.01	12.01	13.01	14.01	15.01
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot						10.05	11.05	12.05	13.05	14.05	15.05
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office						10.08	11.08	12.08	13.08	14.08	15.08
Ascott-u-Wychwood						10.14	11.14	12.14	13.14	14.14	15.14

notes	NS	S	NS	S	NS						
Chipping Norton, West Street	15.30	16.20	16.35	16.55	17.30	17.45	18.25	19.10			
Churchill, Bus Shelter	15.38	16.28	16.43	17.02	17.37	17.52	18.32	19.17			
Kingham, Church Street	15.42	16.32	16.47	17.06	17.41	17.56	18.36	19.21			
Kingham Station	15.45	16.35	16.50	17.10	17.45	18.00	18.40	19.25			
Kingham Station	15.50T	16.35	16.50T								
Idbury	15.53	16.38	16.53								
Ffield	15.56	16.41	16.56								
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot	16.00	16.45	17.00								
Shipton-u-Wychwood Post Office	16.03	16.48	17.03								
Ascott-u-Wychwood	16.09	16.54Z	--R--								

## The Wychwoods-Kingham Station-Chipping Norton

notes	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	S					
Ascott-u-Wychwood							09.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	13.30
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office							09.36	10.36	11.36	12.36	13.36
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot							09.39	10.39	11.39	12.39	13.39
Ffield							09.42	10.42	11.42	12.42	13.42
Idbury							09.45	10.45	11.45	12.45	13.45
Kingham Station							09.50	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50
Kingham Station	06.30	07.00	07.30T	08.15	08.30T	08.55T	09.55T	10.55T	11.55T	12.55T	13.55
Kingham, Church Street	06.34	07.04	07.34	08.19	08.34	08.59	09.59	10.59	11.59	12.59	13.59
Churchill, Bus Shelter	06.37	07.07	07.37	08.22	08.37	09.02	10.02	11.02	12.02	13.02	14.02
Chipping Norton, West Street	06.43	07.13	07.43	08.28	08.43	09.08	10.08	11.08	12.08	13.08	14.08

notes	NS	S	NS	S	NS	NS					
Ascott-u-Wychwood	14.30	15.30	16.15	16.30							
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office	14.36	15.36	16.21	16.36							
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot	14.39	15.39	16.24	16.39							
Ffield	14.42	15.42	16.27	16.42							
Idbury	14.45	15.45	16.30	16.45							
Kingham Station	14.50	15.50	16.35	16.50							
Kingham Station	14.55T	15.50T	16.36	16.50T	17.20T	17.55T	18.10T	18.50T	19.25T	19.50X	
Kingham, Church Street	14.59	15.54	16.39	16.54	17.24	17.59	18.14	18.54	19.29	19.54	
Churchill, Bus Shelter	15.02	15.57	16.42	16.57	17.27	18.02	18.17	18.57	19.31	19.57	
Chipping Norton, West Street	15.08	16.03	16.48	17.03	17.33	18.08	18.23	19.03	--R--	--R--	

## Monday to Friday except Public Holidays

service	C1	C1	C1	C1	T1	T1	T1	T1	C1	C1	C1
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	06.40			07.56							
Shilton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	06.42			07.58							
Ascott-u-Wychwood.....	06.48			08.04							
<b>Leaffield, The Fox .....</b>	<b>06.10</b>	<b>06.56</b>	<b>07.25</b>	<b>08.12</b>	<b>09.30</b>	<b>10.30</b>	<b>12.15</b>	<b>13.15</b>	<b>17.25</b>	<b>18.10</b>	<b>18.55</b>
Ramsden, Royal Oak .....	↓	↓	↓	↓	09.40	10.40	12.25	13.25	↓	↓	↓
Finstock, School .....	06.16	07.02	07.31	08.17	09.45	10.45	12.30	13.30	↓	↓	↓
Charbury, Five Ways .....	06.19	07.06	07.35	08.21	09.49	10.49	12.34	13.34	↓	↓	↓
Charbury, Browns Lane, Co-op .....	06.21	07.08	07.37	08.23	09.54	10.54	12.39	13.39	↓	↓	↓
<b>Charbury, Rail Station ⇌ ... [arr]</b>	<b>06.25</b>	<b>07.12</b>	<b>07.41</b>	<b>08.27</b>	<b>09.57</b>	<b>10.57</b>	<b>12.42</b>	<b>13.42</b>	<b>17.50</b>	<b>18.35</b>	<b>19.40</b>

route in Charbury: Fineways, Sturt Road, The Stade, Enstone Road, Browns Lane, Market Street, Dyers Hill, Station ⇌

service	C1	C1	C1	T1	T1	T1	T1	C1	C1	C1	C1
<b>Charbury, Rail Station ⇌ ... [dep]</b>	<b>06.25</b>	<b>07.12</b>	<b>07.41</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>11.00</b>	<b>12.45</b>	<b>13.45</b>	<b>17.10</b>	<b>17.55</b>	<b>18.40</b>	<b>19.45</b>
Charbury, Browns Lane, Co-op .....	↓	↓	↓	10.03	11.03	12.48	13.48	17.12	17.57	18.42	19.47
Charbury, Church St, The Bell .....	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	17.14	17.59	18.44	19.49
Charbury, Hixet Wood .....	↓	↓	↓	10.04	11.04	12.49	13.49	↓	↓	↓	↓
Charbury, Five Ways .....	↓	↓	↓	10.06	11.06	12.51	13.51	17.16	18.01	18.46	19.51
Finstock, School .....	↓	↓	↓	10.10	11.10	12.55	13.55	17.20	18.05	18.50	19.55
Ramsden, Royal Oak .....	↓	↓	↓	10.15	11.15	13.00	14.00	↓	↓	↓	↓
<b>Leaffield, The Fox .....</b>	↓	<b>07.25</b>	↓	<b>10.25</b>	<b>11.25</b>	<b>13.10</b>	<b>14.10</b>	<b>17.25</b>	<b>18.10</b>	<b>18.55</b>	<b>--R--</b>
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	--R--		--R--					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--
Shilton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	--R--		--R--					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--
<b>Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...</b>	<b>06.40</b>		<b>07.56</b>					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--

route in Charbury: Station ⇌, Dyers Hill, Thomas Street, Nine Acres Lane, Enstone Road, Browns Lane, then  
 C1: Church Street, Park Road, Fineways  
 T1: Sheep Street, Hixet Wood, Fineways

Notes: --R-- continues to these points on request  
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## **COOK'S CORNER: ASCOTT'S FAVOURITE RECIPES**

### **Harvard Beets**

Harvard beets are cooked beets in a sweet and sour sauce of vinegar, sugar and spices. This is also an ideal way of freezing beetroot. Goes well with roast or cold meats or use as a side-dish.

Ingredients (serves six):

- 3 cups freshly cooked beetroot, diced into centimetre cubes
- Half a cup of sugar
- One tablespoon of cornflour (cornstarch)
- Half a teaspoon of salt
- 2 whole cloves
- Half a cup of mild cider vinegar or dry white wine

Harvard beets are cooked in a double boiler. I use a Pyrex bowl that rests inside a saucepan that is about a quarter-full of water; you'll need to keep an eye on the water level as the beets will be cooking for about thirty minutes and adjust the heat to keep the water just simmering. Place the Pyrex bowl over the saucepan and bring the water to boil. Combine all the ingredients, bar the beetroot, into the bowl and stir until they are clear. Add the diced beetroot to the bowl and combine with the sauce. Place a lid over the bowl and leave over the simmering hot water for about thirty minutes.

Just before serving, bring the temperature of the double boiler up, or put the bowl in a microwave for a minute or so, but don't allow the sauce to boil. Optionally, stir in two tablespoons of butter or a tablespoon of orange marmalade.

An alternative method is to cook raw diced beetroot in the sauce. This will take about two hours or so for the beetroot to become tender, but all the beetroot juice will be in the sauce. Just keep an eye on the water level in the double boiler!

**Paul Cunningham**

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##### **Wednesday Evenings**

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