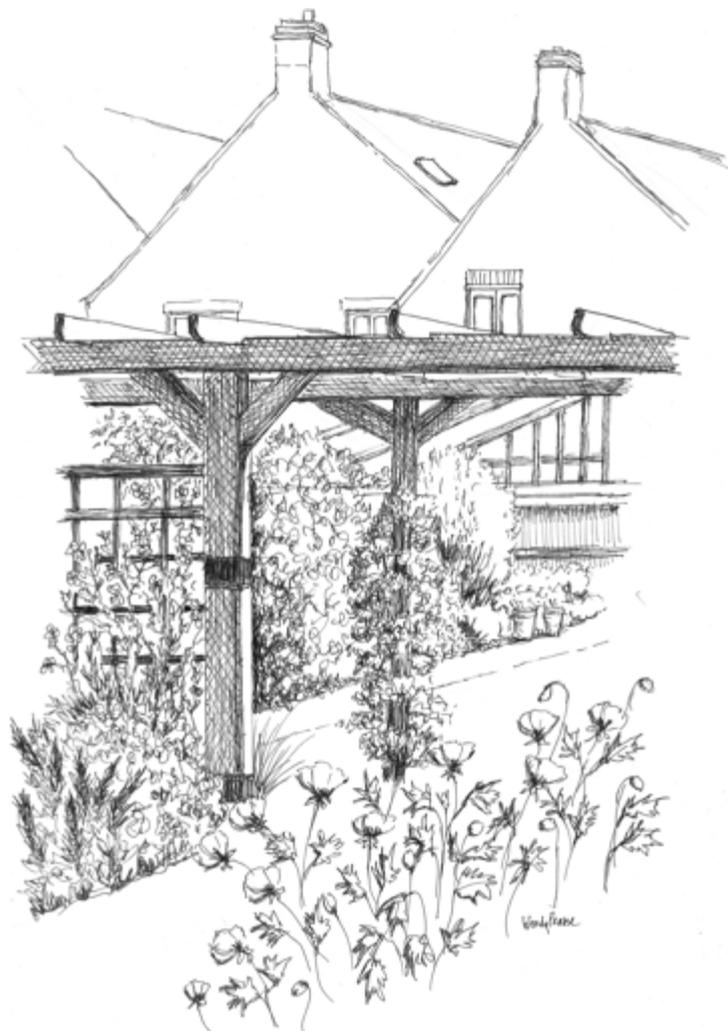


# The Ascott Grapevine

**SPECIAL COLOUR CENTRE PAGE ISSUE**



**Issue 71**

**Summer 2011**

## 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 Autumn issue of *The Ascott Grapevine* should be submitted by 5th October 2011.**

Call 01993 831023 or email:  
wendypearse@[btinternet.com](mailto:wendypearse@btinternet.com)

**The Editorial Team:**

*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.

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## Advertising Rates

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# THE CHASE BENEFICE

## IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

On the evening of October 7th in Enstone Tithe Barn we will be holding the first Benefice Harvest Barn Dance. Final details are being sorted out but we hope to keep ticket prices low and special discounts for families. Book the date in your diary NOW! Tickets will be available shortly - they will be limited and we expect them to go quickly. To reserve yours contact Mark Abrey on 01608 676777 or email [rector@thechasebenefice.org.uk](mailto:rector@thechasebenefice.org.uk).

## A NEW ROLE FOR MARK

It has just been announced that Mark and Revd. Steve Weston have been appointed as Assistant Area Deans for the Chipping Norton Deanery. Mark and Steve will be assisting Judy French who has recently been appointed as Commissary to the Archdeacon of Oxford (his assistant!). Mark will be taking on pastoral care for the clergy of the Deanery as well as deputising as Area Dean where necessary.

## VACANCY FOR BENEFICE SECRETARY

We have a vacancy for a secretary and Mark would be very interested to hear from anyone who might be interested in the job. Duties to include word-processing, audio typing, printing, database management, record keeping and filing. Flexible hours - 7 hours per

week. Confidentiality and sense of humour essential!

## CHURCH PUB MEALS

Thanks to all those who have responded to the idea of having occasional meals out as a Benefice in local pubs. If the idea of sharing a nice meal together and getting to know each other a little better is something that appeals to you please let us know. To register your interest have a word with Mark or Andrew - or for ease email [rector@thechasebenefice.org.uk](mailto:rector@thechasebenefice.org.uk).

## ST. PETERSBURG BLAGOVEST ENSEMBLE

The St. Petersburg Blagovest Ensemble, a touring group of six Russian professional singers, will give a concert of sacred and secular music in Chadlington Parish Church at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14th September. Tickets £15 (to include refreshments) will be available from Ann & David Morton Tel: 676302 or Sue Myatt Tel: 676352 and local bookshops.

## A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN FIFTEEN OBJECTS

A series of talks will be given in Deddington Parish Church beginning on 5 September with a talk by the Bishop of Oxford. For details see poster at the back of the Church.

## **THE THAYER FAMILY**

The Thayer's are returning to Texas this week to see family and friends - and to find some sun! Whilst they are 'back home' James will be baptised at St. Mark's - the Church where Andrew served his curacy. We send them off with our love and prayers and look forward to their return in August.

**Details of all future services and events in the Benefice can be found on our online calendar: [www.thechasebenefice.org.uk](http://www.thechasebenefice.org.uk)**

**Mark Abrey**

## **HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?**

If you have people or situations that you would like to be prayed for privately, either telephone Mark or send an email to:

[prayer@thechasebenefice.org.uk](mailto:prayer@thechasebenefice.org.uk)

All requests are treated in confidence.

## **WANTED!**

**Do you like the outdoor life?**

**Want a little bit more exercise and can give a couple of hours in the summer months?**

**Tim Lyon and Fred Russell would be very grateful for some additional help with cutting the grass in the Churchyard.**

**A new lawn mower is also badly needed and a donation would be hugely appreciated.**

**Please contact either of them to find out more  
(Tel. 832531)**

**With thanks**

# PIANO LESSONS

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# HOLLIE THE GUIDE DOG PUPPY

## The Final Chapter

As I write this, the responsibility of looking after Hollie is coming to an end.

June was an important month for Hollie. After the end of her season there was a six week recovery period before she was due for the spaying operation, this was calculated to be 9<sup>th</sup> June. The operation was booked and

duly carried out. The post operative instructions state that Hollie would be quiet on the day of the operation and would need to be carefully treated for at least two weeks with short walks on a lead only. It seems that Hollie did not listen to the vet and had an entirely different plan for her recovery. The day after her operation she was leaping everywhere,

chasing her toys and begging me to take her on free running walks. It was as if nothing had happened to her at the vets. I think the only way we could have kept her quiet was to tie her legs together and put a large weight on her in her bed! She constantly worried us for play and when we tried to keep her calm she would grab her toys and throw them around and leap and chase them. Her resilience after a major operation did amaze me but fortunately she did not harm herself.



We can be thankful that the vet did a thoroughly good job to secure the operational stitches in a way that there was no problem despite Hollie's activities. Although I suspect that the vet wound Hollie's age clock back to six months old as she started behaving as she did when six months old and then grew out of. That was a shock and I

had to remind her of her training and what she should and should not do.

The next major occurrence in Hollie's life was that we were told that the date for Hollie to be taken back to Leamington Spa for the next stage of her training would be 27<sup>th</sup> June. This date fitted nicely into our social

programme that would include Hollie as she was a lot less excitable when meeting new or old friends and therefore no problem being amongst my family group. My sister recently moved to Leominster and so we decided to visit her for a couple of days to see her house and also see her recently arrived grandson. We arranged to travel to her house on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and then return here on the 25<sup>th</sup> in time to travel to Kent for a family gathering on the

26<sup>th</sup> and then hand Hollie over the next day.

I decided that the lack of free run time as a result of her operation, such that Hollie was full of energy, she deserved to be given a free run before setting off on our journey to Leominster at 9:30am. I took her along the footpath in parallel to the railway towards Shipton. When we reached the field of Barley, Hollie decided it was time for a bit of crazy rushing about in amongst the long grass and, unfortunately, also the Barley. She suddenly started coughing and showed signs that something was caught in her throat that she couldn't clear. When we got home the situation was getting worse as she was coughing a lot and some with blood. I immediately took Hollie to the vet at Charlbury but they didn't have the equipment necessary to remove the obstruction so we had to go Hook Norton. The vets said that Hollie would have to be anaesthetised in order to put an endoscope down her throat to investigate further. It was decided that Hollie would remain with the vets until Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> and I would visit my sister as planned. We were in contact with the vet whilst we were away and we had to inform the Guide Dog people of the situation.

After the vets had anaesthetised Hollie for two hours they were not able to remove all of the obstructions, only a few grass seeds, and the Barley could not be removed because it acted as a multiple barb, every time they tried to

pull it, it opened and caught the sides of Hollie's bronchial tube. It was decided at this point that another investigation would be needed to be carried out on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> to remove the obstruction. This meant that Hollie would not be able to be taken for further training until a later date. The vets kept Hollie over the weekend because of the worry that she could deteriorate and the worst possible scenario would be pneumonia.

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> Hollie was anaesthetised again and fortunately over the three days between the first attempt and the next operation, her body reacted by coating the Barley with mucous preventing it spreading out and it was successfully removed. Again we were instructed to keep her calm and no activity for at least a week after she returned home. Again Hollie had a different agenda and the next day she rushed around as if the drama of the previous days had never happened.

We have been given a new date of 18<sup>th</sup> July for Hollie's training so we have had to keep Hollie for another three weeks. I feel now as though I ought to wrap her in cotton wool until the 18<sup>th</sup> but knowing Hollie she would eat it and have to be operated on to remove it!

To summarise our experience with Hollie it would be fair to say that it has been mixed between the pleasure of looking after and training Hollie as a working dog and the restriction of looking after someone else's dog with

the attendant rules and specific training that we were obliged to adhere to. It has been, without doubt, an interesting experience and one I had to try. It has been a lot harder than I imagined and the time dedicated to Hollie has been immense and in some ways restrictive. Hollie has been very demanding as she is immensely fit and inquisitive, always looking for something to occupy her mind. She is bright and attentive, but often only when she wants to be! My hope is that her next stage trainer can be strong and is able to keep Hollie on the right path. My supervisor has been pleased with her progress and says that Hollie should make the grade as a guide dog. I feel very satisfied that the work I have put into training Hollie will be of use to someone with partial or total blindness. It is this fact that will prevent me from missing her too much.

About ten days after Hollie is transferred to Leamington Spa, we will be informed of how well Hollie has settled into her new environment and then towards the end of six months intense training we will be invited to observe Hollie, from a distance, working with her trainer after which we can meet Hollie again to say hello. There is provision for contact to be maintained with Hollie but only with explicit permission of the owner and provided she is not too far away.

We have yet to decide if we will take on another puppy and as an interim after about six months or so rest, we may well act as boarders for puppy

walkers who need to get away when a young puppy dog would not be an appropriate travelling companion or if an illness requiring hospitalisation of one of the walkers family occurs.

I would like to thank the many people in the village who have shown an interest in Hollie and her training but have refrained from trying to distract her whilst I have been walking her on her lead as part of her training.

**Keith Ravenhill**

Editor:

The Ascott Grapevine Editorial team would like to thank Keith for taking the time over the past year to keep us updated about his progress with Hollie. We have all thoroughly enjoyed reading about all aspects of the training process, so well done to you and of course Hollie, for your obvious hard work and dedication - very good teamwork.

We shall all miss Hollie in our village but know that she is going to be a great companion for her future owner.

# CHARLIE SMITH REMEMBERS

## PART 2

More of Charlie Smith's Ascott memories from when he talked to us twenty years ago. As before, questions and explanations are in brackets and italics. (*Who can you remember in the farms around Ascott?*)

There was Chaundys, over at the old Manor as we call it. (*Ascott Manor*) That was Chaundy's. Now I think he drowned himself, I think so. Either drowned himself or shot himself.

Reg Barrett's wife was from Yew Tree Farm. Her father was Tom Chaundy. Tom Chaundy had Yew Tree Farm. 'Cos there was Kathleen, Phyllis and Mary Chaundy. They didn't have no sons, I don't think. Reg Barrett had it for years after he married Kath. It used to worry him to death, farming did.

Osbert Chaundy kept Long House, as they calls it. You know, just below the playing field on the left.

Poor John Walton! Did he shoot himself or hung himself? That was a lovely family, but a very tragic family, because Edgar lived in the bottom where you did Jim. (*Coldstone House*) Jim Walton, his brother, lived where Woodley lived, College Farm. (*Meadowbank House*) They worked the two farms together, see. Jim turned out the waster and they went kaput. Well they had to get out you see. Well poor old Edgar he come across into that cottage next door to where I was born, where the bishop lives now.

(*Appletree Cottage*) I thought it was wonderful when they moved. He give me sixpence for holding the horse. You know the old, moved with horse and cart. They got three lads and the daughter. John I went to school with, and Bob. He shot himself in the Army over a girl, he went in as a cadet after he left school. Edgar went in the Guards. Well he come through Dunkirk. Mary was old man, Dr Scott's receptionist. When the farm broke up, she lived with old Granny Chaundy, where I'm on about Osbert, at Long House.

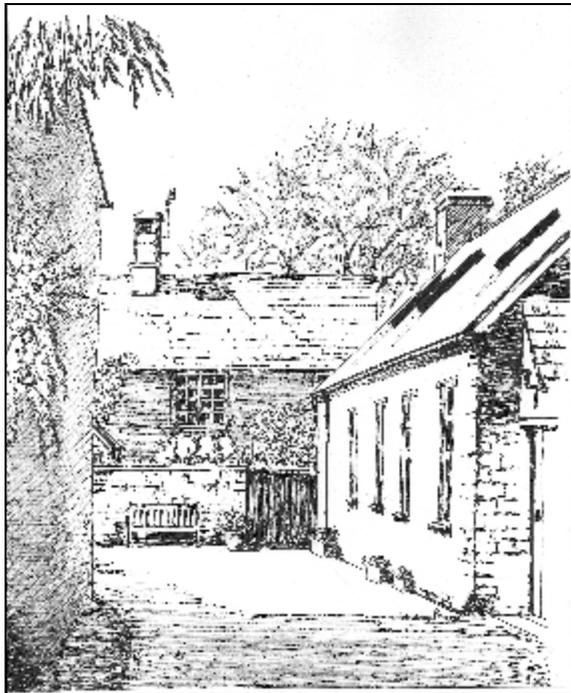
Even in them days we used to do some apple scrumping, our Bob and all them. I mean they was a lot older than me and old Bob (*Hambidge at Crown Farm*), many a time he caught our Bob up on the wall, once pinching the pears where you goes in the gate. There was a pear tree just round the corner in them days.

Well then you see, old Sonny Edington and his father then, they done Fern Hill Farm then. They worked that farm. Had quite a few sheep and that there. I was always about with their boys. 'Cos when we used to come out of chapel, we used to go and get a tennis ball and we'd all got a hockey stick that we cut out the old hedge, you know. Cyril, that's one of the sons that lives down the road, he had that for donkeys years. We used to clang a tennis ball all the way round Caudle Brook on a Sunday afternoon after we come out the chapel.

From here (*Maple Way*), up Fernhill Lane what we called Sandpit Lane, right the way along the top, down London Lane, in time for tea. And I'll never forget....I just got my first suit of long trousers. And that was just when the dewberries was about, the big ones, before the blackberries. Just round the corner from where Jim lived (*Coldstone*), the old barbed wire fence goes, facing the field that went up for Chestnut Close. (*Wychwood Manor*) Just inside the wire was a beauty. I went like that and snagged my new jacket. When I come back round I called at Miss Beck and unlucky, my dad was there. He cut me flying, two or three times. Normally like he used to side with me, but well, he worked hard to get that bit of suit for me. Boys then, we used to stop if it was lambing time or anything. Old Mr Edginton, we'd turn the old handle and grind up great big bathfuls of swedes up for him. Then have a handful and go off up there chewing away. Swede chips. And then we wasn't satisfied. Arthur and meself and David and them, we used to go in the field and get another swede- always got a shut knife- chewing away.

Then there was Reynolds, kept the mill. (*Langley Mill*) That was our first chapel outing then, down there. I used to go to chapel. (*Behind the Swan.*) Mr Reynolds used to have a punt. We used to go down and have a picnic you see, then have a ride on the punt up the river. And in them days the water was deep.'

**Wendy Pearse**



**Ascott Chapel on the right, between  
Vine House and the Swan**



## **WHY NOT VOLUNTEER AT OUR VILLAGE SHOP?**

I have only lived here for 18 months but have spent the last 12 months or so helping out at the shop. Apart from supporting this fabulous village asset, the work is interesting and varied, its a great way to meet people. Just being in the shop regularly, I do a weekly till shift, has opened my eyes to how much it has to offer, given its size, not just an amazing range of items for sale but good value too. We could always do with more helpers and we have a range of roles to offer, I am confident that we can find a role to suit you. Why not come in and have a chat with any of us, or give me a call.

**Richard Squires**  
**01993 830970**

## **HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW WEST OXFORDSHIRE AND THE COTSWOLDS?**

### **Quiz results**

Congratulations to Nigel Beales the winner of last month's competition. He receives a £10 voucher to spend in the Ascott Village Shop.

For those still puzzling about the drawings, the answers are

1. Adlestrop
2. Shipton
3. Chastleton
4. Over Norton
5. Thames
6. Toddington

Which of course, gives us **ASCOTT**.

## ASCOTT SIGNAL BOX

The doubling of the railway lines and changes to the level crossing and platforms have been mirrored by an equally major change inside the signal box. Gone are the complex levers that controlled the signals and points and in their place is a box of electronic wizardry. Instead of pulling and pushing levers everything is now controlled by a push-button system which also shows where each train is travelling on the section of line from Wolvercote through to Moreton. A computer also lets the person operating the signal box know how a scheduled service is operating once it leaves Paddington; is it early, late or run-



ning on time. As it passes each signal box on its journey this information is updated and recorded.

Our signal box still operates the line from this side of Charlbury to Bruern after which control is shared with Moreton. Our responsibility still includes operating the level crossing barriers at Bruern. One relic of the old system is the way Moreton is notified of trains passing through Ascott and on to Moreton. A key is pressed which rings a bell in the Moreton box and they acknowledge the same by ringing a bell in the Ascott box.



One advantage of the doubling of the track is that trains will no longer have to slow down to 40 mph at Ascott as they negotiated the points. This originally allowed one train to pass another that was waiting on the short length of double track on the Shipton side of the signal box.



Don't forget about the Ascott website:

At present, until the new rails are fully tested there is a 50 mph speed limit, but this will soon rise to 75 mph with 90 to 100 mph speeds allowed beyond the village.

The final picture shows the train arriving from Charlbury, which now uses the new platform.



**Stuart Fox**

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## **ASCOTT STATION**

It's 'all change' at Ascott Station and signal box now that we have two platforms, new lighting and even some car parking spaces. Sadly we still have only two trains stopping here each day. This could change if there was sufficient demand either for an additional regular service or seasonal specials, such as Christmas shopping trips into Oxford during December.

If you feel strongly about this or have your own ideas about how Ascott could be better served by First Group then email [mark.hopwood@firstgroup.com](mailto:mark.hopwood@firstgroup.com) and also pass your views on to your Parish Councillors so that they may represent the village as a whole.

# WATERMILL OPEN DAY

## 15 MAY 2011

I am sure that most reading this will have experienced times when it feels like the planning of an event can take over from the enjoyment. In some ways, organising a day or afternoon out with young children can be as tricky. The timing and context can feel like a military campaign and become all consuming. In our house, a trip out usually has to be planned around meal times, afternoon sleeps, and coupled with remembering bottles, nappies and potties – all very mundane!

It was therefore refreshing to chance upon hearing about Anne and Nigel Braithwaite opening up their garden and grounds of the Watermill on a Sunday afternoon in mid-May. On our door step and fun for the kids. It sounded like the perfect Sunday afternoon.

I have to confess our eldest, Cerys, was a bit apprehensive – and whilst William was happy to go if Cerys did – Baby Evan was so sleepy he was not being offered the choice. I had made my mind up; the fresh air would do them all good. It was time to stop thinking, to seize the moment and head on our way!

As soon as we arrived, we met Alec

which in itself was great value. Alec reeled off a list of activities that we might enjoy, encouraging us to plump for the nature trail first of all, then to seek out the rescue owls that had been brought along for display. As we crossed the courtyard, we immediately recognised another familiar face in Fred Russell, who is always keen to greet us.

We regularly cross paths with Fred on a Saturday morning – taking our usual walk to the Village Shop to get a newspaper, loaf of bread, and a Saturday treat. In fact, Fred and Mary Barco were probably the first people I met back in 2005 when we first moved into Maple



Cerys & William find Nosey the Gnome

Way.

Our daughter Cerys was only 9 months old and wanting to go out without driving anywhere, I soon discovered that I could take her pram through a short cut into Heritage Lane and then on via the Churchyard. It's since become our regular Saturday morning stroll almost every weekend, with William joining us three years ago, and most recently Baby Evan.

Fred was reserved for once, which is most unlike him. In fact, I have taken to nominating Fred as the Head of

Marketing for the Village Shop as he never resists an invitation to encourage the children to buy lots of chocolates and sweets – ‘spend lots of money’ is his usual refrain.

We headed on to the nature trail – but not without the children spotting what looked suspiciously like a bouncy castle adjacent to the orchard. A quick distraction – an encouragement to search for the white marker poles – got us back onto the trail and towards the river.

William confidently informed us that he had spotted at least one crocodile, several octopuses and perhaps also a dolphin leaping out to welcome us along the meandering riverbank course.

It was rather slow going with Baby Evan’s buggy bouncing along in and out of the ruts formed by the mud and grass mounds – but he was soundly sleeping whilst the other two continued their quest for more exotic animals to spot!

We were soon caught up by two gents taking a cycling tour via the fields and stopped to watch as they precariously carried their bikes over the footbridge and onwards with their cross-country *randonee*.

As we followed the path towards the Willow Tree, Cerys found Nosey the Gnome’s first treasure chest – a basket laden with sweets – and also a curt

warning that he was watching – so only take one each!

Soon we were also joined by a Mum and Daughter from Broughton Poggs – and what great timing too – as Baby Evan’s buggy was proving to be difficult to manoeuvre over the stiles and most especially Tadpole Bridge. Although Alec had reassured us, in truth it was probably a little bit too ambitious to wheel this through the whole trail and we were very grateful for their help.



Cerys & William on Roly’s Fordson Dexta

No sooner had we left Nettle Dell, with just one sting, we sheltered from the sun taking the path under the cool canopies formed by Spruce Copse. Alec had told us to keep an eye out here for Nosey the Gnome and we were not to be disappointed. We headed up a small rise and there on the left was his humble home, set back from the path, discreetly covered in spruce branches.

After some deliberation, Cerys and William finally came to a sensible conclusion in agreeing that they had both spotted his hideout at the same time, and on closer inspection Nosey greeted us all with a mechanical and rather spooky salutation.

We had found Nosey, but had one more Treasure Chest to find and headed back towards the Watermill, completing the trail, and stumbling upon the final sweet repository, thoughtfully located at the final stile leading us

into the gardens where the owls were based.

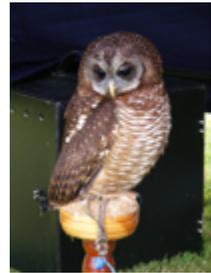
Three sleepy owls peeped out of the tent gazing at us as we stopped to learn that the Barn and Tawny Owls that had been rescued locally, were also accompanied by a beautifully plumed African Owl that blinked at us in slow motion, drawing his eyelids down to acknowledge us with a profound and wise demeanour. Perhaps he had known where Nosey and his Treasure Chests were all along!

Whilst I had a lovely conversation with both Nigel and his son-in-law under the shade of the Mulberry Tree in the orchard, the children alternated between hopping on the bouncy castle and Roly's Fordson Dexta that he had parked up in the yard.

It was past tea-time when I finally managed to convince Cerys and Wil-

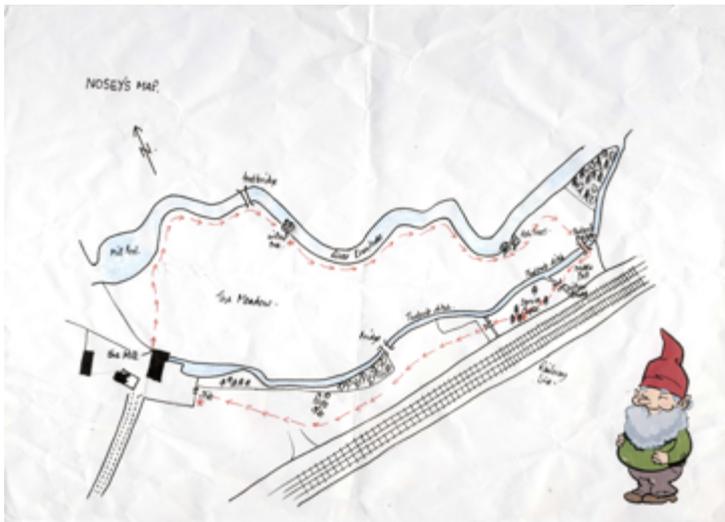
liam that one-last go on the bouncy castle actually meant that; and we made our way up the footpath away from the Watermill, tired but happy.

Thank you Anne and Nigel for putting on such a great local event – it was evident that a lot of time and thought had gone into each part of this. A delightful afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed by us all. No sooner had we arrived back home, Cerys was enquiring as to whether we would be coming back next year. I do hope so, in fact it's one of the first dates that we will be writing onto our New Year calendar.



African Owl

**Kester Harvey**



## A WARNING : COUNCIL TAX SCAM

Council tax scam warning: Residents are being urged not to give out personal information following reports of scam phone calls and e-mails in our district offering either refunds of overpaid Council Tax or asking for payment of an underpaid bill to avoid a fine. The calls and e-mails claim to be from the local council, valuation office or some similar organisation and they ask for personal information and bank details to allow them to process the refund or payment. These phone calls and e-mails have no connection to the Council and we urge people not to give their bank details or other personal information to people who contact them out of the blue. Anyone who is unsure about the validity of a call or e-mail should contact **West Oxfordshire District Council on 01993 861040 or email [local.taxation@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:local.taxation@westoxon.gov.uk)** before giving out any information.

**Carys Davies, Communications Manager. West Oxfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB  
t: 01993 861615 f: 01993 861450 m: 07771 965 360**

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## GOLFERS' TALES

Not to say Carol and I are keen golfers, but as we planned our move to this area in 2009, we even chose a golf club before we found a house! We now play at Chipping Norton, *Chippy*, and live here in Ascott. We are absolutely sure both have been superb choices for us.

This last winter was a tough one for golfers and greenkeepers alike with the protracted cold spell, but at long last the spring came, and thank goodness the snow and frosts vanished and the grass started to grow again. With the recent mixture of warm and wet conditions most courses are now looking great. Chippy, in particular, is a picture and playing stunningly!



What extremes we have to endure in fulfilling our pastime! For example.

A couple of Sundays ago, on an unbelievably wet and windy day, Carol was playing in a Ladies team at Chippy, where 140 competitors competed for the annual club Pro Am. As a result of the difficult conditions, even with 35 local PGA Pro's only three sub par scores were returned with **West Berks Club Pro Paul Simpson winning the**

**Competition with a great performance, 3 under 68.** Ex-Chippy Pro and Director of Golf Neil Rowlands just missed out on a top three place with a round of 71. The Top team prize was also won by West Berk's on 133, Chippy teams claimed second on 135 and third, 136. On the day, our Green Staff worked extremely hard, including having to repeatedly "squeegee" greens, and received a resounding vote of thanks and appreciation from all Competitors for maintaining the Course in a playable condition throughout the day.



I'd been invited to play in a Men's Invitation at Cirencester the same day, so didn't escape the weather! Their golf course is on the top of a hill, so we played in torrential rain and strong winds for four and a half hours with no shelter. I really can't argue with non-golfers who think we are mad! Every bin at every tee was full of dead golf umbrellas! I even managed to pull a calf muscle chasing down an older playing partner's umbrella, every time

I got close it pulled away again! By the end, I could hardly turn the car key in the lock, my hands were so numb. Anyway, I actually played quite well however didn't win anything, as usual, but it all seemed worthwhile after a hot shower, good company, a few drinks and a splendid hot meal.

On the other extreme, last weekend we played in a mixed match against our very local rivals The Wychwood. What a difference, instead of multiple layers of waterproofs, we needed regular applications of suncream and large intakes of water. Wychwood was also in good nick, and it was nice to play the recently improved 14<sup>th</sup>, now a good, challenging hole. Overall, it proved to be a very evenly balanced match. Our game was also competitive and closely fought. We were giving a few shots and had to work hard to keep in touch. All four players did their bit and we had to make a birdie putt on the last to scrape in with a half (ie a draw). Good job we did, because after a good hearty meal in the Wychwood clubhouse, the Lady Captain announced the overall result – a draw!! All were delighted.

It's not all golf at Chippy, our social programme recently included.... ELVIS, yes ELVIS!

Elvis's arrival at the club was greeted by a very welcoming and enthusiastic audience, as evidenced by certain none-disclosed photos of the 'lucky' ladies. The evening commenced with an excellent dinner followed by a quite outstanding performance by 'Alvin' who had no trouble getting everyone

present 'rocking in the aisles'. Carol and I were convinced he was so good he had to be miming, but we were proved wrong! If you ever get a chance to see him – go for it!



Some of you may be interested in an outline of the Club's history.

*The Golf Club Officially Started 11th March 1890 on Chipping Norton Common and is the oldest Club in Oxfordshire.* Until writing to the R&A, Fife, Scotland in May 1987, the Club was under the impression that it started in 1930 and had celebrated its 50 years of age. The R&A sent various entries from 'The Golf Annual' magazine, the first copy, which changed the outlook of the history of the Club is as follows.

*Chipping Norton Golf Club, Instituted March 11th 1890 Entrance Fee, None; Annual Subscription, Ten Shillings, Number of Members 40 President- Dr.G.Wright Hutchinson Committee- Rev.G.A..Littledale, A.W.S.Hitcham, R.Lawton, A.Mackenzie, C.G.Rowell, P.G.Saunders and A.Webb. Secretary - F.F. Walker, Chipping Norton, Oxon. Green keeper - A.Finch Club Prizes - Hitchman Cup (scratch), to be played for on a date not yet fixed; President's and other prizes (handicap) The green is situated close to Chipping Norton Station, on the*

*Banbury and Cheltenham Railway. There is capital accommodation for visitors at the White Hart and Crown hotels. The kennels of the Heythrop Hounds are at Chipping Norton and it is also within hunting distance of the Bicester and Warwickshire packs.*

In 1907 the club moved to the present Southcombe site, playing on rented land. Golfing Annual states *'The new course of nine holes, vary from 156 to 525 yards (par 36) is a mile and a half from Chipping Norton station on the Banbury and Cheltenham Railway. There is a small club house. Visitors 1/- a day or 3/- per week. Capital accommodation is to be had.'* In 1908 Nisbet's Golfers Year Book quoted *'the course is over pasture land and is playable from 1st April to September'*.

The club conveyance records show in 2nd February 1922 Margaret Annie Busby owned the land, sold it on 9th November 1934 to Charles Pinford. He agreed to sell the course land to the Club whereby the Committee promised to loan the Club £150 and members £141 towards the £600 purchase. Negotiations to buy the land took place fairly quickly and by 24th December 1934 it became the property of Chipping Norton Golf Club.

Originally, courses were referred to as Greens. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Fife, application form for the Open in mid 1950 stated that the competition would be played on the club green. Steel shafts would become the popular choice for much of the second half of the twentieth century.

Though the steel shafts can be traced back as early as the 1890's, they were not legalized by the USGA until 1925 and not until 1929 by the R&A.

In 1944, during WW2, along with many others, the course was ploughed up for the planting of cereals. When it was relaid in 1948, the direction of play was reversed, as the back nine holes are today. Apart from the 18<sup>th</sup> hole, the last nine greens were the same as the originals. In 1955 an extra set of tees were laid which made the course 18 holes. In 1984 extra land was bought for an additional nine holes, now the front nine, to truly provide 18 different holes. The current clubhouse was added in 1987.



On 27th August 2007, the bank holiday scramble was played on the '1907 original course' In recognition and celebration of 100 years of Golf at Southcome. The club's Archivist, Desmond Boulton arranged that the traditional Bank Holiday Competition be played over the course that resembled the original layout as near possible. Dress Code and Golf Clubs from the 1900's, were much in evidence.

Recently the club has purchased adjacent land. Contracts have just been signed and work is expected to begin in the next couple of months to provide a flood-lit driving range and par 3 course enhancing the club's junior academy.

If you are interested the Club has a good web site, [www.chippingnortongolfclub.com](http://www.chippingnortongolfclub.com), for further information.

If anyone wants to play as our guest, please give us a call on 830970.

**Richard Squires**

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## **WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

After the past very successful season the History Society programme will begin again on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011, at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. when Liz Woolley is returning to talk about Child Labour in 18c Oxfordshire. She will be followed on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at Shipton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m when after the A.G.M. Guthrie Piggot will tell us about the history of Fifield.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £9 for an individual and £12 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at £2 per head.

**More information can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023 or the WLHS Website [www.wychwoodshistory.org](http://www.wychwoodshistory.org)**

## **ENORMOUS GREAT KNOCKERS**

**Now she had these enormous great knockers,  
They were round at the front and the back.  
Of very high class, as smooth as a glass,  
Which I grabbed and gave a hard whack.**

**Then she shouted, 'Hey just get your hands off.  
My knockers are only for view.  
I only let friends grab hold of their ends,  
Not yobos and people like you.**

**My knockers are early Victorian.  
I've been told they are really unique.  
They could be Queen Anne's,  
So just get your hands  
Off something that is really antique.**

**I've been asked by the local museum  
To let them go there on show.  
Hung over a stand, they would look really grand  
And lit by an infra red glow.**

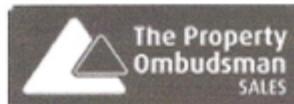
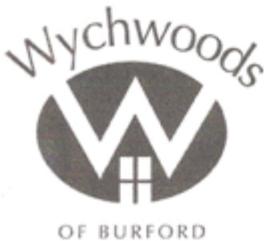
**The trouble they are so heavy.  
That's how my husband got killed.  
He was hit on the knapper, by one of my knockers  
And he wasn't long for this world.**

**He was warned they were not to be played with,  
But he would go poking around,  
He was caught coming up  
Just after he ducked, by my knocker just hanging down.'**

**I stood by the door while this woman  
Shouted at me her abuse.  
So with a firm wrist, I gave her knocker a twist  
Until it fell out and came loose.**

**Then she screamed, ' Oh my little brass monkey  
You've broken free from its clasp.  
You've bent all its toes, one hand up its nose  
And the other you've bent up its back.'**

**Fred Russell**



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## THE ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD VILLAGE CHARITY

Every so often we like to remind local residents about the Ascott Village Charity. It exists for the benefit of the community and although our available funds are limited, the trustees try to use them in a way that will be of wide benefit to our fellow residents. Our purposes include helping with education or training of our young people, environmental projects (flood prevention for instance), and financial help when it is needed. The Charity has ancient origins dating back to the early eighteen hundreds or even earlier, and

parts of the Charity have well known local names, such as the Poor's Estate and the Lower Green Charity. To this day the Charity owns the freehold of the field known as Lower Green, which is just next to the bridge over the River Evenlode on the Chippy road.

Those of you who are regular readers of the village notice boards (!) will know that the trustees of the Charity are John Cull (the Chairman) and our rector the Rev Mark Abrey, Elaine Byles, Stuart Fox, Mark Dawbarn,

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Web: <http://www.wychwoodhealing.co.uk>

Keith Ravenhill and Pauline Marshall. They would like to hear from the local community with thoughts on how Charity money might be allocated

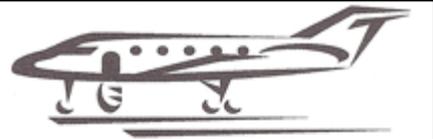
Recent environmental projects have included helping with improvements to the amenity of the riverbank alongside Lower Green and to clear the river at that point, of the debris that had accumulated there. This was done by means of a cash contribution and with the help of local volunteers.

Over the past year the trustees have set up and advertised a scheme for assisting young residents with grants towards purchase of books or equipment in connection with their further education and training. Since the year-end several young residents have applied for grants, which have been agreed either finally or conditionally. The Trustees hope to continue with this scheme and would like to find ways of ensuring that all eligible residents are aware of it and encouraged to apply. So if there is a young person in your family who is starting further education or vocational training, please make sure they apply.

As in the previous year the Charity made a donation last December for the provision of lights on the Christmas tree that had been set up on The Green by the Parish Council. The marquee purchased in 2008 for the benefit of the village has continued in use and is available for local charities and fund-raising causes free of charge. The Charity is also hoping to help in the organisation of a “fun run” on 30th October.

The Charity welcomes participation in its activities and projects by local residents and if you have any ideas for us, please contact one of the trustees.

**Mark Dawbarn**



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**It's becoming quite a social occasion and whilst drinking your coffee, you can browse the bring and buy stalls. Perhaps tempted by the vicar's Elderberry Cordial, homemade jam, cakes, fresh local produce, plants or numerous other items.**

**At the same time, you can meet your neighbours, catch up on local news and help provide funds for our beautiful old church, which in today's economic climate, welcomes all contributions. Anne and June will be only too pleased to see you there.**

**Do come.**

**Wendy Pearse**



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## GARDENING IN ASCOTT

Why do we garden? It must be a question many of us gardeners have asked ourselves particularly this year. Last winter was cold for so long and then we had that lovely early spring, but no rain, followed by those hard



late frosts. Many of us in our valley must have lost shrubs and trees such as Bay and Ceanothus, which might have been predicted, but I lost many shrubs which one would have considered very hardy. My Pyracantha, which had admittedly put on lots of nice growth in the Autumn, has been severely damaged. My non-gardening husband says he cannot bear another spring with suppers and digestions spoilt by the lament of yet another casualty found in the garden that day!

Is there some deep human need to garden? Since we stopped roaming around the countryside hunter-gathering and settled down to cultivate the land, food has been our priority. Even if we accept the idea of need, it does not explain the passion many of us have tending a garden to be enjoyed purely for its aesthetic value. In Britain there does not appear to be much evidence of gardening until the Romans arrived. They brought their knowledge of the ancient cultures of the Middle East and the Mediterranean with their concept of Pleasure Gardens and Paradise Gardens, which were places to be enjoyed solely for their beauty. So are

we responding to a spiritual need to produce our own little paradise or heaven here in this life?

I was recently very fortunate to visit the beautiful landscape garden of Rousham in the company of its head gardener.

It was designed by William Kent in the 1700s, and probably due to the lack of financial wherewithal of succeeding generations, remains very much as Kent intended when he drew up his plans. Certainly this style of gardening must be a response to man's need to produce a perfect world, controlled by us and emulating the gods. We even furnish such gardens with statues of gods and heroes so we can walk amongst these worthies; it is not however a style that all appreciate.

***Large or small (a garden) should look both orderly and rich. It should be well fenced from the outside world. It should by no means imitate either the wilfulness or the wildness of nature, but should look like a thing never to be seen except near a house.***

***William Morris***

Grand gardens like Rousham were often an expression of the owners' wealth and taste and were designed to impress visitors. Even today we are

probably guilty of valuing those gardens created by the latest celebrity designers at the Chelsea Flower Show, and perhaps undervaluing our hard-won success with our own little plots, perhaps created over many years as time and resources allow.

*The purpose of a garden is to give happiness and repose of mind, which is more often enjoyed in the contemplation of the homely border...than in any of those great gardens where the flowers lose their identity, and with it their hold on the human heart.*

*Gertrude Jekyll*

I hope the reason I garden is a pure expression of my love of nature. To be in my garden must be the purest of all worldly pleasures. On a good day I am as rooted as our fine ash tree and just as strong; able to withstand the parched earth of drought, revel in the sun and the rain, and bend with the wind. Perhaps the odd limb may need to be sacrificed for survival, but still the ash and I are deeply rooted and secure.

## **SWEET PEAS**

I have always grown sweet peas. At least since I have had a plot, be it garden or allotment. A packet of seed sown in pots and given a little shelter can provide a grand show in the garden and enough cut flowers to fill a few

vases full of scent and beauty for the house over a two to three month period. I have tried sowing seed in Autumn but without success. They always rot or just germinate and sulk for the winter, making poor plants. I sow mine in February: twenty to twenty-five 4" pots, each sown with five seeds and placed either in the greenhouse or given a little shelter in the cold frame, or one of those shelf units covered in a plastic zipped cover. Grown on in their pots and planted out into the garden in late spring, they will give me enough to cover two wigwam type supports and about 8' to 9' of trellis. Soil preparation seems key to a long growing season and good flower production. I dig out a spade depth of soil where I am going to plant, and fill the trench or hole with either garden compost, spent mushroom compost or in a lean year, strips of newspaper soaked in water together with any of last year's liquid tomato feed. Then back-fill with the removed soil and plant the sweet peas.

I always try to grow some of the old variety Cupani (or Matucana which appear identical to me). They have the strongest perfume and are an intense colour combination of purple and crimson. They make a stunning vase combination with *Alchemilla mollis* (Lady's Mantle) with its fine lime green frothy flowers. In truth, since I save seed from my own plants from year to year, my seed is always a bit of a mix of varieties but they all have scent whatever their colour.

## **A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE MONK & A SWEET PEA**

Cupani was cultivated by a monk, Father Cupani, gardening in his monastery in Sicily at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> Century. He found a highly scented sweet pea and developed his stock to give larger and better flowers whilst retaining the wonderful fragrance of his first discovery. He sent seed to Britain and we still grow his beautiful sweet pea here. I like to imagine Father Cupani walking in the cool of the Sicilian evening, at repose after a day of monastic duties, sniffing his rows of sweet peas and glorying in their perfume and beauty, just as I still do on most summer evenings.

## **OPEN GARDENS**

The lovely weather of the Open Gardens weekend in late June gave all the flowers, shrubs and trees a special flush of beauty. I was amazed at the variety of all the gardens; sometimes surprised and delighted at the great designs and displays, but mostly just so appreciative of all the hard work which goes into making these village gardens so delightful. My only regret is that with many friends visiting us to view the gardens, I did not manage to get around to see them all myself!

## **LATE SUMMER AND AUTUMN JOBS**

A time to harvest and enjoy the fruits of your labours. Hopefully, despite the late frosts this year some of us will have some apples and pears. Don't forget to harvest some seeds from annuals like sweet peas to sow next year, and delight in the abundance of nature.

I could give a list of all those jobs we should do now like taking cuttings of tender plants and trimming lavender, but you can read better informed instruction in most gardening books.

I shall be making a note of my successes and disappointments and improvements in the planning for next year's display. Happiness however, must lie in the acceptance of what *is* and not what might be. I am working towards that aim, but for now shall still be jotting down improvements in my garden notebook.

Do visit Rousham Gardens\* it is only a few miles from us here, and will be looking lovely in the late summer light. Take a picnic and feast with the gods!

*\*N.B: no children under 15 or dogs are allowed*

**Madeline Galistan**



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## **ASCOTT'S BIG SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!**

**We are planning to set up a residents' volunteer group to help with general maintenance and small conservation projects around the village.**

**Our initial idea is to work for one morning per month but, of course, volunteers would not be expected to commit to every month. Previous ad hoc working parties have been enjoyed by all and have created a great sense of satisfaction and community spirit.**

**We would be extremely grateful if you would be prepared to put your name and contact details on the list held at the village shop (ALL ages, male and female) or contact Philippa Carter (tel.830344/[pippa.carter2@gmail.com](mailto:pippa.carter2@gmail.com)).**

**We hope to hold a planning meeting over a glass or two soon.**

## **AN IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

**At 7.30pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September there will be another concert in Chadlington Parish Church by the BLAGOVEST ENSEMBLE, a touring group of six professional Russian singers from St. Petersburg, who will give us an amazing performance of sacred and secular music. With the unique sound of Russian singing and the wonderful acoustic of this beautiful church this is definitely not to be missed. Tickets - £15 (students £10) – to include refreshments - are available from Morton - 01608 676302, or from Jaffe & Neale Bookshop, Chipping Norton and Evenlode Books in Charlbury. For further information contact Morton as above.**

**The concert is generously sponsored by A.L. Sole, Funeral Directors of Chipping Norton - 01608 644112 - and is in aid of Church Funds.**

## ASCOTT VILLAGE FETE

Despite having to cancel the final hour due to an exceptional heavy shower, our Village Fete this year was another great success! A variety of entertainment was there to entice people through the gates: The Hereburgh Morris Dancers started the afternoon off, followed by our now infamous Dog Show, Children's Punch and Judy and magic show, The Debbie Arthurs Jazz Band and wonderful performances from The Ascott Pre-school, The Wychwood and Leaffield Primary Schools.

Five marquees this year were filled with stalls selling delicious homemade cakes which came from as far away as Leicester, (Thank your Mrs Macintosh!) fine china cups and plates, a large selection of plants, homemade cards, candles, second hand books, bottles and almost everything you ever needed on the White Elephant! As ever the BBQ, Beer and teas were kept busy providing some excellent burgers, sausages, beers, Pimms and cakes. We finally found the Aunt Sally too (after three years of looking!), so it was dusted down and put next to the Beer tent, perfect! A new addition this year were stalls representing The Grapevine magazine, The Ascott Pre-School, and The Coldstone Angling Club, plus Theresa Ceesay and a colleague promoting the new FGW railway track, platforms etc.

The vintage cars and tractors attracted both young and old as did the magnificent Fire Engine and the Firemen from Charlbury, especially when they turned on the water hoses!!!

As ever, a BIG thank you to everyone who helped in various guises, and to all those who came and supported us. Despite the shortened afternoon, we still managed to raise £3,000.00 to go towards the upkeep of our Village Church.

**Debra Cull**  
on behalf of the Fete Committee



## ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD OPEN GARDENS



The Open Gardens event took place on Saturday 25 June and Sunday 26 June 2011. Fifteen gardens were open together with four other venues. Saturday began slowly, it was dull and looked as though it might rain but as the sun came out so did the visitors. Sunday in contrast was a very hot and humid day nevertheless many visitors came and remarked on what a lovely village this was and how many attractive gardens there were. The Church had a beautiful, much appreciated Flower Festival. The manor farm fishing lake was open, as was Wychwood Wrought Iron where Chrissies' Owls, always

a draw, could be seen on the Sunday and there was a BBQ. Celia Crampton exhibited her botanical paintings and I marvelled at the intricate detail of flowers and seed pods she is able to achieve. An attractive programme of gardens was designed by Andy Meaden who has his own design studio in Milton. So many other villagers contributed in so many ways – making and fixing signs, providing plants and teas for sale, giving donations of money and, not to be forgotten, visiting all the delights so that it was truly a village event.

The grand total of £880 was collected. Thank you all for making it such a successful weekend.

**Yvette Keauffling**

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE FETE AND OPEN GARDENS ARE SHOWN IN GLORIOUS COLOUR ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES !**

**Photographs courtesy of H Kappen and S Fox**

## JOLLY JAPES FROM SIXTY YEARS AGO

We boys would often stand at the level crossing gates, waiting for the train to pull into the station. The engine would come to a stop right on the crossing, hissing with steam and smelling of hot oil and grease, its great wheels and pistons only feet away the other side of the gates, frightening and magnificent in its power. At the far end of the platform the guard would jump from the train and walk along the platform shouting, 'Ass cut, Ass cut?' We would shout back, 'No, only slightly bruised.'

Overheard on the bus to Chippie.

First girl. 'Have you let your boyfriend go all the way yet?'

Second girl. 'No, only as far as our front gate.'

First girl. 'Do you take precautions before making love?'

Second girl. 'Yes, we always lock the door before going to bed.'

**Fred Russell**

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## NATURE NOTES

We are privileged to live in one of the most attractive parts of England, situated as we are on the North Eastern edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Much of the wildlife that we see and enjoy depends on the diverse habitats that are found across the Cotswolds that vary from the high windswept Wolds to sheltered river valleys and from the steep escarpment in the west to the gently rolling fields and woodlands of the east.

How was this landscape formed? What forces created the Cotswolds?

The story begins approximately 200 million years ago, in the Triassic Era when dinosaurs walked the earth. A time when the global climate was much warmer than today and the area that would eventually become England was covered in a shallow tropical sea and the land masses that

would form North America and Eurasia were still joined. During this period a thick layer of sediment accumulated and was consolidated to form a blue-grey clay. Within this layer further deposits of silt and calcium carbonate accumulated and were compressed. Today these marlstone slabs are occasionally still quarried but in the past they were used extensively to construct foot bridges

over streams and provide stone flooring.

As time passed and marine organisms flourished in the warm seas, further sediments composed of shells and corals were deposited. They eventually formed a limestone layer, which is known as the Inferior Oolite. When examined closely this type of limestone can be seen to be composed of many small spherical particles (ooliths) cemented together. In some areas, as a result of volcanic activity, a further deposit was laid down; this layer was rich in silica and is called Fuller's Earth. Because of its absorbent qualities it was widely used in the Middle Ages to clean and remove grease from woollen fleeces, a process referred to as fulling.

### FARMERS MARKETS

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Every Tuesday 9.00am - 1.00pm

#### **Stow on the Wold**

2nd Thursday of every month 9.00am - 1.00pm

#### **Charlbury**

3 monthly

#### **Witney**

3rd Wednesday of every month 9.00am - 1.00pm

#### **Woodstock**

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#### **Chipping Norton**

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In the Jurassic era, 140 million years ago, the final major strata of rock was laid down, this is known as the Great Oolite. This limestone is free from the small particles that make up the Inferior Oolite and is an excellent building material. It was used in the construction of St Paul's Cathedral, Windsor Castle and many of the fine buildings in Bath. The Great Oolite forms a belt of limestone stretching from East Yorkshire across England to Bath.

Coming closer to the present day, a mere 2.5million years ago, we enter the Pleistocene Era. By now the continents had more or less assumed their present



day positions and the land that formed the British Isles had, through the movement of tectonic plates, assumed its present northerly position. This was an era of repeated glaciations, followed by periods of warming which seem to follow two cycles one of 100,000 years and the other 41,000 years. The last Ice Age ended around 10,000 years ago. At times up to thirty percent of the earth's surface was covered by ice, sometimes to a depth of 1,500 to 3,000 metres and sea levels were up to 100 metres lower than today.

It was during this era that the Cotswold uplift occurred, forming the basis for today's landscape, raising a vast tilted limestone plateau with the

highest points on the western escarpment overlooking the Severn Valley and the vale of Evesham, rising to over 200 metres in places. To the east the land dips away gradually merging with the fertile plains of the Midlands. During the last period of glaciation the ice sheets did not extend as far south as the Cotswolds. At that time our landscape would have been similar to

the present day Arctic tundra with the ground frozen by permafrost. It is speculated that during earlier Ice Ages the ice sheets would have extended this far south and may have been re-

sponsible for creating many of the deep valleys that bisect the area. Certainly a small river, like the Evenlode, could not have created such a wide deep valley, although as the glaciers melted and retreated vast quantities of melt water would be passing through the area, carving into softer rocks and creating deep wide valleys.

The Evenlode valley contains deposits that originated from the Birmingham region. The so called Northern Drift carried and deposited debris here as the glaciers moved south. Debris may also have been carried by fast-flowing rivers. There is also a clay layer which is believed to be a remnant of Lake Harrison, a huge lake that

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

filled an area between the Northern Cotswolds and Leicestershire that was fed by melt water from the ice sheets surrounding it. By dating the debris from the Northern Drift at about 450,000 years old and noting that it is widely deposited over the Cotswolds geologists consider that this debris must have been carried here before the uplift of the area occurred, therefore the Cotswolds are, in geological terms, a relatively recent landscape.



Since the end of the last period of glaciation it has been man that has shaped the Cotswold landscape, with Neolithic long barrows, standing stones from the Bronze Age, hill forts from the Iron Age, roads and villas built by the Romans, Saxon settlements and churches built with the wealth generated by the wool trade in the Middle Ages. Woodland was cleared to provide land for sheep grazing and more recently cereal production and the fields were surrounded by dry stone walls. The same honey-coloured stone was used to build our towns and villages giving the area its distinctive appearance. The enclosures saw the disappearance of much common land and the creation of fields with straight boundaries often marked by the planting of single species hedgerows, usually Hawthorn or Blackthorn.

Today we are still changing our landscape, this time with radio masts, wind turbines, wider faster roads, domestic and industrial buildings with horses in the fields rather than sheep. But underneath the superficial additions of man, the undeniable beauty of the Cotswolds still remains.

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## A POEM REMEMBERED

Today, most of Ascott's villagers will be unaware that on the site of the newly constructed railway platform access, in former years stood the station master's house and station buildings. Geoffrey Moss, who died recently, lived with his family in that station house. He joined the Metropolitan Police, was a lifelong cricketer and enjoyed writing poems, including the one that follows.

**Fred Russell**

### JUST BEFORE D DAY - ENTRAIN 23.30

Dinner plate moon on a dark blue wall  
Washed to shining by a steamy mist  
Peers Cycloptic onto the village and  
into me.

The green light flickers from the  
blackness  
The engine sniffs, the signals clear,  
The train slips silently from the siding  
Into the night without a cheer.

Leaves make lovers whispers in the  
bright woods  
Stirred to murmur by the softest breeze.  
I walk in wonder with my father  
Through the lanes under dappled trees.

Now there is only the tail light  
Winking red like Mars,  
Marking out a permanent way  
Then joining the moon and stars.

I hear the sound of marching  
Nearer, closer, here.  
Where are they going with their rifles  
Where are they going, where?  
They are catching a train to keep an  
appointment  
But they'll stop at the pub for a last  
English beer.

**By Geoffrey Moss (2010)**

Eight year old Geoff walks in awe with  
his station master father to bid silent  
farewell to brave men.

Fully fired a ghost train is restless in  
the siding,  
The footplate sheeted and secure.  
Dead faces at the windows,  
No lights, no slamming of doors.

## WITNEY HOSTS FOREST FAIR

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September, from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. at Foxburrow Wood, Crawley Road, Witney.**

Witney's very new Foxburrow Wood plays host to the Wychwood Forest Fair again this year. At Foxburrow, volunteers are replanting the kinds of trees that used to grow in the sprawling Wychwood Forest that once came right into Witney. Visitors to the Fair will be able to see how the first year's planting has gone, and also to buy and plant a tree of their own this winter.

The entertainments this year will include bands, ferret racing, Hatwells Fun Fair, Morris dancing, hand bell ringing, a barrel organ, an archery display, a storyteller and a Grand Draw. There will be a display of photos from a competition you can enter beforehand (details below), and a chance to try your hand at an Aunt Sally competition. Tours will be given of the new woodland site.

The food and drink stalls are always a big draw at the Forest Fair, and this year there are more than ever, including barbeques and pig roasts from Witney Rotary Club, and Kenchs the Butcher, with beer from the Wychwood Brewery, plus local ice cream. New this year is a vegetarian kitchen.

The large tea tent will be selling refreshments and home made cakes.

The Fair will feature marquees with over 150 stalls, including local businesses selling their products, as well as Oxfordshire suppliers selling food and provisions, handicrafts and gifts. The stalls selling second hand books and plants promise lots of bargains.

What makes the Forest Fair special is the array of rural craft workers demonstrating their skills, like dry stone

walling, hedge laying, thatching, fence making, spinning and weaving, as well as bee keeping.



The Conser-

vation and Community Group marquee will showcase over 20 groups promoting local ways of making your life and home 'greener', and will give you the opportunity of volunteering for a conservation group in your neighbourhood. One new feature this year will be a display on wood fuel. The Wychwood Project will be offering the chance to donate a tree to the Foxburrow Wood, which you can buy to commemorate someone you love, or a special occasion like a wedding, a birth or a birthday. You can even plant it yourself next winter, if you wish.

There is a lot for children to do: Hatwells Fun Fair is coming, there is a storyteller, an Aunt Sally and an archery display. Breckon and Breckon have a family competition and are giving away balloons. Southdown Farm is bringing some of their animals to enjoy.

**Entry is £6 a head, under 16s free, free parking.**

**For further details contact Michael Drew on 01993.702624, or email at [michael.drew@totalise.co.uk](mailto:michael.drew@totalise.co.uk)**

**Visit the Wychwood Project Website at [www.wychwoodproject.org](http://www.wychwoodproject.org)**

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## LEAFIELD SCHOOL

It's been a busy year at Leaffield Primary School and the summer holidays are just around the corner. But before we all head off for a break, here is some news on what we have been up to..

It's hard to believe that it is only a year since Mrs Jane Ridley joined Leaffield Primary School as the Headteacher. She settled in straight away and has done a fantastic job of ensuring that our children are happy and well cared for and that they receive the best education possible. Leaffield continues to be a very popular and successful school – in fact we are over-subscribed for the next academic year.

Children work hard in class, but they also enjoy many opportunities to get out of the classroom and widen their learning opportunities. Class 1 have been on regular visits to the Millennium Woods and the play park, and all children have benefitted from a range of visits including Combe Mill, Hill End Farm and the Roald Dahl Museum. Sports activities have included a Cricket Festival attended by Class 4 and our own sports day. Music has featured too, with children singing at Ascott Fete, in school music lessons and Partnership Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Music Festivals. The Year 5 children took part in the KS2 Music Festival held at Burford School and filled the hall with rousing anthems. After school clubs - gardening, skipping, football, philosophy for children, cooking, multi-skills and ICT - are

also available for children to choose from.

The school recently held a Help for Heroes day, with children dressing up in their own clothes or combat outfits and having the chance to learn about army life from 4 members of the Armed Forces. There was also a raffle to win a Help for Heroes teddy bear. All the money raised was donated to the charity.

Friends of Leaffield School have been busy organising regular cake or ice cream sales on some Fridays after school. These sales are a great way to start the weekend with a treat and raise some money for the school. Each sale is in aid of one class and all the proceeds are given to the class teacher to spend on something to benefit those children.

The work of FOLS is a fantastic boost for the school – not only are the events enjoyable but the funds they help raise are used to directly benefit the children, whether by supporting the costs of a school trip or buying resources – the school has recently been lucky enough to order £1,000 worth of topic related books thanks to a donation from FOLS.

FOLS were also behind the recent Enterprise Event, which was held after school. All classes were responsible for planning, costing, making and selling products or services at the event, with a 'Business of the Year' award going to the group that made the most

Don't forget about the Ascott website:

profit. The effort put in to this event was amazing – teachers and children worked hard to make and sell a wide range of goods, including candle holders, bracelets, wall hangings, paper weights and photo frames. Other children chose to organise activities or plan and perform music and comedy shows. FOLS and volunteer parents manned the barbecue and Pimm’s stall and a very good time was had by all! Before the summer holidays start, there is just one more big event – the KS2 production of ‘The Lemonade Kid’! These productions are always fabulous events and are a credit to the children and to Miss Webb, who puts in so much of her own time to ensure the production is a success. Sadly, Miss Webb will be leaving us at the end of this term as she is moving away from the area. All the children, parents, governors and staff will miss her commitment, energy, enthusiasm and warmth.

Next year, Miss Nina Elliott will be joining us as our new Class 3 teacher. We are all really looking forward to Nina joining the team at Leaffield and she will be coming in for some transition days before the end of term so that children and parents can meet her.

**Carole Bartlett**

## **WYCHWOOD LIBRARY**

Just when we thought that the future of Wychwood Library was safe, Oxfordshire County Council is once again asking you all to “Have your say on a future library service for Oxfordshire”. This Public Consultation is taking place now and will run until the end of September 2011. Last year, thanks to so many of you who wrote letters and emails and signed petitions, we proved how used and valued our library is. Now we need to campaign for the services it provides.

This time OCC proposes to keep all libraries open, with some sustained by volunteers working alongside Oxfordshire County Council staff. As you will see from the “Consultation” document, Wychwood Library falls to the very bottom of the fifth category of libraries which would result in the library staff being replaced with two thirds volunteers!

To arrive at this outcome, an analysis of library requirements was undertaken based on where people live, work, study and shop. The criteria used for each library site was a half-mile radius and a mile radius. This just does not work for a rural situation. Wychwood Library may be in the village of Milton under Wychwood, but the library also serves the communities of Shipton and Ascott, Lyneham, Fifield and Idbury and even as far as Little Rissington. In fact one of the outcomes of the 2010 campaign to save the Library, was that

people travelled furthest in Oxfordshire to visit Wychwood Library. This new supporting data needs to be challenged by our community.

Wychwood Library does welcome volunteers already. They help at:

- Weekly Coffee Mornings
- Monthly Computer classes
- The fortnightly knitting and craft morning
- Weekly AGE UK Singing and Exercise classes
- The annual Milton Fete
- Two Adult Reading Groups
- Covering donated books and much more.

The further involvement of volunteers to shelve returned books, and other tasks, would be helpful. We are a very busy library.

Please come along to the Library and pick up the Library Service Consultation document or go online to [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) and fill it in there.

### Other news

Very many thanks again this year to all who donated books and DVDs for sale at the Milton Village Fete. We raised a reasonable sum. Some of this money has been given to the Fete Committee and the rest will go towards new books for the children's area.

We are calling for all of our younger readers to join in with the Circus theme for The Summer Reading Scheme this year. It is not too late to get started and benefit from lots of new books to read over the summer holidays as well as stickers to collect. The medal and certificate ceremony will be on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 5pm.

Computer classes will begin again on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm. Make this new learning year one in which you get to grips with IT or explore your Ancestry. Please book early.

Join us for any or all of the activities listed above but most of all, come in and be inspired to read.

### Opening Times:

**Monday:** 2.00pm to 7.00pm

**Tuesday:** Closed

**Wednesday:** 9.30am to 1.00pm  
2.00pm to 5.00pm

**Thursday:** Closed

**Friday:** 2.00pm to 7.00pm

**Saturday:** 9.30am to 1.00pm

## WYCHWOOD LIBRARY UPDATE

Just when we thought Wychwood Library was safe, Oxfordshire County Council is again questioning its future.

Having made an apparent u-turn over the proposed closure of our library, Oxfordshire County Council has now launched a consultation exercise. It has split libraries into five groupings, based on a flawed premise, leaving Wychwood Library in the bottom band.

Our library issues more than 48,000 books a year – making it the county’s busiest and best-performing rural library. Under the terms of the council’s consultation, our library, which serves a whole group of rural villages, is due to have its staffing levels slashed by two thirds. This would leave us with one part-time staff member and a team of up to 60 volunteers working to keep the library open.

If the library is to survive, we need local people to voice their concerns by filling in the council’s short feedback form. This forms part of the council’s public consultation, which ends on 30 September 2011.

Feedback forms for the consultation are available at Wychwood library, or online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) and going to the “About Us” tab, where you will see the “Have your Say” section.

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## OVER A MILLION VISITORS TO WEST OXFORDSHIRE'S LEISURE FACILITIES

More than one million visits have been made to West Oxfordshire District Council's leisure facilities in the past year.

There were 1,025,372 visits to leisure facilities between April 2010 and March 2011, according to records kept by the Council's leisure operator Nexus Community.

The figure includes visits made to all facilities run by Nexus on behalf of the Council, including leisure centres in Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Witney, as well as Artificial Turf Pitches in Carterton and Witney, Carterton Pavilion and Woodstock outdoor pool.

Most people attended The Windrush, the largest of all the leisure facilities, with more than 425,000 visits.

Cllr Richard Langridge, Cabinet Member for Local Economy and Communities, said: "We were absolutely delighted to hear that more than a million visits were made to the leisure facilities. This is equivalent to just over 2,800 visits every day of the year and that is a phenomenal figure.

We take great pride in providing high-quality leisure facilities for use by all residents and also to making it as easy as possible for anyone who wishes to take part in physical activity to do

so. We will continue to build on this success during this year and beyond."

Witney resident Ellis Grant is among regular visitors to The Windrush. She goes to the leisure centre every Wednesday morning with her children Harvey, three, and Frankie, one, to attend a 'Tiger Tots' session for pre-school children, with a bouncy castle and play equipment.



Cllr Langridge with Witney resident and 'Tiger Tots' Visitor Ellis Grant, with one-year-old daughter Frankie

She said: "It's always busy at the group. I come because the children love it and it's good to get out of the house with them and catch up with friends."

Ben Border, Nexus Community's Partnership Manager for West Oxfordshire, said: "It's the first time we've monitored

visits to all of the leisure facilities in this way and we were thrilled to have exceeded the one million mark. We want to continue improving the leisure facilities to offer more choice to local people at an affordable cost.

This gives us a benchmark for future years and we will be working hard to improve the number of visits year on year."

**To find out more about the Council's leisure facilities, visit [www.nexuscommunity.org](http://www.nexuscommunity.org) or call 01993 861552.**

## PERSONNEL GLIMPSES

I gave myself a bit of a fright when I sat back and realised that I have been in the people management business for 33 years.

Nowadays unfortunately, it's called human resources, a piece of US management-speak that crept in during the '90s. It's a term I hate, but you can't play King Canute, so I too now talk of being in HR.

My consultancy work these days is geared mainly to UK HR, but my global travels in the people business have donated me a legacy of anecdotes. Some of the more printable I now recount. None of the names are genuine.

My first job was as a personnel officer for a petrochemical engineering company, recruiting for UK and overseas sites. We used an application form designed to cover any vacancy. One such form really sticks in the mind and came from a pipefitter. Under 'What prompted your application?' he put 'Curiosity; 'In what other languages can you conduct business' elicited 'None, I'm a pipefitter not a brain surgeon'. In the section for last or previous job, there was a question 'Reasons for leaving'. Answer? 'Sacked for inefficiency (load of balls, just an excuse)'. We decided not to interview....

In the '70s and '80s, overseas sites employed UK craftsmen; nowadays, they're all from developing nations. My colleague Jill and her team recruit-

ed welders and pipefitters for our site at Skikda in Algeria. As she later admitted, she should have known better when she saw this candidate pinning her secretary to the wall with a karate hold. But said candidate, known as Kung-Fu, was a qualified welder, so was despatched to Algeria. When not at his trade, he pumped iron using home-made weights.

All was well until his first leave. Unfortunately, we had just sacked an Algerian whose brother worked in the passport office. Suddenly, exit/re-entry visas were hard to obtain. On the morning of departure, Kung-Fu came in search of his passport with visa. It was not ready and he was asked to call back in the afternoon. So he did, going straight to the personnel manager's office. 'Where's Jones?' he barked at the secretary doing some filing. 'He's out'. At this, he went berserk, chopping and kicking his way around the office and reducing furniture to matchwood. Finally, his ire spent, he stomped out and the poor girl breathed a sigh of relief. Relief was short-lived as Kung-Fu drop-kicked a hole in the door and sticking his head through, yelled 'Tell him I'll be back!'. I don't know how much it cost us, but he got his visa. It read 'Final Exit'.

My next company supported overseas contractors, mainly in the oil and gas business. We hired a whole range of expatriates, from chefs through en-

gineers and even teaching staff for expatriate schools on larger projects.

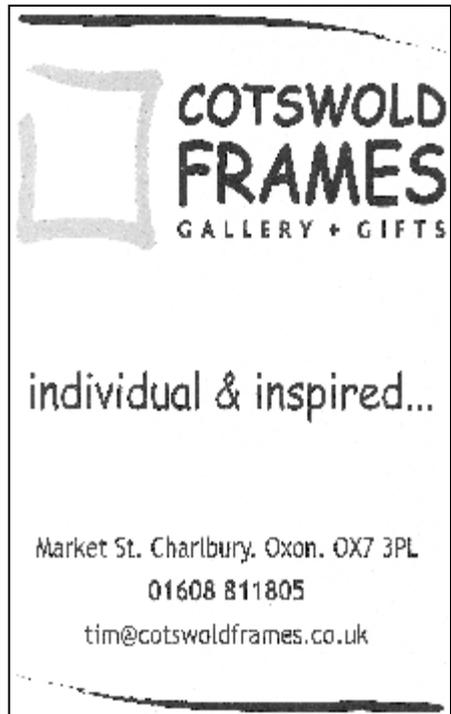
We were always under pressure to recruit quickly, as most contracts paid only for staff on site. It was a constant battle to move fast but avoid the warm body syndrome.

French is the primary language in Algeria, so all our staff had to be French speaking. The company policy was to give every candidate two interviews. One of my personnel officers, Jim, had just conducted an interview with a French chef and asked me to do the follow-up. French chef spoke just enough English and with a bit of my French and some *Franglais*, we proceeded. 'What is your religion?' asked I. According to Jim, chef was Catholic. At this, the candidate reached inside his shirt and produced the biggest Star of David I have ever seen. This actually wasn't a huge problem, Algeria then was quite tolerant of other religions. But worse lay in store. 'Why did you leave your last job?' 'Because I punched ze sous-chef!'. Just what we needed, a punchy chef whose religion might not do him any favours during his police interview! I had words with Jim about the thoroughness of his interviews.....

One of our sites was in Kano in northern Nigeria. Our client was Japanese. Late one Friday, another of my personnel officers, Ron, got a call from the Japanese manager in Kano. It was an appalling line – I was listening on an earpiece attached to the phone – and even yelling at the top of your voice

barely got through, especially with a Japanese speaking poor and heavily accented English. We eventually understood that Les, the maintenance engineer, was very ill and required medevac. But we could not understand where Les was.

I had set up a contract with Europ Assistance for medevac, which insured us against genuine emergencies. If the plane proved unnecessary, we got a chunky bill and our MD was not known for taking prisoners. The Europ Assistance service included a network of agents in every country, so their man in Nigeria was put on the trail of our missing engineer. I had to



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stay at home all weekend to monitor progress and give the OK if necessary.

On Sunday afternoon, Les was discovered in a hospital run by Polish nuns, none of whom spoke English. I was told he was very ill and that the nuns were frightened of him because of his erratic behaviour. I pressed the button. A medevac plane took off from London, refuelled at In Amenas, way down in the Algerian Sahara, thence to Kano. By the time the doctor found him, Les was on the up from a serious chest infection. He was shipped home and sent to Norfolk and Norwich Hospital near his home.

I got the full SP from the doctor. Heavy drinking is endemic to construction sites, but Les was more serious than most, sousing himself in at least a bottle of scotch a day. He fell ill, was taken to the hospital and given a room on the first floor but no scotch. He began to go through withdrawal symptoms. Then the lights went out. In his befuddled state, Les thought he was back on site, that he must fix the generator, and began climbing out the window. The nuns were terrified, he was a big guy.

You would have thought that our man would be grateful for his rescue, but not a bit of it. He had the effrontery to ring me and complain that he had not been given a separate room at Norfolk and Norwich. I told him to go away. At least, I think that's what I said.

As nobody drills for oil and gas anywhere remotely civilised, my travels generally took me to some pretty re-

mote and inhospitable spots. However, a potential contract with a Danish company rewarded me with a trip to Paris. For reasons that escape me, the employment contracts would be under Danish law, but social security payments had to be made to France. Things have changed, but then, French social security was incredibly complex. Different departments covered ordinary workers and managers, with several departments covering different levels of management. The Danish Embassy soon filled me in on their employment law, but the French Embassy simply did not know or understand the detail that I required; they just gave me the contact addresses and phone numbers in Paris.

My French was nowhere near the level needed to quiz les bureaucrats, so having arranged meetings in Paris, I set off from Algiers with our administration manager Liz, a rather dishy blonde who spoke fluent French.

By the time we reached our Paris hotel, it was late and fatigue had set in, so I suggested a couple of brandies. The lounge was deserted, not a soul to be seen. Then I espied a bellpush. Somewhere in the bowels, there was a faint tinkle. Nobody came, so I tried again. Then we heard a flap-flapping and through the door came a small, elderly and wizened man who reminded me of Quasimodo. His frock-coat was patinated with age and his shoes were far too long, making him look like a circus clown and producing the flapping.

He leaned over me and in a rasping voice like a badly cracked bell asked ‘Vous avez sonnez, m’sieur?’. I ordered the brandies and he disappeared, whereupon Liz and I dissolved into helpless giggles.

The next day, we began our tour, hammering from office to office in taxis whose chauffeurs were clearly practising for the Grand Prix de L’Arc de Triomphe. I could understand much of what was said, but had to ask Liz to translate further questions if I realised the conversation was going astray. It was a punishing day, but we got what we came for.

That the company owed us both a nice dinner was a decision easily made. Liz had been to Paris before and knew a good restaurant in the Montmartre, two Metro stops and a short walk away. We exited the Metro and duly took second left as per the map. The narrow street we entered looked as if it came from a Georges Simenon novel. Chinks of light showed through some windows, but only a few streetlamps at irregular intervals shone weak pools on the pitch-black pavements. All of a sudden, Liz nudged me and said ‘Nigel, there are women in the doorways and they’re staring at me as though I’ve pinched their client!’. Swiftly, we stood under a streetlamp and revisited the map, to discover there were two Metro exits and we had taken the wrong one. Walking as fast as we could without appearing to run, we got out of there quick sharp. The dinner,

I’m glad to say, more than lived up to expectations.

It’s amazing how people get caught up in simulations and behave as if it’s the real thing – ask any pilot who’s been on a simulator.

We were looking for a new personnel officer and arranged an assessment centre. This simulates the type of work and situations to be found in the job and lasts a whole day. Not only does it allow a number of candidates to be assessed by the whole department, it also shows each one in their true colours. Some people can keep up a mask for just an interview, but that rapidly slips under the pressure of an assessment centre.

One exercise, which I was observing, was a counselling interview for an employee whose hitherto good performance had worsened. One lady, trained in the techniques, was excellent and had all the answers in 20 minutes. Not so another candidate. Within seconds of him opening his mouth, I was inwardly cringing. The personnel officer playing the role of the interviewee was one of the most equable of my team, but he suddenly snarled ‘Stop being so bloody patronising!’. Ouch!

I spent some time as head of personnel for a Saudi government training school in Jubail on Saudi’s eastern coast.

Out of the country for some weeks awaiting my work visa, it was my first day back. Exhausted, I went to bed in my villa, which I occupied alone until

Don’t forget about the Ascott website:

my family arrived. The one telephone was in the lounge downstairs. Ghost calls were a feature of the phone system, the phone would ring but nobody would be there. Around midnight, I heard the phone, but thinking it was a ghost call, ignored it. The phone continued to ring, so I staggered downstairs and picked it up.

“This is Hamish, there’s been an accident, Ken’s dead.”

Ken was a car enthusiast who wanted to set up his own garage with a partner; Ken would do the mechanicals, his partner bodywork. He was in Saudi to earn the working capital.

Hamish and Ken lived several miles away. I arrived to find a Pontiac Transam ‘muscle’ car inside the garage on a jack, with Ken’s corpse underneath. He had been working on the starter motor and had driven the left front wheel onto a ramp to gain access. The car had slipped off the ramp, killing him instantly.

The Saudi police were much in evidence and Ken’s wife Linda was being comforted by neighbours. I had to ask Linda if there was anyone we needed to inform and she gave me Ken’s parents’ address. I rang my wife in UK, who found the number of the police station nearest the parents and I passed on the grim news to the duty sergeant.

The next few weeks were hectic. Getting live people in and out of Saudi was hard enough, repatriating a deceased was incredibly complicated, demanding the signature of the prince who was the governor.

Meanwhile, I was helping Linda both to come to terms with her husband’s death and to deal with practicalities. Fortunately, I had dealt with three deaths in my previous company and knew what had to be done.

The local police chief wanted to interview Linda in my presence and I was on tenterhooks in case they thought Linda might have been involved in Ken’s accident, but it all went smoothly and he said she could go home.

I put her on the evening flight.

Getting Ken home was not quite so easy. I could find no funeral service to move the body to the airport, so with some of my more muscular colleagues, we took a



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big American SUV down to the morgue and loaded the transportation coffin in the back. These coffins are zinc-lined, full of packing, and Ken was no lightweight either. The whole thing weighed 350 pounds and protruded out the back of the car.

Once at Saudia, we were asked to place the coffin on the scales, then it was wheeled away to await departure.

It was a poignant moment and nobody was sure what to say, but fortunately, Hamish's gallows sense of humour came to the fore.

"Ironic, isn't it? Ken was the king of the cheap flight deals and now he's flying home Saudia!"

**Nigel Wild**

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

### **Village Maintenance**

In the last edition of The Grapevine the Parish Council reported on numerous items of Village Maintenance that needed to be addressed and are pleased to report on some of the progress as follows; the entrance gates to the Sports Field have been removed, repaired and repainted. The road from the entrance to the Sports Field to the Pavilion has now been re-instated and access much improved. Fencing has been erected at the South West corner to help pest control. All three Notice Boards have been repaired and made fit for purpose again.

The Parish Council are currently looking into the possibility of forming a Volunteer Group and have invited a member from the Shipton-under-Wychwood Volunteers to attend the July meeting. If anybody is interested in joining a volunteer group to carry out minor repair and maintenance works then please let the Parish Clerk know or indeed any of the Parish Councillors.

The Parish Council would like to thank the parishioners for their continued support and help with these issues.

## **ASCOTT GRAPEVINE TREASURE HUNT**

**Thanks to everyone who took part in the Grape Vine Treasure Hunt at the village Fete. The winner was Sue Richards who correctly located the 'buried treasure' that was hidden between the site of D'Oyley Castle and the Fishing Lake.**

## Allotments

The Allotment site is thriving and the Parish Council are looking into the possibility of sourcing a water supply to the site for the tenants use.

## Planning Applications

Planning continues to remain quiet, with the exception of The Swan Public House, which is still searching for a buyer.

## Community Emergency Plan

The Parish Emergency Plan has been revised and updated accordingly. The Parish Council are planning to purchase a Snow Plough to help the Village prepare for adverse weather conditions. They are currently awaiting the outcome of Oxfordshire County Council's Winter Maintenance Program with regard to salt/grit replenishment.

## Parish Council:

Rob Morgan (Chairman)	831958
Bridgette Crundwell (Vice)	830671
Laurence Mellor	831182
Philippa Carter	830344
Pauline Marshall	830912
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)	01608 641045

## TIDDY HALL REPORT

The Tiddy Hall Trustees held their AGM on Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup>. There is no change to the committee, those who stood down were re-elected and the others agreed to stay on for another year. The Tiddy Hall Trustees are:

Chairman:	Roger Shepherd
Treasurer:	Nick Carter
Secretary:	Ken Smith
Booking Clerk:	Ingrid Ridley
Pre School Rep:	Pauline Plant
Others:	Simon Gidman Chris Morgan Rebecca Baxter

It was a good year for fundraising with Flix in the Stix, Folk Night, Quiz Night, Coffee Mornin/Table Top Sale and the Anniversary Dance all helping to contribute to funds. These funds are important to the running costs of the Hall and the Committee would also like to thank all the regular users for their continued support and for offering such a range of activities.

Another Coffee Morning/Table Top Sale is planned for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September 10am – noon. Tables will cost £5. If you would like to book one, please ring Ingrid on 830612 or Sally on 831432. Any cakes or other home-made goods will also be very much appreciated. Please come along and join us for a coffee and a chat and a bargain or two!

The Fishing Club are holding their Anniversary Dinner on Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> – more details from Pete Moss (830758). Another Folk Night is planned for Saturday October 22<sup>nd</sup> – tickets available from Lyn Collins (830114)

As has been mentioned in a previous report, the year 2012 will be the centenary of a Tiddy Hall in Ascott. We are in the process of putting together a programme for some exciting celebrations. Please will you all mark the dates of June 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012 in your diaries! Events are planned for all members of the community during this weekend. These celebrations will also coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee which we plan to commemorate with a lunch on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> – all

villagers invited! We are also putting together a booklet about the history of Tiddy Hall and a display will be available to be viewed during the weekend of festivities. Please, if any one has any photos or information could you let us know!

Other activities planned throughout our centenary year are: Anniversary Dinner Dance – Saturday January 28<sup>th</sup>, plus the usual Quiz Night, Flix in the Stix, Folk Night and Fun Run.

Tiddy Hall is looking for a new cleaner starting in September. If you are interested, please contact Roger Shepherd on 830227 for further details.

Ingrid Ridley

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# TIDDY HALL

## Regular Activities:

### Monday - Friday Mornings Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant  
07968006451

### Tuesday Evenings 7.30 - 9.00 Yoga

Contact: Jan Holah 01608 810620

### Wednesday and Friday Afternoons Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter  
01993 774568

### Thursday Evenings 7.30 - 8.30 Pilates

Contact: Julie Short 07761 533969

### POST OFFICE RUNS EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON

2.00pm - 4.00pm

## SPECIAL EVENTS:

**Saturday 3rd September**  
Fishing Club Anniversary Dance

**Saturday 10th September**  
Coffee Morning and Table Top Sale  
10am - noon

**Saturday 22nd October**  
Folk Night



**To book the Tiddy Hall contact:**

**Ingrid Ridley**  
**01993 830612**

## ASCOTT VILLAGE SHOP

Well, summer is here again, the fete has come and gone and we are biting our nails to see if Andy Murray will finally crack it for the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Ascott Shop is half way through another very successful year.

At the AGM, Chairman Mike Pearce, Chris George and Maggie Lyon all retired from the shop committee. They are a hard act to follow, raising the shop's profile and substantially increasing trade. To them, we offer our congratulations and grateful thanks.

The new committee sees both old and new faces. Nigel Wild has taken the chair once more. Stuart Fox carries on as Treasurer and Margaret Ismail as Secretary. Richard Squires is the new face on the team and has already taken on board comments from the recent survey about fruit and vegetables. He has gathered together a team to ensure that all our fruit and veg is always on the top line.

Mark Dawbarn, as well as organising the rota, has been co-opted to look after the personnel function.

Sue Mellor, now fully back to health, is also joining the committee.

We are forever investigating and introducing new lines. Simple Suppers are - literally - going down well. For some time, we have carried a budget range of wines to cater for those looking for a bottle of collapse rather than premier cru.

Did you know you can order fresh meat from Callow's or Foxbury Farm? For Foxbury, order Wednesday for delivery Thursday; for Callow's, order Thursday for delivery Friday.

Our aim is to offer competitive shopping without the expense and hassle of driving to a major supermarket. Our increase in trade shows that we are succeeding.

Talking of increases in trade, the recent influx of contractors working on the Cotswold Line upgrade has been a real bonus. Day after day, we have welcomed dayglo suits looking not only for a lunchtime pastie or sandwich, but much more besides.

Ascott Shop is your shop – run by the village for the village. We welcome your ideas and suggestions for improvements and we look forward to your continued support.

**Nigel Wild**

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## **RIGHT UP YOUR STREET!**

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*Our fresh fruit and veg is delivered three times a week and always on the top line*

*Regular price markdowns and many more bargains and offers*

*Order your fresh meat from Callow's or Foxbury Farm*

*Out all day? Get your parcel delivered to the shop – we will keep it, so you can pick it up later*

**COME AND VISIT US SOON –  
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[shop@ascottvillageshop.co.uk](mailto:shop@ascottvillageshop.co.uk) / [www.ascottvillageshop.co.uk](http://www.ascottvillageshop.co.uk)

# Windrush Valley School

It has been a very busy term for the children and staff at Windrush Valley School, with an array of sporting, dancing and school trips to add to our curriculum.

Our Form 1 class visited Warwick Castle. They had such a great time they wanted to stay all evening! Our Form 2 class have been studying the environment and visited Sutton Courtney Environmental Education Centre. They got involved in pond dipping and studying the huge collection of bugs and insects housed at the Centre.



**Ben Seymour-Smith at the Windrush Valley School Swimming Gala**

Our annual **Swimming Gala** held at Kingham Hill School was a great day for both swimmers and their families. The children competed in their house colours and competition was tough. The highlight of the day was of course the inter-house relay races, and Charlotte Roscoe secured the win over a close fought race against a strong Cheviots team. Well done to all who took part and a big thank you to families and friends for supporting the children and to Kingham Hill School for hosting this wonderful event.

PE staff and parents accompanied a group of children to the annual **North London ISA Athletics Championships** at the prestigious Bedford international athletics stadium, where the likes of Paula Radcliffe and Dame Kelly Holmes have competed. It is a great experience for the children and they all had a wonderful time, competing in sprint, 600, throwing activities, long jump and relay.



Congratulations to all those who took part: Catherine Hawkins, Romy Dawkins, Augusta Townley, Eliot Jones, Blake Richardson, Rachel Purvis, Hattie Cornish, Lucas Melvin, Poppy Kay, Cassia Belardo, Lorimer Kay, Mark Milner, Rufus Worne and Ella Frost.



**May Dancing** is always a great time for the children at Windrush Valley School, and this year did not disappoint. The whole school took part from our Nursery Unit through to Year Six, and the teachers! Mrs Fran Dawkins, our longest serving parent crowned the May Queen, Catherine Hawkins, along with her wonderful May attendants.



**Mill Rythe Adventure Centre** was the venue for this year's Form 6 leavers trip. As with previous visits to the centre, they were not disappointed, with a host of activities from abseiling to archery. The trip concluded with a fun disco on the last evening, where the children got to meet and make friends with other schools and see some *real* dancing from their teachers!

We're looking forward to next term and all our extra-curricular activities that we have lined up .....

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## LESSONS WILL HAVE TO BE LEARNT!

‘Rage, rage against the dying of the light.’

I know where I filched that line from.

I don’t rage against the dying of the light, but I do rage about things which are of little importance. For example. Why do people now call it a train station when I always knew it as a railway station?

A few months ago on a Sunday morning, the Rev. Mark Abery began his address by asking the congregation if any had ever had a ‘wow’ experience. Some said they had. Like a good Anglican Sunday Christian I remained silent. But inside I was seething. I wanted to say, ‘No I never had a ‘wow’ experience, Nor did I ever intend having a ‘wow’ experience.’ What does ‘wow’ mean? Is it a word from a Batman comic, a sound a whoopee cushion makes, or is it what I call Hollywood speak, used by some film star floozie and copied by many because they are too lazy to think of a word of their own?

Have you noticed when a terrible mistake has been made or something goes badly wrong in Society, the organisation for the fault will wheel out a spokesperson, on the television, to say, ‘Lessons will have to be learnt or Lessons will be learnt.’

Picture if you will a small boy approaching the headmaster’s office. He knocks on the door. There is a loud,

sharp voice, ‘Come in.’ The boy enters. ‘Yes boy what do you want?’ the headmaster asks. ‘I’ve been sent to you because I haven’t done my homework.’ The headmaster shouts, ‘You are an idle boy and your standard of work is well below the rest of your class. Lessons will have to be learnt, won’t they boy?’ ‘Yes,’ the small boy replies. ‘Yes, what,’ the headmaster shouts. ‘Yes sir,’ says the boy. ‘Not only are you idle but you are an ill-mannered lout. You will have to be taught a lesson, boy.’ With that, the headmaster takes his cane from the wall.

When our elders and betters come out with the same old claptrap or ‘Lessons will have to be learnt,’ don’t you wish you could send them to the headmaster for six of the best, with a cane?

I begin to realise I’m becoming such a liar that I’m starting to believe what I say myself.

**Fred Russell**

# CALLING ALL DOG WALKERS/ WALKERS SATURDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER



Why don't you sponsor your four legged friends and get your friends / family to sponsor you and raise much needed money for Ascott Church and the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

Every year on the second Saturday in September the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust organise a national event recently renamed the Ride and Stride. StRiders are sponsored for the number of churches of any denominations they can visit during the day. The Trust was formed in 1964 to provide financial help for repairs to churches of all denominations in Oxfordshire and since its formation it has given £3 million in grants to help churches with essential repairs and restoration work. Since this event started in 1986 it has raised over £1.8 million, half of which has gone to the churches nominated by the participants and the other half to the Trust. For more information on the Trust their website is [www.ohct.org.uk](http://www.ohct.org.uk)

So put **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September** in your diary and put your dog in training - churches will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and sponsor forms are available from Anne Braithwaite (831282).



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# THE ASCOTT FETE 1930



## ASCOTT GRAPE VINE VIEWS FROM THE PAST

The first issue of our village magazine was published in January 1994 and was called the Ascott Newsletter. It was the brainchild of Anne Braithwaite and created in response to the closure of the Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine. The first issue was produced as an experiment to see if there was a demand for a local newsletter.

The first issue contained reports from the Ascott Women's Institute, the Playgroup, Leaffield CE Primary School, the Acorn Club (for over 50's), the Cricket Club, Coldstone Angling, Ascott Young Farmers and a report from Bob Salmon our local policeman. Of these local organisations only the Playgroup and the Angling Club have survived the intervening seventeen years. Interestingly the services for the Baptist Church (now a private house) were advertised as well as services at Holy Trinity. Apart from the local clubs the main article, written by Roger Shepherd, dealt with the fundraising and building of the new village hall.

By the time that the second issue was delivered in May the Magazine had adopted the title The Ascott Grape Vine and the original contributors were joined by the Parish Council, the Wychwood Local History Society, the Football Club and the 1<sup>st</sup> Wychwood Scouts. The main article dealt with the life and times of Harry Cook as he approached his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and after

servng twenty years as Parish Council Chairman. He occupied Corner House Farm, in the High Street, kept 2,500 chickens and with his family ran the village shop from a room in the farmhouse.

One interesting snippet of information, but without any detail, concerned the vicar, Timothy Thornton, who was in a wheelchair 'following an accident on the roof of Spelsbury Church'.

This issue also contained the Grape Vine's first advert, for a book written by Eric Moss entitled Saved by Walking, a wartime memoir.



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**IAN MARSDEN  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR**

The third edition, published in July, was looking forward to the school holidays and harvest time and noted the parched condition of gardens and surrounding pasture land following prolonged period of hot sunny weather and no rain.

There was a request for volunteers and equipment to create a youth club for the over 13's in the Wychwoods; I wonder if it ever happened. The same issue reported the opening of the fishing lake at Manor Farm and discussed arrangements for a Dog Show that was being organised as a fund raising event for the Tiddy Hall. Plans for a cricket match, to be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, between Ascott Earl and Ascott D'Oyley. Today we cannot even raise a cricket team to represent the whole village!

In future issues I hope to delve into further copies of the old issues of the Grape Vine looking at the recent history of our village.

**Stuart Fox**

## **REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF ASCOTT IN THE PAST**

Our stand at the Fete featured a display of photographs showing views of Ascott in the past, including buildings, events and people. Visitors to the stand were fascinated by these old images.

If anyone has old photographs we would be pleased to hear from them especially if they would allow us to copy the pictures and perhaps use them in the Grape Vine.

**Contact Stuart Fox : 01993 832004**

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## **COOK'S CORNER : ASCOTT'S FAVOURITE RECIPES**

Over the coming year June Holmes has agreed to use her cooking expertise to encourage all you Grapevine readers to try a British recipe for each season. So gather together your ingredients and try her summer offering of ....

### **STRAWBERRY SPONGE**

**(Serves 4 - 6)**

3 large eggs separated  
5 oz double cream  
4 oz caster sugar  
Strawberries  
Rind and juice of small lemon  
2 oz semolina  
1 tablespoon ground almonds

Heat oven to gas Mark 4 or 180C.

Whisk egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale and light.

Add lemon juice and whisk until thick.

Fold in grated lemon rind, semolina and ground almonds.

Whisk egg whites in a clean bowl to soft peaks and fold into mixture with a metal spoon.

Pour into 2 x 7" sponge tins greased and lined with baking parchment and cook for about 30 – 35 minutes until pale golden brown and cooked through.

When cool, turn out and peel off paper and leave until cold.

Whisk cream to soft peak stage. Sandwich cake with the cream and strawberries (cut into pieces if very large.)

Decorate with strawberries and a dusting of icing sugar.

Enjoy.

**Good as a summer pudding or teatime 'special' cake.**

**June Holmes**

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