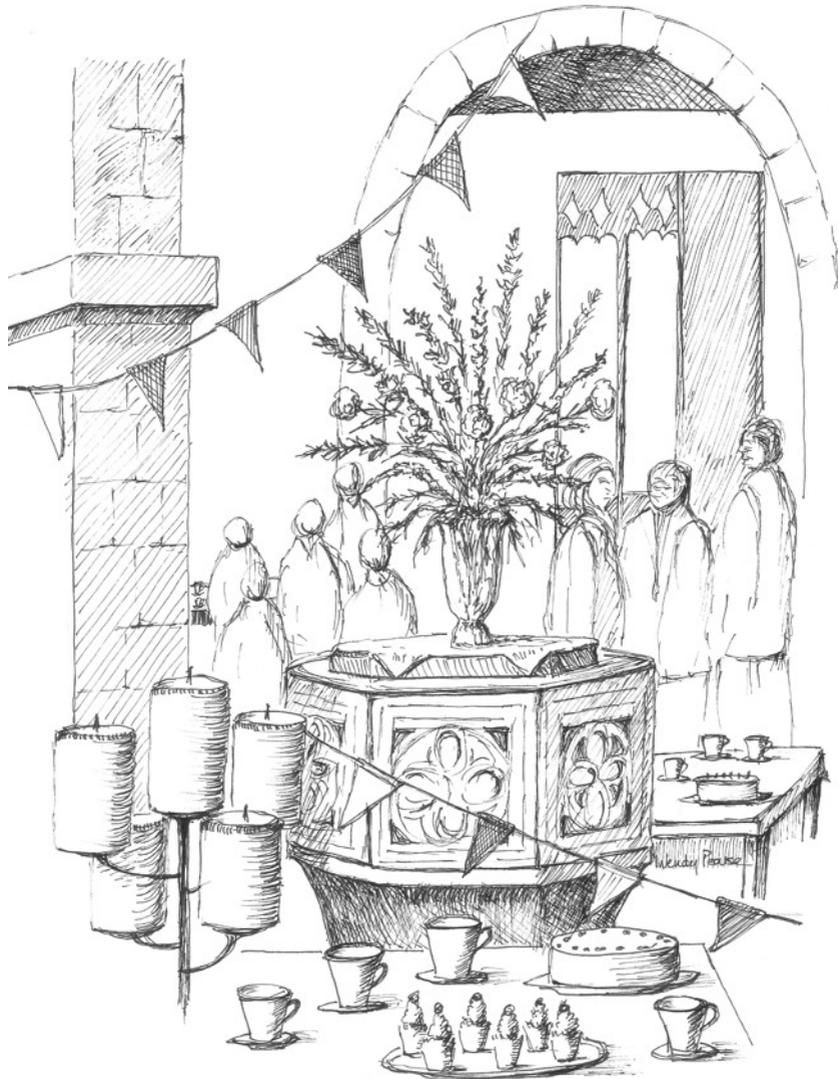


The Ascott Grapevine



Grapevine Appeal

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

Although 'The Grapevine' does receive support from the Parish Council and the PCC, it only raises a limited amount of revenue from advertising. The Ascott Grapevine survives mainly on donations. If you would like to help The Ascott 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 Ascott Grapevine please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas.

Articles for the next issue of The Ascott Grapevine should be submitted by 4th November 2013.

Articles submitted after this date may not be included.

Call 01993 831023 or email: wendypearse@btinternet.com

The Editorial Team:

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,
Wendy Pearse, Keith Ravenhill

Content & Editorial Policy

If you have an article, story or poem you would like to submit for publication The Ascott 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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To advertise in our Local Business Directory (see Page 72), please contact Wendy Pearse 01993 831023 or wendypearse@btinternet.com. The cost is £5 per year but inclusion is free for our existing advertisers.

SERVICES AT ASCOTT CHURCH 2013

Sunday 8th Sept	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 22 nd Sept	8.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 13 th Oct	10.00am	Harvest Holy Communion
Sunday 27 th Oct	8.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 th Nov	10.15am	Remembrance
Sunday 24 th Nov	8.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 8 th Dec	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 15 th Dec	4.00pm	Carols
Sunday 22 nd Dec	8.00am	Holy Communion

Local Churches

United Benefice

Rev'd Kate Stacey Tel: 01993
832514

St Mary's Shipton

Churchwarden James Walmsley
01993 830842

SS Simon & Jude, Milton

Churchwarden Mike Hartley
01993 830160

St John the Baptist Fifield, St Nicholas, Idbury

Churchwarden Pat Yaxley 01993
831385

Society of Friends (Quakers), Burford

Nigel Braithwaite 01993 831282

Wychwood Baptist, Milton

Pastor John Witts 01993 832865

Burford Methodist

Minister Rev'd Peter Goodhall
01993 845322

Westcote Methodist

Tony Gibson 01993 830699
Mairi Radcliffe 01993831472

Roman Catholic

SS John Fisher & Thomas
More, Burford

Holy Trinity, Chipping Norton

***Our Lady and St Kenelm, Stow-
in-the-Wold***

St Teresa, Charlbury

News from the Church

Dear friends,

At the beginning of May I sent a letter on behalf of the Parochial Church Council to each household in the Village asking for financial help to enable us to keep our village Church from closing. To date we have received 28 replies. From these responses we have received one off donations including Gift Aid of £3,000 with another £2,700 pledged by Standing Order. This has been an encouraging start and we are very grateful to all those who have replied.

Thank you too to all those in the village who have been supporting our monthly 'Afternoon teas'. So far we have held 6 of these events: each one has been themed differently and each one a huge success. It has been great to see the Church decorated so imaginatively and buzzing with chatter and the rattling of tea cups! These afternoons, as well as the fantastic concert by William Bugeja and the Harmonix Choir of Bloxham School, have given a real boost to the Church fundraising. An enormous thank you to the various teams of people who work hard to make these events so enjoyable.

The responses to the appeal letter and the successful events held so far this year have gone a long way to help us keep the Church open. However, we are not quite out of the woods yet and still cannot rule out the possibility of closure in the near future. To prevent this we still need to receive more standing orders. Regular donations - however large or small - really do make a difference.

If you haven't replied already might you be able to help us safeguard the future of the Church here in Ascott? Copies of the reply form are available from our Treasurer Ash Ismail [01993 832829] or from the back of Church or downloadable from www.tinyurl.com/19y6eba.
With all good wishes for the summer.

Mark Abrey



Beatrice Kathleen Cooper

1920 – 2013

Family tribute to Aunt Kath.

Kath was born in Chipping Norton and lived with her parents, Fred and ETTY Timms, her sister Doris and brother Wally, in Park Street, Milton-under-Wychwood. For those who don't know where that is-it's the little row of houses alongside the Co-op.

Fred Timms was a blacksmith and worked at Groves in the village.

When Doris was born just 10 months after Kath, Kath was sent to stay with her aunt Polly, Uncle Frank and Uncle Wilf who lived along the terrace at Hawkes' yard. Aunt Polly also looked after Percy Bridges (Geoff and Paula Bridges' father) and he and Kath were very close, like brother and sister. She also spent a lot of time with her Aunt Floss and Uncle Charlie Wilks who also lived in Milton.

Kath went to school in Milton and Burford and when she left school she went to work for the Hartleys at Manor Farm, Upper Milton.

She often walked to work in the dark to start at 7am, getting breakfast for the men who worked on the farm. Quite a workforce in those days. When everything had been cleared away, she helped on the farm, driving the tractor and tending to the animals, mostly sheep in those days. For work she always wore her beret and bib and brace overalls. She used to say that she did a man's job but didn't receive a man's wage, but she wouldn't have changed it for the world.

Kath was a real tomboy, playing cricket and football on The Green. Also, she used to cut people's hair. Her best friend was Cissy Miller whom she met on Cissy's first day in Milton and they remained friends right up to now, 81 years. As youngsters they did many things together, walking to Lyneham to go swimming in the river, many long walks after work, as well as going on holiday and spending

Christmas together. Cissy and John's daughters Andrea and Lorraine looked upon her as a member of the family.

When she was in her 30s, Kath met Tom Cooper at the Churchill Arms, Ascott-under-Wychwood, playing dominoes, which they both enjoyed.

They married in 1958 at Milton Church and went to live in Crown Cot-

tage, Ascott. When they retired they moved to the bungalow in Shipton Road, Ascott which they loved.

Kath also worked for Mrs Campbell for many years and they remained good friends.

Transport was never easy to find in these villages so Kath bought herself a bike, paying off the loan in instalments. She was often seen riding her bike around the villages. The family had to stop her when she was in her 80s. It was a wonderful bike that gave her great service. It is now in a private collection in Benson.

Kath liked the simple things in life and wasn't at all materially minded. She would make do and mend and worked hard all her life. People mattered. She tended three graves in Ascott until she was in her 90s. She always said that it was important to visit the sick and comfort the dying and she took this as the duty of every Christian. She visited Cissy every day when she had glandular fever. She would help anyone in need.

Kath thrived on routine, even in later life. Up at 7.30 in the morning, dinner at 12.30pm, a walk at 4 o'clock and in bed by 9.30 pm.

Kath had a great sense of humour and enjoyed a laugh. I understand that she was naughty at Sunday School but everyone loved her.

With the help of friends and neighbours she kept her independence right up until she became ill. She loved to go out for meals and shopping as well as her Thursdays at the Day Centre where she met up with old friends. She also enjoyed a glass or two of whisky each day.

Kath was a great lady and a friend to many. She never asked for anything or complained about anything. We could all learn a lesson from her.

Goodnight, God bless and rest in peace.

Diana (Crowther).



ORANGE AND POLENTA CAKE

1 large orange 115 grams polenta
170 grams butter, softened 4 eggs separated
170 grams caster sugar tsp baking powder
115 grams ground almonds 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
Orange syrup (optional)
Juice and grated rind of 1 orange
50 grams caster sugar

Method

Boil the orange whole for 45 mins until soft. Cut up and then blend until it becomes a puree.

Preheat oven to 160 deg. or gas 3

Mix butter and sugar well together then add almonds, polenta, baking powder egg yolks, Grand Marnier and mix together.

Mix in orange puree

Whisk egg whites until they peak and fold into mixture with metal spoon.

Bake in a lined 20 cm tin for 50 - 60 mins. Let cake cool in tin and then turn out onto rack to get cold.

Orange Syrup

Put orange juice and sugar into saucepan and boil for about 5 minutes then brush over the top of the cake. Sprinkle the orange rind on top (this can be done when cake is still warm or cold).

Margaret Ismail

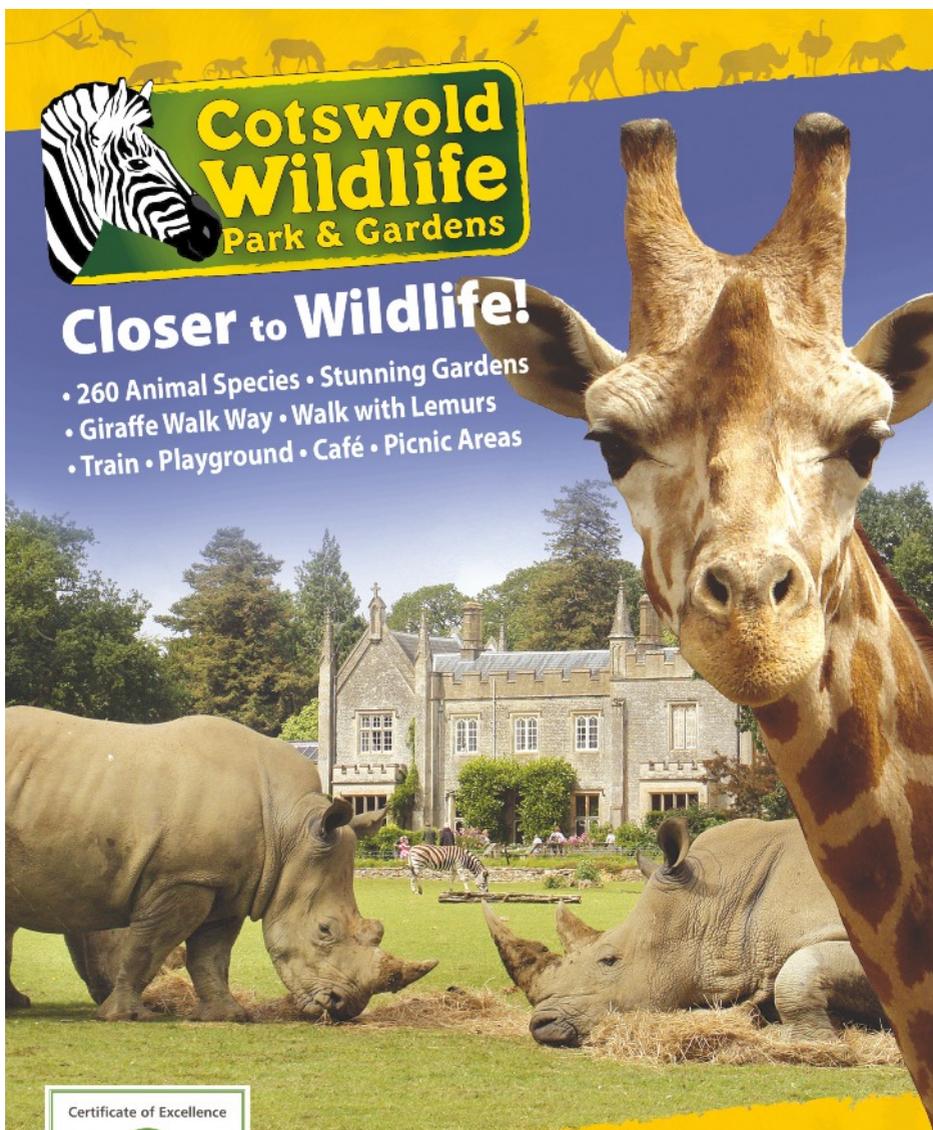
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Our female White Rhino calf was born on 1st July. Although we knew mum was pregnant we weren't expecting the new arrival for a couple of weeks and so were in the midst of detailed preparations for the birth, including sending some of our keepers to Dublin to draw on that zoo's experience. Mum had other ideas and leaving the Rhino house at 7am she promptly gave birth in the paddock with no assistance from us. This was the seven year old female's first calf so we kept a very close eye on both of them for the first few days to ensure that the youngster was feeding and that there were no problems with the other Rhinos and zebras who share the large paddock. She has proved to be a very protective and caring mother. The calf has been christened **Astrid**.

DISPATCHES FROM FRANCE

Nigel Wild talks about his move to south-west France

Well, we have finally done it! We have moved lock, stock and two squeakin' pussycats to the Aveyron in south-west France.

If you look at a map, the Aveyron is in département 12, about 80 miles east of Toulouse and 700 miles south of Calais. It is the Cotswolds of France, green and hilly, albeit that the hills are a bit higher and the valleys deeper than its British counterpart. This is resolutely farming country, dairy, beef and arable but with few sheep. The climate is generally warm most of the year, without the oppressive heat of the south coast. Winters can be bitter, but snow is rare and the cold spell lasts for only a couple of months.

Moving here is the realisation of a dream, a dream that we had pursued for over ten years. When Cathy and I first hired a gîte in the Loire way back in the 90s, it marked the beginning of a love affair with France. Over the years, we have holidayed in central France, the Charente, the Auvergne, Brittany and Normandy, Champagne and the Ardennes and the south, hard by the Spanish border. As realisation dawned that France was where we wanted to live, we combined leisure with some house-hunting. During those years, we viewed everything from complete wrecks to some charming des res, but some areas simply did not appeal. With autumn years on the horizon, we needed sun on our backs and winter in northern France is every bit as chilly as the UK.

We first came to Ascott in 1996. Millstone Cottage had long been on our radar, but the pictures in the property pages did not do it justice. When I finally obtained

the details, they showed it was a tardis. It was love at first sight and we bought it. Living in the village was delightful, but as we both commuted some distance, we did not really get to know too many people.

All that changed in 2006, when I formed my own consultancy and had the time to become involved with the village shop. Within a month, I had met more folk than during the previous ten years and being part of the shop was most enjoyable. It is a great shop and a great team. Gradually, we became more involved in village life and became very attached to Ascott and its people. On many occasions during our endeavours to move to France, we asked ourselves seriously whether we were mad to leave such a beautiful spot.

To keep up to date, we devoured French property magazines, visited property exhibitions and sought professional advice on the nuances and vagaries of living in France.

The eureka moment came when in 2008, we rented a friend's house near the south coast and within the toss of a grape of the Spanish border. Yet again, it was not an area that appealed for a permanent home, but the key was that we flew into and out of the fortified city of Carcassonne. The golden stone of the buildings, lit by an equally golden light, the bastides – fortified towns and villages – the beautiful countryside, we were hooked.

Once home, we began to investigate the south-west, particularly the Midi Pyrenées, and plumped for the Aveyron. Having made appointments with several estate agents, Easyjet flew us into Toulouse. Our chosen hotel turned out to be a gem, a small bastide run by a French chef

and his wife. The Aveyron was at its golden russet best in a crisp November and we strapped in tightly to negotiate the endless bends and hairpins of the local roads.

They say third time lucky, and after a couple of abortive appointments with agents who had clearly ignored our wish-list, we met Steven and Pauline. They have lived in various parts of France for over ten years and Steven works for a well established estate agent with its HQ in Toulouse. He took us to a *mas*, a farmhouse beautifully converted by a French couple and complete with an infinity pool overlooking breathtaking views. Our surname is Wild and theirs was Sauvage, so we felt fate was taking a hand. Mr. Sauvage and I had an enjoyable chat about his collection of classic tractors and besides the five garaged at the house, he revealed he had 21 more stashed in a workshop in the next village!

We made an offer the following day after a second viewing, which the Sauvages accepted. However, they would not agree to a *clause suspensive* that they would take the house off the market until ours was sold. If their house was still available when we were ready to buy, they would sell to us at the agreed price.

We just clicked with Steven and Pauline and by the time we headed for home, we had become firm friends.

Back in dear old Angleterre, we put our house on the market. What impeccable timing! Northern Rock et al kicked off, the housing market slammed into a wall, world recession hit and the Euro plunged over the edge of a cliff. With true British phlegm, we kept at it for two years, gradually discovering that our agent was pleasant but ineffective. A new agent fared a little better but eventually, we

took down the For Sale sign until things improved.

In the meantime, we visited the Aveyron on several occasions. The *mas* had been sold to a British couple who now wanted to re-sell it owing to other commitments. When we looked again, we found that it was not really for us, not least because Pauline was cutting the grass as a favour and said it took 4 hours even with a ride-on mower.

Our Aveyron net was cast wide on every visit and we saw a number of possibles. Steven took us to a converted barn and of all the properties we had seen, this one struck a chord. It had been put up for sale when maman died, but with a French housing market even more dire than UK's and too highly priced, it would not shift. Gradually, the price came down, but there were still no takers.

Come 2012, house sales began to recover and we found a local agent who sold another cottage in our complex for both a good price and in short order. In September, we took what Cathy called a final check ride to the Aveyron to make sure it was what we truly wanted. Back at the ranch, the new agent got the brief and rewarded us with a stream of viewings right up until Christmas.

In early January 2013, we sold. It is hard to express the mix of emotions we felt. Shock and elation that we had a buyer were mixed with fear that the sale might fall through. Completion was to be mid-April, so could we pack up our home of over 16 years in time to meet the deadline?

The answer was to compile a checklist such as to make a NASA pre-flight seem wimpish and go at it hammer and tongs. With just three months to pack up our home and make all the necessary arrangements, the timing was tight to say the

least. Moving within Britain is stressful enough, but shifting abroad added a totally new dimension. Healthcare was a top priority and the NHS helpline people were excellent, explaining how to register in France and sending us the necessary forms. We sought estimates from four removal companies and boy, were they different! Two immediately saw problems with getting the truck into the communal drive and one complained about the length of the carry from our front door. Problems equal money. The first company we saw had no issues with truck or carry and their estimate was far and away the cheapest. Cotswold Carriers in Chipping Norton proved one of the best decisions we made. They packed all the breakables, but gave us ample boxes and tape to pack books and unbreakables in advance.

The checklist waxed and waned. Staying on top of it was vital and we managed to keep ahead. Physically, it was a demanding period and a thorough clearout yielded over two hundredweight of redundant paper for recycling.

Shipping our two pensioner cats should have been easy; it became something of a saga. For various reasons, they could not travel with us.

When you have not moved house for aeons, you forget how stressful it is and how many cockups by others you have to resolve. One lesson we learned was to treat the whole move like a job and at about 6.30 every day, we would down tools, have a glass of wine and unwind with a bit of TV. Although we had not bought a house in the Aveyron, our decision was to move everything down to France and rent a property while we decided what to buy. As the converted barn was still empty and maman's family anxious to sell, Steven arranged for us to rent it and see if it was indeed the

house for us. Watching the numbers of cartons that went onto the removal truck, the thought of shifting that lot even a few miles from the barn sent fear and trembling into our hearts.

Three days before completion on our Oxfordshire cottage, I took the cats to the shippers and the removal team set to work. By the next afternoon, Millstone Cottage was bare, clean and awaiting its new owner. Come the following lunchtime, a text from our solicitor gave the all-clear. Shedding a few tears as we pulled out of High Street for the final time, we set sail for Portsmouth and the St Malo ferry.

A long day's motoring later, Steven and Pauline offered much-needed beer and a bed for the night.

One invaluable buy had been a Liber-t transponder for the autoroute tolls. The French tolling company Sanef has a UK office in Harrogate. The transponder is cheap to buy and maintain and toll charges are automatically sent to your account and paid by direct debit. The device is mounted inside the car screen on the hatched area behind the mirror and works on any of the toll lanes. Simply approach the barrier at walking pace and when you are a few feet away, there will be a beep and the barrier will lift. The left hand one or two lanes at a péage are solely for Liber-t vehicles. The device is not car specific and Sanef provide two mounting clips as part of the package. Essential when driving an RHD car one-up.

Sharp at 8.30 next day, we assembled at Le Roumegas, our new temporary(?) home in the village of Vabre Tizac. Jim and Chris from Cotswold Carriers were already parked outside with the truck. Steven introduced us to our landlady,

Marie-Rose, and her husband Jacky. Graziella, Steven's delightful and English speaking secretary arrived to do the états des lieux, the condition report, with Marie-Rose.



As the Spring was unseasonably cold, Jacky announced he was going to open up the huge fireplace. We thought there was a trap in the chimney, but it transpired that it



been boarded up when maman died around 2009. When his efforts to lift the boards failed, the sprightly septuagenarian farmer seized a chunky log and really gave it some welly. There was a loud crack, followed by an avalanche of brown soot, much of which fell on Jacky. A brown miasma began to roll towards us. Dress in the Aveyron favours the workaday, but Graziella is always impeccably chic and left us in no doubt of her displeasure at the threat to her attire.

I beat a retreat to the local town of Rieupéroux to stock up on food and essentials. When I returned, order had been restored, although for several days, every surface boasted a brown, gritty layer. Much to my wife Cathy's delight, she discovered that Marie-Rose spoke some quite good English, a relief as Cathy's French was still at the plume de ma tante stage.



Forms completed and rent paid, I departed to Toulouse's Blagnac airport to pick up the cats. Blagnac was some 80 miles distant on some very mixed roads and I passed through frequent cloudbursts. I had been to Blagnac once before, but in heavy traffic and teeming rain, I missed the final turning and found myself on



the autoroute to Bordeaux. The on-board electronics guided me back to the main airport, where I searched in vain for the cargo area. A charming lady outside the

pompier's office put me back on track and I duly found Air France Cargo. Pud-dy and Tat were unscathed after their ordeal and overjoyed to see me.

Nonetheless, they treated me to a discordant feline opera all the way back to Vabre Tizac.

Back home, Jim and Chris had done us proud and were offloading the last few bits. The lounge/diner floor was practically invisible under a welter of cartons and we had to weave through narrow corri-

dors between boxes. Despite the mushroom cloud, we were eternally grateful for Jacky's impromptu chimney sweeping and I soon coaxed a roaring blaze from a stock of tinder-dry wood in the cellar. Humans and cats stretched out and basked in the warmth, and after a scratch meal and several libations of duty-free scotch, we collapsed into bed. Surprisingly, the moggies also slept, worn out from the stresses of kennels and flying. We had arrived!

Nigel Wild

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The Ascott Village Charity



The Charity Trustees are looking for ways in which they can help financially with local projects to improve the environment of our village, for the enjoyment of Ascott residents. One recent example of what can be done is the award of cash earlier this year for plants and bulbs in chosen places around the village.

The trustees would like you, as local residents, to come forward with suggestions as to what might be undertaken in the future. Here are a few questions and we would like to receive replies to these from all those of you who have ideas about how our village can be made more attractive.

1. The Green is at the very centre of the village, and is seen by most of us every day.
 - 1.1 Is there anything that could be done to enhance or preserve this area?
 - 1.2 Are there any ideas that have been adopted in other villages that we could consider here?
 - 1.3 Are there any traditional activities that could be promoted here?
2. We are fortunate in having a number of footpaths and walks in and around the village that we are able to enjoy.
 - 2.1 Are there any simple ways in which these could be made more accessible or their appearance improved?
3. Care of existing trees and planting of new ones.
 - 3.1 Is there any need for this anywhere in the village?
 - 3.2 Are there any suggestions on where this might be done?
4. Do you have any other ideas that you have always wanted to put forward?

This might be your chance to have a pet scheme put into practice and enjoyed by the whole of the village.

If you have an idea that you would like to be considered you can write down your idea, put it in an envelope, address it to Stuart Fox and post it in the shop or email any of the people listed below:

johncull@wowmatters.com

elaine.byles@bioch.ox.ac.uk

keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net

stuart@cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk

mark@dawbarn.co.uk

Joke Corner

Joe decided to take his boss, Phil, to play nine holes during their lunch hour. However, they were held up by two ladies in front of them, playing very slowly. As the pair had only a short time for lunch, at the fourth tee, Joe offered to run ahead and see if they would speed up a bit.

He got about half way and then jogged back. Phil asked what the problem was,

“Well” said Joe, “one of the women is my wife and the other my mistress”.

Phil was not amused and started towards the ladies himself. He too, stopped short and walked slowly back to Joe, who asked “What’s wrong”?

“It’s a small world, Joe”, said his boss, “you’re fired”.

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Ascott Teas

The Ascott Teas are going from strength to strength, individually styled and organised by a different group of Ladies each month. Since the last article we have celebrated the Coronation and The Mad Hatters, both of which were a great success and we will have just held our 6th Ascott Teas with a Summer fruit theme and live music.

If you haven't been able to join us yet, there's still time as we have another 2 afternoons organised. They are:

Harvest Bake Off Sept. 15th

Cotswold Kitchen Garden Oct. 27th

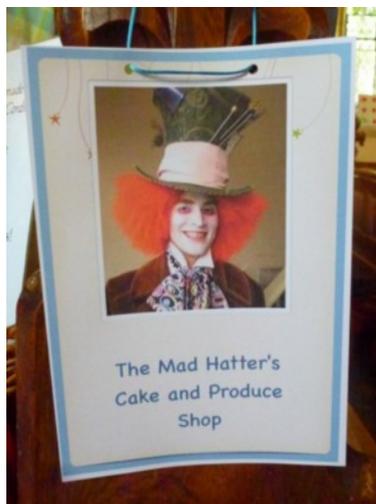
Both will be held in and around the Church and start at 2.00-4.30pm

The last one for this year, on Saturday Nov. 23rd is The Wychwood Xmas Fayre, which will be held at The Wychwood Wrought Iron, London Lane, courtesy of Phil and Helen Pratley, 10.00am - 4.00pm. Lots of individual stalls selling Christmas presents, a refreshment area with tea, coffee and, of course, mulled wine, children's activities and a very special Xmas raffle! Look out for posters and flyers early November.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Debra Cull

The following photos were taken by Maggie Lyon at the June 16th Ascott Tea.







Where Does the Money Go?

Where does our money go?

The moral of this article is “don’t go through your old bills” as it may lead to problems with high blood pressure when you realise just how much more you have to spend now, when compared with the past, for a similar range of services.

We moved to Ascott in 1996 and my first annual rates demand totalled £841, now 17 years later, my current charge is £2,148, an increase of 155%. If the increase was in line with Retail Price Inflation then this year’s demand should be in the region of £1,300, making the increase 54%. Where did the extra £848 go?

Who took the extra cash? The County went up from £737 to £1711 (132%), the District and Parish increased from £36 to £210 (483%) and the police by 235% from £68 to £227. Of all the authorities the County has the lowest percentage increase and the Parish and District the highest.

What services have improved or increased as a result of this extra cost? We did acquire an extra street light and some work has been done to improve drainage on the Shipton Road, but apart

from that and a potential new fence behind the road bridge not much else. Indeed the roads seem to be more pot-holed; local libraries are to be partially staffed by volunteers and we are always hearing about cuts in front line services and the reduction of police on the beat. I expect that the various authorities will blame Central Government, saying that more work is being passed to the District and County Councils and central grants are being cut, but I still look forward (without too much optimism) to a time when both central and local expenditure and therefore taxation can be reduced.

Stuart Fox



Open Gardens in Ascott?

The Rotary Club of Kingham and Wychwoods recently hosted Sir Tim Jenner the chairman of Thames Valley and Chilterns Air Ambulance serving Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Bucks who outlined an expansion of services. They now have doctors on board (already saving lives) and are soon extending flying hours from 14 to 19 a day which of course means special night vision flying. There are nearly a 1,000 flights a year with a third each for traffic and medical incidents. Equestrian accidents take up 15%. These developments will bring annual costs up to £4.5 Million a

year, almost all being raised as a charity. There are 65,000 supporters of a weekly lottery see <http://www.tvaca.org/> which help but they always have to be searching for funds.

Sir Tim said they were keen to offer in Oxfordshire A Village Open Gardens scheme (which has worked well in Berks and Bucks) where the charity promotes and organises the whole thing. Apparently if we would/did host in Ascott (next year) we would need at least 6 gardens.....do we have them? If you would like to support this initiative please call Paul Jackson 01993 83 1967.

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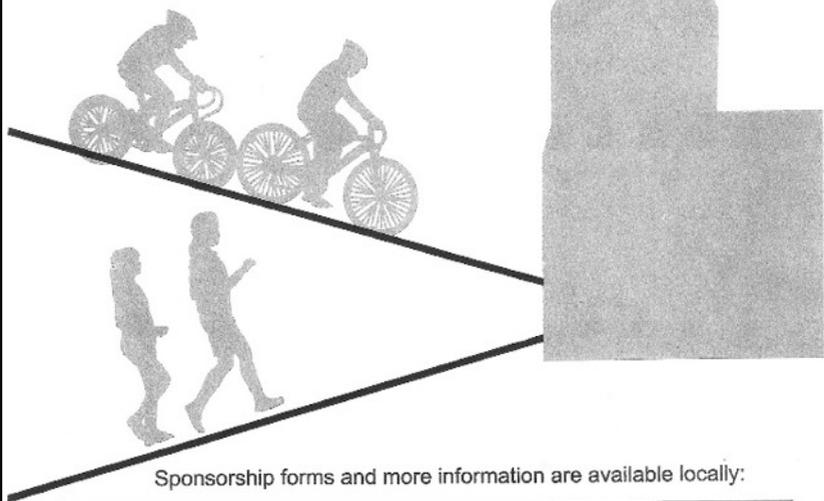
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WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The new season for the History Society will begin on Thursday, 19th September when Professor Pollard from Southampton University, will give a talk on The Dig at South Lawn. 2009-2011. The meeting will be in Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. This is about the dig that took place on the hill above Swinbrook.

Then in October on Thursday 17th at 7.30.p.m. in Shipton Village Hall, following the AGM, Anthony Poulton-Smith will talk about Oxfordshire Place Names.

In November at Milton Village Hall on the 21st at 7.30.p.m. Liz Woolley's talk will be How the Coming of the Railway Changed Oxford. There is no meeting in December.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £11 for an individual and £14 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at £3 per head.

More information can be obtained from Wendy Pearse 831023 or the WLHS Website www.wychwoodshistory.org

Did you Know?

DID YOU KNOW that in 1800 the B4437 Charlbury to Burford Road became a toll road. A toll cottage and gate were constructed just west of the road to Leafield. So if you wanted to ride along the road, drive a carriage or cart along the road or drive cattle, sheep or pigs along the road, you had to pay a toll. Those who joined the road heading east from Ascott had to pay their toll at the tollhouse near the bridge in Charlbury. Those travelling west from Ascott along the road, paid at Ascott toll gate by the cottage. The collection of tolls was discontinued sometime after 1860 and the cottage slowly disintegrated.

ALL CHANGE FOR THE CHARITY

At the Churchill Arms, now Sunset House, at 6.p.m. on Friday 8th June 1934, a significant event in the history of Ascott, took place. Cottages and land which had belonged to Ascott Charity for several centuries, were sold by auction, and this ancient endowment was split up and went into the possession of a number of individuals.

The Charity was established in 1478 when Thomas and Agnes Robins placed two cottages with adjoining land, into the hands of Trustees, the rent from which was to go to help the poor of the parish and indirectly to help the souls of Thomas and Agnes through purgatory.

Over the next few centuries the Charity grew larger by the addition of more cottages and land and a blacksmith's shop, until by 1934, the total capacity was 16 cottages, a dwelling house with blacksmith's shop, and five enclosures of land and orchard. Following the auction the money was to be placed in an Educational Trust. Eventually some went towards the purchase of the playing field and other good causes whilst the remainder forms the basis of Ascott Charity today.

The cottages to be sold were no's 2 and 4 Heritage Lane, all of Church View and more land at the back of these rows of cottages. It is likely that this area of ground was that originally placed in trust by Thomas and Agnes Robins. Later the land between the east wall of the churchyard out to a boundary with the Green also became part of the Charity, comprising two cottages, a dwelling house and blacksmith's shop and yard between.

The areas of land were Cutts Close, behind the Tiddy Hall, Lower Green which lies between the level crossing and the river on the east side and still forms part of the Charity today, and a field known as Charity Piece half way up Chippy Hill on the west side.

The other two enclosures were part pasture, part orchard situated behind Church View as already mentioned, and the piece of garden ground between the Pound and the pathway to the church opposite the Swan.

It is to be expected that the room in the Churchill Arms where the auction was held, was full to capacity, with probably others standing outside. Buyers eyeing up the opposition, tenants wondering how secure their leases were and villagers wanting to be first to pass on the

latest news. Amongst those present was Rob Storey and I am grateful to Jill (Rob's daughter) and Bill Greenaway for lending me their copy of the sale brochure which included Rob's notes about the auction. First up Lot 1 was the piece of garden ground beside the Pound. Apparently it was being rented by three people and being used as an allotment. It was bought for £23 by Miss Perkins, the village schoolteacher who lived in one of the houses beside the church path.

Lot 2 was the building adjoining the churchyard on the east, now owned by Mary Barnes but in 1934 two cottages occupied by Mrs N. Honeybone and Mr C. Sherbourne. They were bought by Mr Young, the village wheelwright who lived in High Street, for £40.

Lot 3 was described as 'a well built stone and stone slated creeper clad Dwelling House' now lived in by Richard and Pauline Plant, with the adjoining blacksmith's shop and back yard. Jimmy Andrews was the village blacksmith already living in the premises and he bought the whole property for £300.

Lot 4 was the present 2 & 4 Heritage Lane, then two cottages lived in by Mr J. Cripps and Mrs Moss. The Lot went to Mr Rawlins for £140. The property included plots of garden ground, coal houses and earth closets, pig sties and a well of water.

Turning into the top part of Church View from Heritage Lane, Lot 5 was a pair of cottages lived in by Mr Albert Longshaw and Mrs Mary Alden paying rents of £6-1s-4d per annum. They were bought by Mr Rawlins for £120.

And adjoining these was Lot 6, another pair of cottages lived in by Mrs Edgington and Mr Thomas Moss. They were bought for £62 10s. These cottages do not appear to have been in such good repair as the previous two and were subject to the requirements of the Local Authority as to repairs under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1930. These requirements also applied to the cottage lived in by Mr Cripps in Heritage Lane.

The above two lots also included garden ground, stone built wash houses and earth closets. Inside, the cottages contained a living room, pantry, two bedrooms and an attic

Moving down to the lower row of houses, Lot 7 was a pair of cottages, each containing a living room,

pantry, two bedrooms and store room with garden, wash house, earth closet and pig sty. This lot was of particular significance to Rob Storey since he lived in one of the cottages. They were sold to Mr Bennett for £102 10s.

Lot 8 comprised the final row of six cottages. No archway in the middle in those days or doors at the front. All contained living room, pantry, two bedrooms and an attic, garden, wash house, earth closet and pig sty. They were occupied by William Moss, Herbert Pratley, Thomas Jackson, Henry Edgington, James Wilkins and Ellis Kitchen at rents of £23 7s 4d per annum. However this lot was withdrawn at the sale and later sold to Mr Young.

Lot 9 the area of pasture and orchard which ran between Heritage Lane and Shipton Road behind Church View, was bought by Mr Rawlins who owned the adjoining field on the west side. Lot 10 Cutts Close behind the Tiddy Hall was bought by Mr Young for £16. It is not quite clear what followed with Lot 11 Lower Green and Lot 12 Charity Piece on Chippy Hill. However a significant day for the village when property which had been owned continually by Ascott Charity from the original endowment by Thomas and Agnes Rob-

ins in the late 15th century, came onto the market again.

Over time several people have asked me where the boundary between Ascott d'Oilly and Ascott Earl lies. It is a question which is very difficult to define but the original Charity Indenture which is kept in the Oxfordshire History Centre in Cowley, Oxford begins '*This Indenture made between Thomas Robins and agnes his Wife of Sybford in the County of Oxoniford of the one part and William Cole the elder Gyles Poole Robert Whiting John Gardener Robert Austin John Selwood Richard Poole and William Hall of yerllys ascott*' (sic)

This would certainly define Church View as being in Ascott Earl but the later addition to the Charity on the east of the churchyard wall may also indicate that Ascott Earl reached at least to the Green if not out to London Lane.

The Duke of Marlborough was given the manor (village and lands) of Ascott d'Oilly by Queen Anne, as part of the Blenheim package, and subsequently his heirs seemed to buy any property that came up for sale in any part of Ascott. This confuses matters because cottages all over the village gradually became part of the Blenheim, later Cornbury Estate. However the

1478 Indenture does seem to indicate a possible line of demarcation on the east side. So the next question is – which

manor of the village was the church built in? Or was it an area of No Man's Land?

Wendy Pearse

ROTARY CLUB OF KINGHAM AND WYCHWOODS

What do Magistrates actually do?

Well come and find out when the Chairman of Oxford Magistrates Tim Pocock comes to the club on September 16th. All are welcome.

If you would like to join us at 6pm for 6.30 at The Mill House, Kingham, then please book in advance with Kay Shortland 01993 832300. You can also join club members and Tom Pocock later for dinner if you wish at £12.50 for 2 courses.

Open Gardens in Ascott?

The Rotary Club of Kingham and Wychwoods recently hosted Sir Tim Jenner the chairman of Thames Valley and Chilterns Air Ambulance serving Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Bucks who outlined an expansion of services. They now have doctors on board (already saving lives) and are soon extending flying hours from 14 to 19 a day which of course means special night vision flying. There are nearly a 1,000 flights a year with a third each for traffic and medical incidents. Equestrian accidents take up 15%.

These developments will bring annual costs up to £4.5 Million a year, almost all being raised as a charity. There are 65,000 supporters of a weekly lottery see <http://www.tvacaa.org/> which help but they always have to be searching for funds.

Sir Tim said they were keen to offer in Oxfordshire A Village Open Gardens scheme (which has worked well in Berks and Bucks) where the charity promotes and organises the whole thing. Apparently if we would did host in Ascott (next year) we would need at least 6 gardens.....do we have them? If you would like to support this initiative please call Paul Jackson 01993 83 1967.



WYCHWOOD PROJECT - 14th ANNUAL WYCHWOOD FOREST FAIR

West Oxfordshire's Green Country Show, the **Annual Wychwood Forest Fair** will be held on

Sunday 1st September on the Wychwood Project's land at Crawley Road, Witney, from 11 am to 5 pm, entry £6.00, under 12's free.

Entertainers will be there to make it a **Family Day Out**, including Morris Dancers, Storyteller, Aunt Sally, Ferret Racing, Coconut Shy, Model Boat Driving, Hatwells Fun Fair, Southdown Farm animals, and other Children's Games.

Local Food Producers will be much in evidence and **Refreshments** from Witney Rotary Club, Rico's Pizza Shack, and John Kench's Barbecue, plus vegetarian food with an eastern twist, and local Ice Cream, all of which can be eaten whilst listening to the Witney Town Band or the ever popular Wychwood Jazz Band. The Wychwood Tea Tent, and Bar supplied by Wychwood Brewery will be much in evidence.

The **Wychwood Project** is all about conserving the countryside and in addition to the Project display some 30 **community and conservation groups** will be promoting ways of "doing your bit" for the environment and for your community.

In addition to the usual **Arts and Crafts** stalls, and local businesses ranging from organic vegetables to Wood for Fuel exhibitors will be showcasing their products and services.

The ever popular **Rural Craft Area**, will be filled with Demonstrators from dry stone walling to hedge laying, from beekeeping to basket making.

The venue is the site of the Wychwood Project's newest **Community Wood**, and those attending will have an opportunity to have a guided

tour of the last three years' planting, as well as see plans for completion of the wood, and participate in the Project's Plant-a-Tree and Dedicate-a-Tree schemes. **All the profit from the event will go towards the ongoing work of the Project in its work of "Restoring Landscapes, Inspiring People"**.

"All the Fun of a Rural Fair"

For further details please contact Michael Drew, 01993 702624, or E-mail michael.drew@totalise.co.uk, or visit the Wychwood Project website at www.wychwoodproject.org.

Ascott Pantomime

Dick Witless and His Cat will be performed on Saturday 14th December in Tiddy Hall, mark your diaries and calendars to make sure you do not miss the annual fun evening. Also for your entertainment is a poem, some historical facts, music by Mark Pidgeon and friends plus songs from the Ascott Songsters presented by Daphne Abe.

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Windrush Valley School

May has been a busy month at Windrush Valley School, as well as the children working hard and sitting the end of year examinations and SATS, we have had some great trips out and sporting events.

Form 1 enjoyed a great day out at **Warwick Castle**. Although quite cold, the rain stayed away! We



learnt how 5-7 year old children would have had to help in battle, and where a lot of our “sayings” today have come from; “*keep it under your hat*”, this is what bowmen used to say to each other about the spare twine for their bows.

We visited the Princess in her tower and all went to bed that night hoping to find out if we were all royal princes and princesses! The birds of prey display was fascinating, and many birds skimmed the top of our heads, WOW! All very tired plus a few

sleepy heads on the minibus, but nonetheless, a great day out.
NORTH LONDON ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

A group of children represented Windrush Valley School at the N. London ISA Athletics Championships at Bedford International Stadium. The day is a great opportunity to compete in a professional athletics stadium, against schools from all over N. London (ISA members.) All the children competed well in both track and field events, with Lorimer Kay



Lorimer Kay

winning his 150m sprint, taking him to the ISA National Athletics Finals at Birmingham International Stadium on 17th June.

Congratulations to: Charlie Maudsley, Jake Maudsley, Gregory Davies, Lorimer Kay, Caden Spencer, Albertine Wheeler, Ella Frost, Cassia Belardo and Poppy Kay for some great performances. With a

special thank you to Lucas Melvin and Mrs Lisa Frost for all their help during the day. Although May turned out to be quite a wet and miserable month as far as the weather was concerned, we didn't let that dampen our spirits for our annual **MAY DANCING** event. To be on the safe side, we

danced, sang and entertained parents, family and friends inside New Beaconsfield Hall. Well done to all the children, especially those performing in the Junior School Band for the first time, and our Nursery dancers, who have not performed in public before!



May Queen Poppy Kay

Young Adults

Going onto sixth form college or university? Do you need books and/or specialist equipment?

The Village Educational Fund may be able to help. Contact any of the trustees, all requests are fully confidential.

johncull@wowmatters.com

elaine.byles@bioch.ox.ac.uk

keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net

stuart@cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk

Ascott Pantomime

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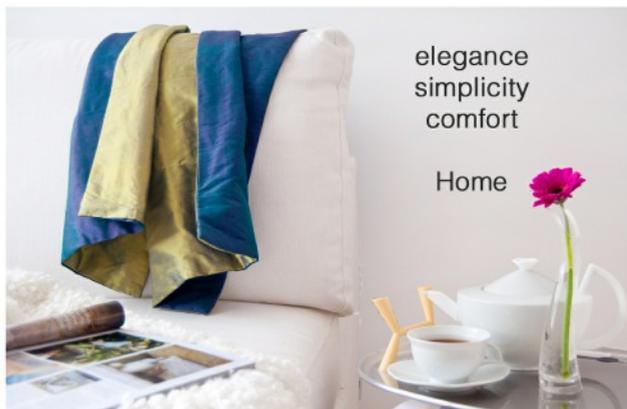
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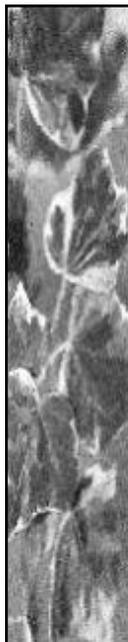


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WYCHWOOD DISHARMONY

Have you ever heard the saying ‘as thick as thieves’?

It came to mind when I visited the Milton Baptist church the other Friday for coffee. There they all were, sat together, laughing and joking, as if butter wouldn’t melt in their mouths.

I thought to myself, only a year ago these ladies from Ascott and Milton were sat, daggers drawn, scowling at each other from across the room.

I couldn’t believe all of them sat there as thick as thieves. It was well known at the time of their big bust-up last year, plans were being made to hijack the bus and make the driver take them to the seaside, it was fortunate for Elliot, the driver, the bus company went bust before the plan could be carried out.

Now they are all friends again, something’s going on, something’s afoot, they could be inching towards carrying out this action again, otherwise why should a certain lady from Ascott, whose name at the moment remains anonymous, always take the driver a piece of cake every Friday? I’m a poor O.A.P., she has never given me a piece of cake.

I just wonder how much longer this cosy bonhomie will last?

I can tell them this, don’t come crying to me when everything goes pear shaped. I have always considered myself a peacemaker, far be it for me to make mischief. I like to boast I have a charm with the ladies that others lack, so last year I was perfectly willing to act as go between when Ascott and Milton fell out. Now I feel I’ve been totally rebuffed. I feel they have cast me off like a pair of old tights. I can tell them this, I’m not going to stand for it. They are not going to use me to stuff an old cushion. I intend to be very crafty and foil their little plans without exposing myself.

I know already a rift is growing. They were planning to raise money by having a float at Milton fete, they intended to sing songs from the 1940’s and 1950’s. All was going well until two of the Ascott lot said they were going to dress up as Vera Lynn and Gracie Fields and told the Milton lot they had to go as Flanagan and Allen and George Formby. This annoyed Milton who took umbrage and said they were not dressing as men. Anyway, none of them could play a banjo or even knew the words to “With My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock”.

It is to the credit of Milton Baptist church and its minister, to show such understanding and allow such intrigue to take place. One interesting observation, these pet-

ty differences are only between Ascott and Milton, does this mean ladies of a certain age in Shipton are too intelligent and sophisticated to get involved in such trifles?

Fred Russell

NATURE NOTES

Our countryside is always changing, often as a result of man's activities, sometimes caused by changes in climate, but more recently by the arrival of foreign pests and diseases. For those old enough to remember, our fields and hedgerows were once populated by the stately Elm. Constable painted them within his iconic landscapes and they were a prominent feature on the roads leading into Ascott. The Elm was wiped out in a generation with the arrival of Dutch Elm disease, a fungus carried by a wood boring beetle, native to Europe, but not Britain. With the loss of the Elm, species that depended



on it disappeared too, notably the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly, whose larva fed exclusively on the leaves of that tree.

Today many of our trees are under threat. Oak is threatened by sudden Oak death, caused by a pathogen, *Phytophthora Ramorum* and the arrival from the continent, on trees imported

from Italy, of the Oak Processionary Moth larva, which is attacking Oaks across London. Not only can this larva defoliate the tree, but it is covered in poisonous hairs which can burn the eyes and skin of anyone coming into contact with them

and in extreme cases victims can suffer anaphylactic shock. In Belgium the infestation was so bad that the army was sent in to deal with them. Horse Chestnuts too are under a two pronged attack. First from bacteria, which causes stem bleeding with a rusty brown or black gummy liquid seeping from the bark, causing die back and death over several years. Second from a leaf mining moth whose activities cause defoliation and loss of green tissue leading to loss of vigour. Now Ash is under threat, as a result of a fungal infection first identified in Poland in 1992 that causes die back of the crown and ultimately death. By 2012 this disease had spread to Belgium, France, Italy, Holland, Hungary, Romania, Russia and Ireland. It arrived in England on



Ash saplings imported from Europe as part of various woodland regeneration schemes. A recent survey in Denmark indicated that over 60% of its Ash trees were infected and would disappear. The only way to stop its spread is to destroy and burn infected trees.

There is now an import ban in place and 100,000 saplings have been destroyed. The current official aim is to identify and destroy infected trees with the hope of slowing the speed at which the disease spreads and finding strains that are resistant.

The disease can be recognised by the appearance of small necrotic spots on stems and branches which expand into large lesions extending along the branches, causing wilting and the prema-

ture shedding of leaves and the death of the crown. Young trees can be killed in one season, but mature specimens survive the initial attack but will succumb over a number of years. There is another disorder of mature Ash trees that leads to die back of the crown, but this is believed to be a physical problem and not a disease.

What will it mean for us? The Ash is one of our most abundant native trees, vying with the Oak in terms of commercial, wildlife and landscape importance. In the short distance between Ascott and Shipton following the back road there are at least twenty six Ash trees in the hedgerow alone. Multiply this across the whole country and we must be looking at millions of trees. The most pessimistic estimate is that 90% of these could be lost in a generation.

Both Foxholes and the Wychwood Forest are Oak and Ash woodlands, with the addition of Beech and coppiced Hazel. In Foxholes the Ash is also coppiced. Traditionally Ash was planted in hedgerows in order to supply timber for tool handles, fence posts and hurdles. Today it is still used to make hockey sticks, oars, billiard cues, cricket

stumps and polo sticks. The timber is strong and springy and won't shatter easily making it ideal for axe and spade handles. The timber is also used in furniture making; its excellent bending properties make it useful for producing parts for chairs. Some unusual uses include making parts of the chassis for Morgan cars and in the past aeroplane frames. The timber is ideal for your winter fire, burning well whether green or dry with a pleasant fragrance.

Ash bark is used for tanning nets and has been used in a number of herbal medicines, purporting to cure fever, liver disorders and arthritic problems. The leaves have been used as a diuretic and laxative. The green, unripe seeds can be pickled and used as a substitute for capers.

When fully grown an Ash can achieve 30 metres or more casting deep shade beneath its canopy; very little can grow beneath, partly because of the shade and partly because of the mass of fibrous roots which can cover a considerable area, drawing moisture and nutrients from the soil. Male and female flowers appear together before the leaves open and when pollinated, seeds known as keys, are produced in

winged bunches. In the autumn these seeds are distributed by the wind, remain dormant for up to six years and if they have fallen in a suitable environment, well away from the parent tree, will germinate during a following spring.

Traditionally, with Oak, it is one of the last trees to produce its leaves, this year not until well into May. There is an old saying suggesting that this predicts the weather for the coming season:

Oak before Ash,

We are in for a splash.

Ash before Oak,

We are In for a soak.

I hope that I have quoted this the right way round, but given our odd weather patterns I expect it would work either way, depending on weather conditions in any year!

Like many of our native trees Ash has acquired many magical properties for instance;

The handles of witch's broomsticks and druids wands were made of ash.

As a cure for warts. Prick each wart with a new pin that has been thrust into the tree and then put the pin back into the tree saying 'Ashen tree, ashen tree, pray buy these warts of me.' I cannot guarantee that this is an efficacious cure!

In northern England it was believed that if a maiden placed Ash leaves under her pillow she would dream of her future lover. Ash leaves are supposed to bring you good fortune, carry one in your pocket. Those with an even number of leaflets are especially lucky.

Loss of the Ash would be a tremendous blow to our countryside and to the many creatures that live and feed on it.

Stuart Fox



The Swan - The Village Pub

After three long years, the Swan re-opened its doors to an eager and enthusiastic village on Sunday 30th June. It coincided with one of our warmest summers for years which seemed wholly appropriate.



A picture of happy villagers along with Author Bostrom on the official opening evening

Our hosts, Richard and Michiel, had asked their good friend, Arthur Bostrom who played Officer Crabtree in the long running TV hit BBC sitcom 'Allo Allo', to make the opening speech and send good wishes to one and all.

The Swan Inn has now been open for 6 weeks and already the village is enjoying popping in for a drink and a chat. We are spoilt for choice and variety on offer be it; 'Pitstop' for fish and chips and the pub quiz on Mondays, Seniors lunch and if you have room, curry and a bottle of Cobra on Tuesdays, and the regular menu for the rest of the week.

All this in OUR pub in OUR Village.

Looking ahead

Friday 23rd August, the Swan is presenting the exciting Abba Live tribute band together with Lady Motown and a soul act Northern Sky. The £20 ticket includes a pig roast, giant hot dogs, doughnuts AND the first drink is free. Now, that's what I call a bargain! Richard and Michiel are very kindly making donations (after costs) to the Village Charity, Grapevine and The Church.

No doubt, you will have also spotted the scaffolding engulfing the pub which is necessary for the major job of re-roofing. As soon as that project is complete, the Swan will embark on a total refurbishment of the function room (the single story building overlooking the car park). I'm sure this will soon be in demand as a smaller scale venue and who knows what treats lie in store as winter nights draw in.

There is even talk of a very special guest for Christmas Eve following Carols on the Green.

Now, that can't be bad ...

John Cull

John Cull, together with Nick Carter, Mike Tucker, Tony Gillings & Richard Smith are members of the Pub Action Group, which helped to facilitate the opening of our pub.



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NEW WYCHWOOD SINGERS IN CONCERT

The New Wychwood Singers now total 50 members from all the Wychwood villages (and beyond). We meet weekly, in Milton Baptist Hall on Tuesday at 12.30, under our Director, Robin Martin-Oliver from Ascott-under-Wychwood.

We will be holding a concert on Friday November 8th at 19.30 in the Tiddy Hall. The programme will be varied with popular songs and other well known favourites.

Tickets will be £8 to include a glass of wine and will be available in September from choir members or telephone 01993 830090

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wood, OX7 6AG**

**Doors open 7:30 Tickets £7.00
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Elaine or Mark - 01993 831427**

IN AID OF THE TIDDY HALL

Free Speech

The Grapevine is your magazine and as such you can contribute by writing an article about anything you feel will be of general interest or a subject that you feel should be aired. For example:

- Do you subscribe to a charity that you think more of us need to know about?
- Have you a rant about the way we are governed at national and/or local level?
- Do you want to praise or thank the work carried out on your behalf?
- Is there a group of villagers striving to improve the village that we are not all aware of?

You can contribute in the form of an article or as a letter to the editor for village related subjects.

Please Note:

The editorial staff reserve the right to correct or remove any inappropriate words or phrases.

Editor

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Get to know a Villager

CAROLE ANGIER

Where were you born?

I was born in London, towards the end of the war. My mother always said that a huge bomb exploded nearby at the exact moment of my birth; it's probably a myth, but I like to believe it.

Where else have you lived?

After a rocky start (being a Jewish refugee from Austria, he was interned as an enemy alien), my father spent six years in the British Army. When he got out, jobs were scarce, and he was completely unqualified, his youth having been swallowed up by the war. So he and my mother lit out for the territory, in their case Canada. As a result I lived for 17 years – all my schooldays – in Montreal, in the French-speaking province of Quebec: first in a flat, then in a ‘duplex’, finally in a house, as our fortunes

improved, but always in the English part of what was then a divided city. I didn't meet a French Canadian – not socially, to make friends with – until I went to Art School at 17.

Growing up in Montreal was strange, for me. In fact, I didn't really grow up in Montreal. I read Dickens and Jane Austen, and in my mind I was living in 19th century England...

So I came back as soon as I could, at 21 – though as you may imagine it was a bit of a shock, and not

at all like the England I'd imagined. All the time I'd lived in Canada I felt English, now I was in England I felt Canadian. And so it has gone on.

In my first years in Britain I lived as a student in Oxford: first in a convent – which was *really* strange, nuns

never spoke English in Quebec! – then in various student houses, scruffy but beautiful, and I was



blissfully happy. I expect it was being young, and a student, as well as Oxford, but Oxford was certainly a large part of it. After that I lived in various places – back in Canada, briefly in Kenya, and for 6 years in Cambridge. Then when I had my son, Tom, and was thinking about where to settle, I remembered my blissful Oxford days. So that’s how I came to live here, because we looked all around until we found a cottage we could afford – though we could never afford it today, so that was very lucky. And I’ve lived here ever since, for over 35 years. I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. I love Italy and France, but I can’t understand people who retire far away from their native language. I guess it’s still the books I read that matter most to me, and I want my inner and outer lives to be in the same place at last.

What jobs or professions have you had?

When I left Oxford my first job was as ASM – Assistant Stage Manager – in the new Adeline Genée Theatre in East Grinstead, in Sussex. I’d spent a lot of my Oxford time in the theatre, and thought that was what I wanted to do. I did it for a year or two, until

I reached the dizzying heights of Production Manager for the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in Montreal, and realized that that was as far as I was going to get. So then I went back to academe, and worked on a PhD – those were the Cambridge years. After a while I realized that that wasn’t it either, and what I really wanted to do – what I’d always wanted to do – was write. So even before the PhD was finished I started my first book, and writing reviews and other bits of journalism, and generally began the literary life I still live today. As a result of course I flunked my PhD – though it was a near thing, and only one examiner (from Oxford!) refused to pass it. So I nearly became an academic after all, and sometimes of course I regret it; the regular salary would have been nice. But really I know that that was the right path for me. I’ve been very lucky to survive as a writer. I’ve also had spells back at university, as a teacher of writing, and my son is a proper academic; so in the end I’ve had the best of both worlds.

What books have you written?

I’ve written four biographies, the first privately commissioned, and

the next two – a short one and a long one – about the same person, the novelist Jean Rhys, who wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea*, most famously, but also other marvelous novels. My last biography was of the great Italian writer, chemist and Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi, author of *If This Is a Man*, and *The Periodic Table*, and much else. The long Jean Rhys and the Primo Levi took me 8 years each, so I'm extremely slow.... I've also edited other people's books, which I'm equally proud of: two by writers from Ascott-under-Wychwood, and three by exiled writers, from Afghanistan, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe... The Ascott writers are Eric Moss, who wrote two volumes of autobiography, and Fred Russell, who writes poetry, as readers of the *Grapevine* will know. Eric's *Walk Humble*, *My Son* and Fred's *Tongue Pie* are both available at the Ascott Shop, for very reasonable sums. My own long biographies are a bit pricier, from Faber Finds, but I expect you can find lots of cheap copies on the Internet. (They're very long, I admit, and I promise I won't quiz anyone about whether they've bought them.)

What are you doing now?

Well, I've recently retired from teaching, but I'm not ready to quit,

so I've founded a mentoring agency for writers, together with several writer friends. We have a website –

www.thewritersproject.co.uk – so if anyone's interested, or knows anyone who might be, please have a look. I'm also co-editing a series of books on writing, and co-wrote one myself, on Life Writing. It's not the Great American (or Canadian, or British) Novel, but I hope it's useful, and a good read. Big rivers or small streams, they all flow into the great sea of literature, as Jean Rhys said.

I'm carrying on with my own writing too – writers are always writing, we don't know how else to justify our existence. My current literary passion is the German writer (but also English writer, since he lived here most of his life) W G Sebald, author of *The Emigrants*, *Austerlitz* and others. A biography would be difficult, for several reasons, so I'm working on a set of essays about him. I hope other people will find them interesting; I'm riveted.

What are your hobbies?

I always say 'Walking and talking' – and actually it's true. I think I've done every walk within miles of Ascott many times over – past the Stag Plain to the bluebell wood above Chilson, through the Wych-

wood, and the Nature Reserve at Foxholes, over to the Sarsden Pillars, along the Shakespeare Trail from Chipping Norton... And many more. I think that's been the most sustaining part of my life here – the constant presence of birds and animals, the hills and fields, most of all, perhaps, the trees. And the talking. Years ago Fred Russell and I (together with Patrick Hanks, an OUP lexicographer who lived in the village then) founded the Ascott Discussion Group precisely for that purpose – talking. The annual Ascott Panto began as a Discussion Group entertainment. I'm proud of having been one of the originators of an Ascott tradition!

Do you have a hero?

When I was a child, the two people I admired the most were Charles Dickens and Vincent Van Gogh. I'd have to add Primo Levi now, but Dickens and Van Gogh are still my heroes too. They all paid such *attention* to things, and they all managed to turn suffering – their own and other people's – into such vivid, colourful, moving art. Dickens is supposed to be a sentimentalist, but he isn't really. He's not just a great social critic, but extremely sharp about our everyday foibles, such as smugness and self-delusion. I might easily have landed up in Holland or France, because of Van Gogh. But Dickens brought me to England instead. You can blame him.

Carole Angiers



Wychwood Library

We are well through our big event of the year for children and that is the Summer Reading Scheme that starts in the middle of July until the middle of September. This nationwide scheme is designed to encourage all our children to read during the summer holidays with incentives such as stickers and other rewards for each book read. Medals and certificates are awarded at the end and the theme this year is "Creepy House". We also have lots of new books available so I am sure there will be something for everyone to get stuck into and it's not too late to join in.

We had an amazing response to the "Fossil Day" at Wychwood Library at the end of July. The event was run by the Oxfordshire Geology Trust, with very many thanks to Owen Green and Leonie, and well over 150 adults and children of all ages brought along their fossils for identification, discussed dinosaurs and were also made aware of Oxfordshire's many sites of geological interest.

The computer classes will be restarting at the beginning of November. Do book in early, as we have limited places available.

If you love Poetry, then come along on the third Thursday afternoon of the month, to read and listen. The group has been running for over a year and we have covered topics such as War Poets, Lakeland Poets and Animal poetry as well as one session of Poetry Games which was great fun. This is a very relaxed group with the participants just there to enjoy poetry. 2.30 – 3.30pm.

We are also looking for new members for our two Reading Groups. One group meets on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm and the other group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 1.45pm. So take your pick and read and discuss with us.

See you soon at Wychwood Library.

Ruth Gillingham

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

Gardening in Ascott

Zen and the Art of Pruning

I recently visited Whichford Pottery, not just to admire their fine garden pots, but to listen and watch Jake Hobson, a master of the Japanese art of Niwaki. Niwaki is usually translated in the West as Cloud Pruning, but the literal translation is “garden tree.” This gives a clue to the extensive use of Niwaki in the Japanese garden setting; all trees and shrubs are trained or manipulated in some way to fit into the Japanese garden concept.

Japanese gardens have long used a fine-tuned set of distinctive techniques to coax a plant into producing a very striking effect. Trees can be made to look older, wind-swept, or even constrained in keeping with the size of their gardens whilst still retaining the essence of the grand-sized tree they might have become if space permitted. Think of Bonsai (meaning potted tree), pruned and restricted to produce a miniature of the mature tree; Niwaki can be thought of as a larger version, grown in the ground.

Of course, there has always been a tradition in the West, and perhaps

particularly here in Britain for Topiary, and Jake’s approach is often a fusion of East and West; the pruning of Box for instance into amorphous shapes akin to the flowing curvature of a Henry Moore nude for example. Although the final shapes may not be in the strictest terms traditional Niwaki, the techniques used to produce them are from this great Japanese tradition and skill.

Whilst here in the West we enjoy experimenting with a wide range of different plants, Japanese gardeners experiment through training and shaping a relatively limited set of plants. The principles of Niwaki may be adapted to garden trees all over the world, and not restricted to Japanese gardens.

Jake demonstrated the intricate effects which can be produced by drastic pruning of a young tree. He tied young growth into sinuous curves by using soft garden string and secured main stems to canes to twist them in pleasing directions. What started as a young shapeless sapling turned before our eyes into a beautiful contorted vision of a large bonsai. Of course it is not that easy to produce a beautiful, manicured piece of

sculpture – one needs to understand the kind of symmetry we are unfamiliar with in Europe and that concept which is closely allied – one of overall balance. Well executed Niwaki is highly asymmetric and yet beautifully balanced at the same time. No “cloud” of vegetation is directly above another, nor is it at the same height as another cloud emerging from the main trunk. Jake suggested a number of trees and shrubs which could be pruned in this way, the most obvious being yew, privet and box. But less thought of might be cotoneasters, holm oak, holly, viburnum, pyracantha, pines, thuja and lonicera nitida.

The most obvious examples for trying these techniques in my own garden are on overgrown shrubs and trees. No longer do I see an old tree or shrub needing to be replaced; I now see a potential new Niwaki specimen awaiting my new Japanese secateurs. Hey presto – a transformation from an ugly duckling to a beautiful swan, or perhaps should that be a crane!

Jake has written an excellent book, *The Art of Creative Pruning*, and there are lots of examples of his work on the Internet. I recently visited Bourton House Garden which, by the way, was looking superb in late summer, and they have a large grouping of box in the formative stage of cloud pruning. It should be looking crisp and neat by this time next year. It will be well worth a visit to see it, together with the great planting and general high standard of gardening at Bourton House Garden.

Madeline Galistan

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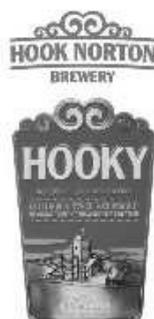
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Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

The Parish Council have continued to receive the support of both their District Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles and County Councillor Rodney Rose. Drainage works commenced on and around the river bridge on Monday 22 July – this has not been without its problems! When this work was originally requested by the Parish Council and agreed by Oxfordshire County Council, it was not envisaged that a visit by an Oxfordshire County Council Bridge Engineer would prompt the proposal of extreme remedial works to the river bridge. The proposed works by Oxfordshire County Council sparked an immense response from the Village and a Public Meeting was held in conjunction with the Parish Council's scheduled meeting in July. The meeting was supported by some 36 parishioners, who were given the opportunity to express their views. After a lengthy question and answer session Oxfordshire County Council agreed to delay the proposed works to the river bridge and to re-think the proposals made and report back to the Parish Council in time for their meeting in September.

Planning applications received have increased, albeit still slow. The Sports Pavilion continues to receive support from local clubs and organisations and there is the possibility that the Football Club may provide a second team.

Parish Councillors have been busy organising events to present Project Safe Play – these have included a Car Boot and a Roadshow illustrating the possibilities for a new safe play area.

Please try and support your Parish Council, they do meet every second Monday of the month, with the exception of August.

If you have any issues, please do not hesitate to contact either myself as Parish Clerk or indeed any of the following Parish Councillors.

Parish Council:	
Rob Morgan (Chairman)	831958
Bridgette Crundwell (Vice)	830671
Laurence Mellor	831182
Philippa Carter	830344
Sandy Timms	831870
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)	01608 641045

Tiddy Hall News

The hub of usual activities slows down during the summer months at Tiddy Hall. However, during July and August, yoga classes took place on Tuesday evenings and Mrs Pauline Carter continued with her piano classes. There were also a few children's parties. Of course the faithful regular, John with the Post Office, never seems to miss a week unless snow blocks his way! This quieter time gives us a chance to organise some general maintenance. This August, the boards under the gutters have been repainted and the usual general clean-up of hedges and trees and car park area took place, all in preparation to welcome back our regular users for the start of a new term – Ascott Pre School, Windrush Valley School, The Roseneath School of Music and The Post Office.

The Tiddy Hall Trustees held their Annual General Meeting back in July. A few changes within the committee have taken place this year. Roger Shepherd, who has been Chairman for many years, has decided to stand down. However, Roger will continue serving on the Committee and has agreed to take over in a newly created post as President. On behalf of the whole village, the Committee would like to thank Roger for all the hard work that he has put into the Hall over the past 20 plus years. We are delighted that Roger has agreed to stay on in this new role, as his wise counsel is much appreciated, whilst keeping a guiding hand on the tiller! Simon Gidman, who has been acting Chairman this past year, was voted to take on the role for the coming year. Also, Rebecca Baxter has retired from her post and we would like to thank her

for her commitment over the past few years and we are delighted to welcome Carol Squires to take her place.

Tiddy Hall Trustees

President	Roger Shepherd
Chairman	Simon Gidman
Vice Chairman & Treasurer	Nick Carter
Secretary	Ken Smith
Booking Clerk	Ingrid Ridley
Responsible Person	Tony Gillings
	Carol Squires

Kitchen Update

We had hoped to confirm the starting date for the installation of the new kitchen at our AGM with view to opening the kitchen in September. However, there has been a slight delay and work is now scheduled to start in the February half term.

There will be another evening of acoustic music on September 14th. Wychwood Folk Club hosts RiverFolk at Tiddy, with Acousticana regulars and special guests Chalice.

Chalice are a Cotswold based 5-piece contemporary folk band who play a wide range of instruments including guitars, mandola, electric bass, recorders, whistles and cajons and all sing in close harmony. Please contact Mark or Elaine 01993 831427 or Harry 01993 830358 for tickets which are £7.

On November 9th the Fishing Club will be hosting another **Race Night**. Please contact Pete and Judy Moss on 01993 830758 for tickets which are £10 and this includes supper.

And, another date for your diary is the **Annual Village Pantomime** which is scheduled for Saturday 14th December! Plenty of varied entertainment to look forward to in your village hall!

Regular Activities:

Monday – Friday Mornings

Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant 07968006451

Wednesday Night 6pm – 6.45pm

Circuits

Contact: Simon Gidman 01993 831479

Friday Afternoons

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Post Office runs every Friday afternoon 2pm – 4pm

Special Events:

Sat 14th September

Wychwood Folk Club & friends

Tickets £7 - doors open 7.30pm

(bar available)

Contact Mark Pidgeon 01993 831427 or

Harry 01993 830358

Sat 19th October

Life Drawing Class

9.30 – 12.30

Contact Jan Harvey 01993 832357

Sat 9th November

Race Night

Tickets £10 to include supper – doors

open 7pm (bar available)

Contact – Pete Moss 01993 830758

Sat 14th December

Village Panto!

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start

Ingrid Ridley

PROJECT PLAYSAFE

RECREATION GROUND RENOVATION

In 2011 your Parish Council identified that the recreation ground was in need of renovation and that this beautiful space is used very little by local residents. We consulted residents and experts widely to help us decide which changes the community would like and would use. Results and our responses were:-

Step 1

51% residents replied to a questionnaire and over 90% were in favour of renovation.

Repairs and easy changes were made; new swing seats, picnic benches and football goalposts purchased. More expensive changes (such as new equipment, better play surfaces and drainage) had to wait for grant applications targeted for Autumn 2013.

Step 2

Experts were consulted and all results analysed. Suppliers were approached for designs and quotations of a renovated playground.

Step 3

A letter was delivered to all households giving our suggested list of new equipment and inviting feedback by note into a box in the shop or by e-mail. It was explained that most funds would come from grants but that some fundraising should take place within the village to strengthen our grant applications. We had little feedback but the strongest voices were clearly calling for more facilities for older children. There were a few offers of help with fundraising. Around this time we received a request for a tennis facility.

Step 4

We concluded that we should offer the village the option of a multi-use all-weather court (MUGA). This could provide tennis as well as other sports and therefore appeal to older children and adults as well as offer-

ing an all-weather surface where any age group could play during wet periods. Suppliers were approached for advice and quotations.

Step 5

We invited all villagers (young and old) to come to the recreation ground to view and vote for all possible options. This was advertised in the Grapevine and by mail drop to all households. 79 people either voted at this event or the June Church tea, while a few e-mailed their views:-

- 53 asked for a MUGA (some also wanted a few extra pieces of play equipment)
- 15 asked for big changes to the playground only
- 9 asked for just a few key pieces of play equipment
- 2 asked for no changes at all

Overwhelmingly, the favourite pieces of play equipment were (in order of preference):

1. A zip wire
2. A challenging climbing frame
3. A BMX track
4. A skateboard ramp

CONCLUSIONS

We would like to say how thankful we are to those who have taken the trouble to give their views. The conclusion is that the majority of those who have spoken out are asking for a MUGA. We are now referring to the voluntary and leisure sectors of OCC and WODC to check that our consultation has been thorough enough to start making grant applications.

If anyone would still like to give their views – positive or negative – please e-mail pippa.carter2@gmail.com.

Parish Council



FAREWELL TO HILARY

Friday 28 June



It was a sad farewell to Hilary Hawker, our dear friend and member of staff of Ascott Village Shop. Friends gathered to wish Hilary well as she takes up a new job in Charlbury near to her home. A beautiful bouquet and garden vouchers were presented to Hilary by Richard Squires (Chairman) on behalf of all her friends and colleagues. She will be so badly missed by one and all.

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Us as others see us

This is an article that appeared in the New York Times and was sent by Paul Longshaw, who, as many will know, was born and raised in the village but now lives in America.

A Weekend in the Country by AMY CHOZICK

CHIPPING NORTON, ENGLAND - The power centers of British politics and media may reside in London, but their tentacles extend to a tiny working class market town with rows of glistening stone buildings, 17th-century pubs and a medieval church.

This politically conservative Tory stronghold in rural Oxfordshire, with its green hills dotted with sheep and cottages with slate roofs, is in some ways London's amped-up version of the Hampdens - if President Obama, David Axelrod and Rupert Murdoch were neighbors and went horseback riding and ate suppers together.

The area around Chipping Norton, about an hour-and-a-half drive northwest from London on the M40 motorway, is home to Prime Minister David Cameron's constituency in Witney, as well as to Lady Astor and Viscount Astor, the mother and stepfather of Mr Cameron's wife, Samantha. Rebekah

Brooks, the former head of Mr Murdoch's British newspapers, and her husband, Charlie Brooks, an old friend of Mr. Cameron's brother from Eton, have homes just outside town, as does a who's-who of British media, politics and entertainment, like Jeremy Clarkson, the raconteur co-host of the BBC's highly rated "Top Gear"; Alex James, the former bassist in Blur; and the actor Sir Ben Kingsley. Within a short drive can be found Damien Hirst (Gloucestershire); the writer and socialite Jemima Khan (Woodstock); and Steve Hilton, Mr. Cameron's former chief strategist, and his wife, Rachel Whetstone, in charge of public relations at Google (Burdord).

Chipping Norton is London's amped-up version of the Hampdens, but one that has seen its social fabric frayed by the country's phone-hacking scandal.

The reigning golden couple of "the Chipping Norton set: as it's been labeled by the British press -

Elisabeth Murdoch, a daughter of Rupert, and her husband, Matthew Freud, who founded one of Britain's most powerful public relations firms - lives nearby in Burford Priory, a converted priory that dates to the 10th century and has its own cemetery and chapel. It's a chummy world - one of shooting and tweed - but one that has been shaken in the last two years in the aftermath of the phone-hacking scandal at Mr Murdoch's British tabloids. It is a scandal that has splintered some long standing relationships, made social gatherings occasionally awkward and made the clique of power brokers in the area even more of an object of fascination for the British public. For years, the set existed in relative seclusion, socializing at Mr Cameron's favorite pub, the Kingham Plough, or in one another's rustic kitchens with their exposed limestone walls and Aga stoves. (Think: Wellington boots and Barbour jackets.) "It's very pretty and suits urban people who don't particularly like the countryside but like the idea of liking it," James Hanning, a co-author of "Cameron: Practically a Conservative", said of the Cotswolds, the hills that include Chipping Norton.

Alastair Campbell, who was former Prime Minister Tony Blair's communications director, said: "If you go to Chipping Norton, there are farm laborers and miners. But if you really breathe in the essence of the place, it's what you imagine David Cameron being." (While he was prime minister, Mr Blair had a home in his constituency of Sedgefield in Northeast England, and used Chequers, the official countryside residence of the prime minister.) Then came the summer of 2011. To celebrate the completed renovation of their Burford home, Mr Freud and Ms Murdoch hosted a bacchanalia for guests like the Labour politician David Miliband and the singer Lily Allen. It featured a jazz band and, for those who stayed the night, brunch. The next day, The Guardian published a report that The News of the World, which was one of Mr Murdoch's newspapers, had hacked into the voice mail of Milly Dowler, a school-girl whose cellphone was hacked after she disappeared and was later found murdered. The news set in motion a series of events - the closing of The News of the World, the arrest of Ms Brooks - that have made this area, reminiscent of a Jane Austen novel, the center of a modern British drama. Since then the set has splintered, the parties have mostly ended, and the place has quieted. "We're in a period of calm," said a person close to Ms Brooks who asked to remain anonymous to protect that friendship. May-

be, this person added, it's like the part of "The Great Gatsby" when guests drive up the long driveway of Jay Gatsby's West Egg mansion, only to find the lights turned off. (Of course, that story didn't end well for Gatsby.)

In a widely talked-about column in 2011, Peter Osborne, chief political commentator for The Daily Telegraph, called the set "an incestuous collection of louche, affluent, power-hungry and amoral Londoners."

In September, Ms Brooks faces trial on several charges, including conspiracy "to conceal documents, computers and other electronic equipment" related to police investigations and corruption at The News of the World and The Sun, another Murdoch holding. Her husband also faces a conspiracy charge. In public statements, the Brookses have denied the allegations.

"I feel today is an attempt to use me and others as scapegoats," Mr Brooks said after being charged in May. He added that his wife "is the subject of a witch hunt." (A lawyer representing Ms Brooks declined to comment for this article.)

THE RISE OF CHIPPING NORTON can be attributed in part to an unlikely and uniquely British alchemy of class, politics and geography. Chipping Norton and the wider Cotswolds are easily acces-

sible from West London and, specifically, Notting Hill, which evolved into a popular area for London's media elite because of its proximity to the former BBC headquarters.

Residents in the city's other neighborhoods might spend weekends in the South Downs, but the Notting Hill crowd prefers the towns of Burford, Stow-on-the-Wold and Cirencester. (Real estate agents call the area of the Cotswolds between this troika "the golden triangle." The media has called it "Posh-tershire.")

About 20 miles north of Oxford, Chipping Norton also has a certain intellectual appeal. Many of the people with homes in the area (including Mr Cameron) attended Oxford, though the crowd is better known for its bashes than its book clubs.

The group mostly consists of professionals in their mid-40s who come from well-known, moneyed families but who, with the exception of Mr Brooks, have also built their own companies and fortunes. Ms Murdoch started the television production company Shine Group, which she sold to her father's company, the News Corporation, for \$674 million in 2011. Mr Freud, a great-grandson of Sigmund Freud and a nephew of the

artist Lucian Freud known for his eclectic dinner parties, started Freud Communications.

Ms Brooks came from humble beginnings and worked her way up to become the chief executive of News International, the British newspaper subsidiary of the News Corporation, and one of Mr Murdoch's most trusted confidantes.

The town of Chipping Norton (known to locals as "Chippy") hasn't always welcomed the London arrivals. And many residents don't love their newfound attention.

"This is still a working-class town, and this is a working-class pub," said Peter Shirley, a retiree who nursed a pint by a stone fireplace on a Thursday afternoon in the Kings Arms pub, "that changes on the weekends," he said.

"These tall people named Giles and Pippa show up.

Chipping Norton came in to wider view during the Leveson Inquiry into media ethics in Britain. In one text message from Ms Brooks to Mr Cameron she allegedly responded to a complaint from Mr Cameron about coverage in The Times of London a Murdoch owned newspaper. The Sun, which Ms Brooks also oversaw at the time, had recently switched its allegiances to Tories. "Seriously, I

do understand the issue with the Times," she wrote. "Let's discuss over country supper soon."

Now known as "The Country Supper" text, the message, sent in 2009 and uncovered last year, exposed this quiet little corner of the English countryside and its tight-knit residents.

The precursor to the Chipping Norton set was, many people say, the Blenheim Palace set. Before they bought their home in Burford in 2008, Mr Freud and Ms Murdoch had a 20-year lease on a nine-bedroom house on three acres within the palace grounds. The palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill, has a gilded gate, 2,000 acres with formal gardens and a dramatic driveway that offers the first sweeping view of opulence on the road connecting Oxford to the countryside.

Before she married Mr Brooks, Ms Brooks (then Rebekah Wade) also leased a home on the palace's grounds.

In 2006, at a dinner party at Mr Clarkson's house just outside Chipping Norton, Ms Wade, then the editor of The Sun, met Mr Brooks, a racehorse trainer whose old-money family has roots in this part of England. Three years later the couple married in the village of Churchill.

Their newlywed days corresponded to a high in News Corporation's power in Britain - it looked poised to take full control of British Sky Broadcasting. At the same time, Mr Cameron's political star had risen. Mr Brooks, a friend of Mr Cameron's brother from Eton, had converted a barn between the towns Sarsden and Churchill, a short drive from the Cameron's estate.

For better or worse, the area - with its wildly ornate manors and working-class market towns - has become inextricably linked to Mr Cameron's image. In another text message discussed during the Leveson Inquiry, he thanked Ms Brooks for the horse her husband had lent him.

Mr Cameron's text message read: "The horse CB put me on. Fast, unpredictable and hard to control but fun. DC." (Mr Cameron had also occasionally signed off text messages to Ms Brooks with the letters "LOL," thinking the shorthand for "laugh out loud" stood for "lots of love," according to Ms Brooks's testimony.)

ON A JANUARY AFTER-NOON, a light snow fell on the 1,700 grassy acres in the Cotswolds that surround Daylesford Organic, a farm-to-table food shop set up in a stone farmhouse

with a cheese room and scented geranium-leaf candles for about \$30.

The facility, which also offers Pilates, meditation and massages, became a popular haunt for the Chipping Norton set. It's also become the butt of locals' jokes. The crowd hissed when the comedian Mark Steel mentioned Daylesford in his routine broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in January.

"You can feast on a locally sourced, no-chemicals crisp for as little as 700 pounds," he said, adding that it's worth the price because it's so good for the environment. "Everything is organic and local, including the people who go there who have driven only 90 miles in a Range Rover." Places popular with the moneyed class like Daylesford are thriving, but the phone-hacking probe and political climate have chipped away at the gatherings that once defined the social scene. "I wonder if without Rebekah Brooks in power, the 'set' really amounts to much anymore," Peter Stothard, a former editor of The Times of London who now edits The Times Literary Supplement, said by e-mail.

Still, the occasional run-in is inevitable. In June, at the Cornbury Music Festival, an annual ritual

that last summer featured Elvis Costello and Macy Gray, a casual Mr Cameron and his family meandered around to the festival's tents and food stalls. Observers said he seemed careful not to run into Ms Brooks, who also attended the festival, wearing a navy blue Barbour jacket, her red hair pulled back.

In a V. I. P. area, Mr Cameron did see Andy Coulson, his former communications chief and the former editor of The News of the World, who, like Ms Brooks, is facing Charges related to phone hacking, which he has denied. A spokesman for No.10 Downing Street told The Guardian, "They did not speak or meet - it's categorical." But one person who attended the festival said they did briefly talk. Either way, just being at the same festival drew criticism. (A spokesman for Mr Cameron did not respond to requests for comment.)

In December, Mr Cameron was spotted talking to Ms, Brooks at a Christmas party at Merriscourt, a converted 17th-century farmhouse owned by Tom Astor, a great grandson of the heiress Nancy Astor, drawing public scrutiny.

Mr Cameron told BBC Radio 5 Live: "My wife's cousin had a party, and I went. It's not a big deal." "What really matters is the country," he added. "I am very focused on the job I do."

In a column in The Sunday Times in 2011, Mr Clarkson mocked the suggestion that he and his neighbors conspire while socializing in the countryside. "We began with a cocktail made from crushed socialists," he wrote of a 2010 Christmas dinner hosted by the Brookses and attended by, among others, the Camerons and James Murdoch, a son of Mr Murdoch's. "And after we'd discussed how the trade union movement could be smashed and how News Corp. should be allowed to take control of the BBC, Rupert Murdoch joined us on a live video feed from his private volcano, stroking a white cat."

In reality, he said, Mr Cameron and Ms Brooks discussed sausage rolls at that now-infamous Christmas dinner. "Rebekah was worried about what we'd eat," Mr Clarkson wrote. "Cameron thought sausage rolls would be nice."





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Ascott Pantomime

For the pantomime to continue to provide a great evenings entertainment just before Christmas, more volunteers are needed to provide more impetus. In particular the inclusion of young people is essential for the show to carry on over the next few years.

Absolutely no experience is required, all that is needed is enthusiasm, a will to take part in an event that has grow in popularity year on year.

You will be part of a production that not only puts on a humorous Pantomime but also music to appreciate and join in with, popular songs sung by the Ascott Songsters by kind permission of Daphne Abe and also readings from a local resident couple with great knowledge of the history of the village and local area.

Don't be afraid to join in, it is great fun to do the show and a great fun evening for the people to watch.

If you wish to join the show, please contact:
Keith Ravenhill on 831498 or keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net

Goodbye

A fond farewell to Tim and Maggie Lyon when they eventually manage to move to the Wirral. We will miss them as they have contributed much to Ascott-under-Wychwood during their time here. We shall especially miss Maggie who has contributed so much joy and expertise in editing the Grapevine over the past few years. Not forgetting Tim for so many aspects of Ascott life that he has contributed to from the church and churchyard to many other events. We may even get a report from Maggie on their move to their new home.

Hello

A warm welcome to Ascott-under-Wychwood for Graham and Liz Bell who have just moved into Heritage Lane.

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Events Calendar - 2013

Date	Event
1 st September	11.00am - 5.00pm Wychwood Forest Fair
14 th September	Ride and Stride
14 th September	8.00pm RIVERFOLK Concert Tiddy Hall
15 th September	2.00 - 4.30 Ascott Tea : Harvest Bake Off (Church)
16 th September	6.30pm Rotary Club (Mill House, Kingham)
19 th September	7.30 WLHS (Milton Village Hall)
17 th October	7.30pm WLHS (Shipton Village Hall)
27 th October	2.00 - 4.30 Ascott Tea : Cotswold Kitchen Garden (Church)
27 th October	Charity Run
8 th November	7.30pm New Wychwood Singers Concert Tiddy Hall
9 th November	7.30pm Fishing Club Race Night Tiddy Hall
21 st Novewmber	7.30pm WLHS (Milton Village Hall)
23 rd November	2.00 - 4.30 Ascott Tea : Christmas Fayre (Wychwood Wrought Iron - London Lane)
14 th December	7.00 Ascott Village Pantomime (Tiddy Hall)