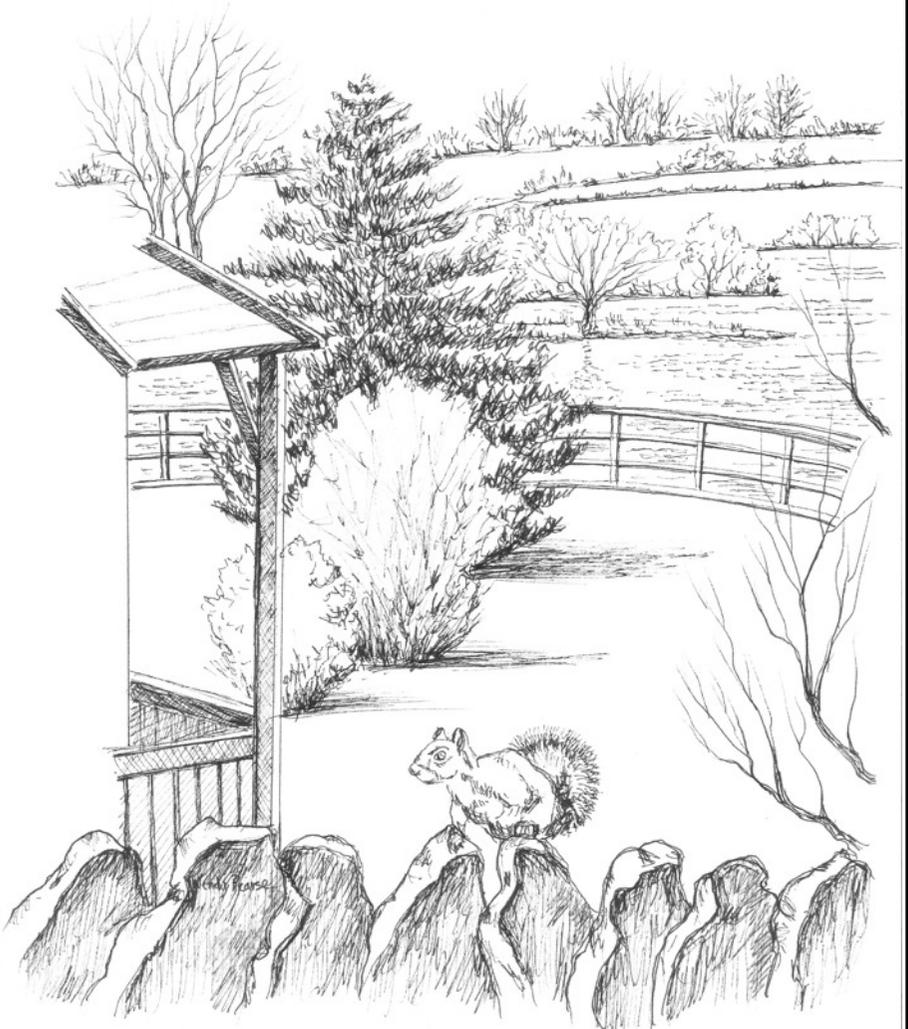


The Ascott Grapevine



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 6th May 2014.

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.

Advertising Rates

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Book and pay in advance for four issues and receive one advert FREE.

Only if possible, any adverts submitted for publication should be in any of the following formats: .jpg .tif .png .bmp .emf .gif .svg .wmf but other formats can be used.

To advertise in our Local Business Directory (see [Page 68](#)), 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 2014

Wednesday 5th March – Ash

Wednesday

1000 Holy Communion [in Chadlington]

Sunday 9th March

1000 Holy Communion

Sunday 23rd March

0800 Holy Communion

Sunday 30th March – Mothering Sunday

1000 Family Communion

Sunday 13th April – Palm Sunday

0945 Palm Sunday Service in Spelsbury

Sunday 20th April – Easter Day

1000 Shared Communion in Enstone

1830 Holy Communion [BCP] in Ascott

Sunday 27th April

0800 Holy Communion [BCP]

Sunday 11th May

1000 Holy Communion [CW]

Sunday 25th May

0800 Holy Communion [BCP]

On Sundays when there is not a service in Ascott, there are others across the Benefice, normally 1st Sunday 0800 Enstone & 1000 Spelsbury; 3rd Sunday 0800 Spelsbury & 1000 Enstone. For full details please see the church notice boards.

You will receive a warm welcome in any of our Churches.

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

Rector's Letter: February 2014

My guess is that most of us are fairly fed up with winter by now. The front page of the Sun newspaper on Friday carried a huge picture of St Medard, apparently the patron saint of good weather, and invitation to join a campaign of prayer to him for deliverance from the rain. Apparently Sue Evans, the Lincolnshire vicar of a church dedicated to him had written a prayer which included the phrase "Dear Lord – we've had enough..." The accompanying headline read "Bring me Sun Shrine".

I think we would all say "amen" to that prayer. Even if we have escaped the flooding that has caused such havoc to so many, by this stage in the winter most people are very keen for spring to come. The feast of Candlemas, which is celebrated on February 2nd, traditionally marks the moment when we start to see it on the horizon. It falls on one of the old Celtic "cross-quarter day" festivals. It is halfway between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, and the Celts called it Imbolc, which means "in the belly" because it heralded the beginning of the lambing season. The customs and folklore associated with Candlemas try to forecast how long the winter has still to run. There is an English rhyme that proclaims:

If Candlemas day be fair and bright
winter will have another fight

If Candlemas day brings cloud and rain
winter will not come again.

The folklore is a clue to how our ancestors felt about this time of year, and how most of us feel about it too. We've had enough – enough of the wet, enough of the cold, enough of the gloom.

In our 24/7 society when light and heat are usually available at the flick of a switch and we are often isolated from the passing seasons, we can banish the physical darkness and cold, but spiritual and emotional darkness are not so easy to deal with.

When that sort of darkness falls on us, it is better by far to acknowledge the gloom we find ourselves in, and the feelings it evokes – fear, loneliness, hopelessness – than to try to chase them away with a blaze of artificial cheerfulness. The Christian festivals we observe through the winter give us resources to do that through their stories and imagery. As we celebrate them again and again, their messages sink in slowly, to be drawn on when we really need them. They reassure us that darkness is nothing new – it is part of the cycle of life, just as winter is part of the cycle of the year - and that God has not abandoned us.

Candlemas recalls the story from Luke 2 of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, when the infant Jesus is acclaimed by Simeon and Anna forty days after his birth. It encourages us to be on the lookout, Simeon and An-

na were, for small signs of hope, to be aware of the light there is and help it to grow. It tells us to nurture new life, however fragile, rather than writing it off as insignificant. We may wish we were basking in the full light of summer, but the first glimmers of spring can be even more important; noticing them helps us not to give up. Life begins with small things, like a baby in his mother's arms. Light creeps back into the world minute by minute as the days lengthen. Our lives, and the life of the world often turns on a sixpence, that tiny moment when we decide to trust in some small sign of goodness and stick with it, to treasure and protect a tiny flame of hope in the gloom of despair.

At the end of the Candlemas service we light small candles, symbols of the

light of Christ. Rather bizarrely though, we light them only so that we can blow them out again. This might seem a bit pointless, but it's not a gesture of despair. It is a declaration of trust, a statement of the faith that we have already been given what we need, by the grace of God – his presence and his love, at work within us, growing in our lives. We blow the candle out to affirm that the light we need is already ours.

It may be just a flickering flame at the moment but it is enough to make a difference, enough, alongside others, to light up the world.

With every blessing

Mark Abrey



Fund raising for our Church

After 8 successful afternoon teas, a Concert performed by pupils from Bloxham School, and the various stalls at The Christmas Fair, we are very pleased to tell you that a total of £5,457 was raised for the Church in 2013.

Thank you to everyone who helped organise or came and supported.

Teas will be served again this year and will be starting in April, so look out for the posters, and if you would like to be involved, please contact one of us.

Debra Cull, Mary Barnes, Jacquie Bugeja and Louise Woods

Eggs and Lentil Curry

A quick midweek dish for the family when time is short but you fancy a curry. All the ingredients should be readily available from our shop if you don't already have them in the store cupboard.

Quantities enough for three hungry adults.

- 6 eggs
- 1 medium onion, roughly chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 small green or red pepper, chopped
- 3oz red or whole lentils
- 1-2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 rounded tablespoon flour
- 1 rounded teaspoon Madras curry powder
- Half teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 level teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds or a few whole cardamom pods (optional)

Heat the oil in a thick-based saucepan or casserole and fry onion, browning a little, then add celery, carrot and pepper until all are browned too (about 5 minutes).

Sprinkle in flour, garlic and spices and cook for a couple of minutes, then stir in lentils. Keep stirring whilst you gradually add about 1pt or 500ml boiling water. Add salt and ground black pepper to taste, then put lid on and simmer gently, stirring occasionally for about 35 minutes or until lentils are soft and liquid is absorbed..

The eggs can either be hard boiled, peeled, halved and warmed in the sauce or I prefer just to make a small indent for each egg and break them straight into the pan, then with the lid on cook for a while longer until just softly poached.

Serve with boiled white or brown basmati rice, mango chutney and your favourite curry pickles, natural yoghurt, and sliced banana, apple or whatever you have to hand.

Sue Richards

And now for pudding! →

Lemon Posset

600ml (1pint) of double cream
150gm (5oz) golden caster sugar
5tbsp lemon juice

Bring slowly to the boil stirring all the time and simmer for exactly 3 minutes.
Take off the heat and stir in 5 tablespoon of lemon juice.

Cool for 5 minutes and then pour into six ramekins.

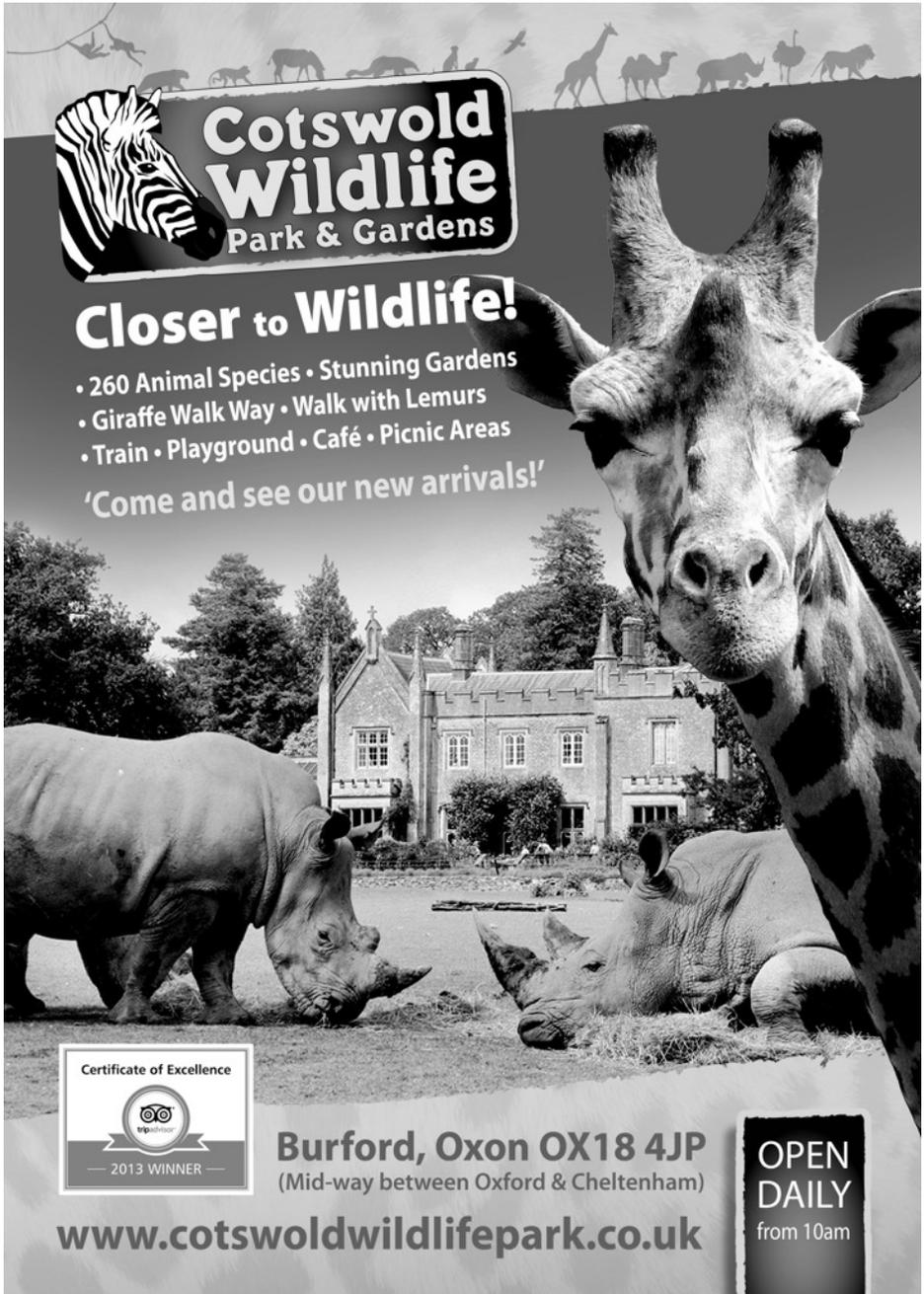
Leave to cool completely, then refrigerate for two hours.

(to get the most juice out of your lemon, place it in the microwave for 10sec and then roll it between the hands before squeezing).

Decorate the ramekins with fruits such as blueberries, raspberries or strawberries.

Rob Morgan





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The Victoria County History of Oxfordshire

The Victoria County History of Oxfordshire (VCH) is part of the greatest publishing project in English local history. The VCH's aim is to publish a detailed history of every parish and town in the country, each based on rigorous original research. So far histories of two thirds of Oxfordshire have been published in seventeen volumes, and Volume 18 (the Chilterns from Benson to Nettlebed) will be completed in 2015/16. Plans are now underway for Volume 19, which will cover a dozen places in and around the ancient royal Forest of Wychwood.

The research will explore the unusually large and diffuse parish of **Shipton-under-Wychwood**, with its scattered hamlets of **Langley**, **Leafield**, **Lyneham**, **Milton-under-Wychwood**, and **Ramsden**. Around the fringes lay **Ascott-under-Wychwood**, **Bruern** (with

its Cistercian abbey), **Fifield**, and **Idbury**, together with the important country house at **Cornbury Park**. All these places will be fully covered in the published volume.

Preliminary work will begin in late 2013, alongside completion of the VCH's Benson area volume. Subject to adequate funding, the Wychwood volume will take three to four years to complete. The main product will be a fully illustrated hardback VCH volume of around 180,000 words, which will be subsequently made available online. As work progresses draft texts on individual places will be made freely available on the VCH Oxfordshire website. It is also hoped to arrange events in the area to share finding and ideas with local organisations and individuals.

New Wychwood Singers

The concert by the New Wychwood Singers, held in the Tiddy hall Ascott, on the 8 November 2013 was a sell out. Forty members of the choir sang a variety of songs with solos by Dorothy Carrington, Linda Sale and Robin Martin-Oliver.

A total of £772 was raised for Lawrence Home Nursing.

Anyone interested in joining the choir who sing for fun should come along to the Baptist Church Hall on Tuesday 12.30-2pm or contact Robin Marlin Oliver on 07890948122

The End of the Furrow

Coldstone – Honeydale – Return to Ascott.

Following my account of childhood memories of Coldstone Farm which ended when I walked out to board the school bus on 29th September 1952, my life living in Ascott village came to an abrupt end.

My grandfather had been the tenant at Coldstone Farm for twenty years but when he died suddenly, the owner decided to sell the farm and we had a year to find somewhere else. However, the farm proved difficult to sell and eventually my parents were able to purchase the higher part of the land which bordered the A361.

On return from school I stopped the bus on the A361 at the entrance to the part of the farm that was newly named Honeydale. Our parents had purchased a caravan and a garden shed because the only buildings were two open cattle sheds, a brick feed store and an old shepherd's hut. The garden shed arrived at about 4.15.p.m. but no sign of the caravan.

I walked down the fields to find dad and he was approaching the river bridge along Gypsy Lane with a tractor and trailer carrying the last load of our goods and chattels, and driving our last two milking cows. We reached our new abode at about 6.p.m. and the caravan had arrived and was set up in position. My next job was to fetch a bucket of drinking water which came from the overflow of a reservoir, with a 200 metre trek

each way across a stubble field. We also had a well which supplied our water for washing etc. but it had to be drawn up with a bucket on a cord and carried 100 metres uphill to the caravan. This remained our water supply system for 18 months.

The caravan had calor gas lighting which was bliss after only having oil lamps, candles and torches at Coldstone, but in bed with a clover field just below the window, at first it made it feel like camping out.

Autumn was not kind in 1952, it rained incessantly. Many of our goods were on two farm trailers, side by side, and they were only covered with a ricksheet. The previous owner had reserved about sixty large elm trees for timber and the heavy timber carriages of Alfred Groves turned the wet land into a deep sea of mud. Snow lay on the ground for three weeks in November and the cold weather had an adverse effect in the caravan.

Condensation ran regularly down inside the walls and several times I remember waking up with wet bedclothes frozen to the wall. We called it arctic training. We must have had the pioneering spirit.

January 1953 brought the severe north east gales which flooded lands around the North Sea. Our share of it gave us a fair old rocking through the night but fortunately we stayed horizontal. The morning revealed that tops were blown off four hayricks, the only time I've known that happen.

What became the farm road was a four hundred yard field margin covered by rough grass and thorn bushes. Dad spent much of the first year digging it all out down to the hard sub-soil. In following years we forked up many loads of stones from the fields to make a hard track. (No J.C.B. Diggers at that time.)

Construction materials were still difficult to obtain with all the rebuilding after the Second World War but a building permit was granted and we added a house, a small milking shed and a multi- purpose barn. The old well was brought up to standard and a petrol driven pump delivered water into large storage tanks and supplied water to the house. What joy to have hot and cold running water!

We moved into the house in April 1954 but the one down side was that we were back to oil lamps and candles again. We stepped forward into modernisation in February 1956 when the telephone was connected. Previous to this we had to use the public phone box in Lyneham or Shipton.

In 1961 we bought a second hand Start-O-Matic generator which started itself when you switched a light on. I constructed a shed for it. (The power house.) It was only a small plant but it would run two single bar fires, a television and several lights. The total output was sufficient to drive a small milking machine. Not all old cows were pleased to accept the teat cups.

We had the mains electricity connected in 1970 which brought unlimited

power but my luckiest break came when I found Wendy and amazingly she agreed to join me at Honeydale. For over four years we lived in a large residential caravan which was roasting hot in the heatwave of 1976, but at least it had central heating and hot and cold running water. We worked hard together and whilst I had cows to milk, Wendy fed the calves and did nearly all the tractor driving, plus many other jobs.

In 1977 we had a bungalow built to our own design and it suited us perfectly in every way with continuous panoramic views from the west all the way round to Chadlington in the north east.

Years flew by enhanced by the great pleasure we derived from our two border terriers Tiger and Rosie, but we found that hard winters brought more worry when we were isolated by snow. The big decision was made with much regret but incredibly Blenheim Cottage became available just when we needed it. Jo and his team worked hard on the cottage and made it into the home that we wanted. It is warm and very cosy, has plenty of garden and privacy, very good views of Honeydale Farm and especially very good neighbours. What more could we ask?

I was always attracted to all forms of farm work and from the age of seven, I did all the jobs that were available to me. I have ploughed, sowed, reaped, mowed, milked and calved cows, laid hedges and one hundred and one other jobs. I am certain that no-one

before or anyone after will do as much physical labour as I have on that area of land. I enjoyed every bit of it and given the chance I would gladly do all of it again. My little bit of England.

The new owners of Honeydale are really nice people and I am confident that they will take the farm forward with care into its new chapter.

Jim Pearse.

West will be among best for coverage of life-saving heart kits

A new initiative to roll out life-saving defibrillators to every town and parish will make West Oxfordshire one of the best-equipped areas in the country to help cardiac arrest victims.

West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet has given the go ahead today for a £27,000 scheme to offer local towns and parishes funding towards their own Automated External Defibrillator (AED), proven to dramatically increase a person's chances of survival in cases of cardiac arrest.

Working with South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS), the Council initiative is complementing a generous donation by an anonymous donor who has given enough funding to pay for AEDs to be in-

stalled in 24 of the District's towns and parishes.

Some of the AEDs funded by the donor, whose life was saved by a defibrillator, have already been installed and further locations are yet to be decided. However, the District has 54 towns and parishes in total and the Council scheme will enable the remaining 30 communities funding to help purchase their own.

Every town and parish will have the chance to receive 50% of the money to buy and install an AED, which usually costs a maximum of £1,800.



Cllr Mark Booty, the Council's Cabinet Member for Health, said: "These kits can mean the difference between life and death and are of vital importance, particularly in rural areas like ours that can be affected by ambulance and emergency response times.

Ascott Grapevine

“We are absolutely delighted to be offering this chance to our towns and parishes. Together with the equipment so generously donated, we are confident that our District will have the highest level of defibrillator coverage in the country.

“We believe we should give our residents the best possible chance of survival and hope this scheme will help to make West Oxfordshire one of the safest places to live if you suffer a cardiac arrest.”

Under the scheme, CPR training will be provided in association with SCAS to communities and local people will be trained to give initial care should a cardiac arrest occur.

AEDs work by delivering an electric shock to restart a person’s heart. The small, portable machines give clear, spoken instructions and are designed to be used by anyone, even without training. They are placed within a secure box in a public area, with a code to access the box that can only be obtained from the ambulance service.

In cases of emergency, people should always call 999 in the first instance.

Dick Tracey, divisional responder manager for SCAS, said: “When someone goes into cardiac arrest time is of the essence. For every minute that passes where there’s no active treatment, the chances of a successful resuscitation reduces by 10%.

“Having these machines, particularly in the villages, will significantly increase chances of survival.”

AEDs from the anonymous donor have already been installed in:

- Cassington
- Combe
- Finstock
- Stonesfield

Shipton-under-Wychwood had an AED fitted in January 2014 and other areas confirmed to receive one of the kits are Burford, Eynsham, Leafield and Lyneham.

Some local towns and parishes have also already fundraised to provide an AED, including Chipping Norton and the village of Aston, near Bampton.

Aston’s AED was fitted outside Aston Repair Depot, in the centre of the village, last year after a fundraising effort by three local residents, parish councillor Paul Sparrowhawk, The Red Lion pub landlord Andrew Cripps and Depot owner Andy Ball, and donation from Witney Round Table.

Mr Ball said: “We just felt we had to get one and there was lots of support from everyone in the village. The cost is tiny when you think about the impact it could have.”

The Cabinet decision is subject to the usual call-in period.

In addition to West Oxfordshire’s 54 towns and parishes, the District has 27 areas covered by a Parish Meeting, which are not included in the scheme. However, the Cabinet has agreed that funding should be diverted from towns/parishes that already have an AED in place to offer a Parish Meeting in an area that is particu-

larily isolated the chance to receive 50% towards an AED.

Further information and advice on using an AED:

A map showing the current known locations of defibrillators in the SCAS area can be viewed at <http://www.southcentralambulance.nhs.uk/campaigns/startaheart.ashx>

- Being told if there is a defibrillator nearby – you will be given an access code if it is in a security box
- Continuing CPR while someone else gets the defibrillator

When the defibrillator arrives, it will give clear, spoken instructions on how to use it, including:

In an emergency

If you come across someone collapsed, not breathing or breathing erratically, call 999. You will be advised what to do by the operator while you wait for emergency services to arrive. This may involve:

- Performing CPR

- Attaching pads to the person's chest
- Watching and listening for instructions as you are told what to do next – the machine is specially designed to monitor heart rhythm and will only administer an electric shock if necessary.

UNWANTED SHRUBS?

PERENNIALS BEING SPLIT?

Please, don't throw anything away before contacting me as we might be able to use some of your unwanted plants in beds around the village. I am particularly looking for ground cover and alpines at the moment but there will be other projects coming up and what is a nuisance to you could be really valuable to us.

Please phone Philippa Carter on 01993 830344. Many thanks.

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 charity has also allocated the money raised at the Charity run last December to the Multi Use Games Area at the recreation ground.

The trustees thank the villagers for the very generous donation of £203.56 in the village shop collection box.

If you have an idea that you would like to be considered by the trustees 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



WYCHWOOD FOLK CLUB

(At The Swan or Tiddy Hall, Shipton Rd, Ascott –u– Wychwood)

At 8.00pm

*Showcasing an eclectic mix of
Folk, Roots, Acoustic & Americana Music*

March 1 st	Bluebird + support from Rachel Chai
March 15 th	The Ponderosa + support from Nick Hooper
March 22nd	Peter Knight's Gigspanner £12.00
April 5 th	Gawkey + support from the Oxford Jesters
April 19 th	Linda Watkins Band + support from Three Pressed Men
April 26th	Richard Digance £10.00
May 3 rd	Palmerston + Support from Marian Wedley
May 17th	The Carrivick Sisters £10.00
June 7th	Hatful of Rain £10.00
June 21st	Miranda Sykes and Rex Preston £10.00

See website for venue. All events in The Swan are £3.00

If you would like a floor spot or if you would like to be added to our mailing list or want any further information then visit www.wychwoodfolkclub.com, or call me on **01993831427** or e-mail: wychwoodfolkclub@gmail.com

Wychwood Folk Club

On Saturday February 1st the function room at The Swan opened its doors to the very first Wychwood Folk Club evening! Musical entertainment was provided by singer/songwriter Colin Macnee, Damien Clarke on a Hurdy Gurdy and a Dulcimer, yes you read correctly! 2 fascinating and melodic instruments. A duo, Toots and Fraser and our very own Mark Pidgeon.

Conceived by Mark, the Wychwood Folk Club has various artists booked both at The Swan and at Tiddy Hall throughout the year. So to get the full programme please check the flyer which came through your door, or go onto their website: www.wychwoodfolkclub.com, as there are performances once, twice or even three times a month!

The Culls!



Colin MacNee



Mark Pidgeon



Damien Clarke



Toots and Fraser

In response to Stuart's article in the last Grapevine about Francis Steadman and Bell Ringing, the following is a report from Aubrey Loyd of Charlbury about a Bell Ringing Festival, held in Ascott in 1969.

Wendy Pearse

Chipping Norton Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild

Ringling Festival. October 11th 1969.

It all started when the Bishop of Dorchester, the Right Rev. D. G. Loveday, told the Chairman of our branch that he would come and preach at the autumn meeting at Ascott under Wychwood on October 11th. Our live-wire Secretary, Peter Coveney, thought we ought to make it a special occasion and organise a festival, having all the towers in the branch open and available to ringers. There was general agreement, as well there might be when we all knew that the work entailed would fall on Peter, though we knew too that he would have the skilled assistance of Marjorie, his wife. So the arrangements went ahead. All the incumbents with ringable bells agreed that their towers should be open on the day, local ringers undertook to be in attendance and where necessary make up bands to ringing strength, details of the service were arranged with great care, the ladies at Spelsbury and Ascott volunteered to lay on food and drink for an unspecified number of visitors and the event was publicised.

From such enquiries as were received it seemed that some interest had been aroused but no-one could hazard a guess as to the numbers likely to come along. Came the day, and apart from some morning fog the weather was fine, and it was soon evident that we were to have full houses all day. Ringers from Oxfordshire and the adjoining counties turned up in force and there were visitors from as far afield as Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, the Home Counties, East Anglia, Hampshire, Dorset, Herefordshire and Wiltshire. They were in parties of varying size, of all stages of ringing ability and all ages, and there were just about as many ladies as men.

The tower stewards had a busy time fitting everybody in and there were the usual problems of limited space in ringing chambers and narrow spiral stairs but a notable feature of the occasion was the happy and friendly spirit which prevailed. The branch has no very heavy rings but the fourteen towers provide a pleasant variety ranging from the fine 20.5 cwt ring at Hook Norton to the unusual light five at Little Compton, and those enthusiasts who completed the full programme had a very satisfying day.

Ascott Grapevine

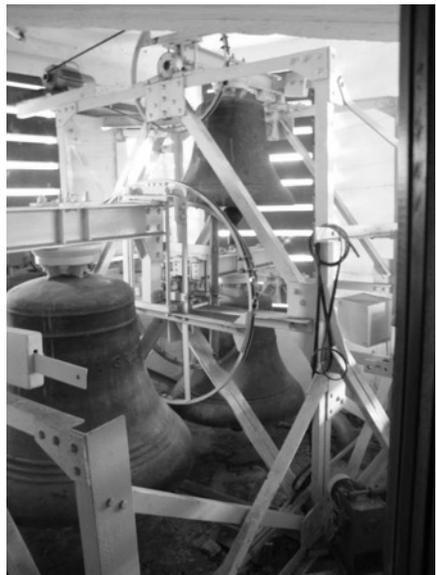
The interesting old church at Ascott under Wychwood filled up as the well struck service touch of Cambridge proceeded and before long every seat was filled. In spite of it being Saturday— the day for weddings – a good number of the Deanery clergy were with us. There was no formal choir but a few known singers were grouped near the organ to make sure the tempo was kept up. The service opened with our own ringers' hymn to the tune "Belfry Praise", and as the first verse rolled out it was obvious that the congregation were singers as well as ringers and that they were rarin' to go. In this and the rest of the service there was some fine congregational singing and it must be a long time since the old church echoed to a sound of such volume and quality. The service was conducted by the Rev. P. G. Smith, Chairman of the branch and Vicar of Leafield and Ascott. Lessons were read by Canon Elliot Wigg, Master of the Guild, and the Rev. A. G. Sparling, Rural Dean.

Opening his sermon the Bishop said he thought the assembly would like something different from the sermons normally preached on such occasions, and he related the points of his sermon to historical, geographical and architectural features of the locality and the churches in the deanery.

The hymn "Fill thou my life" to the tune "Richmond" followed the sermon and built up to a stirring climax, and the service closed with the Bishop's blessing.

After the service the bells were set going again and at least a hundred of the company made their way to the Tiddy Hall where the ladies of the parish served a generous tea with their never-failing efficiency, cheerfulness and good humour. By then it was time for the evening part of the ringing programme to get underway and this went on with sustained interest to the end.

All in all it was a memorable day for the branch, and full credit for the success of the venture must go to Peter, though he would be the first to acknowledge the good work of everyone else who contributed in any way, especially Mrs Datsun and the other ladies at Spelsbury who looked after the ringtors at midday, the ladies at Ascott who laid on the tea, the incumbents, the organist, the tower captains, stewards and local ringers.



Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

“Happy New Year” to one and all. The Parish Council held their annual Carols round the Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve. The weather was much kinder this year and the evening enjoyed by all. This raised £180 which has been donated to the Wychwood Day Centre.

The Parish Council have completed their preparations on the winter resilience programme. Salt/grit has now been received and is duly stored. The equipment has been checked and prepared for any forthcoming “Snow”.

Planning still remains quiet, with only a handful of applications having been presented to the Council for comment.

Councillors Laurence Mellor and Philippa Carter continue their hard work on Project SafePlay. For those

of you who are not aware, this is a project that has been undertaken to upgrade the current play facilities on the Playing Field.

Please note that the current Parish Council will have served their four year term in Office in 2014 and Elections will take place in May. If you are interested in representing Ascott-under-Wychwood as a Councillor or indeed would like more information please do not hesitate to speak with either of the Councillors, noted below, or the Parish Clerk.

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 Parish Councillors noted below.

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

Did you Know?

That the first Ascott man to die in the Great War was Elisha Pratley. One of the youngest of at least twelve children, he had been born and brought up in Ascott, his family settled at No 1 Feoffees Cottages, one of the Ascott Charity properties at the lower end of Church View.

By 1907 he was in the Royal Navy, and when War broke out in August 1914, he was aged 26 and serving as Stoker 1st Class on the 'Good Hope', the flagship of the South American Station. Unfortunately this squadron was by far inferior to the crack German Squadron which attacked it off the coast of Chile, in what became known as the Battle of Coronel. A massive explosion destroyed the 'Good Hope' whilst fire consumed her sister mighty cruiser, the 'Monmouth'. Both ships sank with a total loss of life, one thousand six hundred men. The date - 1st November 1914. What a rude awakening in Ascott, to the impact of war.

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My Sporting Heroes - Cricket



Denis Compton

Denis Charles Scott Compton, to give him his full name, (incidentally he was always “Denis”, not “Compton” to the crowds), was born on 23rd May 1918 in the London suburb of Hendon. His father was a self-employed painter and decorator, but times were hard, his business foundered, and he found work as a lorry driver. He was a keen cricketer, as was Denis’ brother Leslie, and did everything to support and encourage Denis’ precocious talent at both cricket and soccer. Denis attended an elementary school, where the staff all loved cricket, and this was where he honed his formidable natural sporting talent.

It is not without significance that the Number 13 bus route began and ended in Hendon and took spectators to and from Lord’s Cricket Ground, the scene of some of Denis’

greatest innings and his cricket “home” all his playing life.

Denis joined the Lord’s ground staff in 1933 at ten shillings a week, and flourished in the somewhat Dickensian atmosphere there. By 1934, his talent was really beginning to flower and in that year, he played four times for the MCC, and 16 times the next year.

In 1936, he was chosen to play for Middlesex Second XI against Kent. The writer E. W. Swanton, who played in the match, returned to Lord’s and reported that “he had just been playing with the best young cricketer he had ever seen”. Meanwhile, there was soccer, as Denis had joined the Arsenal ground staff. He was to become a footballer of skill, winning the FA Cup with Arsenal in 1950 and playing for England.

Unlike today’s cricketers, Denis played for the same county all his cricketing life. Three weeks after his first appearance for Middlesex, he scored his maiden century. Everyone who saw this innings was impressed by the combination of judgment and stroke play, and it was characteristic of Denis through his career, that he nearly always scored quickly.

Already by the end of his first season in the County Championship, he was being judged by the highest standards and described as “the best young batsman who has emerged since Walter Hammond was a boy”. The emergence of Hutton and Compton

as Test players was arguably the most significant sporting event of 1938.

As with both Hutton and Bradman, Denis' career was interrupted by the Second World War. He volunteered for the Army and served through the war, for the most part in India. Just as the Football League was put on ice during hostilities, so was the County Cricket Championship. There were some representative games between British and Commonwealth forces, but generally speaking, cricket in England was a pretty ramshackle affair. However, in wartime India, Denis saw no reason to stop enjoying himself. The pattern continued after the war. By that time, Denis was the star of advertisements for the men's hair lotion Brylcreem, which brought him a thousand a year. None of this changed his enthusiastic life style, drinking, betting and women coming and going, which caused the MCC to frown in disapproval!

The truly great year in Denis' cricketing career was 1947. Britain was in a sorry state as the government struggled to restore the crippled economy; rationing was at its meanest and tightest. Those blissful days of 1938 seemed light years away and Denis and other first-class cricketers tried to bring some enjoyment to a war-ravaged country in 1946. For the next few years, cricket enjoyed tremendous prosperity and Denis, of all players must take credit for this. With the brilliant support of Bill Edrich, Denis made people realise what they had been missing for six years. Statistically, no batsman has enjoyed a better

season than Compton, or Edrich in 1947, (Compton making 3,816 runs and Edrich 3,519).



Denis was a crowd-pleaser, an instinctive risk-taker who was a throwback to the pre-war era. He walked up the wicket to fast bowlers and tried unusual things against spinners. His batting was a party-piece, full of wit and dancing feet, but importantly, he delivered too, even when he was finally incapacitated by a chronic knee injury sustained playing football in 1938. Denis retired as a pro in 1957, but carried on playing occasionally as an amateur until 1964. He died in Windsor on 23rd April, 1997.

The statistics of Compton D.C.S. cannot compare with the pleasure he gave, but they certainly act as an impressive reflection of a glorious career - twelfth in the list of centuries with 123 hundreds, a batting average of nearly 52 and the fastest triple century in history. If he had possessed two good knees and a

greedier attitude to batting, those figures would have been much more impressive.

1947. The scorebook could never reflect the flamboyance and enjoyment of a Compton innings.

I had the good fortune to watch Denis, (and Bill Edrich), play at Lord's in

Clive Fieth

Ascott-under-Wychwood Charity 10k Multi Terrain Run

Last year I was determined to give running another go having gradually giving up the time once devoted to playing football or cricket; and swimming now more about splashing around in the pool with the children rather than the metronomic challenge of continuous lengths.

Encouraged by like-minded work colleagues, half a dozen of us set out in February last year and led by a couple of 'couch to 5k' apps, we started up a training routine – running as a group twice during the week – coupled with a solo run each Sunday.

None of us would consider ourselves that serious about running, but a more serious side of competing last year was the opportunity to give something back in the form of fund raising. Satisfying as it was to complete the Blenheim 7k course in May and the British 10k run in London on July's hottest day of the year; greater fulfilment came from the kindness of our sponsors, collectively donating more than £2,500 towards the Nasio Trust*.

Immediately after the British 10k run, the trust wrote to thank each and every runner for their endeavours and asked us to do it all again next year by enclosing a 2014 'early bird' entry form. With no other sponsored events on the horizon for the remainder of the year, I signed up immediately, knowing that would bind me to the exercise routine over the autumn and winter months.

And that is exactly what placed me at the start of the 10k run in Ascott Multi Terrain Run in October; albeit this time there were no sponsors or supporters, and no crew of helpful volunteers offering food, drink, safety pins and plasters.

Opting for the 10k run rather than the shorter 5k course was perhaps ambitious. As I found out retrospectively, the longer circuit offers something to challenge the most hardened cross-country veteran. So it came as no surprise to watch a wave of a seasoned club-runners show their undoubted pedigree as they ghosted into the distance in the early stages.

Nonetheless, I was determined to keep up a steady pace, taking encouragement and advice from the group of runners around me, and slowing only to take on the near-vertical hilly sections and when crossing the slippery wooden bridges. Those who have covered these tracks, at a more leisurely pace as a weekend walk, will know well that the course is carefully crafted to lull the unknowing participant into yet another hill; winding up and down several times before finally returning back to the village and the finishing tape at the playing field.

Knowing the course as I do now will certainly place more doubts in my mind when I think about taking it on again this Autumn. Until that point, I'm left with a wishful thought that this winter's persistent rain will erode some of those most challenging slopes into softer inclines.

The Nasio Trust

* The Nasio Trust runs day-care centres in western Kenya providing orphaned children with a daily meal, education, medical care and support. Its UK programme offers young people the opportunity to turn their lives around through positive activities and fundraising, culminating in volunteering on projects in Kenya.

If you would like to find out more about the Nasio Trust, and would like to get involved, donate, or sponsor one of the range of fundraising events that take place each year, please logon to <http://www.thenasiotrust.org/>

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Spare a Thought for Neighbours

Many of us have been affected by floods in the past and we all feel great sympathy for those who are suffering during this wet period. Luckily this time the village has been spared – but you probably don't realise that 2 homes have been affected and we can all do something to help.

When the road is flooded on the Z-bend of the Shipton Road (just below Tidley Hall), if vehicles drive through they are not only running the risk of getting stuck but they are also causing a bow wave which risks flood damage under the 2 cottage doors. When the water is deep even the slowest, most careful of vehicles will do this.

On Christmas Eve the water was knee deep at one point – certain larger vehicles could ignore the flood signs and risk driving through but what they didn't know was that they were flooding two homes with young children - just as they were getting ready for the most exciting day of the year. Younger drivers thought it was fun to take the risk too and drove so fast that their wave hit the bedroom windows. When local residents asked drivers to turn around they sometimes received abuse.

The Police were contacted and they gave permission over the phone to close the road. The Highways inspector arrived and declared that the water was too deep and the road should be closed. The signs, however, never turned up because there were too many emergencies elsewhere.

OCC Highways have been asked to consider a system whereby Parish Councillors are fully trained and then are given the power to close the road so that it is only closed when absolutely necessary and not for days on end just because the Highways men are busy elsewhere. We do understand the frustration of motorists who take a detour only to find that there was actually no problem.

Until then we shall use the FLOOD signs as carefully and sparingly as possible. In return we ask you all please to use London Lane when the Z-bend is flooded. Think of the mess, the work, the stress and please

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURS!

Thank you, Philippa Carter



Windrush Valley School

All back to school, refreshed and ready to go after a wonderful Christmas break, the children are very excited to be auditioning for our annual Christmas performance at New Beaconsfield Hall this Easter. Each year their performances gets better and better, and our older children have a lot to live up to, following a great Nativity performance from our Foundation Unit and KS1 children. WATCH THIS SPACE....

We were all so good Father Christmas came to visit us! Our lucky Foundation Unit and KS1 children had been working hard all year, so Father Christmas felt he should pay them a visit and give them a small gift each at their Christmas party.



The older children of the school have also worked incredibly hard throughout the year, and were celebrated with a trip to the Swan Theatre in High Wycombe to watch a very funny Cinderella.

The school have competed in a variety of competitive sporting events this year, from Cross Country at St. Hugh's (Faringdon) to a Tag-Rugby Festival at Hatherop Castle, as well as our usual netball, football and tag-rugby local school matches. Well done to a very successful year to all the children who took part and good luck in the forthcoming Independent Schools cross country and football tournaments in London.

Thank you to our football coach, Mr Madden, for coaching our most successful junior and senior teams, and PE staff for encouraging the children in sport.



Photograph Competition

Snap up a prize by capturing beautiful West Oxfordshire on camera

The search is on to find photographs that capture the very best of West Oxfordshire.

From scenic images of local towns, villages, countryside and buildings, to atmospheric shots encapsulating what it is like to live in the area, photographers of all abilities and ages are being invited to send in their snaps to the District Council.

The Council is looking for photographs to help show off the uniqueness of West Oxfordshire, which it brands as the 'Oxfordshire Cotswolds' to market the area as part of work to support and encourage tourism.

It is the fifth year that the Council has run a photographic competition and this year's winner will receive a ready-to-hang art canvas of their image donated by Witney-based Blueprint Imaging Ltd, as well as afternoon tea for two served in the Wedgwood Lounge courtesy of De Vere Venues Heythrop Park Resort.

The winning photograph and a selection of some of the best entries will be used in the Council's tourism marketing publications and on the website www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org.

Cllr Richard Langridge, Cabinet Member with responsibility for tourism, said: "West Oxfordshire is a beautiful part of England with stunning countryside and traditional buildings and historic towns. We have vibrant communities, interesting places to visit and an endless list of things to do, along with shopping opportunities and a diverse range of places to eat, have fun or relax.

"We're looking for images that really get to the heart of West Oxfordshire and capture what it has to offer to help us show everyone just what a fantastic place this is."

For full details and a competition entry form visit: www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org/photos or contact Diane Blackwell on 01993 861553; email: diane.blackwell@westoxon.gov.uk.

The closing date for entries is Monday 31 March. All images should be of high enough quality for enlargement up to A4 size.



Last years winner Paul Chapman of Enstone - Post box at Clevely

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Ascott Pantomime

The Pantomime team say a great big thank you for your continued support of the pantomime and especially for your generosity at the door. You raised the huge sum of £388 (£63 more than last year), £194 each has been passed on to the Tiddy Hall funds and the Grapevine fund.

A big thank you and we look forward to your support this year.

Just to let you know that the Panto has been uploaded to youtube (in 2 parts).

Search www.youtube.co.uk for 'ascott panto 2013' or visit these links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W5x11j6pxY>

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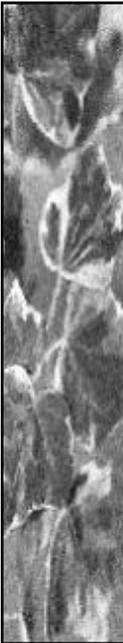
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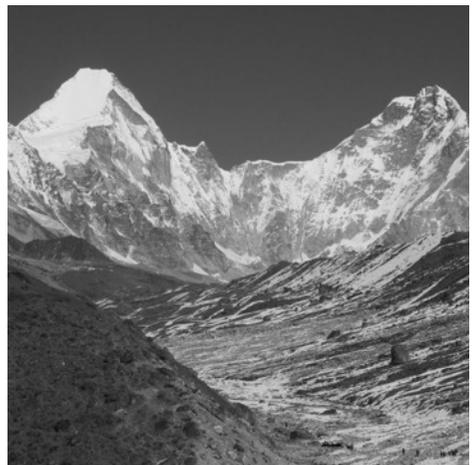
To the top of the world (well almost)



For some people their ideal holiday is lying on a beach basking in the sun and ordering a cool drink from the waiter, but we can only manage that for a couple of days, after which we are just itching to get up and do something. As a result our annual holiday last November was spent trekking to Everest Base Camp in Nepal.

The trip really started with the flight from Kathmandu to Lukla, a village on the side of a mountain at an altitude of 2,800m. Because of its altitude and size, only small aircraft (13 people maximum) can use the airstrip, which is approximately the size of an aircraft carrier. You land uphill towards a cliff and take off over a sheer drop – no wonder it's rated as the third most dangerous airport in the world.

The trek starts from there, with our luggage loaded onto Dzo's (a cross between a cow and a yak) and a deceptively easy afternoon going downhill and then along beside the Dudh Kosi (or 'milk river') to a Tea House at Phakding, where we spent our first night.



Tea Houses are the main form of accommodation along the route; they vary slightly in style and facilities but mainly offer twin share rooms and a communal room where hot meals are served. Only the communal room is heated, usually by a yak dung burner. Other facilities you may or may not find are electricity, showers and wi-fi (often with better reception than we get in our house in Ascott!) and it's probably best not to ask about the toilet facilities. The staple diet of Nepal is Dahl Baht, which is boiled rice, a lentil soup and some curried vegetables (other vegetarian meals are available; we didn't risk the meat due to the lack of refrigeration.)



The next six days were spent gradually gaining height, from a low point of 2652m up to Labouche at 4930m, passing through places such as Namche Bazaar, Khumjung, Thyangbouche monastery (where all the early expeditions were blessed) and Dingboche. Along the way there was the opportunity to visit the Edmund Hillary hospital, Khumjung School and to see the only yeti skull at Khumjung monastery!

The next two days to Everest base camp itself, were very tough, the terrain was difficult (walking on moraines at the side of the Khumbu glacier) but the lack of oxygen was a significant factor. At 5000m there is approximately 50% less oxygen in the atmosphere, which makes any physical activity very hard. For anyone who has not experienced the effects of high altitude, it can best be described as how you feel the morning after the night before - head ache, nausea, and general lethargy (sound familiar?). Base camp itself is just a jumble of rocks and ice and looks very bleak, especially during the autumn when there are no climbing expeditions there. It is located at the foot of the Khumbu icefall where the glacier



comes down from the western cwm, the first challenge when climbing Everest. The mountains surrounding the camp are really impressive, though you can't actually see Everest from this point; the best views are saved for the next day when you climb up Kala Patar (5545m). This involves a very early start in the dark and then a long descent back down the valley. The walk back to the airstrip only takes a further 3 days; it's so much easier go-

ing downhill, losing altitude and gaining oxygen!

For people who have a love of mountains seeing Everest is usually on their bucket list and there's no doubt the scenery on the trek up is truly stunning. To see Everest in the flesh, and to follow the route that so

many famous expeditions / climbers have taken is a very special experience, and one that we would recommend, the unpleasant effects of altitude are soon forgotten when looking back at the photos.

Sandra & Jon Wells

Nature Notes

Plants are a bit like people; some are shy "shrinking violets" only flourishing in areas that meet their special requirements, whilst others are outgoing appearing wherever there is space to grow. Some are thugs taking over and driving everything else out. One notable thug is the Bracken Fern (*Pteridium Aquil-*



num). In Britain it covers an estimated 17,000 square kilometres of heath and moorland and 120,000 linear metres along hedgerows and verges. It is so successful that it grows on every continent, except Antarctica and is even present on remote islands such as New Zea-

land, where deforestation by the indigenous Maori population provided it with ideal growing conditions.

Bracken isn't too fussy about climate, being deciduous in temperate regions and tolerating a wide variety of soil conditions from acidic to calcareous, as found in some Cotswold grassland areas. The one thing it doesn't like is waterlogged soils. Its success is not new; Bracken has survived from the time of the dinosaurs showing in the fossil records 55 million years ago.

Today it has become a major threat to Britain's moorlands and if not controlled will encroach and destroy lowland pasture. What are its secrets of its success? First, once a clump is es-



Ascott Grapevine

established it can spread rapidly by means of creeping underground stems (rhizomes), which throw up new plants up to one metre away from the original parent as well as spores that can be carried on the wind. Second, once established its two to six feet high fronds shade out more delicate plants even moorland heathers and the litter produced when it dies down in winter smothers any chance of re-growth. Finally, it produces toxins which are released into the soil that inhibit the growth of other plants. Even when areas are cleared the residual toxicity can make it difficult to successfully replant with other species.

The biggest problem for farmers is that Bracken is poisonous to cattle, sheep, pigs and horses. If consumed in large quantities it can cause blindness in sheep, vitamin B deficiency in pigs and in horses and cattle tumours of the oesophagus, gut or bladder. Bracken also harbours sheep ticks, which are responsible for the spread of Lyme's Disease to animals and humans.

Despite being toxic Bracken has been used by humans as a food, indeed in Japan, Korea and China the emerging shoots are still considered a delicacy, despite their potential toxic-



ty. They are eaten fresh, cooked, pickled or preserved by salting.

Is Bracken all bad? No, like every natural resource mankind has found ways to use it, both historically and in the present day. In the past the dried fronds have been used as a thatch, for animal bedding and packing material for pottery. The ash was used for degreasing cloth and used in the production of glass and soap, because of its potash content. Tannins were extracted and used in the leather industries. Today its uses are limited to providing animal bedding and the production of garden compost. Bracken's spread, in recent times, is probably linked to the reduction in its commercial use. Looking to the future it may have potential as a biomass fuel.

Bracken is also the food plant of two of our scarce butterflies; the Dark Green Fritillary and the High Brown Fritillary as well as several species of moths. Ground nesting birds, such as the Skylark, Curlew and Lapwing may seek shelter and refuge under its canopy. In a way Bracken can act as a substitute for woodland canopy allowing bluebells and wood anemones to grow where woodland doesn't exist.



Once Bracken is established, control and eradication is difficult. There is a specific herbicide, Asulam, which targets Bracken but leaves everything else more or less unaffected. Glyphosate based herbicides are effective at destroying the creeping rootstock. If the use of a chemical control is considered undesirable, then cutting once or twice a year for a minimum of three years or regular trampling by cattle as the young fronds emerge may be effective in

reducing its vigour and spread providing sufficient fodder is available to prevent them eating the Bracken. In some areas crushing with a roller has been used, but again this must be carried out for at least three years.

This tenacious plant has been with us for 55 million years and I suspect that it will always flourish; whatever we do to control it.

Stuart Fox

Open Gardens

Plans are now settled for what should be a major event in the village next June 22nd. If anyone wants to still add their garden then please let us know. In aid of Air Ambulance about 400 are expected IF it's a fine day. Special car parking areas have been arranged.

The highlight is the opening of Wychwood Manor but several other gardens will be open as will Phil Pratley's Wychwood Wrought Iron and Celia Crampton's fantastic pictures.

Rotary will be also running a Tombola so contributions (nearer the time!) will be most welcome. If any other group in the village would like to run a stall on a profit share basis they are most welcome. There will also be a plant stall so any contributions will be appreciated.

Centred on the Swan teas will be organised but the club would like as many villagers as possible to make a cake. Air Ambulance particularly for this area is such a worthwhile charity to support. They need almost £5 million a year to maintain such a service which is often a life saver in this area.

Paul Jackson



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Rotary



Village Shop - 10 year Celebration Lunch



What a swell party it was. Around 80 volunteers, partners and guests met for a special celebration lunch at Tiddy Hall to raise a glass to reminisce and remember everyone who has played a part in making the shop the success it has become. Many community shops have come and gone but Ascott shop shines like a beacon. Our guests (at the opening in 2003) Councillor Hilary Biles and BBC Oxford radio celebrity Bill Heine were in attendance and very impressed they were too with the progress we had

made especially the community and volunteer support that has made it all possible. Even David Cameron (on duty in Beijing) was fulsome in his praise and as well as a personal letter he signed a box of House of Commons chocolates which were won in the free raffle by Jim Pearse. Incidentally, the main prize of a free hamper was won by Roger Shepherd who said he never wins anything. Well, you did this time Roger! So, now we look forward to the next ten years when we can do it all over again! A heartfelt thanks to one and all.

John Cull



ASCOTT VILLAGE SHOP

Owned by the village, run by the village, there for the village

SHOP WEBSITE

I guess the first thing to say is that from March, the Newsletter will be available on the shop website, have you seen it? www.ascottvillageshop.co.uk. Worth taking a look, especially as that's how the Newsletter will be sent out from now. If anyone has a problem accessing it, please let Richard know, so we can add you to the list and get one printed off for you. There will still be one displayed on the notice board in the shop.

10th ANNIVERSARY

Following on from the successful 10 year Anniversary Lunch back in November (where has the time gone?) Bill Heine wrote a brilliant article in the Oxford Mail. If you haven't seen it or you want a copy for your memorabilia, go onto www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news and put in Ascott under Wychwood in the search box. You'll find the article under Jan 10 2014.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Now we are 10, we have thought we may change the Free Draw slightly. Starting in February, spend will need to be £10 for an entry but prizes will be increased.

For those who have been with the shop from the start, it's at this time of the year you might get that tap on the shoulder. People start talking more about the shop.....Yep, you've guessed it, 'Do you want to join the Shop Committee'? I appreciate it's also not everyone's cup of tea, but do you know what? There's nothing worse than sitting back and criticising other peoples efforts. It's not always rewarding, it's time consuming AND you don't get paid, but we do have an excellent shop and with your help, we could make it even better.....I just ask you to think about it.....

BOOK SWAP SHELF

Have you noticed the book swap shelf above the ice-cream freezer? Bring a book that you have read and enjoyed to the shop and swap it for one on the shelf.

Yes our shop is 10 year's old, to keep going for another 10 years it needs your support...as regular customers....and yes as volunteers too....PLEASE make the effort.

HIP ! HIP !! HOORAY !!!

THREE CHEERS FOR YOUR VILLAGE SHOP



1 Newspapers/ Magazines for sale

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Solution to crossword in Edition 80

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

Farmhouse B&B In Ascott u Wychwood

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Evenlode Valley**

**Please ring Mrs Sally Walker on
01993 831900**

Tiddy Hall News

The end of last year saw Tiddy Hall hosting plenty of Christmas parties and festivities. The Windrush Valley School and Ascott Pre School both held their Christmas parties and concerts to get everyone in the mood for the Christmas season! Many of you may have attended another successful Village Pantomime. The Ascott Songsters and Acousticana also added to the entertainment on this delightful evening which has become an annual event at Tiddy Hall. Thank you to all who entertained, sang and provided refreshments and also to you who donated to good causes around our village.

On January 25th we celebrated 20 years of the new Tiddy Hall! It's hard to believe that we have been using our hall for that length of time – who remembers the old one?

The Marlborough Ceilidh Band did a grand job of getting us up on our feet and dancing the night away! We enjoyed a lovely chilli supper followed by scrummy puddings and a very helpful sum was raised which will contribute to our new kitchen. Thanks to the committee and their spouses for their organisation and for helping to decorate the hall so splendidly!

2014 seems a rather perfect time to introduce the new **Wychwood Folk Club**. Thanks to some very hard work from Mark Pidgeon, we have some fantastic entertainment to be

looking forward to at Tiddy Hall! The first event will be Saturday 22nd March when we welcome Peter Knights **Gigspanner** to Ascott. Peter was Steeleye Span's legendary fiddle player and together with Roger Flack on guitar and vocals and Vincent Salzaas on congas, djembe and vocals, **Gigspanner** take their influence from all parts of the world to provide a mix of blues, jazz, folk and ethnic music.

On Saturday April 26th, **Richard Digance** will entertain at Tiddy Hall. Richard is a rare performer, in that he's respected by comedians for his original material and by musicians for being an accomplished performer/guitarist. His evergreen career has been acknowledged by numerous awards within both the music and entertainment industries including a BAFTA nomination as a TV entertainer.

The Carrivick Sisters, who will perform on Saturday 17th May, are one of the UK's top bluegrass and folk acts. The twins will perform some of their original songs and instrumentals along with a few carefully chosen covers on guitar, mandolin, fiddle, dobra and clawhammer banjo. They were finalists in BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Awards in 2010.

We are very fortunate to have these talented musicians coming to play at our Tiddy Hall here in Ascott. What an eclectic mix of music we have to look forward to! These artists are

visiting Ascott as part of their UK tours and it would be great to fill out the hall and welcome them to Ascott to continue our historic folk tradition that Reginald Tiddy started all those years ago. For the evenings to be a success, we need lots of support, so please come along to see some wonderful live music! The door for all evenings will open at 7.30pm, performance starts at 8pm. A bar will be available. For further information, visit www.wychwoodfolkclub.com. Tickets can be purchased on www.wegotickets.com or ring Mark and Elaine on 01993 831427.

Another evening of The Ascott Songsters is to be held in early May. Please look out for posters around the village nearer the time for further information.

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:

Saturday 22nd March Folk Night – Peter Knight's Gigspanner
Doors open 7.30pm – bar available
Tickets £12 from Mark & Elaine 01993 831427

Kitchen Update

We have been successful in our grant applications and together with the monies raised we are now in a position to replace the kitchen at Tiddy Hall. This refurbishment is due to take place between 7th – 20th April and the hall will not be available for any catering activities during those dates.

Please remember that there is a badminton court marked out at Tiddy Hall and we have a net for you to use! It would be good to see more people using this facility. Cost is £2 per adult and £1 for juniors – just give me a ring to see if the court is available!

Ingrid Ridley

Saturday 26 th April	Folk Night – Richard Digance Doors open 7.30pm – bar available Tickets £10 from Mark & Elaine 01993 831427
Saturday 3 rd May	Ascott Songsters
Saturday 17 th May	Folk Night – Carrivick Sisters Doors open 7.30pm – bar available Tickets £10 from Mark & Elaine 01993 831427
Thursday 22 nd May	Polling Station European Parliament & Local Government Elections

Wychwood Library

It is still a little chilly outside so there is time yet to curl up with a good book before the weather improves and we are drawn to the garden. So visit your local library and borrow books instead of buying them and we can also save you pounds with our system of renewal notification by email so you should not need to pay fines for overdue books either.

Having books in the house is a marvellous thing and I know I have mentioned this before but studies show that having just 20 books in the home can boost a child's chances of doing well at school! We allow every library member to borrow 20 books and it's all free! Come and see what we have on our shelves.

Over the next few months you will see posters around the villages asking people to join the Wychwood

Friends Group. Do come along and fill out an application form to help us with our move towards a community assisted library.

We are looking to hold a local history event during March so come along and book a space for help looking up your ancestors. If you are looking for local family history, we have the Oxfordshire Parish Register transcripts for our locality. These are on CD and cover Baptisms, Marriages and Burials variably from 1569 to the present time. We also hold a copy of the archives of the Local History Society, the Shipton-u-Wychwood old churchyard survey and Milton-u-Wychwood monumental inscriptions. Use this research material along with the Ancestry and Find my Past online databases, free of charge and available at all Oxfordshire libraries.

Look out for our window display of old photographs to highlight the Local History event. If you can put a name to any of the faces that would be wonderful.

Please feel free to book window space to advertise a local event.

Look out also for our special offer of two DVDs for the price of one during March. The cheapest will be free. Prices start at £3.50 for the most recent titles, dropping to £2.50 then to £1.25 for the rest. You can borrow the DVDs for one week so quite a good deal.

Come and visit us at Wychwood Library.

Ruth and Liz

Wychwood Library's Future

As many of you will know, Wychwood Library is one of 21 in the county which will deliver services differently from April 2015, with community and volunteer support for staff in the running of the library. The Library will remain part of the existing network of 43 libraries in Oxfordshire that will continue to be funded, managed and run by the County Council – unlike in other counties, no libraries in Oxfordshire are being closed.

The Library Service is working closely with your local Parish Councils, and the Friends of Wychwood Library, to develop a plan that will work for our library, and to shape the future of how the library will be run.

It is likely that Library Volunteers will be sought in due course, and people are very welcome to join the Friends of Wychwood Library. To find out more, please contact James Hazlewood, the county council's Community Libraries Coordinator, on james.hazlewood@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

We will keep everyone updated as matters progress, but in the meantime, watch this space!

Rodney Rose

County Councillor for Charlbury and Wychwood

New police front counter opens at Chipping Norton

From 20 January 2014 West Oxfordshire District Council's Guildhall Reception in Chipping Norton will double up as a one-stop shop for police and council services.

The Police's new base at the Guildhall will not only save money for the force, but also offer a more convenient town centre location, with extended opening hours.

Cllr Mark Booty, Cabinet Member at West Oxfordshire District Council responsible for Community Safety said, "We were very keen to help the police maintain valuable front counter service in Chipping Norton and are pleased to provide this service for them from the Guildhall. For residents, the Guildhall has the added benefit of being a town centre location. It also has longer opening hours and is easily accessible with everything on the ground floor."

The move builds on the strong working relationship that already exists between Thames Valley Police and the District Council in areas such as community safety, licensing, enforcement, housing and emergency planning.

Thames Valley Police is keen to reassure residents that the availability and visibility of police officers to attend incidents in their areas will be not be affected by these changes.

Supt Colin Paine, Commander for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell said, "The opening of this new front counter will give the residents of Chipping Norton access to police counter services for an extra 15 hours per week and allow them to visit more easily as it is in a town centre location. Visitors can also access council services at the same time, all at no extra cost to tax payers.

"I am pleased that the service to the public has been improved thanks to our close working relationship with West Oxfordshire District Council."

Council services will continue to operate as normal from the Guildhall. The additional police counter services provided by West Oxfordshire District Council will include producing driving documents, reporting lost and found property as well as general advice when needed.

At present, the Police Station front counter is open from 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday. The opening hours with the Council providing the service are:

Mon to Friday: 8.45am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.30pm (4pm on Friday)

A full list of police counter services provided by West Oxfordshire District Council at the Guildhall are:

- *Advice*

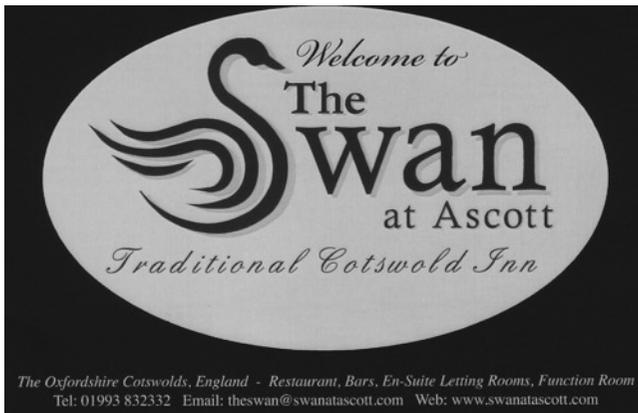
Ascott Grapevine

- *Directions*
- *Document productions*
- *Immigration and Nationality - changes in detail only*
- *Removal of prohibition notices*
- *Lost and Found Property*
- *Putting members of the public in touch with local officers via 101*
- *Referring incidents, reports of anti-social behaviour, crime and missing persons through to the Police Enquiry Centre*
- *Handing out application forms for pedlars certificates*
- *Handing out application forms for shotguns, firearms, pedlars certificates etc. (signpost to correct station for payment)*

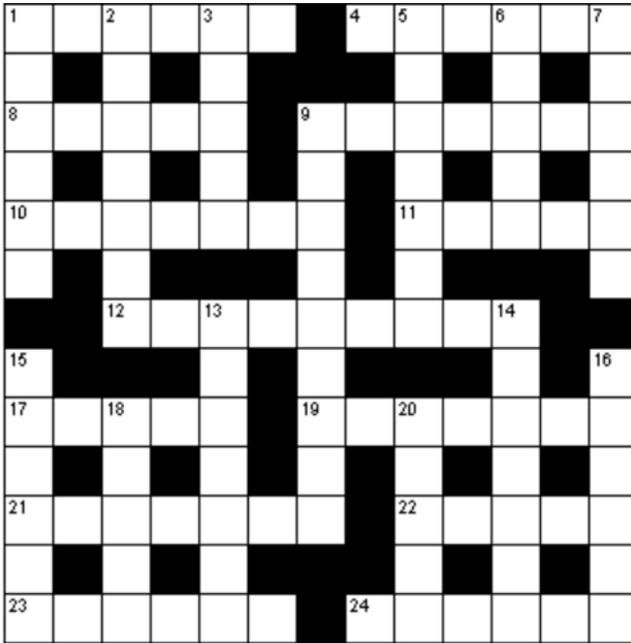
- *Crime Reduction information*
- *Handing out booklets for complaints against police*
- *Displaying promotional material for campaigns police are involved in*
- *Data protection requests*

For further information contact:
West Oxfordshire DC Communica-
tions - t: 01993 861615/616 m:
07771 965360

Thames Valley Police Communica-
tions - t: 01865 846699



Crossword



Across

- 1 Predicament (6)
- 4 Whisky (6)
- 8 Hazardous (5)
- 9 Ghastly (7)
- 10 Coincide partly (7)
- 11 Offspring (5)
- 12 Remiss (9)
- 17 Place of safety (5)
- 19 Moral (7)
- 21 Inns (7)
- 22 Monarch (5)
- 23 Small pool (6)
- 24 Required (6)

Down

- 1 Forgive (6)
- 2 Water tank (7)
- 3 Faithful (5)
- 5 Common painkiller (7)
- 6 Implements (5)
- 7 Hurry (6)
- 9 Felicity (9)
- 13 Military commander (7)
- 14 Amused (7)
- 15 Hold your tongue (4,2)
- 16 Cakeburning king (6)
- 18 Very bright (5)
- 20 Steed (5)

Gardening in Ascott

A garden for the florist.

I give you the image: a sunny morning in summer, galvanised bucket and secateurs in hand, a large floppy hat to shade the eyes as you float along the rows of abundant flowers, snipping a few here and there. Then perhaps bunching a few heads together to judge their compatibility. A little whimsical I admit,



but a small patch, sown with mainly annual flowers is relatively easy for us to grow in most of our gardens. Somewhere we can feel free to cut flowers for the house without detriment to the garden. In fact, cutting

for the vase is really dead-heading, which will in due course produce more flowers for cutting. Pick a bunch on Friday and more buds should be opening on the following Thursday.



My aim this year is a very small new bed, only 12ft x 4ft, dedicated to growing annual flowers for cutting. The ideal site would be in an open, sunny position and with some well prepared soil. I shall be digging in the mix of spent mushroom compost and grit, to help improve the newly broken-in grassland and produce a good open soil structure. When the soil is sufficiently warm you could sow seeds directly into the ground, but given our weather, I will be sowing undercover in the greenhouse or cold frame, and planting out the little seedlings in late May. As my plot will be rather small, I need to think about producing lots of flowers over a long

period and choosing those which have a good vase life.

My new cutting garden bed will be accessed on all sides by grass paths which will help when cutting. I shall be planting in short 4ft rows and while giving each plant sufficient space to grow, there will be no necessity to leave large access paths, as most of the picking will be done from the surrounding grass area.

To ensure plants do not flop as they grow and to help them provide long straight stems for the vase, I will be stretching plastic pea-netting over most of the bed, tied to stakes at the edges of the bed, and about 12 to 15 inches above soil level. The young plants as they grow will push up through the wide spaced netting, and be perfectly supported for the rest of their growing year. The only exceptions to this are the sweet peas. These will be grown, again using pea netting, but this time stretched vertically between two or three stout posts about 6ft tall. This will form the back of the 12ft length of this bed. A lot depends on the orientation of your site to the sun as to whether this would be possible in your plot. Obviously one would not wish sweet peas to overshadow the other flowers, so you may have to put the sweet peas at one end of your plot, perhaps using a wigwam of strong hazel sticks.

My choice of Flowers

If I can fit them all in, the following are my choice for a long flowering mix of easy hardy, and half- hardy annuals.

Calendula, Indian Prince - A lovely Pot Marigold with orange petals that contrast with the rich dark crimson buds, centres and petal reverses. 10-12in tall, it flowers from May to October. Easy to grow and will self-seed in favourable conditions.

Cosmos, White Purity, and Magenta Dazzler- Although these are half-hardy annuals and therefore requiring heat to germinate, they are so valuable in the cutting garden that it is worth the extra effort required.

Pinch out the tips when they are 6-8in tall to encourage bushy plants. They flower from early June to the first frosts if picked regularly. Dazzler has deep magenta-pink flowers, with an eventual height of 18in. Purity has pure white flowers and ferny foliage, which can grow up-to 4ft.

Helianthus (Sunflowers) These will be some of the shorter growing, dark red coloured ones, replacing sweet peas at end of July. A deep red variety such as Helianthus 'Claret' is a wine-red sunflower which grows up to 5 ft. tall. Pinch out the tips when the seedlings are about 6-8in tall, to encourage bushy multi-stemmed plants.

These will replace the sweet peas when they have finished flowering in late July.

Dahlias, Bishops's Children. A fiery mix of striking colours ranging from red and orange to deep pink, with dark bronze foliage. Another half-hardy annual, but a good strong grower which can reach 30in in height.

Sweet Peas, A mix of colours. No description is needed here as we all know these scented lovelies which, the more you cut, the more they flower. Invaluable in the cut flower border and I cannot think of a summer garden without them. The range of colours is immense, but I love the dark coloured ones - but then again, white ones are lovely - and perhaps pink would be nice for a change this year. The answer must be to grow a mix of them all!

Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Black Cat' Height 2-3ft. Large pompom flowers in a velvety dark crimson-black colour. Flowers June to October.

Ammi majus Graceland, perfect for cutting and long flowering. Flowers from June - September. Known by its common name as Bishop's flower, it has lacy white flowers, akin to a delicate cow parsley. It is a very good white filler-foliage plant in a mixed arrangement and spectacular arranged in a great cloud on its own. Height 3ft. It needs plenty of water.

Aster China Mix, Old fashion singles. Great for cutting and flowering from July to October. These old fashioned, single flowered asters are simply delightful for large vases in the house. They are also indispensable for the cottage garden.

Euphorbia oblongata - This very useful acid-green plant provides good foliage for flower arranging over a long period. It is actually a short-lived perennial, which is usually grown as a hardy annual and is tolerant of most conditions. It will reach a height of 20in and flowers from May - Decem-

ber. Do remember to use gloves when picking; the sap is an skin irritant. Condition for the vase by soaking overnight and searing the stems for 20 seconds to stop the sap leaking out.

Alchemilla mollis. Used as annual. Just dig up a big clump in early spring, divide into smaller plants and by late May they will provide ample acid green, fluffy flower heads to complement the darker coloured and larger flowers. To avoid large woody clumps, repeat the lifting at least every other year.

Dill. Perhaps a surprising inclusion here, but it is great for flower arranging and for cooking with fish! Easy to grow, but perhaps best if sown direct into the soil in late spring when the soil feels warm.

Weather permitting, we are hoping to grow a sufficient number of these seedlings so that we will be able to sell them at the church tea in May. So get digging now and prepare your little patch ready for cutting flowers this year. In June you could be cutting bunches of flowers every week throughout the summer. Floppy hat optional!

A few notes on picking and conditioning flowers for arrangements.

The best time to pick flowers is last thing at night or first thing in the morning.

Cut and put the flowers directly in a water bucket not into a basket. Cutting

Ascott Grapevine

straight into the water makes a big difference to the flowers vase life.

Don't leave the flowers in direct sun. Find a spot in the shade until you are ready to take them into the house.

Don't cut flowers down to the ground; it wastes lots of potential flowers. Just take out the leading shoot just above the side-branch which has a bud, and this will go on to grow and produce more flowers.

All flowers benefit from being left at least a few hours in a bucket of water before arranging them.

Most flowers seem to benefit from having their stems ends seared in boiling water for about 30 seconds before arranging them.

Adding flower food to the water is very important. You can buy sachets to sprinkle into your vases or you can make your own. Just add a little sugar and bleach (or vinegar) to the water. The sugar gives them a little feed and the bleach or vinegar inhibits the growth of bacteria and keeps the water smelling sweet.

Madeline Galistan

Wise men arrive in Ascott under Wychwood!

I can just hear your reaction, “**and not before time either**”. Well, if it has taken some time I'm sure you will all agree that the wait was worthwhile. In this instance the journey began with a visit by yours truly to Blenheim Palace during Christmas 2012. On display in the Palace Chapel was an impressive nativity scene, Wise Men, Mary, Joseph and, of course, baby Jesus. I was confident that whatever Blenheim could do we could better. Although lacking a chapel, we do have a wonderful village green and some really talented people.

Personally, I would have been content with cut out figures, a quick lick of paint and a coat of varnish. Not so, following discussions with Parish

Council Chairman Rob Morgan he revealed that daughter-in-law Kerri Morgan was a gifted artist who would no doubt be able to do much better than that. So it was that a visit to Kerri was arranged and our plans were revealed. Without hesitation and despite leading a busy life as a working mother of two, Kerri immediately offered to do the artwork that would lead to the most impressive wise men I have ever seen. However, her support was not to stop there as she also promised to design and paint wooden decorations for our Christmas tree.

Over the following months the project was brought to life, sketches produced, shapes were drawn and with the help of Richard Franks and Simon

Ascott Grapevine

Barnes these were transformed into our village nativity scene. By the time Kerri had added her interpretation of robes, Crowns and gifts complete with magnificent colours the transformation was complete. On the day the scene was put in place there remained one important missing item, we were short of a baby Jesus. Staff at the village school very kindly donated a “baby” complete with nappy! I am told that one inquisitive little girl examined the baby and declared that it couldn't be Jesus as it wasn't a boy!! Staff were left to deal with the explanation.

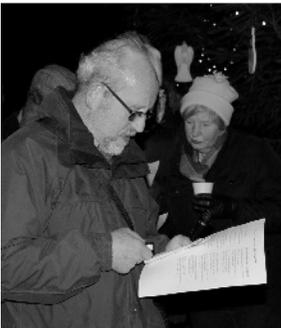
All we needed now was an audience and our traditional village gathering for “**Carols Round the Tree**” provided that, with the numbers attending

far greater than in previous years. Members of the Parish Council dispensed hot mulled wine and mince pies, with villagers young and old providing the singing. To cap what was a splendid evening £180 was raised and donated to the Wychwood Day Centre.

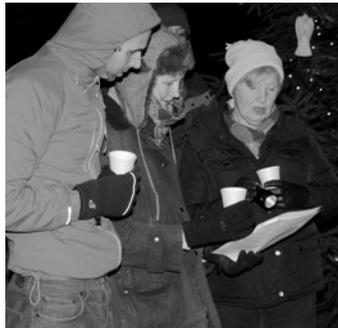
A big thank you to all those who helped, especially Kerri, Richard, Simon and Robin Walker and Shane Barnes for putting the tree up which thankfully survived extreme wind and rain. Finally, thank you to all those who supported the event on the night.

Laurence Mellor

Parish Councillor



Ascott Grapevine



Ascott Village Floodplains

Photos of the flooding of some areas north of the railway line. This is what happens when you have 6 ins (15 cm) of rain in December followed by 8 ins (20 cm) in January



Ascott Grapevine



The Wychwood Christmas Fair

Christmas Shopping came early for many in the Village on 23rd November under the guise of The Wychwood Christmas Fair, kindly hosted by Phil and Helen Pratley. Preparation for it started a week before with marquees being loaned from Kingsley and Gareth and the Village charity. These were put up early in



anticipation of our unpredictable weather, which was just as well as the strong winds became the challenge! However on the day it was cold, dry and sunny and it certainly enticed many people, not just from our Village but further afield too! There were 16 stalls and The Wychwood Wrought Iron showroom, each selling different gift ideas for all ages, and 8 year old Mathew Ernst who recently joined New College Oxford, sang Carols in the morning.

The Vintage Stall, refreshments area, Children's Corner and the raffle ticket table were all hosted by people who throughout the year had helped organise the Ascott Tea afternoons, resulting in further funds being raised for our Church.

Luck was certainly on Tony Collins's side, as he not only won the £100 first prize in the raffle, but he also guessed the correct weight of the Christmas cake too!



Mr and Mrs Wood won the large food Hamper and the meal for 2 at The Swan was won by somebody outside our Village.

A big thank you to Phil and Helen and good news, plans are being made for another Christmas Fair this year!

Debra Cull





The Swan - The Village Pub

The day the PM came to town

It's not every day the PM comes to Ascott - on his bike with his family too!

And what a grand occasion it was; the Hook Norton dray and a free barrel of Hooky for visitors, villagers and supporters.

It was also an occasion for David Cameron to officially open the Old Coach House - the Swan's new function room.



The PM went on to say that it was a huge privilege and pleasure to attend the opening. The pub is the hub and it was good to see the Swan open and thriving. He thanked Richard and Michiel, and the district council (we were fortunate to use planning rules to overturn building applications based on 'last pub in the village')

The Pub Action Group were also thanked for their time, ideas and of course some very useful funding at the time Richard & Michiel needed that support.

David then went on to praise Hook Norton Brewery who served some very pleasing Old Hooky to the French President Monsieur Hollande at the other Swan a week ago. Now we don't want to give the impression that the PM spends all his time in pubs but clearly it makes a pleasant change to PM Questions!

We then moved into the new Old Coach House for more celebrations and a formal presentation of the shares



certificates - around 40 villagers have supported the Swan (including a small group of supporters from Connecticut, USA courtesy of Nick Carter).

So, having got our pub back it is now time for all of us to give our support to Richard and Michiel. Whether it's a light bite, family celebration, romantic evening, a beer by the fire or listening to some great folk music - the Swan is open for business!

Its taken three years to get our pub back - now let's keep it that way!

John Cull

Ascott Grapevine





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puppyschoolwitney@yahoo.com



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 grown 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

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- ASCOTT VILLAGE SHOP** 01993831240 shop@ascottvillageshop.co.uk
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- BERTIE THE SWEEP** 01993899143/07954180371 [Page 20](#)
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- BILL'S GARDEN & HANDYMAN Co.** 01993830544/07929288000
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- BESPOKE VINTAGE TEA PARTIES** 07967833979
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- DAVENPORTS** 013672419036
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- DRY STONE WALLING** 01993881476/07980564508
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Events Calendar - 2014

Date	Event
March 1 st	8.00 pm. Bluebird (The Swan)
March 15 th	8.00 pm. The Ponderosa (The Swan)
March 22 nd	8.00 pm. Peter Knight's Gigspanner (Tiddy Hall)
April 5 th	8.00 pm. Gawkey (The Swan)
April 19 th	8.00 pm. The Linda Watkins Band (The Swan)
April 26 th	8.00 pm. Richard Digance (Tiddy Hall)
May 3 rd	8.00 pm. Palmerston (The Swan)
May 3 rd	8.00 pm. Ascott Songsters (Tiddy Hall)
May 17 th	8.00 pm. The Carrivick Sisters (Tiddy Hall)
June 7 th	8.00 pm. Hatful of Rain (Tiddy Hall)
June 21 st	8.00 pm. Miranda Sykes & Rex Preston (TiddyHall)
June 22 nd	Open garden day