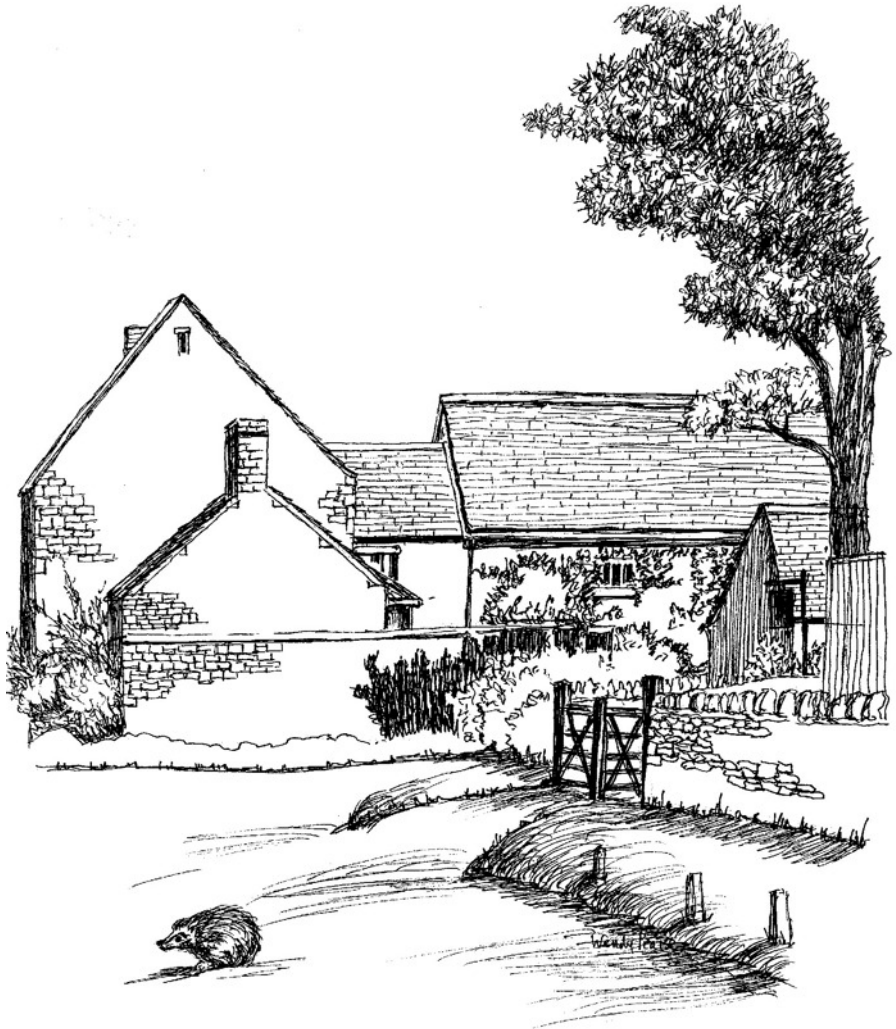


# The Ascott Grapevine



## 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 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Articles submitted after this date may not be included.

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

The Editorial Team:

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,  
Wendy Pearse, Keith Ravenhill

## Content & Editorial Policy

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

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

**Opinions expressed in contributions are not necessarily those of the editorial team.**

\*\*\*\*\*

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**To advertise in our Local Business Directory (see Page 80), please contact Wendy Pearse 01993 831023 or [wendypearse@btinternet.com](mailto:wendypearse@btinternet.com). The cost is £5 per year but inclusion is free for our existing advertisers.**

## SERVICES AT ASCOTT CHURCH 2015

|                                   |              |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> January   | 8.00 am      | Holy Communion [BCP]                           |
| Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> February   | 10.00 am     | Holy Communion [CW]                            |
| Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February  | 8.00 am      | Holy Communion [BCP]                           |
| Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March      | 10.00 am     | Holy Communion [CW] followed by Annual Meeting |
| Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March     | 8.00 am      | Holy Communion [BCP]                           |
| <b>EASTER WEEK</b>                |              |  |
| Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March     | 8.00 pm      | Meditation                                     |
| Good Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April | 12 pm – 3 pm | Private Prayers                                |
|                                   | 2.00 pm      | An hour at the Cross                           |

On Sundays when there is not a service in Ascott there are services across the Benefice, normally 1st Sunday 0800 Enstone & 1000 Spelsbury; 3rd Sunday 0800 Spelsbury & 1000 Enstone. For full details see the Church notice boards. You will receive a warm welcome at any of our services.

## Local Churches

### **Wychwood 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-on-the-Wold  
St Teresa, Charlbury

### **Chase Benefice**

Rev'd Mark Abrey Tel: 01608 676572

# ***News from the Church***

That old phrase 'you shouldn't talk about religion and politics' is dying. The events in Paris two weeks ago caused an international outrage which eclipsed most other news stories, mainly because of its mix of religion and politics.

Amidst other news stories was one of two African villages decimated by fanatical militia but which only registered on some radars because the question was asked around the politics of France and 'freedom of speech' versus 'freedom of life' in countries suffering religious terrorism.

In Peshawar there was a horrific terrorist attack without the level of indignation from political leaders in the manner of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Similarly with Raif Badawi and the protest at Saudi Arabian methods of punishment not receiving sanction from some countries because of politics, these have been some of the biggest recent news stories and all have religion and politics at their core.

So if we don't talk about these things, what will happen to them? Will things calm down and get easier? Or is it that shying away from these things which allowed a small Austro-Hungarian man with

a neatly-trimmed moustache the freedom to turn Europe into a war-zone? Does religious and political tension happen because we talk about it too much or not enough?

Is there enough done to engage the two in areas riven with conflict?

Many may agree that most conflict arises out of misunderstanding and lack of communication, whereas preparedness to listen to another's point of view is one of the biggest reasons for reconciliation and peace: never more so than in political and religious conflicts.

Where are you in all this? Are you wondering what to do about the issues you hear about? Are you wondering how you can help effect change in a world where religion and politics are in conflict? Or are you sick of hearing about it all the time? Are you wondering what I'm prattling on about when I should be out doing vicary things?

Before I go out and do what vicars should do, there is increasingly the question raised of where the Church and politics meet? In January the first woman bishop will be consecrated: previously a major religious and political barrier. It is only due to religion and politics meeting that so many conversa-

tions like this and those in the first two paragraphs here happen, and we should never divorce the two: the whole of civilisation is formed from political structures coming out of religious ones and vice versa.

Even charities owe much of their existence to the work done by religious communities in exercising their belief of loving one's neighbour as much as we love ourselves. Amnesty International, Oxfam, the many organisations associated with alternative trading like Fairtrade, have roots in religious movements which then try to effect change through better ethics and social activism. So many religious groups find a social need and try to make the world a better place. When they work well with

politics, God works through us in them.

When the religious and the political meet and search for a way to resolve a need or to ease the burden of life, such as the work of foodbanks, parenting groups, supporting family networks, housing schemes, support groups for minorities, these things prove we must never forget the necessary and positive impact which the two things of religion and politics have on people's lives. Only, of course, when we let God work in them, through us.

So, with less than a 100 days until the Election, where are you in all this?

Yours  
**Mark Abrey**

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting** - for Ascott Church will take place on Sunday 8 March, following the 10.00am Communion Service. This is the meeting open to all parishioners to elect Church Wardens and PCC members. For further information see the noticeboard in the Village or contact Mark Abrey on 01608 676572.

## ***Deaths***

Village residents recently died

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Freda Wearing | 29 <sup>th</sup> September |
| Tony Collins  | 19 <sup>th</sup> November  |
| Bill Prewett  | 28 <sup>th</sup> December  |

# ***Afternoon Teas in the Village Church***

Following on from another successful themed Afternoon Teas in 2014, this year sees a slight twist to some of them. We're starting the year with teas at The Wychwood Manor on Sunday **MAY 10<sup>th</sup>**, with Mr and Mrs Wilmot-Sitwell kindly opening their Gardens and Kathy and Madeline selling their beautiful plants. So fingers crossed for some early sunshine and warmth!

Over the weekend of **MAY 30/31**, our Church is holding a Flower Festival, where the Committees and Clubs of Ascott-under-Wychwood, will be advertising (in flowers and other props!) what they do for the Village, so more to follow on both of these events on the notice boards and flyers through the doors from April onwards.

**JULY 12<sup>th</sup>** then sees the teas (and possibly Pimms!) move to The Playing Fields for the Wimbledon Men's Final, which will be shown on a big screen up there, plus we shall also have the use of the new playground equipment as well!

Teas are also going to be organised for August and October (themes to be advised) a Harvest Tea in September, and then we're completing our year with the

Xmas Fair on **NOVEMBER 21<sup>st</sup>** at Wychwood Wrought Iron.

As ever, all the money raised goes towards the upkeep of our Church, so please come and enjoy some different teas this year as well as supporting your Village Church.

With thanks

Debra Cull

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## ***Superfast Broadband***

A fibre optic cable has been installed at Cold Corner, so anyone wishing to connect with greater speed to the internet, contact your internet provider and ask to be connected. The signal will be from the cabinet at Cold Corner to your premises via your existing copper cabling so installation costs are relatively low.

# ***Recipe***

## **Sausage Flan**

### ***Ingredients***

Short crust pastry to line shallow 7 inch tin

Medium onion

4 smoked bacon rashers

1 Egg

Fat or oil for frying

$\frac{3}{4}$  lb Sausage Meat

Seasoning and 1 level teaspoon of mixed herbs (optional)

### ***Method***

1. Prepare sufficient short crust pastry to line a shallow 7 inch sandwich cake tin.
2. Peel and finely chop a medium sized onion.
3. Remove any bacon rinds and cut rashers into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch strips.
4. Fry onion and bacon till onions are golden. Remove from pan, draining well.
5. Break egg into a basin and whisk lightly.
6. Mix sausage meat, onion and bacon and beaten egg, together with mixed herbs and seasoning.
7. Spread mixture over pastry case and bake towards the top of the oven gas mark 6 (200°C) for 15 minutes until the pastry has set. Turn down to gas mark 4 (180°C) and cook for a further 25 minutes, or until the sausage meat is cooked.

A simple, but tasty, recipe that can be enjoyed hot or cold; real comfort food.

## 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. At the 2014 panto you raised the huge sum of £400 (£12 more than last year), £200 each has been passed on to the Pancreatic Cancer Charity and the Village Charity fund. Lets break the record this year!

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

Some children of the village played a big part in Cinders and were magnificent, there are certainly some budding actors emerging.

There is always room for recruits, either on stage or as back stage staff, a chance to show your talents as actors or managers. Please email [keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net](mailto:keith.ravenhill@talktalk.net) or phone 831498 or drop a note through the door of 4a Heritage Lane.

All applications welcome - there is no audition, if you volunteer, you're in!

## ***Pancreatic Cancer Research***

Thank you for the online donation of £200 in aid of Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund raised at the annual Ascott-Under-Wychwood pantomime 2014 in memory of two villagers. We're very grateful for this generous gift.

I'm pleased to tell you that the charity has just accepted seven, pioneering new research projects for funding at universities around the UK, totalling £1.2m. This gift will help to fund these world-class projects, which include research on early diagnosis and more effective treatments. The importance of this work and the support from PCRf donors is best expressed by the researchers, so please do take a look at one of our short videos [Professor Caroline Dive](#). It's thanks to our supporters that things are beginning to change for future pancreatic cancer patients.

Please do pass on our sincere thanks to everyone who donated so generously. If you would like an official thank you certificate from the charity to go on display somewhere in the village, just let us know and we would be delighted to provide one for you.

With kind regards,

Becky Tanner

Fundraising Director





# Scenes from the Panto





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## NATURE NOTES

At last, however miserable the weather we can feel spring is in the air! Everywhere spring bulbs and flowers are making an appearance, rooks have rebuilt their nests and are noisily courting, the woodpecker is drumming to attract a mate and the garden birds are noisily singing to establish their territories.

One sign of spring that I always look for is the appearance of Hazel catkins, also known as lamb's tails. Over the winter months the catkins sit like tight green buds on the branches, but as the days lengthen so do they until in early spring they are ready to shed clouds of pollen on every breeze. The female flowers of the hazel are inconspicuous and often overlooked, small swollen buds on the top ends of the tree's twigs with crimson threads (see illustration) ready to be fertilised by the air-borne pollen.



The Hazel, together with Birch, was one of the first trees to re-colonise the British Isles after the end of the last ice-age, 12,000 years ago. Indeed at one stage it was probably the most abundant tree or shrub species. Normally Hazel is seen as a hedgerow shrub or as part of a coppice, but in an open situation can grow into a small tree up to 30 feet high. As other tree species started to colonise Britain, such as Oak and Ash, creating the dense wildwood, the Hazel was pushed to the margins as it does not thrive under dense woodland cover, preferring a sunny position, retreating to open areas by rivers, cliffs and rocky upland places.

Eventually as early human settlers began clearing areas of the wildwood Hazel was able to return and some 4,000 years ago people started to coppice Hazel, having noticed how if a branch was broken or damaged the tree would produce straight new shoots (rods) from the base. Hazel rods have many uses; they can be split lengthways, twisted and bent without breaking. From Neolithic times cut and split Hazel was woven into wattle, a simple

lattice-work used to make hurdles, fencing and the foundation for wattle and daub walls.

Today Hazel is still used to produce hurdles, peg down thatch, provide the support for hedge laying, used in bundles to fortify river banks, as pea and bean sticks and carved walking sticks. Having suffered many years of decline Hazel coppice is now being managed again to support artisan wood workers.



In prehistoric times Hazel nuts would have been a staple food, although different clones would have been of widely varying quality. In Tudor times a new variety was introduced from Asia Minor (*Corylus Maxima*) known as the Wild Filbert. The name probably derives from St. Philbert's Day on the 20<sup>th</sup> August when the nuts are said to be ripe and ready for picking. Today the improved varieties of nut, known as Cob Nuts are

mainly grown as a commercial crop in Kent.

One particular use of Hazel is to provide water diviners with their forked twigs. It is said that the most effective divining rods should be cut on St. John's Eve or night (23<sup>rd</sup> June).

As you might expect, given our use of Hazel since prehistoric times, many myths and superstitions have grown-up around its use. Celtic myths associated the Hazel with fertility and fire. Small Hazel twigs kept in the house were said to protect the property from lightning strikes and if kept on a boat would prevent shipwreck. Other superstitions sprang up around the nut harvest. In some areas a good crop of nuts was said to foretell disaster, 'many nuts mean many pits' ran an old saying, a pit in this case referring to graves. However in other parts of the country a surplus of nuts was supposed to indicate that there would be many babies born.



In Wales there was a tradition of weaving Hazel twigs into hats as this meant that the wearer was bound to find their heart's desire. If a double nut was carried in the pocket this would prevent tooth-ache.

The nuts were also used to predict whether a woman's choice of a partner would lead to a successful marriage. During Halloween a row of nuts would be placed in the hot embers of the fire, each nut belonged to one girl. Each would utter the name of her favourite

man and if her nut jumped then the match would be successful, if it quietly burnt away it wouldn't be.

'If you love me, pop and fly,  
if not, lie and die.'

Animals too benefited from Hazel's powers. Horses were said to be protected from attack by fairies if they wore a breast band made from woven Hazel and if cows were fed a few Hazel leaves their milk yields would increase.

*Stuart Fox*

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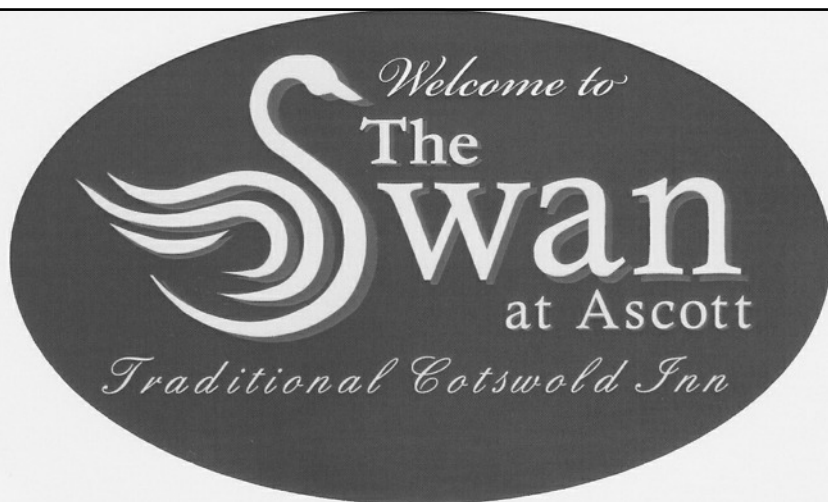
## WYCHWOOD FOLK CLUB

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|                        |                                     |            |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| March 7th              | Winter-Wilson                       | Tiddy Hall |
| March 21st             | Scarecrow + Mick Holditch           | The Swan   |
| April 4th              | Red Moon Road + Paul McClure        | Tiddy Hall |
| April 18 <sup>th</sup> | Three Pressed Men                   | The Swan   |
| May 16 <sup>th</sup>   | James Bell                          | The Swan   |
| June 20 <sup>th</sup>  | The Jigantics                       | The Swan   |
| July 25 <sup>th</sup>  | Swanfest - Headline-Barbara Dickson | The Swan   |

If you would like to be added to our mailing list or want any further information then visit [www.wychwoodfolkclub.com](http://www.wychwoodfolkclub.com), or call **01993831427** or **07870563299** or e-mail: [wychwoodfolkclub@gmail.com](mailto:wychwoodfolkclub@gmail.com)



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## ***Ascott Under Sunrise***

From nightly dark Dawn wakes  
and slowly shakes her reverie  
as half the world lies waiting.  
A fir-fingered forest strokes her side.  
Stretching, she peers over a hill  
to see that all's asleep and still.

Two mounds have stood for years  
where fears of warfare stirred  
one lord, one earl, to raise their might  
in stone and wood.  
Yet undeterred  
she brings them peaceful light.

Her widening gleams  
on stream and river creep.  
A startled heron's wings take to the air.  
Past sacred church, unholy tavern and an old  
sheep-  
wash she turns her warming face and stares  
towards the west.

Over the grassy patch  
where signs of ancient burials lie  
long overgrown, soon,  
as handmaid of the solar deity  
she'll burst upon the sky  
and join Sun's endless quest  
to kiss elusive Moon.

*Juliet Craig*



# ***The Ascott Village Charity***



The last few months have been busy ones for our local charity. First we were organising our main fund-raising event, the 10k & 5k Charity Run. There were 103 runners and we raised £1,319 for our charity funds.

Of course fund-raising is not an end in itself; money is raised to benefit our parish and we have fulfilled that task admirably this year. We donated £1,000 to the Tiddy Hall in order to purchase more comfortable chairs. £1,200 was given to the Parish Council to fund one of the new pieces of play equipment at the recreation ground. The village now has a defibrillator and we contributed £399 towards the cost. Other smaller expenditure included £120 for work to improve the area surrounding the village station and a £50 education grant to a local student.

Apart from local grants made within the village we also contributed £200 to the Air Ambulance service. I only hope that there is never any need to call on their services!

Students who are moving into further education are reminded that the Charity still has funds available to award grants for books, equipment etc.

Many of you will have noticed the Charity collection box on the shop counter. Thanks to all of you who donated your small change, it raised £198 in 2014.

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.john.fox@gmail.com  
mark@dawbarn.co.uk; se.timms@btinternet.com  
pollymarshall@gmail.com; rector@thechasebenefice.org.uk

# ***Wychwood Forest FC***

Wychwood Forest FC are doing very well this year, maybe on the verge of promotion this season currently with our new crop of players, which is very encouraging. Also we have a reserve side ready to start in div 4 for next season. As some of the Ascott village have seen, we have installed floodlights for training that are packed away every time we use them which is a great help to the club. The floodlights very kindly put together by Phil Pratley at Wrought Iron. Also we have an under 15s youth team playing on a Tuesday night at 6 o'clock, if anybody in the village would like to come up and have a go they would be very welcome and they will be

put through their paces. The under 15s are currently doing very well in their league.

A special thanks to the Swan Pub who puts on a good spread after home games and also to WIND-RUSH FOOTBALLS soccer equipment suppliers who sponsor Wychwood Forest FC. Also thank you to Laurence Mellor who is on the sports committee giving us permission to build our growing club at Ascott who are going to be called Ascott Football Club next season. If you fancy getting involved with Wychwood Forest FC please give Mike Ody a ring on 01993830170 or 07928722367.

**Mike Ody**

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## ***Flood Danger Area?***

### **Trouble finding reasonable Home Insurance?**

For the latest information on finding home insurance look up the **National Flood Forum** on

<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/trouble-getting-insurance/>

# **Thames Lock Keepers**

## **An Appeal by the Environment Agency**

For the last 4 years volunteers have been assisting Lock Staff on the Thames at the 45 locks along its length between Lechlade and Teddington. Now, ahead of our fifth season, you are invited to apply to become a Volunteer Assistant Lock Keeper at a lock near you.

The Environment Agency, which is navigation authority for the Thames, is now recruiting for the 2015 season and are looking for volunteers who can commit to assisting at least one day a week between May and the end of September. Volunteers can agree their days with lock keepers but need to be available from 10 am to 5 pm. Volunteering is a great way to meet people and to find out more about the Thames, its history, wildlife and management. At the same time volunteers know that they are doing something worthwhile that is really appreciated.

Roy Poysor who volunteers at Iffley Lock said:

*"Since becoming a volunteer lock keeper I am absorbed in a completely different environment where my assistance is greeted by*

*the enthusiastic boating fraternity who give me immense pleasure with their friendship and banter"*

Volunteer Assistant Lock Keepers work alongside paid lock keepers. They help boats pass through the lock safely: taking ropes, directing traffic, and operating sluices and lock gates. They help maintain the site: painting, tidying and gardening. They provide information to visitors, be they on foot or afloat, so that they can make the best of their time on the river. Visitors really appreciate the local knowledge that volunteers can provide.

All applicants are invited to an assessment at a local lock. Here they will have the role explained to them and be shown what it involves in practical terms. They will also be assessed to decide which site may be most appropriate for them and to ensure that they have the physical capabilities required. After successful completion of the assessment, they attend an induction course which focuses on safety and preparing them for the lock side.

On the lock side, the volunteers follow a documented training programme before being signed off to

take charge of the lock on their own. This will only be for short periods, while the paid keeper is at lunch for example.

William Partridge who volunteers at Benson Lock had the following to say:

*“2015 will be my fifth year as a volunteer lock keeper. I have enjoyed every moment of it, come rain or shine. I look forward to it in the knowledge that I am helping boaters and lock staff alike. It gives me great pleasure to make a contribution”*

Volunteers are provided with uniform and can claim mileage for travel to and from a lock local to them. They also receive a monthly newsletter which keeps them in touch with what is going on along the river and other activities of the Environment Agency.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering on the Thames and to receive an information pack and application form, please contact the Volunteer team on 01491 828360 or email [thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk)

---

## ***Sunday Walking Group***

### **A Sunday walking group is to be formed.**

Modelled on a successful walking group in Kingham (which has been going for over 15 years) the new group will walk monthly in the area on a Sunday morning leaving the green at 9am sharp and aiming to be back around 1pm. Dogs will be welcome and some of the walks will require transport to surrounding areas which can be provided.

A programme will be available in the village shop starting in April and finishing in October. If the group is successful year round walks will be develop. More information available from [paul.jackson@triangle.eu.com](mailto:paul.jackson@triangle.eu.com).

# **Ascott Wychwood PC**

## **Defibrillator**

An excellent training session was held at the beginning of December in the Swan function room and was extremely well attended. The trainer was Ian Jones from the Ambulance service and he explained very carefully how to recognise if a person is having a heart attack, what steps to take, how to apply CPR while singing 'Nellie the Elephant' and how to use the defibrillator. There was the opportunity to try CPR on dummies and to use the defibrillator. Everyone felt that the session was well worthwhile, even those who had had previous training.

**A second training session has been booked for Saturday 7 March at 10 am – it will last approximately 2 hours and is free. Anyone interested in attending please contact Sandy Timms on 830344 or e-mail [se.timms@btinternet.com](mailto:se.timms@btinternet.com)**

## **Project SafePlay**

The new look playground is now open – we do hope that you will all enjoy using it with friends and family. Please also consider booking the pavilion for small functions which need outdoor facilities (booking secretary is Philippa

Carter). We now have new play-ground equipment, junior football goals, cricket facilities and a volleyball net. Functions with loud music would not be appropriate. More tables, chairs and crockery could be made available and hire of the Village Charity marquee is possible. We are grateful to the Tiddy Hall trustees and the Village Charity in supporting the pavilion.

Developing this lovely space for a wider variety of uses by the community is our goal and I want to thank all those who have worked very hard on Project SafePlay. Laurence Mellor is still working hard on the improved drainage project for the playing field and his reports can be read in the PC minutes on line.

## **Bus Service**

The GoRide X10 has temporarily been replaced by Pulhams to Burford where there is a good connection to Witney. Timetables are at the stops. OCC have asked about the village's exact requirements and Peter Rance has put up notices inviting residents' views. The ideal for everyone would be for OCC to be able to reduce costs when the contract comes up for renewal while still running buses at the

times that residents really want. We will keep you informed.

## ***Financial Planning***

OCC has already cut several services which affect our budget and both WODC and OCC warn of further cuts. They strongly advise keeping a sensible reserve as no one really knows what will be cut and by how much.

## ***Wychwood Library***

This is an example of our PC now having to contribute towards a facility which used to be fully funded by OCC. Sandy Timms is monitoring this and was pleased to report that the new system is functioning well and there is no shortage of good volunteers.

## ***Footbridges***

We have recently had to complain to OCC about the state of 2 of the footbridges over the Evenlode.

Thank you to Mark Tribe for taking this responsibility. We are al-

ways grateful to anyone who reports anything they feel is dangerous along the footpaths or any flytipping within the village limits and in the river.

## ***Carols Round the Tree***

What a wonderful event this was this year! Huge thanks must go to my dedicated team of Councillors, to our wonderful brass band, to Robin and Shane who patiently put up the tree and to our team of helpers who heated up the wine. I created a bit of confusion with changing the order of carols (a woman's prerogative changing her mind) so promise to improve the public address system next year – I hope you think it just added to the fun! You all sang beautifully and the Wychwood Day Centre was thrilled to have raised £305.

**We wish you all a very Happy New Year!**

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

## **Parish Council:**

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Philippa Carter (Chairman)   | 830344       |
| Laurence Mellor              | 831182       |
| Peter Rance                  | 831113       |
| Sandy Timms                  | 831870       |
| Mark Tribe                   | 359769       |
| Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk) | 01608 641045 |

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## ***Reginald Tiddy***

### **Battlefield tour 2016 with visit to resting place of Reginald Tiddy**

Reginald Tiddy came to live in Ascott in 1909 and in 1912 built for the villagers a reading room, later called 'Tiddy Hall' after him. The hall became a natural venue for recreational activities and helped to break down social barriers.

On 10<sup>th</sup> August 1916, Reginald Tiddy was killed in action in northern France, hit by a stray shell while searching for wounded men. To commemorate the centenary of his sacrifice, it is proposed to organise a short trip to the WW1 battlefields, during which we would visit his resting place at Laventie.

The trip is in the very early planning stages at the moment, but will probably involve a duration of 4 days, with 3 overnight stays, around 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016. We would visit the Somme area, Laventie of course, and also take in the sounding of the Last Post at the Menin Gate at Ieper/Ypres. We shall also manage a visit to medieval Bruges.

Tiddy Hall is still today a key feature of Ascott community life and is the legacy of Reginald Tiddy. A lot of people have enjoyed many memorable evenings here over the years.

There has already been considerable interest in such a trip. If you think you might like to come along, please register your interest with Ingrid Ridley at [ingrid@meadowbank-ascott.co.uk](mailto:ingrid@meadowbank-ascott.co.uk) or telephone 01993 830612, leaving your contact details, in order to be kept informed of updates.



# ***Ascott-under-Wychwood Station***

## **The Present and its Distant Past**

### ***The Present***

Possibly many of you saw the Great Railway Journeys TV programme in January in which Michael Portillo visited Ascott by train, and it included a scene inside our delightful Signal Box, which is the last remaining vestige of the original complete station complex. That was removed long ago and though it is good that our existing platforms and waiting shelters are functional they can hardly match the character of the earlier station buildings.

Putting that issue aside, I am grateful our station exists, having used it as often as I can alongside quite a number who commute daily to and from Oxford. I am delighted those trains are well patronised by Ascott folk because one train each day per weekday is clearly the very bare minimum provision! Surely if Shipton has more trains and creates more patronage then why can't Ascott do likewise?

The Office of the Rail Regulation (ORR) publish annual statistics on station usage and those for Ascott show that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 some 2856 journeys were recorded which is a 15% increase on 2012-13.

Despite this, users would know that First Great Western haven't added extra trains to gain more custom and indeed in 2014 quietly withdrew without any official reason, the pre Christmas Saturday shopper's specials which operated in 2013!

By comparison, Shipton with its better service particularly with late evening, returning home trains from Oxford had consequently some 5050 journeys.

It is clear that whilst there is no apparent Ascott user pressure for a better service, First Great Western clearly don't have to do any worrying. This is reflected in the fact that Ascott hasn't had a representative on the quite influential and effective Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG), who also nat-

usually assumed this indicates that Ascott users are happy with the current minimal service on offer.

Well, as the Ascott Parish Councillor with the “Transport focus” role, I could hardly do nothing, so in a personal capacity I have joined the CLPG as its Ascott representative.

So, if, like me, you consider one train each way, each weekday as unacceptably minimal, then get in touch and just maybe the CLPG can have a genuine Ascott sourced pressure they can use in their regular dialogue with First Great Western.

However, please don’t expect anytime soon, Ascott having its old station rebuilt or enjoying the Great Western Railway Company train service now in the distant past!

## ***The distant Past***



However modest Ascott’s original station was, in the late 1890s it

still boasted a Station Inspector and two shift Signalmen who between them dealt with literally everything that arose. The Great Western Railway (GWR) ran a tight organisation, and not least was the formal tasking of all its “Company Servants” (this phrasing was only changed to “Company Employees” after 1918) so that they had no reason to doubt what were their duties and responsibilities.

This was most effectively secured by the simple means of making the appointed Station Inspector and the signalmen, complete a list in their own hand-writing of all those duties, and have that text then signed and witnessed by the relevant GWR Divisional Officer.

By wonderful chance, the above duties are preserved in a very rare, modest and very frail card bound, lined page ledger, for Ascott under Wychwood station which has entries dated for 1895 and 1897 and a final undated but circa 1900 entry.

It would appear that in 1895 a Mr Dance was the Inspector, and the signalmen under his supervision were messrs Moss and Smart who it should be noted worked 12 hour shifts, with a change-over on Sundays when the Shipton signalman came on as relief.

Frederick Lock of Chipping Norton junction was the Linesman tending the signal & telegraph system. Some 3 passenger trains ex Worcester to London stopped each day, but 4 passenger trains started from Oxford and 1 from Paddington!

GWR Train Time-Bills (poster size timetables) were periodically displayed in the Swan Inn and the Churchill Arms but apparently no-one was thought sufficiently important to receive a free (“Gratuitous”) one penny (old currency of 12 to a shilling and 20 shillings to the Pound) Time-table book.

By 1897 the Inspector had become Mr Eruson (my guess from his signature) and many Signalmen signed including Attwood, Cotton, Coppage, Price, Smith & Hall.

In the sadly undated final section, it seems Signalman Attwood had become Station Master, and a Special Permit was being granted to Joseph Chandler who was the River Keeper at Ascott, to use GWR land where necessary between Kingham and Charlbury to “watch the river”. The issuing of Time-Bills had then been extended to the George Inn, the Fox Inn and Potters Arms at Leafield

though still no free Timebooks were issued. Leafield folk presumably used either horse and trap or walked to Ascott.

Over those years, the Petty Cash held remained at £1-10 shillings (150 new pence today) comprising £1 for change and 10 shillings for Telegraph Stamps. The daily cash received from passengers was to be sent to Worcester with the Guard of the 8.35 am train.

The ledger itself is preserved by the Great Western Trust in their Museum & Archive at Didcot Railway Centre. How do I know? Well I am happily involved there as the Trust Chairman and I could not resist the fact that having moved to Ascott barely 18 months ago, such an item in our Collection would be of such specific relevance to this lovely village. Having mentioned the cash takings being sent each day to Worcester, the original leather money bag for this purpose, with GWR brass lock and engraved brass plate “GWR Ascott under Wychwood” is also in our collection. Modest survivors maybe, but the ledger alone is as much social history as it is railway specific. I hope I will find more relevant material in due course.

**Peter Rance**

## ***Milton-under-Wychwood Post Office***

Following the resignation of the Postmaster, Milton Post Office will be closing temporarily from Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Until a permanent solution can be found, the branch will operate on reduced opening hours from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

Other Post Offices can be found at Shipton and Burford.

New hours are:

Tuesday 13:00 - 17:00

Thursday 09:00 - 13:00

Friday 09:00 - 13:00

There are no changes to the services available facilities and access.

## ***Photo Competition***



The winner of the  
Photo Competition is  
Juliet Heslewood.

# ***My Sporting Hero***

I was about four years old when my Uncle Arthur said to me, "There is only one football team to support and it is Aston Villa." So I have followed the fortunes of that famous old Birmingham Club for over seventy years. Maybe left to my own choice it may have been Arsenal, Liverpool or Manchester United. Over the years I would have had much more to crow about but the Villa it was and the Villa it will always be.

But why did my uncle from rural Oxfordshire support a team from the industrial Midlands?

At the beginning of the last century his Granny Shirley had moved to Birmingham from Ascott to be a nursing midwife. I have seen records of all those she helped bring into the world. Most of these were from West Bromwich so it should be the Albion I should follow. During the depression of the nineteen thirties Arthur had got on his bike to Birmingham to find work. Later he met a girl from the West Midlands. He married my Aunt Ethel just before the last War and spent the rest of his short life in the Black Country near Cannock Chase, where I spent many happy holidays with my cousins. For those of us

who support teams other than the top four in the Premiership, we quickly learn a lesson for life, to treat those two imposters, success and failure, both the same. However this cannot be said of many of those who support one of the top four teams. These usually fall into two groups. Group A. These are fair weather supporters who support whoever is top of the league at that moment. Most of these are found among celebs, another name for these is posers.

Then there is Group B. These people who support a top four team think their club has some divine right to win all the trophies every season and when they don't, they become bitter and twisted people. It could be argued those of us who support teams outside the top four are more mature in our outlook and are therefore superior.

So far I have only shown my prejudice and nothing of my sporting hero.

On a dark November Saturday in 1951 I went on a Worths coach with other boys and young men to see Arsenal against Blackpool. The trip was organised by Des Pratley, a lifelong supporter of the Arsenal. It was my first ever visit

to London. This was exciting enough. But to be in a crowd of forty thousand in Highbury was something I will never forget.

When the teams ran out onto the pitch, they all looked fine young athletes, except one player for Blackpool. He looked older with slightly stooped shoulders and bow legs. When he took his position on the right wing for Blackpool I thought they must have been one short and picked him up on the way down to London. When he eventually received the ball there was a feeling of expectancy throughout the crowd. He had the Arsenal defence going all ways, even falling over themselves. It was magic! He was Stanley Matthews.

I have always admired people of any trade or profession who by their dress or bearing would be the last

we would choose to be experts in their field, but turn out to be the grand masters, whether in art, sport or industry. The best example I can give from television fiction would be Columbo, the American detective, one of the few shows from the U.S.A. I can tolerate on T.V.

Stanley Matthews played his last game for England aged 40. He returned to his home town of Stoke and played his last game for them aged 50. Made Sir Stanley in 1965, the first footballer to be knighted. He died in February 2000 aged 85.

Stanley Matthews was the best footballer I ever saw and will always remain so.

**Fred Russell**

---

## ***Coldstone Angling Club***

The Coldstone Angling Club would like to thank all of those who supported the Race Night Evening.

The event raised a profit of **£1,781.07.**

**Many thanks to all**

**Coldstone AC**

# ***Tributes to Tony Collins***

**MY FRIEND TONY**

**Tony Collins 1938 - 2014**



He was a gentle man that much I know  
Polite, Unruffled and calm  
Always willing to listen and willing to help  
Never wishing anyone harm.

Construction was where Tony made his career  
Rising right up to the top  
Even after retirement he was still in demand  
He just didn't know when to stop.

Tony was proud of his family I know  
Of Lyn and Edward and James  
And of Aaron his cricketing protégé  
He would travel to all of his games.

He'd go to the theatre in London with Lyn  
For a good show he'd cheer and he'd clap  
But if it was boring or dismal or slow  
He'd just close his eyes for a nap.

Tony liked food but he didn't like veg  
"5 a day" had passed Tony by  
At the end of a meal 9 times out of 10  
There'd be food on his shirt or his tie.

## Ascott Grapevine

Like me he was tempted by unhealthy food  
But Lyn kept him on a tight rein  
But when the chance came we'd sneak out on our own  
And eat "Pastel de Natas" again

Racing, Cricket, Football and Golf  
He enjoyed all of them it would seem  
Oxford, Wycombe, Villa or Spurs  
I never knew which was his team?

Racing was one of his favourite sports  
On the sofa or out on the course  
On the gallops at Dawn on a Saturday morn  
Keeping tabs on our next wonder horse!.

Tony loved golf but as years ticked on by  
He needed a buggy to play  
I shared one with him in Seniors games  
But I wasn't with him "THAT" day?

He was out playing golf on a Portuguese course  
And driving his buggy with style  
When he turned it right over as he went up a slope!  
But emerged from the wreck with a smile.

He was a great singer with a folk singer's voice  
And in recent years joined Daphne's choir  
He told silly jokes that would bring you to tears  
And ran concerts you had to admire.

Folk nights at Tiddy were not to be missed  
With music and singing and Rhyme  
But the biggest applause always came at the end  
When Tony sang "Wild Mountain Thyme".

When Tony's time came - He went peacefully  
Not wanting to cause any fuss  
But now that he's gone his memory lives on  
Always loved and remembered by us

**Written and read at Tony's funeral by  
his close friend Bob Fellows**



## Ascott Grapevine

I first met Tony Collins in the very early 1970's when there was a folk club in just about every village. I had heard that there was a good one in the oddly-named Tiddy Hall at Ascott-under-Wychwood, and one night I rocked up in my smoking Morris 1000 to see what all the fuss was about. I think the main singer was the glorious Sean Cannon, but before him a number of floor singers stood up and did a spot.

One of these was Tony. I was sitting in that dear old wooden hall, underneath the portrait of Reginald Tiddy with its beautiful inscription. Up stood this bearded, bespectacled, scholarly-looking bloke.

He looked like a teacher, and then he started to sing. It was the daftest song I had ever heard, about John Wesley and his double-jointed wife.

Tony would sing one line and all of Ascott-under-Wychwood joined in the massive, bellowing refrain. I have never laughed so much at anything before or since. I never, ever forgot Tony singing that song. It's as if it was yesterday.

When I married and we were looking for a home for our new family, I was ecstatic to find that not only was the gorgeous old vicarage in Ascott-under-Wychwood for sale, but that it was right opposite Tony and Lyn Collins. We didn't hesitate, and I spent the loveliest six years in that house. We had the best possible neighbours in Lyn and Tony and their sons Edward and James. On both occasions when I had a baby, Lyn made me an apple pie. I was only sad that I had no more children and thus didn't qualify for any more pies.

I am sorry Tony has left us, he was a really good sort. We were always delighted to see him and Lyn. I am sure he has left countless happy memories behind him. He certainly has with me. When I think of Tony Collins a great big smile appears on my face. I think that is a pretty good legacy.

*Pam Ayres*

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# **Andrew Timms 1961-2014**

Andrew was brought up in The Sands, Milton-under-Wychwood. He was the sixth of seven children and the only son. I met Andy at Burford School - we were both interested in agriculture and were in the same class.



milk round - he loved meeting people but developed a problem with his knee and decided to become self employed as a gardener in 1989. Our family was expanding and we eventually were proud to have eight children together, two sons and six daughters -

We started going out with each other when we were fifteen years old and got married when Andy was 18 years old and I was 19.

We lived in Shipton-under-Wychwood as Andy worked for John Hartley on his farm as a labourer. He loved working on the farm dealing with cattle and driving tractors. We moved to AscottunderWychwood in 1984 when we were expecting our third child.

Andy had changed jobs and was a milkman for Pratley Dairies in Charlbury delivering milk around the Chipping Norton and Ditchley areas. He enjoyed doing the

Louise, Emma, Patrick, Grace, Matthew, Elysia, Lily and Amy-Sophia.

Andy enjoyed working outside and had a few loyal customers. He would often light fires and put bins in and out for those who found it difficult. He would always be smiling and whistling.

Andy worked right up to the day he was ill when without warning he suffered a stroke. He died on the 29th October just short of our 35th wedding anniversary. His passing has left a great void in our lives and he is missed immensely.

**Carolyn Timms**

## **Andrew**

We feel sure that along with many others in the Wychwoods area, we would like to express our gratitude for all that Andrew so willingly did to help others. No-one could have been more caring and quick to assist in any way whatsoever. In fact he stepped way beyond the mark to ensure that especially vulnerable people could always rely on his assistance in whichever way it was required. The Wychwoods lost a true friend with Andrew's passing and we all deeply sympathise with the great loss to his family.

**Wendy & Jim Pearse**

## ***Ascott Pre-School***

After a wonderful holiday season and a very successful Christmas concert, Ascott-under-Wychwood Pre-school has welcomed several new children to Tiddy Hall this term. The children are having a wonderful time exploring themes like ice and cold climates, music and movement, and the fun there is to be had with mud pies, splatter painting, and other messy things. Wellies and waterproofs are mandatory for the Forest School, and budding chefs have enjoyed making “treasure chest tarts” in cookery classes.

One of the highlights of the term will certainly be the Pancake Tuesday pop-up café during half term. Children (and parents!) will have the chance to make and eat pancakes, and enjoy themed crafts in the village hall. All are welcome to stop by between 11:30 and 1:30 on Tuesday 17 February.

Future dates for your diary include the pre-school Easter Egg hunt on Saturday 28 March in the Wild Garden in Shipton-under-Wychwood and cake sales at Crown Farm in June and July. Details of these and other events will be on our website, [www.ascottpreschool.org.uk](http://www.ascottpreschool.org.uk). The toddler group based in the Ascott Cricket Club is not currently running, but we hope to start up again in the spring.

Ascott-under-Wychwood Pre-School is a community-based pre school providing appropriate learning through play for children aged 2 – 5 years. Based in a modern village hall, our pre-school offers a friendly, secure and professional environment, providing the best start possible for your child’s education. We have spaces available from September for all ages in our range. Please contact pre-school supervisor Pauline at [pauline@minorpartsofoxford.co.uk](mailto:pauline@minorpartsofoxford.co.uk) or on 07768 453747 if you are interested in learning more about the pre-school.

## **Rural districts unite to fight county bid for unitary takeover**

Oxfordshire's four rural district councils have united in opposition to a unitary bid being considered by Oxfordshire County Council as a response to its financial woes.

The district councils are disappointed that a report has been commissioned by the county council, at taxpayers' expense, without any consultation or engagement with its district partners.


As a consequence the Districts will now need to respond, on behalf of their residents, to the consultant's report to ensure that a 'true and fair' picture has been painted by the consultants – who also happen to be the county authority's auditors - and the county officers who have commissioned them. This will detract from resources that should be being spent on service delivery priorities and the districts' own efficiency agendas.

The report, due to be published on Monday 19 January 2015, has been written using high-level assumptions and having no regard to actual service delivery arrangements on the ground. All four rural districts are at the vanguard of modern, innovative and sustainable solutions that have already delivered, and will continue to deliver, significant and increasing savings for their local taxpayers.

Even a cursory review of the figures provided by the consultants indicates that the savings at £33m are vastly overstated and the costs of implementation significantly understated, yet the county council consistently use the highest figure in respect of the savings even when the consultants, with their flawed logic, give a range.

In an attempt to sweeten the electorate, there is a proposal to bring Council Tax down to the lowest currently charged in Oxfordshire, at a cost of £9m. However, even these figures are fundamentally flawed, realistically being half as much again at £13.5m, exposing the report for what it is: error-strewn.

Realistically, the rural districts all know that given the county's anticipated budget shortfall of £72m they will be unable to reinvest any savings in a Council Tax cut, or, achieve a reduction anywhere




close to the average Council Tax currently charged in Oxfordshire - residents need simply look at the county's record over the last few years, compared to districts. Under these proposals, Council Tax levels are more likely to move upwards to Oxford City levels, not downwards to that charged by rural districts.

The County case argues that political accountability will be improved, yet the democratic deficit left by the absence of the rural districts would lead the county council to become yet more Oxford-centric than it is already. Do the residents in well-run rural districts really want to place their trust in a huge monolithic county council, which has difficulty managing its finances, is forced to cut vital services to rural communities, and lurches from one funding crisis to another?

The county council answer to its financial woes is to blame someone else, whether it be Government or, in this case, rural residents who will not want a one-size fits all service. This approach to calling for council boundary restructure is of the last century. It is contrary to Government policy, which says 'don't waste your time and money on unitary bids'. It appears once again that the county council is ignoring national guidance, in the same way that it did when offered government incentives to freeze Council Tax - unlike the rural districts which have frozen, or reduced, tax levels charged to residents.

The districts in Oxfordshire are at the forefront of the 21st century approach to local government – delivering services collaboratively and sharing resources irrespective of administrative boundaries. All of the rural districts have been recognised by the Government as trailblazers in modern, efficient local government through transformation agenda funding of in excess of £8m based on sound, robust and well-argued business cases backed up by evidence of savings made historically. The county council has received no such recognition.

If the county council was to look at the approaches adopted by the districts and apply those principles to its own services, working collaboratively with its recently announced tri- county partners for example, they could deliver the bulk of the £72m savings required without exposing rural Oxfordshire residents to a democratic deficit



and delivering standard countywide solutions that may work in an urban environment, but not across the many different and varied rural communities of Oxfordshire.

## ***Oxfordshire C C***

The Oxfordshire County Council had an independent report compiled to financially justify their intention of creating a unitary council, i.e. joining West, South, Vale of White Horse, Cherwell, City and Oxfordshire Councils. This is compared to the statement shown by the various councils opposed to the change.

The document is too large for inclusion in the Grapevine but it is included as an attachment in the village website, see

<http://assets.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Oxfordshire-Financial-Case-for-Unitary-v2-0.pdf> or <http://www.ascott-under-wychwood.org.uk/2015/01/23/oxfordshire-financial-case-for-unitary/>



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# ***Why do we Neuter our Pets?***

Owners of pets that are not going to be used for breeding are often advised to have them neutered. It is not always easy to take this step. There are a number of pros and cons to be considered.

An entire (i.e. not neutered) female cat can produce a litter of kittens annually and be responsible for an enormous increase in the population. Already in Britain the charities are inundated with unwanted cats and kittens. We need to keep the numbers down so that we can give these creatures the care and attention they deserve.

Male cats tend to cover larger territories and have to fight off invaders, and so end up with abscesses and other injuries. The fighting also helps to transfer some serious viral diseases. Male cats tend to mark and their urine does not exactly smell like Chanel!! Castrate them I say.

Most vets advise spaying bitches for health reasons. The earlier they are neutered the less chance they have of developing mammary cancers. Older entire females often develop a condition called pyometra (pus in the uterus) which can be life threatening and

they then need to be spayed while suffering from toxemia which makes the surgery riskier.

As in the case of cats, the charities are inundated with unwanted and abandoned dogs, so we do need to keep the population down.

We do not always advise the neutering of male dogs. Taking away their testosterone (and their testicles) can make nervous boys more nervous. Males that are more bolshie and might become aggressive will benefit from castration. This generally has to be done before they are a year old to be effective. Castrating will also prevent marking and hypersexuality (it will put a stop to the 'humping the leg' party trick). The dogs are also less likely to run off in search of a bitch on heat. At present there is an implant available which works as a chemical castration so dogs do not have to undergo surgery. Cost will, however, be an issue.

The negatives. First of all anaesthesia, although greatly improved over the years always carries a risk and losing an animal when performing elective surgery is devastating for both the owners and their vets. Neutered animals tend to run to fat - obviously this can be

controlled by the owner. They frequently become a bit more fluffy (if you want a fluffy pet this could be seen as a positive). There is a possibility that neutered females have a higher risk of developing urinary incontinence.

At the moment (17 - 31 January) I am in Egypt for a TNR project (trap neuter and release project).



So far we have neutered 40 animals (cats and dogs), and are hoping to do at least a hundred before we go back home. Last year we did 128. The reasoning here is a bit different. Most animals here live on the street and to control the population the authorities have put out poison (strychnine) which is

pretty indiscriminate and leads to very nasty deaths. Puppies are picked up at a very young age by children and used as toys. They don't last long. The place was overrun by cats and dogs and if you think Ascott-under-Wychwood has a problem with people not picking up their dog's poo, imagine what hundreds of street dogs and cats can do!

The programme seems to be working. Attitudes are changing, though admittedly slowly, but we are not expecting miracles. We are training local vets, and the government vet is now providing a building for us to use. Clients at our surgery in Witney and many wonderful people in Ascott have helped by donating towards equipment which the Animal Welfare Dahab will take care of and use for more projects. We now have good clippers, they have bought an autoclave for sterilising instruments and we have a cat trap which is in constant use.

It is a start and hopefully better than not doing anything at all. Thank you all for your help.

Karen Kappen

*To see Karen & Lisa in Dahab, check [www.coggesvet.com](http://www.coggesvet.com) and follow the link to our blog.*

*Continued over page*



*In addition to the neutering, we also give talks to the locals on various welfare issues.*

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## ***From a Pensioner***

There must have been at least 200 people at the Carol Singing on the village green on Christmas Eve. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the collection held for the Day Centre which is held every Thursday at the Beaconsfield Hall in Shipton.

I am fortunate to be a pensioner who attends the Day Centre. I cannot praise enough Katherine Gidman and her team of volunteer helpers for the care and kindness they show to us all.

The meal we have each week is excellent and it's going to get even better. For an extra £1 a week

we've been promised richer gravy and thicker custard.

The Day Centre is full of Wychwood characters. One man for example claims he biked up Fish Hill near Broadway on a fixed wheel without getting off. Anyone who believes that still believes in Father Christmas. None of us are perfect but when we have a quiz there is one man who annoys me. He will shout the wrong answers out. I just sit quietly answering the question. I nearly always win the quiz so it begins to get a bit boring.

When we are not being entertained by music or a talk or sometimes the school children singing, I like to sit and do a jigsaw puzzle. I am often helped by the lady helpers. Most of them are very good and soon have the puzzle done, except for one young woman, Jill, who lives in Milton. She gets frustrated and tries to hammer the pieces together by using the heel of her shoe. I've told her many times she will ruin the puzzle. She then threatens to set Archie her dog on me. Thank goodness Maisie Tucker keeps him on a tight lead.

Often there is a short church service. Unfortunately I arrive too late to attend, but every cloud has got a

silver lining. I don't have to put anything on the collection plate.

We are sent home by 3.15 p.m. with tea or coffee and a piece of cake, such is the extent of the helpers seeking to please. I've had six spoonfuls of sugar put in my tea.

I would like to thank everyone again for attending the Carol Singing and donating towards the Day Centre.

I've heard it whispered through the Grapevine next Christmas the Ascott Songsters are going to sing 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' in descant and finish with a rousing rendition of the 'Alleluia Chorus'.

**Fred Russell**

---

## ***Did You Know?***

The old oak gates outside Crown House in the Green, were the original gates brought from London as a memorial to those who died in the First World War. They originally hung at the Church Close entrance to the churchyard beside the plaque which lists the names of the men from Ascott who died in that War.

TIDDY HALL

# Piano Lessons

**Pauline Carter**

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# **HARRY HONEYBONE**

## **A BOY GROWING UP IN ASCOTT IN THE LATE 1800s**

### Part 1

Between 1876 and 1888 Harry Honeybone lived in Ascott with his grandmother Jane Honeybone, initially in what is now Appletree Cottage at the west end of the village. In 1933, aged 62, he wrote his life history including an account of his

time in Ascott. This has been given to me by Fred and Rosalie Ryley. Fred is Harry's grandson. The details about Ascott which Harry describes are fascinating and give a tre-

mendous insight into life here at that time. Over the next few Grapevines I hope to serialise Harry's story so that all of you may gain a true image of Ascott during Harry's years in the village. The words will all be Harry's except when some clarification may be required. These additions will be in brackets and italics.

*[Harry's father George John , born in Ascott in 1835, became a coachman and moved north to Handsworth near Sheffield but when Harry was five his father was taken ill.]*

But as father's illness did not seem

to abate and his health did not improve, it was decided that he should go back to his old home in Oxfordshire, the place of his birth, I believe at Ascott under Wychwood. He remained there for a while,



how long I cannot say, I was too young to remember all these things not being yet six years of age. However we all (except William, he being the eldest, was working at the nurseries, remained behind) went down to Oxfordshire. Whilst waiting for the train, as a parting shot I was running about on the platform and nearly got left behind. This took place at

the Sheffield Midland Station, now the L.M.S. We had to wait a considerable time at Oxford station for a connection to take us forward to Ascott, the stations at that time were not what they are today, although there is room for considerable improvement to make them comfortable to remain there for any length of time. I am sorry to say that whilst waiting for the train mother contracted a cold from which she never recovered.

Ascott under Wychwood (taking the appendage from the close proximity to Wychwood Forest) was situated in a valley, a rather long valley, a long straggling village more than a mile in length, comprising about 60 families, including seven farmsteads, two licensed premises, one the Swan Inn, the licensee being John Hill, the other the Churchill Arms occupied by one Morris by name, afterwards Jepson, one railway station one gentleman's large house, mostly unoccupied, one old fashioned square towered church with clock face situated in the centre of the village, one Baptist Chapel, with pulpit, an immersion well sunk into the floor in front of the pulpit, one National School and a vicarage on the south side of the village,

with fields, gardens, outhouse, and trout pond. There were two cobbler's shops, the inhabitants chiefly wearing home made shoes and boots, preferring them to boots purchased at the shops in the nearby towns. The price of handmade boots being anything from 18 shillings upwards, but one had the benefit from extra comfort and harder wear, each patron had their feet measured not one foot, but both of them, which ensured perfect fitting and greater comfort, keeping them well greased against all weathers, they would endure two or more year's wear. There was one small grocer's shop, also a bakehouse and coal business and two other places where sweets and a few oddments were sold. A railway, the property of the Great Western Railway Company, ran through the village and the main line between Oxford and Worcester and about three miles north west, at Chipping Norton junction, a branch line to Cheltenham and another to Chipping Norton, and Banbury were constructed, I believe after we went to reside there. About two trains each way, daily, used to pick up and set down passengers; also a goods train, one each way daily, used to set down and pick up goods. The train was known locally as the "pickup". A



river, which had its source somewhere in Gloucestershire, flowed through the valley on a winding course crossing and re-crossing as it wound its way along the valley, it ran along the north side of the village. I have tested its depth in many places throughout the summer months. Every evening, after a day's work, we used to resort to the river, each Saturday evening we were to be seen with soap and towel winding our way to the river.

Morning, noon and evening on Sundays we were always found there, many a struggle we have had with lads from neighbouring villages, who would come with the intention of having a bathe, get undressed and stand shivering on the brink, dare not face the beautiful clean water, afraid to take the plunge. We used to get behind them make a rush and all of us go in together. After they had once been in they accustomed themselves to it, it was always a pleasure afterwards. We were completely shut in the village, the ground rising on either side, north and south. The village was well supplied with food, drinking water being no fewer than four streams which had their source in the hills on the south side, enter the village in various places the whole length,

had they been planned out by engineers they could not have served a more useful purpose. Nature seemed to know the requirements of the village, all the streams coming down from the north side of course entered the river since the river was on that side of the valley, By the way, the name of the river is Evenlode, a tributary of the Thames, known as the Isis of Oxford. It is rather a pleasant undulating country, broad acres of arable and pasture land, also a densely wooded district, the Wychwood Forest being by far the largest. Charlbury Park was attached to Wychwood Forest, one of the seats of Lord Churchill. Queen Victoria once paid a visit there. To the north of the village was Chipping Norton, the place where thousands of pigeons are liberated from the north each flying season. At Chipping Norton there are several factories and breweries coupled with farming. It is a market town, the same applies to Banbury, Woodstock and Witney. I remember once taking a beast to Woodstock market, a distance of about twelve miles. Oh what a journey! A large part of Wychwood Forest was cut down and the roots grubbed up for farming purposes, some after we took up residence there. About

seven miles east, iron-ore was excavated at Fawler known as Fawler Iron-ore. In the vicinity stone slates for building purposes were excavated. I can well remember, and I have cause to remember, once being sent with a horse and cart to fetch a load of slates to the farm on which I worked. The farmer whose name was Hambridge, in whose employ I was at the time, came to me in the morning with a purse, "Here Honeybone is a purse with a sovereign. I want you to go to Fawler to fetch a load of slates." So off I went. I knew in what direction it lay but I had never been further than Charlbury, four miles distance and Fawler was three or four miles further on than that. So I went trudging along. I knew it was a day's journey, fourteen miles with a horse and cart and I was not more than twelve years of age at the time, and I had to pass the dreaded Wychwood Forest for more than a mile of the road, lonely will nor describe my ordeal, but however I went. I told them what I wanted and by whom I was sent, pulled out this purse to pay for the slates. When the man opened it, to my surprise there was only a new halfpenny in and not a sovereign as the farmer told me. I was in a dilemma. The man

looked at me and I looked at him, what was to be done? "What kind of man is your employer?" he asked. I told him he was a farmer, he farmed one of the biggest farms in the district. I said "I am sure he will pay you, he will not like me to come all this way and not take the slates back". So after some persuasion he decided to load me the slates up. When I got home I did not know what to do. I went to the shepherd and told him about it so he persuaded me to go straight to the master and explain it to him, which I did do. Of course he said he thought it was a sovereign he had put in the purse. He said, "Have you brought the slates?" "I told him yes but however the next day the man who supplied the slates came over. He told Mr Hambridge that if I had not given him a good character and told him I was sure he would be paid for them, he would not have let me have them.. Mr Hambridge told me this afterwards but I heard no more about it.

About four miles to the north is a place called Churchill. Grandmother died there. It is a beautiful place situated in a densely wooded district; the place cannot be seen unless you are actually in the village. At Milton are quarries known as Freestone Quarries. It is

a very soft stone which can easily be cut with a knife; it is largely used for building purposes, monuments and decorative purposes. It is easily sawn and carved into any required shape. The proprietor was named Groves. He also had a large timber yard and employed a considerable number of men. At Shipton about a mile distant westward, a large house was there known as Shipton Court. I believe a person by the name of Grey lives there at the present time. I am not quite sure but I almost think he has been a Member of Parliament and I believe it is the same person who has had experience as a roadster, or tramp as they are commonly called. The name is very popular and has been in the press often. There have often been reports about his tramping experience, if it is the same person. At this court a large number of racehorses used to be trained, I have seen as many as ten or twelve pairs out for exercise at one and the same time. Leafield, known locally as Fieldtown, lies about three miles south. It is now a large wireless station. Having omitted a few items that I may have to make reference to later, I will fill them in here. I omitted to mention that there were in the village the customary

village blacksmith, with a forge and shoeing shed all complete, situated near the school and village green in the centre of the village. There was also a carpenter's and wheelwright's shop near the east end of the village. In addition to these there were two mills for grinding corn and the like, situated more than half a mile distant and detached from the village, both necessarily near the river. The occupant of the one on the west side of the village was named Reynolds who had three children the oldest, a boy, sat next to me in the Sunday School. One Sunday morning suddenly he commenced to shake and tremble. He went home and passed away in a few days owing to inflammation of the lungs, pneumonia as it was called. They were quite a nice family. I was very intimate with them seeing that Grandmother used to go and help them three or four days per week. The mother afterwards married a person by the name of Mullis by whom she had several more children. He became a miller and farmer. The other mill at the east end of the village was occupied by a person by the name of Cooper. I have also assisted here on more than one occasion to change the millstones when it was necessary after being used too much.

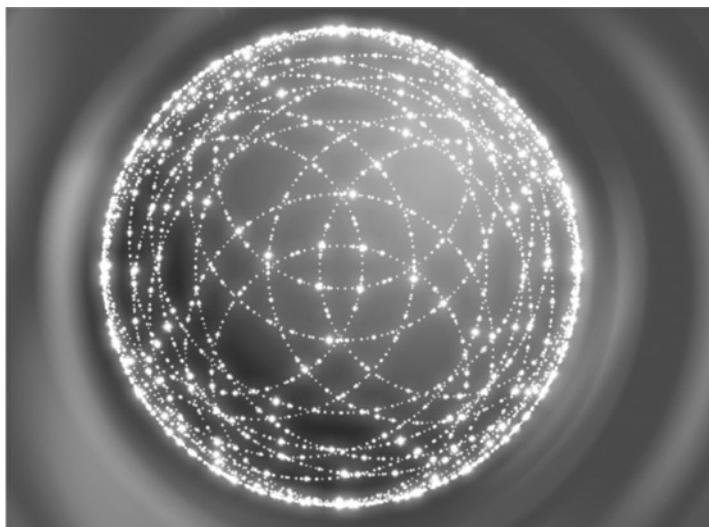
The chief industry was farming, although in recent years there has been talk of the possibility of coal being found in that neighbourhood. I have got out of touch with the district these last twenty years.

On returning to the period when we first went to reside there, I have mentioned that Mother contracted a cold from which she never recovered; she died soon after we arrived; sometime in the month of February. Then father died about six weeks later in March 1877. Both were buried side by side of the footpath on the east of the church. I have in my mind's eye at the moment the position of the graves. All around there is nothing but gravel, sand and pebble and with it being in a valley, it is not far down to the water. I can remember when the coffins were lowered into the grave they would not sink, there was so much water in them. Although I have vivid recollections of events that took place before I was two years of age, I cannot

seem to remember either Father or Mother. I can just remember Father in bed at the infirmary when Uncle Reuben took me with him once just before he died. It was at Burford Infirmary where he died and I can remember them bringing him home in the coffin at night time; I was living with Grandmother at the time. They were both quite young, Father 43 and Mother 38 years of age. I would be six years of age the following June as they died in February and March. I could never get to know what was the matter with Father, but of course I was too young to bother about such things then. I know we were left orphans, six of us. A Mr Maddocks, a farmer and local Baptist preacher who lived in Shipton, was the means of getting the two youngest John and Lizzie into Mr Muller's Orphanage Homes at Ashley Down, Bristol (Lizzie being the youngest). From that day to this we have never all been together in each other's company at one and the same time.

**Wendy Pearse**

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# ***Wychwood Library***

You may have noticed in the news recently the suggestion that libraries need to be offering tea and coffee, have sofas to sit on and computers available for public use. Well, we are doing all of this already with our Wednesday coffee mornings, a comfy sofa in the children's area and speedy internet on our computers. Are you also aware that we have a scanner and of course a colour printer?

2015 brings in "The National Information Offer" initiated by The Society of Chief Librarians and partners including The Arts Council and The Reading Agency who are committed to keeping library services relevant and accessible. Together they have identified four key areas of service which today's users regard as integral to public libraries.

They are:

- Reading offer
- Information offer
- Digital offer
- Health offer

Looking at the Information offer, you are probably finding that

more and more information is only available online with the need to be able to gain access to that and to have an email address. We are offering our regular winter activity sessions of "Introduction to Computers" as well as topping up your skills if needed. Ask at the desk for details and to book a place.

Come in or access from home Oxfordshire Libraries Reference Online facilities. Expert information, whatever the subject at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/reference](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/reference) online.

We are now looking for volunteers who would be happy to help with our Home Library Service working in partnership with Age UK. Some of our elderly customers who are no longer able to visit the library but are still great readers would value a regular home visit to change over their reading material. Please ask at the desk for more information.

If you are unable to leave your home unaided or if you have a mobility, sight or hearing problem or find reading a book difficult you can borrow free of charge books and audio books on cassette and CD and you will not be



charged for overdue items or reservations.

To take advantage of these benefits to your membership you need to tell us so that we can update your records.

Come in and see our new books. We have recently had a top up of current fiction bestsellers and other useful non-fiction items as well as the continuing changeover of book stock between similarly sized libraries. Our selection of DVDs is updated regularly and is very reasonably priced and we also provide a good number of books on audio. These are particularly useful for long journeys or just listening whilst doing the ironing! And, it is warm in here!

Bring all your used stamps as well to help raise funds for Young Dementia UK. Look for the red box at the front desk.

We have recently been very kindly given a screen and an “In Focus” X6 digital projector for use within the community. If you would like to borrow this useful and valuable item, please contact the library. We will of course be asking for a returnable deposit.

You can see what else we have on offer at Wychwood Library by going online to:  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries)  
and following the links to Wychwood Library.

**Ruth and Liz**

## Opening Times

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b>    | 2.00 to 7.00 pm                       |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>Closed</b>                         |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | 9.30 am to 1.00 pm<br>2.00 to 5.00 pm |

**Thursday**  
**Friday**  
**Saturday**

**Closed**  
2.00 to 7.00 pm  
9.30 am to 1.00 pm



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

# ***The Village Shop***



Looking back, 2014 proved to be a very good year indeed for our community shop. We finished with nearly £3000 profit, which will help fund some necessary replacement of equipment in the coming year.

Huge thanks go to our loyal customers, volunteers & staff and of course, our manager Bridgette Crundwell. The shop, together with the Church and the village pub, provides the

heartbeat of the village. If you want to know what's going on in Ascott where else would you go!

So, we look ahead to 2015, not with complacency but positive and ready for whatever twists and turns the year will bring. We are a quality shop offering a quality experience and we plan to stay that way.

## ***News for 2015***

### ***Volunteers***

We are delighted to add Jack Morgan to our team. Jack moved to the village a year ago, works partly from home and is able to fit a regular shift pattern into his week. If you can help out as a shop volunteer we would be delighted to hear from you. Ask Bridgette for details next time you visit the shop.

### ***Feedback***

It's important we get to hear from you about the shop, what we do well and what can be improved. We plan to run a series of short interviews with a free cup of coffee when you visit the shop. The results will then be analysed by the management committee and used to make changes that benefit you the customer, the shop and the community.

Our shop has achieved so much in the 11 years its been opened and if you haven't visited us for a while, why don't you make it your New Year resolution?

### ***Easter 3-6 April***

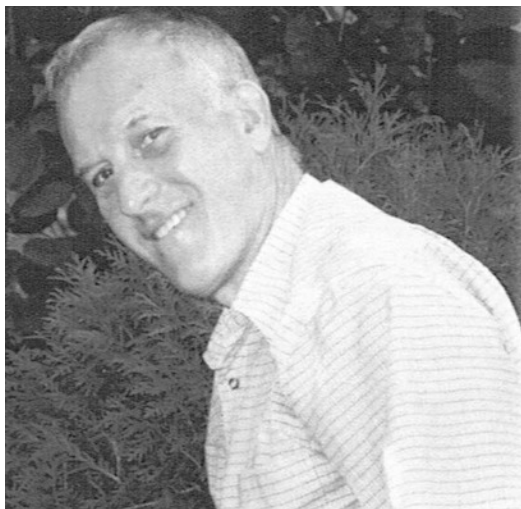
With Easter fast approaching, why not order your hot cross buns early and buy your Easter eggs and Simnel cake from the shop.

Our shop has achieved so much in the 11 years its been opened and if you haven't visited us for a while, why don't you make it your New Year resolution?

**John Cull**  
**Chairman**

## ***William George Prewett (Bill)***

Bill was born in June 1941, the son of the Canadian poet Frank Prewett. He was brought up in rural Oxfordshire, going to primary school in Idbury and then secondary schools in Burford and Devizes, Wiltshire. From a very young age he had an extraordinary interest in science. Cousin Peter recalls how, on a family camping holiday in Cornwall in 1957, his mum's Austin A35 was packed with chemical



glassware, carboys of concentrated acids and gas burners, so that Bill could pursue his ambition of extracting gold from the ore he had got from local tin mine tailings ! He went on to study geology and chemistry at Bristol University, graduating in 1963.

His first job was with the British Geological survey in London where he worked for some 6 years. After the death of his mother in 1971 he secured his

first job in Thailand at the Institute for Scientific and Technological Research. He later moved to the Department of Geological Sciences at Chiang Mai University where he was a lecturer in both science subjects and English. In 1978 he

became Scientific Adviser at the Euro-Thai Mining Company. In 1980 he was appointed as a geochemist on an overseas aid project in Bandung, Indonesia where he worked on the geological survey of

northern Sumatra. He returned to Bangkok for a short period before joining the Department of Geological Survey and Mines in Swaziland in 1982 where he largely remained until 1990. Back in England in 1991 he obtained his qualification in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, returning to Thailand in 1992 where he stayed until his retirement in 1999.

Bill wrote a number of technical articles for professional journals

and was a qualified scuba diver, a skill which no doubt enabled him to study underwater rocks as well as those on the surface!

A typical expat Bill was not – he learned to read, write and speak fluent Thai – a rare achievement, and he developed very strong and close friendships with a number of Thai friends with whom he remained in contact all his life, returning to visit them nearly every year and entertaining them for the London Olympics in 2012.

Bill settled into retirement in his home in Ascott where he led a quiet life tending his allotment and researching family history. He was

a modest, unassuming man who was meticulous in everything he undertook. He did not see the need for material possessions, instead taking pleasure from the beautiful countryside in which he lived. Cousin Jane remembers well the gifts of wildflowers he sent to their Aunt Jane when she was ill – one day a collection from the clay vale, the next day a collection from the upland. Bill was often misunderstood but had a few very faithful friends in Ascott and the family would like to thank them very sincerely for all the kindness, care and support they gave Bill over so many years.

**From Bill's family**

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# Wychwood Folk Club

## **One Year Old & Counting**

At the time of writing we are approaching our first event of the year, on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February we welcome The Will Pound Band to Tiddy Hall. We took January off after a hectic first year to recuperate, look back and see what lessons could be learned and to figure out exactly where we were heading with this folk club malarkey

It has been very hard work, quite stressful at times, extremely worrying, but we've also had lots of fun and the bonus of meeting many talented artistes (and one or two not so talented) along the way. We have also met some lovely, wonderful guests whom without the club would not exist and at the end of the night when they tell us they've had a great time it makes it all worthwhile.

The biggest lesson learned from last year is the need to retire from the day job to make it all less stressful and less rushed but I still

have four years to go before that happens so we have cut down on the number of events this year.

Our two venues have proved more than adequate for the occasions, Tiddy Hall can be used in a variety of ways depending on how many we're expecting. We had nearly

full houses for Richard Digance & Gigspanner and went length ways which worked fine seeing them on the stage, with full use of the in house lighting. But for some of the lesser known artistes like Sam Kelly, Sun-jay, Miranda Sykes &

The Carrivick Sisters going sideways on made it all very intimate with the audience getting up really close (although some of the lighting I used made for some weird and wonderful shapes on the back wall) So any budding lighting engineers out there who would like to help out feel free to contact me

The acoustics in the stables at The Swan are fantastic, and whether the artistes played acoustically or with the use of our small PA I don't recall having one bad evening sound wise. We had some



of the best performers on the local scene with the likes of 'Toots & Fraser' & 'Linda Watkins' from over Buckingham way, Oxfordshire favourites 'The Ponderosa', 'Gawkey' and yours truly. And representing Gloucestershire we had 'Blondes with Beards' and the magnificent 'Chalice' but we didn't stop there, oh no, we went further afield as far as Brighton, to bring you the young lads from 'Stark' and my favourite artiste of the year and the only act we had to turn people away for (wish I'd kept them in Tiddy now) 'Hatful of Rain' who not only took the village by storm they also agreed to play at Roger & Ros's barbecue the next day all for a cheese burger and a beer (what wonderful people)

Our first go at organising a small festival appeared to have gone down ok with Swanfest 1. We had a wide range of local artistes playing and I believe we had around 150 customers on the day. Many thanks to Richard & Michiel at the Swan who probably did most of the donkey work. This year we are thinking really big with Swanfest 2 which will see one of the biggest stars of the music world play in our humble little Cotswolds village of Ascott -u- Wychwood

and no this is not a lookalike/sound-alike, this is the real deal, so we are proud to announce that **Barbara Dickson** is our headline act. There are half a dozen top local artistes also playing from about 2pm onwards. Tickets for the whole event have been set at £22.50 and considering the cheapest tickets I've seen online just to see Barbara on her tour are around the £25.00 mark I think our tickets are a bargain. I also think this will sell out so get your tickets early to avoid disappointment for this once in a lifetime event.

The rest of the year we have a wide range of artistes playing for you including some crossing the wide ocean from America and Canada. See website for details [www.wychwoodfolkclub.com](http://www.wychwoodfolkclub.com)

So overall I think we had a good first year and I only recall one really low turnout although we could still do with more people through the doors (especially more local folk) I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have supported us over the last year and here's looking forward to a successful future.

**Mark**

# ***Carols on the Green***







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**Sign here:** <http://chn.ge/1IJvYUA>

**For more information go to:** [www.cpreoxon.org.uk](http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk)

## ***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.

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# Craft Fair



## ***Tiddy Hall News***

The **Tiddy Hall Trustees** would like to wish all their users and hirers a very Happy New Year and we are pleased that our smart new kitchen has had its teething problems sorted out and is now up and running and working smoothly!

We have a few big events coming up in the next couple of months. Our annual **Anniversary Dinner Dance**, slightly later than usual, will take place on **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February**. Tickets are £15 each for a two course meal with entertainment and a licensed bar will be available. Put on your dancing shoes as **Ragged Edge** will be providing the music. They, and the **Tiddy Hall Trustees**, will be donating all proceeds to **Pancreatic Cancer Research** in honour of Ken Smith, a member of our committee, who sadly passed away in August last year from this disease. Simon (01993 831479) and Ingrid (01993 830612) have tickets, but do hurry as tickets are selling fast!

**Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup>** saw the Wychwood Folk Club present their first event of the year. Will Pound, a harmonica wizard, entertained an enthusiastic audience

at Tiddy Hall with his dynamic band comprising Chris Sargeant on guitar, Henry Webster on fiddle and on double bass and beat box, John Parker. Will started playing the harmonica at the age of 10 after his dad suggested he played around with one to strengthen his breathing after open heart surgery. He clearly has a passion for his music and has made a career out of his talent by becoming one of the best harmonica players in the world. He has been nominated twice for BBC Folk Musician of the year. This fundamentally instrumental outfit brought the house down with their mix of the traditional and the adventurous and the rapport between the band members imparted a freshness and vitality that was a pleasure to see and hear!

On **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March**, **The Wychwood Folk Club** will host their second event of the year by welcoming **Winter-Wilson to Tiddy Hall**. Kip Winter and Dave Wilson have a lively chemistry, a duo who have been together for 17 years and have released 6 critically acclaimed albums. During their time together, the couple have built a reputation for their stunning harmonies, spontaneous, of-

the-wall humour and fine songs.

Their 6<sup>th</sup> album, **Cutting Free**, was selected by the Daily Telegraph as one of the top folk albums of 2014. In 2015 they tour the length and breadth of the UK delighting audiences in folk-clubs and festivals, village halls and arts centres – and **Tiddy Hall** is one of them!

April's Folk Night will be held on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>** when **Red Moon Road** comes to **The Wychwood Folk Club** at **Tiddy Hall**. This Canadian trio's masterful story telling is endearing and energetic. Come listen to their haunting three-part harmonies and be roused by banjo, guitar, mandolin, delay pedals and a beat-up bass drum. A lush and lively take on modern roots!

Tickets for both events are £8 in advance or £10 on the door. Please contact Mark & Elaine (01993 831427) or visit [www.wychwoodfolkclub.com](http://www.wychwoodfolkclub.com)

A six week course of **Qigong** will commence on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm – 8.30pm, with Pam Quirke. (See page 51 for details)  
: [pam@wychwoodhealing.co.uk](mailto:pam@wychwoodhealing.co.uk) or on 07780 572283.

**Tiddy Hall** now has its' own website! Please take a look - [www.tiddyhall.co.uk](http://www.tiddyhall.co.uk)

You will find up to date information on what's on, regular bookings and upcoming functions, booking information & hiring charges. The **Tiddy Hall Trustees** would like to thank Mark Pidgeon for helping us to get this up and running.

And finally, just to remind you, that we still have a **Post Office** running at **Tiddy Hall** on Friday afternoons. As many of you know, John and Edna Naish have now retired and we thank them for their long service, especially here in Ascott, at Tiddy Hall and before that at The Swan. Gary Kirkman from Moreton-in-Marsh is the new postmaster and you can use his services at the usual time, 2pm – 4pm every Friday.

**Ingrid Ridley**

**Regular Activities:**

**Monday – Friday AM** Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant 07968006451

**Wednesday Night** 6pm – 6.45pm

Circuits

Contact: Simon Gidman 01993 831479

**Thursday Night** (From April 9<sup>th</sup>)

Qigong 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Contact Pam Quirke 07780 572283

**Friday PM**

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter 01993 774568

Post Office

2.00pm - 4.00pm

**Special Events:**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March**

Folk Night

Winter-Wilson

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

Folk Night

Red Moon Road

Tickets £8 in advance, £10 on the door

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## **A COUNTRY CALENDAR**

Was there ever a more colourful autumn than the one of 2014?

The leaves stayed on the trees for a nice, long time; then when they did come down, they were absorbed and disappeared incredibly quickly and the whole thing is now a distant memory. With the fall of the leaves, views of the countryside return unveiled as effectively as withdrawing a closed curtain from across a window.

At the time of writing, late January, the deciduous trees all look very bare and dormant but it is worth looking around occasionally to see if any buds show signs of life. They can have interesting colours in February.

The winter so far has been very reasonable, a bit of everything but nothing too severe. There have been a lot of slight frosts but the grass is still green, al-

though there is still plenty of time for a withering blast from the east during February, and perhaps we should remember the old saying 'What February grows, old March mows.'

With such good cover on hedges and shrubs, it must have been a good year for nesting birds and the good growing season should have produced a wealth of caterpillars, bugs etc. for feeding the young birds. So there should have been a good increase in the bird population but it is a cruel fact of nature that whatever the number of birds reared there will only be an average of one parent bird and one young bird surviving at the following springtime. This is surprising but if any more survived then we should have ever larger flocks of birds searching for dwindling food supplies. The exception seems to be the red kite which in-

creases in ratio to the amount of meat supplied to them by humans.

The freshly trimmed hedges show up quite starkly along the roadsides now. The regulation which means they cannot be trimmed more frequently than at two yearly intervals is a double edged sword in my opinion. It certainly means that more berries will grow for the birds but whereas a quick annual trim left a thick covering of fine twigs at the cut surface, the two year trim is much more destructive with all the fine twigs removed and the cut surface down onto thicker sticks, leaving a more open aspect, much less suitable for bird nest cover. Also any smooth bark species such as ash get split and shattered and look very unsightly. In the words of one operator, "It murders 'em."

It was interesting to see the increase in the number of birds around the feeders as soon as the frosts arrived. On one occasion I counted nine long tailed tits on the suet ball feeder. They must be very timid birds; as soon as a great tit or a finch comes near they fly to the shelter of a tree. There definitely seem to be more blackbirds here compared with this time last year.

It has been a better season for arable farmers this time, much less

soggy in the fields. Personally I have not seen any patches of oil seed rape crops being stripped by pigeons. It all seems to have got a good start and the cereal crops look thick enough with a good cover. Most of the fields intended for spring crops, especially barley, are ploughed or cultivated ready and every grower is probably looking for the highest yield they can achieve but if there are near record crop yields everywhere, there will be a worldwide glut with prices as disastrous for the producers as the milk prices are for the dairy farmers. Who knows? Perhaps the answer is for farmers to spend a bit less on fertilisers and sprays and be prepared to accept a slightly lower yield.

Snowdrops are having quite a good show again and some aconites are flowering. Any day now the crocus will appear and the whole sequence of spring flowers will be underway again. It is usually about this time that those pretty little crocus appear under the trees in the churchyard, and it will soon be time for lawn mowers to hum again because as someone once said, "If Winter's here can Spring be far behind?"

**Jim Pearse**

## ***WHERE'S THE FIRE?***

The original house on the site now occupied by Wychwood Manor was built by Groves of Milton in 1912-13 for Lord Sanderson Furniss, near to a chestnut tree in a small grass field which was part of Coldstone Farm, owned by him at that time. He named the house Chestnut Close.

Lord Sanderson was a great friend of Reginald Tiddy, the man who gave the land and the original hall for the use of the people of Ascott, and it was left in his care when Mr Tiddy was killed shortly afterwards in World War One.

I lived at Coldstone Farm for a number of years before spending over sixty years on Honeydale Farm which had also originally been part of Coldstone Farm.

We had a good view from Honeydale Farm up on the hill, over a large area to the south includ-

ing all of Ascott, and one evening about fifty years ago we noticed a column of smoke rising from Chestnut Close soon after some new owners had changed the name to Wychwood Manor. "Looks like a chimney fire," we thought. Sure enough a fire engine was soon coming at speed along from Charlbury. Well, Charlbury firemen knew where the Manor was at Ascott, where it had always been for centuries, so they came straight down London Lane, over the railway crossing and along to Ascott Manor Farmhouse, the present home of Mr and Mrs Gripper.

Things then became amusing. Back they went over the crossing, down Shipton Road and along to what they had known as Chestnut Close. At least the fire was still burning when they got there! Perhaps a salutary lesson, to think carefully before renaming your home!

**Jim Pearse**



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# ***Gardening in Ascott***

On a wet and windy January afternoon, I abandoned my foolhardy attempts to tidy around the just emerging snowdrops and retreated to my desk with a hot cuppa to look back at my garden diaries. Since 2008 I have kept a record of new plantings, garden projects, musings on successes and failures, the weather and the wildlife in my garden. Sometimes due to other commitments outside the garden, a week will go by without an entry, but then a larger piece will come perhaps on a Sunday to summarize the gardening week.



Re-reading these diary entries from previous years, I have concluded that I did more gardening and had more energy than I have now. I'm amazed at the great list of tasks and projects on each page! It is also strange to read about something of

which I have no memory. For instance, on 26 February 2009 I started to build a tunnel of Hazel sticks with the idea of planting them with sweet peas. On 27 February 2008 it was a fine bright morning but no frost and I noted briefly that we had had an earthquake overnight! I was woken up at 1am, but like a true gardener this minor event was quickly succeeded by a note that I sowed Tumbling Tom Red tomato seed that day!

An interesting weather event occurred a few weeks later on 10 March 2008;

the barometer fell to the lowest reading we have ever seen - 947 millibars!

In 2008 Good Friday fell on the 21 March, and I seem to have been very organized that year as my Good Friday entry shows :

A fine windy day - set out broad bean seedlings under cloches ready to be planted and pricked-out seeds of tomato, Costuluta Fiorentina, sown on 21 February, also basil seedlings into individual pots.

First cut of salad leaves from the pots in the greenhouse; seed sown

on 7 February (45 days from seed to salad bowl).

It must have been a very cold Easter weekend, as I noted that I went shopping for a kettle, a toaster and a new wool duvet for the bed. I also covered the basil and tomatoes seedlings with newspaper and turned up the greenhouse heater. On Easter Sunday it snowed heavily, but had melted by lunchtime.

## ***Spring Ramblings from my Gardening Diaries***

I hope this selection of diary entries from over the years will be interesting and perhaps even be an aide memoir for spring jobs in the garden.

### ***28 February 2014***

The Aurora borealis seen over UK last night, but sadly not over Ascott!

### ***1 March 2014***

Reed bunting in the garden today. Lovely clear and warm day. Got up at 4:30am to see if the Northern Lights visible; lovely starry night but no aurora!

### ***4 March 2014***

The newly planted winter aconites have settled in beautifully and

look like they have always been there. Viburnums have been fabulous all winter and now looking at their very best. Like a sea of bright pink candy floss seen from the windows at the back of the house.

### ***5 March 2013***

Another beautiful sunny day. Felix the horse, who lives in the field behind the garden, has taken off his coat. Paul mowed grass for the first time this year. Potted-on Sweet Williams, Foxgloves and Salvias. Cleaned out the water butts.

### ***7 March 2014***

Attended a lecture at Whichford pottery; Fergus Garrett from Great Dixter Garden lecturing on planting garden borders. Came back thinking our borders look very tame and dull, especially the gold border; it needs an injection blue and/or purple.

### ***8 March 2008***

Seeds sown:

Red flowered Broad Bean, Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Tall Mixed', Cerinthe major, Calendula 'Indian Prince', and a very dark Larkspur from seed saved from Poplar Cottage. (NB: this was the first anniversary of our move to Ascott and

Poplar Cottage was our previous home in East Sussex).

### **13 March 2008**

Sowed 4 pots of Common Thyme. Also, 2 trays of mixed salad leaves to be cut in about 3 weeks. Parsley and Parcel all germinated. Had to re-sow the dwarf french beans - too cold, too early?

Basil on kitchen window-sill looking good.

### **18th March 2008**

Finally finished digging. Added lots of mushroom compost and gravel.

Started to prune the roses.

Planted 2 big pots with deep red and purple violas.

### **18 March 2011**

Pricked out seedlings of Cosmos 'Purity' and 'Dazzler'. Rain this morning, but cleared by lunch-time. Cut Back the Penstemons. Greenhouse very full indeed. Need to start hardening off plants ready to put in the garden.

### **19 March 2011**

A beautiful sunny day following overnight frost. Turned out the leaf mould. Moved the bench to under the apple and pear trees. It

looks good there. Sowed one tray of runner beans, 'Lady Di', half a tray of French beans 'Ferrari', and half a tray of climbing French bean, 'Cobra'.

### **22 March 2013**

Sowed seeds of Malope, Calendula 'Indian Prince,' Linaria 'Canon Went', and the dark Hollyhock 'Nigra'. (*All under cover in greenhouse*) A difficult year for seed sowing, lack of sunshine and damping off etc.

### **25 March 2011**

Gardening in a T-shirt. Watered the raspberries and the rhubarb. Jean's cucumbers are getting their first set of true leaves. Peas need to be planted out, but waiting until I can remove the cloches from the broad beans. Repaired the water butt. Cleaned the patio and paths.

### **27 March 2009**

Dug over the new vegetable beds and spread with compost. Turned out all the old compost and spread it around the garden. Turned the next compost into the empty bin. A strenuous and dirty job, but very satisfying.

Planted the new Pear tree, Doyenne du Comice, on Quince A rootstock, a present from Patrick.

Pruned the lower branches to give it a better shape.

Broad beans now need to go into cold frame. Heavy hailstorm in the afternoon and quite cold.

## **28 March 2008**

Potted up six un-named dahlias into large pots (must keep these labelled next year).

## **1 April 2010**

Sowed the seeds of the sunflower 'Chianti' (F1), trays of leeks, 'Malabar', and a tray of Alpine strawberries, 'Baron Solemacher'. Tided the shed, a cold wet day. Side Garden looking great. Potted on 'Rainbow' chard seedlings.

## **2 April 2008**

Paul mowed the lawn for the first time this year. Ordered a case of wine!

Pulled the last of the leeks and made a Gratin with some chard and cheese.

## **4 April 2009**

Fruit trees are just about coming into flower. Planted out broad beans under cloches. Blackbird (grandson White Stripe?)\* in the garden all day. The first bats of the year seen over the garden this evening.

*\*In our first year in Ascott we had a resident male blackbird in the garden with distinct white feathers amongst his otherwise black plumage, giving the appearance of stripes. We wondered if his curious appearance would be detrimental to his attracting a mate, but he and his partner raised two fine broods that year and we still see his genes in the white markings on our visiting blackbirds. Interestingly, it seems that only the males carry the white-stripe gene, or perhaps it is less pronounced in the females and therefore more difficult to identify.*

## **5 April 2009**

A lovely spring day walked to Pudlicote to see the daffodils, and saw the very new calves. Buzzards very active and their call is magical.

## **Peril of Hope**

*It is right in there  
between and betwixt  
The orchard bare  
And the orchard green,  
When the boughs are right  
In a flowery burst  
of pink and white,  
That we fear the worst  
For there's not a clime*

*But at any cost  
Will take that time  
For a night of frost.*

**Robert Frost**

## **8 April 2009**

Watered in the first batch of slug nematodes. The first house-martins seen this evening. A bright windy day but a beautiful evening sky. Removed the cloches from the broad beans. (*Slug Nematodes are a naturally occurring predator of slugs*).

## **8 April 2008**

Picked the 2nd batch of the forced rhubarb.

## **11 April 2008**

'Persian Carpet' wallflowers look lovely in the Side Garden.

## **12 April 2011**

Another beautiful sunny morning. Cut grass. Strimmer broke down. Potted-on Cosmos, I've sown far too many this year! Beans and tomatoes all come on very well but really need potting-on into their final positions. Struggling for greenhouse space with the dahlias and the Cosmos all growing well. Tomatoes are

flowering while still in their small pots!

## **13 April 2013**

Red spider mite in the greenhouse. Really need to take down the bubble-wrap and ventilate. It is been such a cold start to the year.

## **13 April 2008**

Planted out seed potatoes (Charlotte) 2nd early.

Dug out some compost from the bins to spread onto the raspberry patch. (*Raspberries are greedy, but they don't like mushroom compost, so I always save some home-made compost for them*).

## **16 April 2013**

A fine spring day, still windy but that much warmer than of late. Pricked-out 14 plants of *Nicotiana mutabilis* from seed sown by Kathy. Felix the horse keeps near to our hedge as the sun goes down. I wonder if he has comfort/reassurance in seeing the lights from the house?

## **20 April 2008**

Sparrow-hawk caught a small bird on the wing, in the field just alongside me as I was working in the garden.

Picked out chilli seedlings into small pots.

Dug Sweet Pea trenches and filled them with a mixture of compost and shredded newspaper soaked in liquid seaweed.

### **23 April 2009**

Potatoes in the greenhouse ready, very good variety. I think it is 'Swift.' 60 days since planting to the plate. Afterthought - not so good on plate- lacks flavour!

### **26 April 2011**

A beautiful hot Easter. High temperatures and no rain. Like summer with tulips! Cannot remember such hot weather at this time of year. Watering a lot. I'm very late with the second vegetable sowing but first sowing of the broad beans are coming along very well.

### **21 April 2010**

At least two weeks of bright dry weather, but the ground needs water. The pergola, recently constructed by Pete, looks great. It just needs planting up to be just as I imagined it back in cold days of winter. The roses I ordered from David Austin are on their way and the Golden Hop and the clematis are due to be delivered over the weekend.

### **30 April 2013**

Picked the first radish of the year.

### **1 May 2013**

The ash tree is starting to bud. The swallows have arrived!

**Madeline Galistan**

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# Crossword

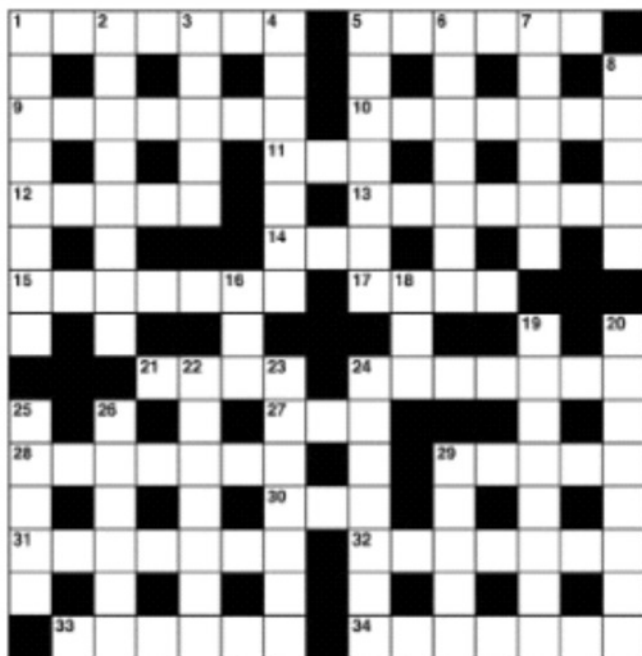
## ACROSS

- 1 Substance in tonic water (7)
- 5 Methodical, ceremonious (6)
- 9 Strong in quality (7)
- 10 1940s trio of singing sisters (7)
- 11 Shaft of light (3)
- 12 Style of poem (5)
- 13 North Atlantic country (7)
- 14 Beard of barley (3)
- 15 Air passage near the septum (7)
- 17 Meaning, nub (4)
- 21 Albert \_\_\_\_\_, London building (4)
- 24 Costly ornamental buildings (7)
- 27 Time past (3)
- 28 Fish with both eyes on the same side of its head (7)
- 29 West Indian republic, capital Port-au-Prince (5)
- 30 2012 Mark Wahlberg comedy film (3)
- 31 Red wine produced in Tuscany (7)
- 32 Establish (7)
- 33 Deduction from a bill (6)
- 34 Harlech's Welsh county (7)

## DOWN

- 1 Person who helps the enemy (8)
- 2 Premium paid on borrowed money (8)
- 3 Greek architectural style (5)
- 4 Immortal (7)
- 5 Stripping the skin from (7)
- 6 Set right (7)
- 7 Number of years between people (3,3)
- 8 Words spoken by an actor directly to the audience (5)
- 16 Under the weather (3)

- 18 Bride's pledge (1,2)
- 19 Be a powerful or conclusive factor (against) (8)
- 20 Aided (8)
- 22 Country on the Balkan peninsula (7)
- 23 Criss-cross pattern (7)
- 24 Pleating, creasing (7)
- 25 One of the Marx Brothers (5)
- 26 Gate for regulating water flow (6)
- 29 Glad (5)





## Solution to Crossword in Edition 84

### Across


- 1 First Class
- 6 Scum
- 10 Tudor
- 11 Sheffield
- 12 Loam
- 13 Vera
- 14 Ernie
- 16 Side On
- 17 Hang Seng
- 19 Spectral
- 22 Sonata
- 25 Easel
- 26 Gory
- 27 Trad
- 29 Palatable
- 30 Bloom
- 31 Tyne
- 32 Maceration

### Down

- 1 Fatalist
- 2 Rudyard
- 3 Turf
- 4 Lasted
- 5 Smetana
- 7 Cleanse
- 8 Midge
- 9 Afterglow
- 15 Mortality
- 17 Hal
- 18 Guardsman
- 20 Epsilon
- 21 Algebra
- 23 A Priori
- 24 Breeze
- 25 Expat
- 28 Abba

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| <b>WYCHWOOD WROUGHT IRON</b> 01993832850<br>www.wychwoodwroughtiron.com               | Page 79 |

# ***Events Calendar - 2015***

| <b>Date</b>             | <b>Event</b> |  |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| March 7th               | 8.00 pm      | Winter-Wilson Tiddy Hall                         |
| March 8 <sup>th</sup>   | 10.00 am     | Annual Parochial Church Meeting<br>Church        |
| March 21 <sup>st</sup>  | 8.00 pm      | Scarecrow The Swan                               |
| March 28 <sup>th</sup>  | 7.30 pm      | Wychwood Chorale Concert St Kenelms<br>Church    |
| April 4th               | 8.00 pm      | Red Moon Road Tiddy Hall                         |
| April 9 <sup>th</sup>   | 7.30 pm      | Qigong Session Tiddy Hall                        |
| April 18 <sup>th</sup>  | 8.00 pm      | Three Pressed Men The Swan                       |
| May 10 <sup>th</sup>    |              | Open Garden at Wychwood Manor                    |
| May 16 <sup>th</sup>    | 8.00 pm      | James Bell The Swan                              |
| May 30/31 <sup>st</sup> |              | Flower Festival Church                           |
| June 20 <sup>th</sup>   | 8.00 pm      | The Jigantics Tiddy Hall                         |
| Jul 12 <sup>th</sup>    |              | Church Teas Playing<br>Field                     |
| July 25 <sup>th</sup>   | 2.00 pm      | Swanfest<br>- Headline- Barbara Dickson The Swan |