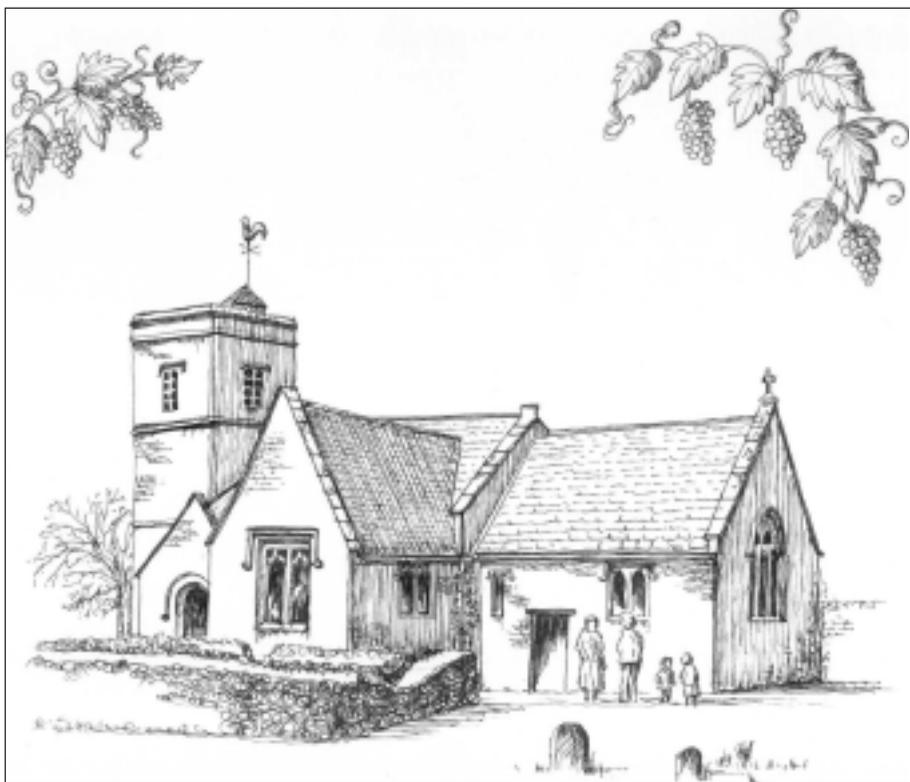

The Ascott Grapevine



Issue 42

April 2004

Services at Holy Trinity Church

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in the Grapevine please contact a member of the production team to discuss your ideas. Articles for the July issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by July 4th.

Call 01993 832163 or email:

ascottgrapevine@dial.pipex.com

**Stuart Fox, Kingsley,
Wendy Pearse,
Karen Purvis**

25th April
3rd Sunday of Easter
1100 HC C

02 May
4th Sunday of Easter
1100 MP P
1600 FS

09-May
5th Sunday of Easter
0800 HC P

16-May
6th Sunday of Easter
1100 HC C

23-May
7th Sunday of Easter
1100 HC C

06-Jun
Trinity Sunday
1100 MP P
1600 FS

13-Jun
1st Sunday after Trinity
0800 HC P

20-Jun
2nd Sunday after Trinity
1100 HC C

What's what

EP = Evening Prayer/
Service

FC = Family Communion

HC = Holy Communion

MP = Morning Prayer/
Service

QP = Time of Quiet
Prayer

BS = Benefice Service

Bapt = Holy Baptism

C = Contemporary Language

P = Book of Common
Prayer



Triumph, Defeat, and?

Letter from Mark Abrey

It looked like a triumph to begin with! Jesus on a donkey making his way into Jerusalem, showing all the signs of being “the one who is to come”; even, in some of their eyes, the promised Messiah. Hosannas rang out on that day. Banners were waved. People smiled.

But it didn't last. And in our worship through Holy Week we shall meditate again on how the hosannas turned to jeers, the banners were put away, and people scowled. Jesus, stripped of every shred of dignity, was led away to be crucified. His mission had failed.

And in more than one sense it had, indeed, failed. The people to whom he had tried to minister did not respond to his preaching; those closest to him deserted; he was put to death as a troublemaker.

But we know it was not failure. For in an extraordinary sequence of

events that gave to the embryo church a dynamic and vibrant life that was to change the world, Jesus appeared to his disciples after his death.

Incredible? They thought so; it was some time before the truth dawned. It was some time before they came to see this was God's way of vindicating Jesus as the one who had been commissioned to proclaim the Kingdom of God. They didn't ask how it had happened. They couldn't say, anymore than we can. They knew only that the tomb was empty and he was with them. Indeed, they felt his presence in their lives more acutely after his death than before it. And they began to call on all that would listen to accept - “Christ is risen” and “Jesus is Lord”.

The best evidence we have for the resurrection must be the existence of the Church. The disci-

ples certainly were not ones to create it! But something got into them; something changed them, and the gospel began to be sung out from the rooftops - “Christ is risen, Jesus is Lord” and he is with us. And people believed and the Church was born. How else could such a disparate group of people be brought together, but by an act of God?

And since those early days such groups of people have gathered Sunday by Sunday to acknowledge the risen Jesus; to sing “Christ is risen and Jesus is Lord” and to (try to) carry his presence with them into every part of their lives. That is the Church at its best. Worshipping and Witnessing to its risen Lord.

Alleluia!

With all good wishes for Easter.

Mark Abrey

News from the Clergy

There comes a time in the life of every training parish when they have to say 'farewell' to their curates. For us in the Chase Benefice and Ascott-under-Wychwood, this farewell has come sooner than we first expected and, by the time that this Grapevine is published, the Revd. Nigel Hawkes will have left us to complete his curacy as a member of the Chipping Norton Team.

This past year has not been an easy one in the life of our parishes. Nigel – who joined us straight from theological college less than two years ago – has dealt with some very difficult pastoral situations and has done so extremely well and with great sensitivity. I – and I know that I speak for all of us in the Benefices – are very grateful for all that he has done and wish to record our thanks to him. A presentation was made to Nigel and his family at the Palm Sunday service on April 4th in Spelsbury. He will be missed and we

wish him well in his future ministry.

Bishop Colin has appointed the Revd Hazel Scarr as Associate Priest to work alongside me across the Benefices. Hazel is an experienced priest who is just finishing her curacy at Adderbury where, amongst other things, she handled an interregnum superbly. Although she is a Non Stipendiary Minister [which means that she is not paid a salary by the Church and she will remain living in her family home in Bloxham] she will be able to offer the equivalent of Sundays and two days a week as from the end of May. Her first Sunday with us will be May 30th when we will welcome her at a Benefice Service in Chadlington at 10.30 am.

As for myself, I am pleased to report that my health is improving and that the treatment I am receiving is going well. I will be returning to work on a part-time basis from

May 17th. To start with I will be assisting at services every other week, building up to full time later in the year. I am looking forward to that greatly!

In the meantime, services and pastoral care will be provided by local clergy—to whom we are very grateful.

Bookings for weddings and baptisms are being taken by Claire Nicholls, the Benefice Secretary, on 01608 676572.

If you need a Priest in an emergency please contact the Revd. Graham Canning on 01608 810421.

Messages may be left on the Benefice answerphone [01608 676572] but there may be a delay in replying.

And, of course, your Church Wardens [Tim Lyon - 01993 832531 or Anne Braithwaite - 01993 831282] will be more than happy to help you if they can.

Mark Abrey

Shop Update - April

With the shop into its first six months of operation, this is an ideal opportunity to update you on how we are doing. Firstly, we have established a really loyal customer base and this is reflected in the excellent customer feedback conducted during February. The key findings were:

- Warm and friendly 96.4%
- General appearance 97.3%
- Product range 80.0%
- Efficiency 81.8%
- Value for money 81.8%
- Overall satisfaction 87.3%

Typical positive comments were:

Good variety of products, looking forward to meat and ice cream being available

Local and convenient. Gets people in the village together

The fact that it exists. It is friendly, very useful, looks so nice and has a great atmosphere. I'm really proud

of it and recommend it to everyone.

The personal touch

It's very convenient, warm and friendly. Ideal

Nice and friendly, smells lovely

Personalised service, attractive display of products

A really high standard, I especially like the feel of spaciousness

As for ideas to improve, these were:

Would like to see more people volunteering

Give better training on the till

Better signage so it can be seen from London Lane

Personal drop off service.

Wider range of fresh juices, home made ready-made meals e.g. pies, quiches, casseroles

Greater choice of delicatessen

A few times I have been disappointed with the quality of the fruit and veg

Another freezer – good quality meat if possible

Make sure there is a price visible on shelves for all products. Put a pricelist on the freezer for frozen goods

The feedback has been really useful but it should be remembered that this came from a small number of the village. In fact, we had about 30 questionnaires returned. This means that the vast majority did not give us their views and it is to the silent majority that we need to 'talk'.

Welcome to the new shop manager

We have appointed a new manager to take over from Sue Richards (who has been standing in on temporary basis since we opened in November).

Our new manager is Mary Balkwill from Long Handborough and she is very much looking forward to meeting the villagers and providing a lead for the volunteers. It is important that we have one person that the volunteers can listen to and that voice will be Mary.

Mary's professional career includes: Admissions Registrar at both

Charterhouse a 700 pupil boarding school and St Clare's, Oxford, an international co-educational college for students aged 16+. Mary may be a bit short on retail experience but has vast experience working with people and taking responsibility for getting things done. This is what makes her an ideal candidate for the manager's job at Ascott! In fact, Mary *has* worked behind the counter in a previous life and that was at the Deli in Summertown ... and she loved it.

What's new in the shop?

As reported in the last edition of the Grapevine, we now have an ice cream freezer as well as a further freezer to accommodate our new supply of quality meat from Callows Farm. We also have a daily delivery of fresh bread and we are re-looking at our fruit and vegetable supplier to see if we can improve the quality. Do

come in and check it out for yourselves.

More volunteers please ...

We have been really lucky with the number of villagers who are prepared to give up their free time to work in the shop. If you would like to join this happy band, please call in and see Mary in the shop or call 831240.

As ever, thank you for your on-going support

John Cull
Chair - Shop Management Committee

PS: Congratulations to Fred Russell who was the first person to have a questionnaire pulled out of the 'hat'. Fred, the champagne is all yours!!

Bluebells Florist

Sheep Street, Charlbury

01608 811414

PROVIDING FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS:

- ✦ Hand Tied bouquets
- ✦ Wedding Day flowers, including pedestals and table decorations
- ✦ Funeral tributes
- ✦ Corporate Events

SPECIALISING IN COUNTRY STYLE FLOWERS

‘All Christians for Evermore’

When in 1478 Thomas and Agnes Robins of Sibford decided to come to an agreement with eight Ascott villagers concerning some property which they had acquired in the village, little must they have dreamt that the remnants of that agreement would still exist 625 years later. The original document still survives in Oxfordshire Record Office together with a second document dated 1691 on which a villager of the time then commented that the “Poors’ Estate” originally established by the earlier agreement had already existed for 214 years Also on this second document is a comment “N.B. This paper should be kept very safe. J.H. “, and it certainly has been.

The property which Thomas and Agnes sold was valued at £16 of which the villagers (the Feoffees) were to find £9 whilst Thomas and Agnes gave £7 which presumably would be used as the basis of the Charity. In return masses were

to be said once a year in Ascott Church for the souls of Thomas and Agnes “and of the ancestors afore them and all Christians for evermore”. Whilst John Chaundyth and his heirs were to pay Thomas and Agnes 4s a year rental for the rest of thier lives, for the property which consisted of two messuages (dwelling houses) and two closes. The settlement was to be administered for all time by the Feoffees and the site of the property was todays Church View together with the Orchard behind, which used to stretch from Heritage Lane to Shipton Road. Unfortunately by the 1540’s with Henry VIII’s Reformation Thomas and Agnes lost their

chance of “easing the passage of their souls through purgatory” as the use of masses was discontinued. All charitable works were considered in those days to shorten the amount of time the soul spent in the terrors of purgatory before reaching the gates of heaven. Pilgrimages to various shrines could serve the same purpose.

Nevertheless the Charity survived and in 1512 Cutts Close at the back of the Tiddy Hall was donated by John Selwood. By 1668 Nicholas Perry had added more property. Church House which until the turn of the twentieth century stood in Church Close, and probably the remainder of that corner where the



houses of Mary Barnes and Richard and Pauline Plant, and the Garage formerly the Blacksmiths, stand today. In 1809 an amusing incident occurred concerning the Charity cottage which stood at the entrance to Heritage Lane. A certain Edmund Busby was the leasee and in fact it had been the home of both his father and grandfather for nearly 100 years. Apparently he was "ill advised by acquaintances and relatives" that as the premises had been in the possession of his family for so long, he must own them. So he refused to pay the rent to the local agent, re-enlisted in his former soldiering profession and left his wife in possession. When the agent visited the wife and informed her that goods must be taken in place of the rent, he noticed a stack of hay in the yard of the premises. But when he went back the next day to seize the goods, the hay had disappeared. During the night the wife and her

friends had thrown the hay over the wall on to adjacent land. However the agent ordered that the hay must be thrown back over the wall so that he could seize it, together with a few other goods that were left in the house. Six months later the agent went back again for the rent but all he could find that time were a few old apples in a tub. So he advised the Feoffees to pay the woman £2 12s 6d to get out, which they did. This must have been quite a good sum at the time, but at least the Feoffees got the property back and it was soon leased to a reliable tenant. The agent however had a few nightmares since he lived in dread that such an "evil disposed person" as Edmund Busby might return and challenge the legality of the lease! The inhabitants of Ascott then asked the agent to inquire into what was done with the Charity money. He asked the Feoffees and was told that most of the money went into repairs

of the property but what was left they spent on beer!

By 1819 Church House had been converted into a Poor House or House of Industry - seemingly a village workhouse. But after the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1838, Chipping Norton Union Workhouse was built and the poor and destitute of Ascott, likewise the surrounding villages, were all sent there. Nineteen Ascott villagers died in Chipping Norton Workhouse between 1846 and 1917. They were brought back to Ascott for burial and although most of them were elderly, one was a young girl of sixteen named Hannah Townsend. Her father Philip, a butcher living in London Lane had died in 1843 aged 42, leaving a wife and seven children. Hannah was then aged eight. What sad story could these facts conceal?

The lower row in Church View which was formerly known as the Row or Raggs Row, was

bought in the 1960's by Don Fletcher. There was one stand pipe, earth closets and the back gardens were out of alignment with the appropriate houses. There were no doors at the front, only windows. But when Don renovated the properties, he found that there had originally been doors at the front. which he restored. It would appear that in an earlier renovation, some people had been adverse to seeing the inhabitants on their doorsteps. This might be partly understandable when some Census figures are considered. In the fourteen houses of the Row in 1841 there were a large number of children including sixteen under

twelve. By 1891 these numbers had increased considerably, even those under twelve had risen to twenty nine. Peace and quiet must have been in short supply!

In 1889 the property comprised nineteen cottages, an orchard, the blacksmith's house and shop, Cutts Close, Lower Green Close (added by Lord Churchill), some garden land, and Church House which had been converted into five cottages, and a small field up Chipping Norton Hill named Charity Piece.

The Charity provided not only cottages for rent by the poor of the parish, but revenue and relief to the needy over many centuries. During the nine-

teenth century many village lads were set up in seven year apprenticeships to all manner of trades and girls were supplied with clothes to go into service. The school was given a donation each year and in 1894 income was given towards the "Advancement of Education of Children attending Public Elementary Schools". Prizes and help to maintain children's education were given together with hospital and convalescent aid and donations for unexpected loss or sudden destitution.

Most of the Charity property was sold in 1932 and the money invested into an Educational Trust. Money from this Trust was used to purchase from Oliver Watney of Cornbury Park, the land for the village playing field in 1951. A small investment still exists together with the close known as Lower Green and these two comprise the 'Poors Estate' and 'Lower Green Charity' today.

Wendy Pearse.



Country Lore - The Weather Forecast

In days long before world trade, supermarkets and modern technology the lives of our ancestors depended, literally, on successful production and harvest of crops and livestock products. It is not surprising that they took note of any sign by which they could forecast the all important weather. Some of their sayings have been passed down to us through the generations and many of us will have heard that "Red sky at night means shepherds' delight", and that "A heavy crop of berries means a hard winter", but some are more obscure.

In January. "As the days lengthen so the cold strengthens."

"If cattle gallop round their yard in winter the snow is on the way."

"If Candlemas Day (2nd February) be bright and clear there's half the winter to come and more." "Where the wind is on Candlemas Day there it will be till

the 2nd May." "What February grows, March mows."

"If March comes in like a gentle lamb it goes out like a lion." "For every fog in March there'll be a frost in May."

"If the sun shines clear on Easter Day there'll be plenty of grass but little good hay." (Wet summer). "If the oak is out before the ash there will only be a splash." "If the ash is out before the oak there is sure to be a soak." "A mock sun brings rain or storms within 48 hours."

(A mock sun or 'sundog' can sometimes be seen horizontally level with the sun at about 15 degrees to the side. It is a bright patch on the cloud which may include rainbow colours that are caused by sunlight striking ice crystals in the upper clouds.) "A new

moon on his back brings a dry month." "A new moon upright means a wet month." "A Tuesday's moon means a wet month."

"Tuesdays new and Tuesdays full awlul wet and awlul ull."

"If ice will bear a duck on a pond in November the frost will be less severe through the rest of winter." "If Christmas Day be dirty and foul then half the winters gone at Yule."

Sceptics will say that weather sayings don't make sense, they don't rhyme properly and if they come true it will be merely by chance. But then again, you could often say something similar about official weather forecasts which are backed up by world wide information and state of the art computers.

Jim Pearse.

Advertise Here ...

Advertise in The Grapevine and reach all the households in Ascott-under-Wychwood in one go
email: ascottgrapevine@dial.pipex.com
or phone: 832163 for details.

Ascott-under-Wychwood Parish Council

I am sorry to have to start on a sad note but unfortunately I have to report that the level of vandalism in the village is on the increase again. The Parish Council has very limited powers to deal with the problem directly as all incidents should be a police matter but we do report every incident we know about to the police. Keeping a diary of when and where incidents take place will help the police and these diaries are available from me at any time. The most effective action is to ring the police control room on **0845 8505505** this number will give various options please do not be put off by this. Choose the crime option if the incident is happening at the time of your call or the general option to speak to an operator if you are giving information about an incident. The important thing is that all these calls are logged and the police can then build up a picture of how many inci-

dents there are in a particular area and will send out a car or increase their patrols accordingly. We would urge everyone to use this number as soon as they witness an incident.

Oxford County Council will shortly be carrying out a review of subsidised bus services in this area and so the Parish Council will be taking this opportunity to do a transport survey in the village. This review only happens every four years and we hope that by providing the County Council with the results of the survey our needs will be taken into consideration in the review. A questionnaire will be circulated shortly and we hope everyone will take part even if you do not use public transport.

If we do not take part in the review then the needs of our community will go unheard and unnoticed by those who have to decide which services need subsidies.

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on

Tuesday April 13th. This was a public meeting, as are all Parish Council meetings, where all organisations connected with the village gave their annual reports about their activities to the Parish Council. Thanks to all who came along to the meeting.

We are aware that not everyone knows who the Parish Councillors are or the County and District Councillors so their names and telephone numbers will be published after each Grapevine Report we hope this will be helpful.

Margaret Ismail Parish Clerk 832829
Councillors:

Nigel Braithwaite, Chairman 831282

Wendy Pearce, Vice Chairman 831023

Stuart Fox, Responsible Financial Officer 832004

Mike Pearce 830058

Elaine Byles, 831427

County Councillor:
Rodney Rose 830584

District Councillor:
Hilary Hibbert-Biles 831822

Police Report

At the beginning of this year, Thames Valley Police introduced a new single telephone number for all non-emergency calls. Members of the public are now able to contact the Police with their day to day enquiries by dialling 0845 8 505 505. This new number gives you 24 hour access to the Thames Valley Police enquiry Centres, with teams of trained operators able to help or forward your call to the right department. They will also provide a round the clock crime recording service which will help free up officers to be out and about in the community. The number will be charged at the local call rate and it was chosen in the hope that it will be memorable with the last six digits spelling sos - sos. For a long time members of the public haven't been sure about what is the best way to contact the Police when it's not an emergency. Now I can make it absolutely clear - call '999' if there is a threat to life or limb, or a crime 'in progress' and 0845 8 505 505 for everything

else which is a genuine police matter.

Between 1st January and the 31st December 2003 a total of 12 crimes were recorded in Ascott under Wychwood. , that equates to only 1 incident a month and the vast majority of them being of a very minor nature, with a fair few being of a 'domestic' nature. The breakdown of this figure is as follows:

- Burglary - Dwelling 0
- Burglary - Other 1
- Assaults 5
- Vehicle crime 0
- Thefts 2
- Damage 3
- Other reportable incidents 1

Total: 12

As you can see you live in a very low crime rate area, as I am sure any insurance company will in-

form you. However, I will impart one piece of very relevant crime prevention advice, and that is, take a look at where you currently keep your house and car keys. Are they anywhere near your front door? If so, a current trend amongst burglars and car thieves is to fish out your keys through your letterbox then obviously giving them access to both your house and vehicles. A simple remedy, keep them away from the door.

By far the majority of complaints I receive from residents are concern for the behaviour of the local youth. Anti social behaviour amongst the young seems to be our biggest bug bare, a problem I can't deal with alone. I have two requests, firstly, parents, you can help by educating

Incidents may also be reported to:

**West Oxfordshire District Council
Safety Officer**

**Adie Cole
01993 861632**

your children on what is and what isn't acceptable behaviour in public and secondly, you the residents, if you see anyone misbehaving, causing damage or even suspicions of drug abuse, then please report them, so that I can bring them to book. Despite many attempts to point out the dangers of using cannabis, the old adage 'old head and young shoulders' always springs to mind. Many I speak to are under the misapprehension that the recent down grading of cannabis as a drug makes it virtually legal. Take it from me, that is most definitely not the case, and those found in possession of it are just as liable to arrest as before. Apart from the obvious health implications, problems arise when this drug abuse results in anti social behaviour and the accessibility of these substances to the younger generation. Again I ask for your help in combating this problem. Any information will be dealt with in strictest of confidence.

PC Jon BADRICK

**Want to report an incident?
Ring the Police Control Room
on
0845 8505505**

**For 'crime in progress' or
'threat to life or limb'
999**

Wychwood's Community First Responder Scheme

A Community Response to Sudden Illness or Collapse

A scheme has been established, with the Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust, in the Wychwoods to ensure that a defibrillator reaches a casualty in the Wychwoods within four minutes.

A Community First Responder Scheme is made up of trained volunteers who will attend potentially life-threatening emergencies in their community, initiating life-saving measures prior to the arrival of an Emergency Ambulance. The only definitive treatment for a cardiac arrest is the delivery of a controlled high energy shock by a defibrillator. This must be performed within a few minutes of collapse as few will survive if

treatment is delayed. The Ambulance Service acknowledges that responding within these times in our area is challenging. The answer is to train members of the local community in the use of a defibrillator and provide them with further training to manage the conditions which could lead to cardiac arrest. The main points of the scheme are:

- First Responders would be trained by the NHS Ambulance Service, responding only after being called by the NHS Ambulance Control Centre and operate under the guidance of an Opera-

tional Ambulance Service Manager.

- The First Responder Scheme is not a substitute for an Emergency Ambulance. An Ambulance will always attend.
 - The First Responder will not be able to claim the exemptions of an Ambulance whilst driving to an emergency. The Highway Code still applies and no First Responder will be allowed to use blue lights and sirens.
- The type of emergency that might be attended includes:

- Breathing difficulty
- Chest Pain {potential heart attack}
- Collapse of unknown cause
- Sudden illness at home or in public
- Convulsions
- Diabetic Collapse

The First Responder would not attend road accidents, children under 16, fire, violent situations and gynaecological/maternity conditions.

Developing the scheme

At present I am trained as a Community First Responder, using equipment on loan from the NHS Ambulance Service. I am keen to develop the scheme so that we have enough trained volunteers to provide 24 hour cover, 365 days of the year within our villages and sufficient funds to purchase our own defibrillator, kit bag, emergency equipment and items such as clothing, maps and torches.

This scheme could have enough volunteers to provide cover within a few weeks. We require first responders and importantly people to support the scheme.

Could you be a Community First Responder?

Honesty, responsibility, efficiency, self discipline, confidentiality and respectfulness are all prerequisites for a First Responder. More importantly is your willingness to give your time freely to the scheme and be able to attend occasional training. Previous knowledge or experience is not essential as full training is provided by the NHS.

If you are interested in finding out more about the scheme or wish to volunteer please call me at work on 01993 832335 at home on 01993 830617 or by email, paul@elanfirstaid.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Paul Butler
5, Mount Pleasant,
Swinbrook Road,
Shipton, OX7 6DT.*

TREE SURGEON

Andrew Jackson
Ascott-U-Wychwood
Tel: 01993 832607
Mobile: 07816 901455

All Tree Surgery & Hedge Cutting Considered
Fully Qualified & Fully Insured

Friends of Wychwood

The link between people and trees is a fascinating one that stretches back to the dawn of history – nowhere more so than on our own doorstep in the Wychwood. At a recent talk organised by the Friends of Wychwood at the Tiddy Hall, Jon Stokes of the Tree Council brought this to light most clearly in a talk on “Trees and People in the 21st Century”. Until very recently it was quite likely that either your life or livelihood would have depended upon wood and so understanding

how each type of wood could be used was as important as knowing whether to put petrol or diesel in your car’s fuel tank is today. Even an apparently simple cart-wheel was in reality a composite of three woods, elm for the hub, oak for the spokes and ash for the outer rim – with regular soaking in a pond to keep the joints tight. Mighty oak ship’s timbers kept Napoleon at bay. Beech in your chair legs would have kept your bottom off the floor whilst the ever versatile hazel had many

uses – keeping thatch on your roof, securing the hay in your stack and, when split and woven, making hurdles to keep your sheep where you left them and, for the less well-off, the walls of the house. Today, many of us are finding space for local timber in our homes and gardens. Hazel hurdles are making a comeback as an alternative to larch-lap, oak beams are replacing concrete joists and charcoal from English woodlands outperforms imported briquettes. Even where we aren’t using

the wood we can still enjoy the trees, from a simple walk amongst the bluebells at Foxhole’s Wood this spring, to ‘hands-on’ tree care as a local Tree Warden or with the Friend’s of Wychwood.

Nick Motram



Wychwoods Local History Society

The May meeting will be held in Milton Village Hall on Thursday 20th at 7.30.p.m. when Malcolm Bee will speak on Friendly Societies and Community: Shipton Oddfellows 1877 -1968.

Then in June, John Wilson will talk about

Gertrude Jekyll and her interest in English Rural Life. This meeting will be at Shipton Village Hall on Thursday, 17th June at 7.30.p.m.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £5 for an individual and £8 for a couple which includes a

copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors welcome at any meeting at £2 per head.

Further details from Wendy Pearse on 831023.

Cook's Corner: Ascott's Favourite Recipes

Ascott Kofta Kebabs

Ingredients

500g Lamb Mince
1 Medium onion
Large bunch of flat leaf parsley
4 tsp Cumin (ground)
1 garlic clove
1 table spoon bread crumbs (Optional)
1 egg (optional)

Method

1. Place lamb mince in a large bowl and form a well in the middle.

2. Grate Onion & Garlic (alternatively whiz

in a processor) and finely chop parsley. Add to bowl.

3. Also add cumin and bread crumbs.

4. Mix firstly with a knife and then you need to pound the mixture with your fist so the texture becomes smooth and incorporates all the ingredients.

5. Add the egg little by little (you may not need it all) so the mixture is moist but not wet

6. Form into patties with your hands or mould on to a skewer and refrigerate before cooking on BBQ or Grill.

7. The kofta is cooked when you press it and no moisture comes from it.

Serve with a lemon dressed salad, rice and a greek style yoghurt.

Afiyet olsun!

Apologies to Joan Pratley and many thanks to those with sharp eyes who spotted the typo in last month's recipe, it should have read 1 teacup of MILK.

Further contributions to 'Favourite Recipes' would be appreciated for publication in future issues.

“If Thee Cyant Yet”

I often listen to the children talking whilst they are playing and it's become obvious that the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire accent that everyone once used is quickly dying out. I was born and brought up in Ascott in the 1920s and 1930s and at that time you could almost tell which village a child came from let alone which county, by their accent. Ascott and Shipton were much

the same but Leaffield was much broader .

Words were changed and accepted. A lot of words had the letter 'y' incorporated. e.g. **cat - cyat, can't - cyant, isn't - yent, eat -yet, here -yer.**

When my friend took her now husband home for the first time, he was invited to lunch but felt a bit nervous and could'nt eat much and her father said to him “It yent a bit of good thee a-

coming yer if thee cyant yet.” And in the village where the old man walked up the hill each morning and sat on the seat at the top and watched the happenings of the village below. One morning he saw a man starting up the hill and when he eventually arrived at the top, he said “When thee were at the bottom of the 'ill I thought it were thee but when thee were 'alfway up I thought it were thee brother but now thee be all the way up yer I can see it yent niether on ya.”

I think that accents are part of our heritage and would hate to see them disappear but I feel that this is inevitable with the advent of T.V. and the fact that villages are no longer occupied by born and bred villagers.

Dorothy Harrison.

Wychwood Wrought Iron 

QUALITY WROUGHT IRON PRODUCTS

- FINIALS
- SECURITY GRILLS
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Jottings from the Potting Shed

I don't think I have seen such a good year for blossom for a very long time. The flowering trees have been a picture, the snowdrops seemed to go on for ever, like wise the daffodils. I suspect the reason is the hot dry summer last year which ripened the fruit or flower buds. There's one thing you can be sure about gardening and that is it will never fail to surprise.

What's your favourite month in the gardening year? Mine has got to be May. Everything is so fresh - the greens so green and so many favourite plants are growing strongly wanting to make a good show. If you are lucky the tulips are still making a good show along with the wallflowers. Peonies, iris sibirica, and perennial cornflowers are among many plants striving to put on a good display. Some of the early flowering roses are also starting to bloom especially the climbers. It's the one time that plants seem to

be telling us how good it is to be rid of winter and I would go with that.

In the vegetable garden the soil will have warmed up so that seeds should be germinating quickly which is essential if you want strong healthy crops. There is always an urge to get on with early planting and sowing but on balance I think it is always better to wait until you are sure that the soil has warmed up and the danger of frosts has passed. Seeds sown in late April or May always catch up. The best way to ensure an early crop of course is to provide some form of protection like a cloche or fleece. Or you can do what I normally do and that is to sow in containers in a frame or warm greenhouse and plant out later. I do this with onion and leeks - I use modules - trays divided into cells - and sow two or three seeds per module and thin out to one plant when they are large enough. This system ensures minimum root dis-

turbance and allows the plants to get away quickly. You can do this with many brassica varieties - sprouts, cauliflower and early cabbage. It does help to prevent your seedlings falling prey of the dreaded flea beetle which seems to be such a menace today, much more than I can remember in the past. I also sow my runner beans in root trainers which are about 5 inches long and are ideal for runners that have a long root run. I know most people sow direct at the base of a row of canes and that's fine - the traditional date for sowing around here is Stow Fair day, usually the third Thursday in May, when most of the danger of frost has gone.

If you are interested in gardening then you'll have plenty to do through the course of this addition of the Grapevine so I'll wish you Happy Gardening.

Curly Kale

An Ascott Garden

"A Gard'ner 's work is never at an end., it begins with the year and continues to the next. " (*John Evelyn 1620-1706*)

When I was asked to write about our garden, it did not seem such a formidable task but looking back over the eight years since the beginning it poses quite a problem as to what to put in and what to leave out.

In the beginning we were confronted with a fairly blank canvas. The surrounding boundaries were edged with 15 feet *leylandii* hedging. Ivy covered the house walls and masses of concrete paving slabs. We had come from a mews garden, hence quite small, so being a keen gardener, I was quite thrilled at being able to widen the horizons to more varied plants and a few features which, over the years of visiting historic houses I had noted. I have been visiting Chelsea Flower Show for 30 years, so I have collected lots of information.

Our soil is very stony, mostly on river bed, being close to the Evenlode. We've put in

bags and bags of mushroom compost, farm manure etc., and it just disappears so it has now become an annual process of gathering the surface stones and topping up of compost.

Trees are incredibly beautiful things. To watch them grow and mature is most interesting. My selection varies from bark to leaf interest. First and foremost my favourite is the Liquidamber (*styraciflua*) for autumn colour. A Handkerchief tree (*Davidia involucrata*), which in a few years may have the bracts hanging like white handkerchiefs. There is a fine specimen

at Batsford Arboretum which is a magnificent sight in May and well worth a visit. In all thirty-four trees have been planted Ginkgo (*biloba*), *Magnolias*, *Gleditsia*, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and *Liriodendron tulipifera* which takes years to flower, to name but a few- I am only sorry that I shall not see the true beauty as we are all only caretakers to our present gardens.

I don't appear to garden by rules. I put in what I like, and as another of my interests is water colour painting I have lots of inspiration around.



A diseased hawthorn was removed by a mechanical digger which left an ideal hole for the pond. By the pond a willow arbour is situated. It's a quiet place to sit and watch the pond life, especially the dragonflies in summer. The arbour produces willow rods each year for a hand-made basket, another fascinating hobby.

Spring, with a collection of Hellebores and variety of obulbs is probably the best time for the garden. Fritillaries, Irises and Alliums are all in their glory, the latter becoming very popular over the last few years.

Summer provides full foliage and colour with herbaceous perennials and lilies with climbing clematis. Numerous birds have found their way to build their nests in the hornbeam hedges, Wagtails, Song Thrushes, Blackbirds, Gold Finches and Blue tits in the boxes provided. Regular visits of other birds, especially the Kingfisher who



perches on the stone cairn by the pond, even a Barn Owl patrols the railway embankment. Hardly a bird was visible in the early days.

“The best way to get real enjoyment out of a garden is to put on a wide straw hat, hold a little trowel in one hand and a cool drink in the other, and tell the man where to dig. “

- Charles Barr

Box hedging adds structure and is easy maintenance. Derby Day is said to be the traditional day to clip, so we've been told. Both varieties have been planted (*Buxus sempervirens* and *Buxus suffruticosa*).

The Far East has held a fascination for us for many years, and a visit to

Japan cemented a firm decision to have some oriental influence somewhere in the garden. The courtyard which is totally enclosed seemed the ideal place since it already had a cherry tree and wisteria, and small sitting area. So with easy care in mind we installed a bubble fountain feature, black and yellow stemmed bamboos, azaleas and camellias. Stepping stones, some Japanese ornaments and gravel finished it off. It brings back fond memories of far away places. perhaps another visit one day.

Autumn heralds another change with various trees predominating. Tree bark features highly with *Acer griseum*

(paperbark tree), Snake bark Acer turns bright pink, the Himalayan Birch is white, and the tactile feel of the *Prunus serrula* (Tibetan Cherry). *Cochicums* (autumn crocus) display a bright mauve flash of colour amongst the falling leaves. The pink berries of the *Sorbus cashmiriana* together with the bright red hips of the *Rosa rugosa* add more colour .

Our newest addition is a folly in the style of a ruined wall with a gothic window. It will be

clothed in rambling roses and clematis. A visit to Sudeley Castle gave me the idea, something similar but obviously a lot smaller version. Also a summer house has been built, from which we can start to enjoy our labours.

We are in a frost pocket and by the river which gave us some problems with some of my favourite plants as it's impractical to keep replacing year after year. It was disheartening to lose them to the harsh

elements. Overall however we are pleased with the results and as it develops and matures it is giving a pleasing effect.

I did have all the plants labelled but now having two mischievous Bichons that has all gone by the board. How they love chewing and bringing in the discarded labels. I now have most plants recorded on a rough plan. Moles occasionally make an unwanted appearance but the joys of living here in Oxfordshire far outweigh any misgivings. Discovering the surrounding countryside is indeed rewarding and a pleasure, dare I say, in retirement.

Constructing a garden is hard work but hopefully now;- "*We sit in other peoples' gardens, why not our own?*"

- *Mirabel Osler (from a gentle plea for chaos)*

*Diana Byatt
The Barn House*

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Nature Notes

Have you noticed that each year, in March, something magic happens? One day it's winter but the next everything changes and suddenly it's spring. The weather may still be cold and damp but something has changed. The first celandine flowers, the buds begin to swell on the hawthorn, hares gather in small groups in the fields and the birds begin their dawn chorus. No longer is the dawn quiet, except perhaps for the alarm call of the resident Blackbirds, now it's full of song as each bird establishes its territory. The Song Thrush high on the plum tree is the first to serenade the dawn in my garden, but Robins and Great Tits soon follow. Even the Woodpecker joins in, rapidly drumming on a tree trunk, sounding like the firing of a distant machine gun.

It's not only the bird's song that alerts you to the changing season but also the changes in their level of activity. No

longer are they content to spend the day searching for food or seeking shelter from the wind. Now they seem driven and purposeful. A Blackbird chases across the garden trying to drive other males away whilst at the same time flicking his tail at the watching female seeking to convince her that he is a desirable mate. The Song Thrush seems to have found a partner and they are feeding together in the field. The blue tits are exploring the new nest box and the local robin started to build a nest in the ivy only to be evicted by a blackbird. Pigeons are noisily coupling whenever the opportunity presents itself and almost every passing bird seems to be carrying a twig, feather or a beak full of moss, of which there is plenty in my lawn!

Also, there is a good deal of male aggression. The chaffinches, in their gaudy breeding plumage are staging aerial fights, hovering chest-to-chest

with claws outstretched, until they break apart and the weaker rival flees.

All this activity is directed at producing the next generation but before this can happen nests have to be constructed. How do birds know how to build a nest? Do they remember from their days as nestlings or is it genetically programmed into them? Whatever the mechanism, the skill employed is wondrous and varied.

Both blackbirds and song thrushes produce a bulky nest of stems, grass and moss carefully woven together with an inner cup made of mud and saliva. Blackbirds then line theirs with grass but the Song Thrush does not. Blackbird's nests are usually in dense bushes or in ivy against a wall but the Song Thrush prefers a tree. Although the male will gather nesting material it's the female who does the work!

Pigeons and Collared Doves build a flimsy

framework of small twigs with no real structure in any tree or hedgerow that is available. These must be the “jerry-builders” of the avian world. The chicks must expend a great deal of energy just making sure that they neither fall out, nor get blown out. The Wren, on the other hand, produces a cosy dome-shaped nest made of moss, grass and dead leaves, usually in a hole or crevice. In this case it is the male that does all of the work, often building several nests for his mate to choose. Once chosen the female will line the nest with feathers.

Some birds like to reuse their nests year after year, a rookery is a good example, whilst others will occupy and “improve” the nests of other species. Both the Kestrel and the Sparrowhawk will build an untidy structure of twigs, bark and leaves on the foundation of nests of other species. The Sparrowhawk prefers to nest high in a tree, preferably a conifer, but the

Kestrel will often choose a ledge on a tall building or cliff. Locally a Kestrel moved into a Barn Owl box. If it can the Kestrel will avoid nest building altogether simply using the old nest of a Pigeon, Crow or Magpie.

Not all birds nest in trees or bushes. Some, like the Skylark, nest on the ground, in a depression, on a tuft of grass or hidden within the growing crops. The female builds a cup of grass, sometimes lined with hair. All ground nesting birds are vulnerable to farming activity during their breeding period, which, in the case of skylarks, lasts from April to July.

Some birds, like the Little Owl do not build any nest. They look for a hollow tree, or some other suitable site and lay their eggs with no thought of comfort. The Great Spotted Woodpecker also nests in tree hollows but they will carve them out themselves, often taking up to three weeks to complete. Several holes may be prepared but only one is

used, the others are either abandoned or used as an overnight roost. The nest hole may be used over several years. The Green Woodpecker prefers to be lazy, although they will excavate their own nest hole they prefer to find a ready-made hole that has been created by other woodpeckers.

Finches and Tits all build exquisite nests. The Long-tailed Tit’s nest resembles a bag with a wide base, narrowing towards the top. The entrance is in the top third.

This complicated structure takes both male and female from nine to eighteen days to complete and is made of moss, bark, lichen, hair and cobwebs. Inside it is lined with feathers, wool and hair. Truly a palace amongst nests! The Chaffinch too uses similar materials to build a nest but with the addition of blades of grass. It too is comfortably lined, but is of a more open structure. It is the female Chaffinch that builds the nest, often before the trees are in full leaf. The

males, I guess, watch and pass opinion on the construction methods being used!

Nature is indeed wonderful in the variety of styles of nests, their locations and the way they are built.

Stuart Fox



New Face at the Swan Inn

The new manager, Alexander Young and his partner Donna Pemberton will have given anyone who has recently visited the Swan Inn a warm welcome. Alexander (who prefers to be called Alex) was born in Bulawayo in Rhodesia some 29 years ago. He spent 20 years in South Africa where he qualified as a litho printer. He first came to England in June 2000 and started working in a bar to supplement his income. At that point he realised that he enjoyed running a pub much more than working as a litho printer and decided to go into the license trade on a full time

basis. He left London and went to work for Young's Brewery as an assistant manager in East Grinstead for nine months and then came to Oxford, in June 2002, to work as a relief manager for Morrells.

He has now been at the Swan since the end of February and tells me that he instantly fell in love with the village, the pub and the people. Although Alex is only acting manager, at the time this article was written, he would very much like to take on the pub on a permanent basis. During the next three months he is going to be working very hard to show what the pub can

do and convince his bosses that he should be appointed as a full time manager. I can confirm that anybody visiting the pub will be assured of a warm and friendly welcome and I would hope that the village will support Alex and the pub, especially over the next few months.

Alex's message to the village is "this is a beautiful pub which was once the main social gathering point. I would like it to be that place once more. Come and visit and give my partner and I a chance to make you feel as welcome and at home as the villagers made us feel".

Welcome to Angelic Dogs Training School



Dog training classes have been running at The Tiddy Hall for one year now on a Saturday morning, each class lasting for an hour. These have proven to be very successful with both dogs and owners enjoying themselves whilst learning together.

The classes are run by myself, Sharon Wilson. I am a qualified Veterinary Nurse of 12 years with two lovely Collie crosses of my own. I have run Puppy Socialisation classes for 10 years, the feedback I received from the owners who attended has encouraged me to offer basic training classes as well on a part time basis at the Veterinary Practice I work at. These soon became busy and I now offer classes at The Tiddy Hall.

I have completed several canine behavioural courses and currently working towards a HNC

in canine behaviour and training.

We use the Clicker method of training, which is a fun, kind and effective way of training your dog, based on rewarding your dog for the correct behaviour.

Owners are encouraged to take a look at the world through their dogs' eyes, helping them to understand why their dog acts the way he/she does. They also learn how to communicate in a way their dog understands after all our human behaviour is so different from our dogs.

I keep classes small to encourage a calm friendly relaxed environment and to be able to offer owners lots of help and encouragement. Dogs of any age are welcome and placed in a suitable class. Children are encouraged to get involved; however an adult must accompany them.

Angelic Dogs Training School also runs the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme. This national scheme for all dogs and their owners is

designed to train dogs and their handlers how to become "Good Citizens." There is no age limit on either dog or owner but generally dogs must have completed their vaccination programme to take part. The initial Bronze training course is easier than you think and upon successful completion dogs (and owners) will receive a Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Certificate and Rosette. There are also two additional levels, the Silver and Gold.

Watching the dogs and their owners progress and achieve so much is very rewarding for me. Many dogs and owners have overcome a variety of problems through the training school. A bearded collie has stopped chasing traffic, a golden retriever has learnt to enjoy walking by his owners side rather than pull full steam ahead, a Labrador is currently learning how to interact with other dogs and a Pyrenean sheepdog learnt to greet peo-

ple nicely at the doorway plus many others.

Angelic Dogs Training School has brought many owners together sharing their little prob-

lems and having fun solving them. We often have reunions to meet up and play training games.

Work towards the perfect partnership between

you and your dog. Call 01993 831801 and speak to Sharon Wilson for more information.

Sharon Wilson

The Rural Crafts Network Finds a Home

It is with great pleasure that the Rural Crafts Network of West Oxfordshire can announce that it now has a Project Officer and an office thanks to funding obtained from West Oxfordshire Network's European Community Leader+ Programme, Defra and Seeda.

The project was launched at last year's Friends of the Wychwood Forest Fair where rural craft demonstrations and exhibitions contributed to making the Fair a very special event.

Over the next 12 months, the new Project Officer hopes to meet with many rural craft workers and those interested in learning these skills, to determine from them their needs and get their thoughts on how the Rural Craft Network can help to promote ru-

ral crafts. In addition to all this talking, training courses and demonstration events are being planned. Look out for:

- Family Learning weekend on Sunday 1 August and Family Fun week Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 August, both at Cogges Manor Farm,

- taster sessions in stone carving, hurdle and basket making, willow work, green wood working and many more.

If you are interested in rural crafts and would like to either learn new skills, share your skills with others, participate in demonstrations and events, become involved with the Rural Crafts Network in any way or simply give us your views on developing rural crafts, please contact Nicola Williamson on 07795037870 or email: nwilliamson@cfbt-hq.org.uk

Taster sessions in rural crafts

Greenwood Working Tasters:

Dates: 15 May OR 3 July 1.30-4.30 P.M. At Cogges Manor Farm Museum, Witney.

Cost £20

Concessionary £10

Felt-making and Spinning:

Date: 10 July 10-1P.M.

Venue: Lower hall, Methodist Church, Witney

Cost: £12

Concessionary £6

Blacksmithing:

Date: Wednesday 4 August Time: 5-9 P.M.

Venue: Bridewell Organic Gardens, Wilcote

Cost: £35 (2 students:1 instructor)

For bookings and information tel: Rural Crafts Network on 07795037870

Nicola Williamson

The New Church Organ

Holy Trinity Church has a new organ, well not very new, it was built in about 1880. It's a huge improvement on our dear old one built by the Positive organ company with a shortened keyboard, few stops and no pedals. Various visiting organists had suggested that we needed something better, so we asked the Diocesan organ advisers if they could help us find one.

They found a beautiful instrument by Heard and Sons of Truro, which was being restored in the workshop of Tony Foster-Waite near Newbury. For the expert this has the following specifications:-

GREAT

Open Diapason	8 foot
Clarabella	8 foot
Dulciana	8 foot
Principal	4 foot

SWELL

Lieblich Gedact	8 foot
Gamba	8 foot
Dulcet	4 foot

PEDAL

Bourdon	16 foot
---------	---------

COUPLERS

Swell to Grant
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal

This instrument has now been installed and fits perfectly into the space where the old one stood.

The last organ had been restored some years ago with a legacy from The Revd P.G. Smith. The new one has been partly paid for by the memorial fund for Mrs Monica Badger and the Parochial Church Council wishes to dedicate it to both of these people who contributed so much to the life of our church.

The remaining costs for this project are being raised by private subscription and contributions from various charities so there will be no call on parish funds. As a final touch it has been suggested that we might gild the visible pipes; something that could be a communal effort.

Opening Recital

Barry Williams, one of our Diocesan Organ Advisers is giving an inaugural recital on Saturday 8th May at 7.00pm. Come and assist in the dedication and hear what our new organ sounds like.

Refreshments will be provided.

Anthony Wood



Iraq

One morning last May, I awoke in a strange room, in a large ornate bed surrounded by opulent and gold inlaid furniture. Then I remembered where I was - in the VIP bedroom of a converted hanger at Baghdad International Airport.

It was a few weeks after the 'end' of the war in Iraq and I had flown up the previous day in a Cessna plane from Kuwait, but due to the night curfew, had had to spend a night as a guest of the American forces. Next day I got a lift with some British guys working for DHL and they drove me to the centre of Baghdad, where I booked into the Palestine Hotel. This was the hotel used by the international press and TV media. I then arranged the hire of a taxi and an interpreter so I could get out and around the city.

I had travelled to Iraq to make an assessment of the needs of animals for emergency disaster relief on behalf of a consor-

tium of international animal welfare groups. In Baghdad I was able to meet senior veterinary officials in the Iraq State Veterinary Service and United Nation FAO representatives as well as senior Army personnel and make a courtesy call at the British Embassy.

After five days, I had finished my work and had booked to fly back to Kuwait, but the flight had had to be cancelled as the plane had crash-landed the day before. I managed to hitch a lift with a TV crew travelling in a small convoy down the road to Basra. We set off, complete with flak jackets, only to have to turn back halfway. There was then a mad dash back to the airport where I was lucky to get a flight back to Kuwait on a transport plane flown by some crazy Russian pilots.

Three weeks later in June, I was back in Iraq, this time with two helpers and satellite phones along with six and a half tonnes of veterinary

medicines for the farm livestock such as goats, sheep, cattle and water buffalo. The US Military were very supportive and we flew the medicines from a US air base in Kuwait in a Hercules aircraft and set up a cold storeroom in an aircraft hanger at a US military camp at Al Kut. The antibiotic medicines had to be kept below 25 degrees Celsius and with the outside temperature reaching 45 to 50 degrees Celsius; we had to obtain a generator and air coolers to maintain the correct temperature. We hired two GMG Suburban vehicles and a refrigerated van; so that we could distribute these much needed medicines to 15 Veterinary Hospitals around central and southern Iraq. At the time of my two visits, Baghdad was a chaotic shambles -looting had been widespread and unchecked, there was no electricity, no telephones, a shortage of petrol, long queues for calor gas for cooking, the

streets were full of rubbish and there was no law enforcement as the civil service and police had been disbanded.

The criminals had been released from prison. When it was curfew time, the US soldiers went back to their barracks and a culture of revenge killings and the brute force of gun law took over- when you lay in your bed at night you could hear the shooting going on all around the city and usu-

ally there were at least a dozen bodies of victims taken to the morgue the following morning.

The American military forces had fought a short war with little resistance, but were hopelessly ill equipped for the reconstruction of the country. Many of the troops were young recruits with little experience of foreign cultures or sensitivity to other religions. Often these recruits had never been away

from home before and were scared and nervous they would shoot first and then ask questions. The only time that I was worried for my own safety was when entering the Zoo Park in Baghdad, a young American soldier, standing by a tank, pointed his gun at me and said that if I walked any closer his orders were to shoot me -and he meant it!

John Gripper

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Dodgy Builders

We hear a lot about dodgy builders but here are one or two tales about the other side of the coin. I'm talking of nearly forty years ago when I first went into business. A gentleman I had been doing some work for had an acquaintance who was moving into a cottage, which he was going to rent. She wanted to have some decorating done, basically the cottage was sound, and she wanted the walls and ceiling etc. given a coat of paint to freshen it up. But the problem was that she was moving in a weeks time, and she wanted the work completed before she actually moved in. She was a well-spoken lady in her early sixties and seemed quite pleasant. Owing to such a short time before she was moving in I could only spare her three days, but I told her however if I could get someone to give me hand we might be able to get an the painting done which she required. I gave her an es-

timate for the work, which I would complete in the three days, and an estimate for all the work she wanted done. Well as it turned out I managed to get a couple of painters to give me a hand in the evenings, and we worked three nights until about 9.30pm-10.00pm and managed to complete an the work. I met the lady at the cottage and she was more than pleased with the work and asked me to drop by with my bill. Two or three days later I went with the bill and when she opened the bill she went quite hysterical, and said this was more than I had estimated. I informed her that if her memory served her right I had given her two estimates and I had completed an the work as she had requested. Anyway she wrote me out the cheque for the full amount but in due course she had the cheque stopped. So off I go to the solicitors to see what the situation was, and he more or less

laughed me out of his office. Some years later I discovered that in situations like this in those days (probably today) it's not what you know it's who you know. I continued for quite a number of years for the gentleman who had recommended me to her so I think there's your answer. I did however get paid for the lower estimate. It was a lesson well learnt as in the future any work of any consequence was in writing or I knew my client very well.

Another little episode was funny enough was for another lady about three doors away. This was a year or two after. It was a small cottage she had just bought and she required a few alterations and repairs etc. She called in at the cottage on a Saturday morning, we had a general discussion about progress etc. and informed her that there was just a little bit of plastering to be completed, which would be done on the Monday

morning and the job would be complete, which was well ahead of schedule as she was not due to move in for another three weeks. However about mid-morning on the Monday my wife managed to get hold of me and said the lady in question had been on the phone wanting to know why we were not at the cottage and she was most aggressive with her, So off I go to her house and the housekeeper asked me in and the lady was sat in an easy chair in her lounge. I asked her what her problem was or what the problem was, and she said why are you not at the cottage. I told her that the plaster had not arrived but there was no problem as she was not due to move in for another three weeks, and I informed her that the plasterer may turn up at any time, and I could not see any problem. I could not get her to see reason and she was quite aggressive, so I left. I went straight to the cottage removed all my kit

and materials, took down anything that was removable~ and said to myself “I would rather sweep the roads than work for people like that”, Anyway about two or three weeks later I was telling another client of mine about the episode, and he said “Send her the bill, she was drunk”. I said “what? A well to

do lady, well in her sixties and apparently very wealthy, drunk at 10am in the morning”. He said, “Send her the bill”. Anyway, I made up my account less what I had removed and sent it off. The cheque came back return of post!

The tales go on and on...

A Builder

NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY



CHURCH FÊTE
Saturday 3rd July 2004
on the Playing Field
at 1 p.m.

Barbecue, Beer Tent, Cakes, Plants , Preserves,
Ice Cream,
Cream Teas and lots more. Children’s activities.
Car Boot

In aid of Church Funds

School News

Ascott Pre-school

Ascott under Wychwood Pre School has recently been awarded a £5000 lottery grant under the National Lottery Awards for All scheme. The Pre School has been based at the Tiddy Hall (the local village hall) for about 20 years and decided to use this grant to Astro turf the rather muddy garden area to the rear of the hall.

At the end of February the grass was removed and the garden transformed. In keeping with the pre-school's strong emphasis on outdoor education and play this will now provide a



robust and safe open-air area for the pre school children - whatever the weather - as well as a valuable extra outdoor resource for anyone using the village hall.

A lot of hard work went into carefully writing the application and the Pre School are

thrilled to have received such a large sum of money. Our voluntary team of fundraisers are now working on money raising ideas for exciting equipment to be used on this great new Astro turf area.

Wychwoods Library

We often comment that the Wychwoods do not enjoy the full range of local services that are available in the larger towns of West Oxfordshire.

However, we are blessed with a very fine Library in Milton, which serves the local area. Not only does the Library

supply a wide range of books, including reference and fiction, both for adults and children but they also have videos, DVD's, audio books and can offer Internet connection and photocopying services.

The Library's opening hours are: -

Monday & Friday

2pm - 5pm and

6pm - 7.30pm

Wednesday

10am - 12 noon and

2pm - 5pm

Saturday

9.30am - 12 noon

If you are not a member do not delay, join and support this valuable local service.

Sport

Ascott Utd Football Club - Season 2003 / 04

In a less than convincing season, Ascott Utd FC have finally completed their league games. Unfortunately there have been few highlights this season, the acquisition of new goal posts probably the only one worth noting! Yes, the season has been that bad, with a team spending more time bandaging and strapping, than warming up, it was little surprise that we would struggle in a higher division.

Division 3 started with two new teams to the league and it is one of the new sides,

Millpark FC, that look like winning the Division and they have managed to score a total of 17 goals against us! Ascott Utd however, look certain of relegation, unless the League is reshuffled again or Minster Lovell Reserves fail to win their last game.

On a more serious note, the majority of the senior players will be calling it a day this year and it is becoming increasingly likely that we will not have enough players to be able to enter a team into the Witney & Dis-

trict League next season. After years of success and fund raising it would be a shame for Ascott not to have a football team, but unless a manager and some players are found the club will be forced to fold.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the team, please contact the below on 01993 883562 and hopefully we can keep this club going. A team has to be entered into the W & D FA on or before 1st June 2004.

Allister Moore
Sec. Ascott Utd FC

Wychwood Football

I hope you enjoyed playing for Wychwood this past season.

For those involved from the start it was like being on a roller coaster. Prior to the season commencing we wondered if there would be enough players? 'We' found them in time for the start of the season only for them to leave in a short time. 'We' then had to suspend our fixtures to

once again find new players. By the end of October we finally found the committed quality players we needed to continue and above all compete with the other teams in the League. I say 'we' but great credit must be given to our long term players who were determined to carry on and find the players not once but twice in a very short time.

We now had enhanced the squad with Tom's - Fletcher and Perry, Tim Senior and Ben Greatbatch. A special mention to Tom Fletcher who scored no less than 23 goals in eleven games. It took a little time for us 'to get to know each other' but we were now in with a chance in every match. We had some very close calls before we finally got

our first victory by 4-3 at the end of November against Summertown. The next game we were all up for another victory - just failing 5-4 with what would have been an equalising goal ruled out when the whistle went for full time as the ball entered the net - precision timing indeed!

The two months from early December to early February saw us go without any form of competitive match, due to lack of fixtures and waterlogged pitches - we played one friendly in this period against Summertown and beat them again! We re-commenced the League programme with two games against Witney United losing 2-0 in the first game and beating them 3-0 in the strong 'artic wind' a week later. Our final League game of the season saw us lose 4-2 at home to Bullingdon.

We concluded the season with the John Byles Cup. Dan Scarsbrook rejoined us for this competition. We were grouped with St Edmunds, Wantage

Town and Summertown. We opened against St Edmunds which was by far our best performance of the season - without exception all were on top form that day - we beat them 12-3 to give a faultless display against a team who were up for it and expected to win. We soon came back down to earth with a bump with our next display when we lost 5-1 in gale force winds against Wantage Town and in what turned out to be our last competitive match of the season a strong Summertown side got their revenge in this Cup by beating us 3-1. At the point of writing Wantage Town look certain to go through to the Quarter Finals.

Throughout the season no fewer than 30 players 'signed on'. At the end eighteen were actively involved and several had to share appearances. On occasions some had to put up with not getting on at all due to the League Rules that only three of the five subs can be used! We could have done with

more fixtures to keep the momentum going but it seems 'the way of the world' to minimise the number of fixtures for this and similar age groups, which also applies to other Leagues. There are only so many friendly games you can play in a season!

Thanks are due to all of the following for their commitment and exceptional help - Patricia Brooks and Chris Barnes. Also to the Parents who attend regularly and take the boys to the away games. Thanks also to Pat Wright for his efforts in putting up the new goals up at Ascott and Mary Barnes for her help and support throughout the season.

Finally regarding next season - its up to you if you want to carry on playing for Wychwood in the same 'Elsevier' Inter Counties Youth League. You now have a quality squad but to avoid the problems of this past season it would be appreciated if you would make up your mind sooner rather than later!

Paul Marsh

Update on the Wychwood Under 11s Football

We have completed our Witney & District League fixtures , finishing a creditable third and boasting the meanest defence with the fewest goals scored against . Our record was w10 lost 5 d1 .

A slightly protracted end to the league schedule with many games hit by postponements due to weather affected pitches. I'm pleased to say that the Ascott playing fields have stood up to the elements very well .

This season has seen our squad adapt very well to the size of the Ascott pitch , and with the speed of our full backs , wingers and front men given us a real home advantage. The slope is only a minor concern , far outweighed by the excellent playing surface .

The league have organised n supplementary cup competition and so we now have a further five matches to play from March to May .

May 8th sees the Wychwood FC Awards event , a once a year get together for all the age

groups to present player trophies and round ups of the years progress .

Results of the U11 awards will be given in the next issue.

Squad 2003/4

Mathew Markwell, Will Blencowe, Toby Case , Jamie Hazell , Sam Taylor, Ralph Cattermole, James Trevers , Henry Stratford , Luke Agnew, Robert Watts , Jamie Wiltshire, Hugo Sperry, Josh Ridley



Ascott Cricket Club, Season 2004

The summer season is almost upon us again, and after a fairly successful 2003 season, Ascott Cricket Club are preparing themselves, mentally if not physically, for another season of fair play, fun and jaunts to the local hostelry!!

Last year saw an improvement on support and playing members, for those who came to

support, as club captain I'd like to say thank you, we hope to see you again in 2004.

Our **home** fixtures this year are as follows:

May 9th, 23rd & 30th

June 6th & 27th

July 18th

August 8th, 22nd & 29th

September 19th

We are still on the look out for fresh talent (CRICKETERS!!) to

Cricket Club con't...

join our friendly club, young or old, fit or unfit, it doesn't matter. If you enjoy the game and would like to support your village club please contact **Clive Jowett on 01993 831916**, if I'm not available, please leave a

contact No. And I WILL get back to you.

Membership to the club involves an annual subscription of £30 for over 16's and £12.50 for under 16's. Match fees are £4.00 for over 16's and £2.50 for under 16's.

Our season starts in May and we only play Sunday friendly matches.

Come and enjoy the best Cricket teas in Oxfordshire and post game chat down the Pub!

Clive Jowett

Coldstone Angling Club

21 June - our first competition took place at Manor Farm Lake. The match was won by Barry Barnes with a nice mixed bag of fish weighing 16lbs, 8oz.

Our second match was fished at Rye Hill Golf Course and was won by Bob Mills with a fine weight of 39lbs, 15oz - mainly carp.

At our third match on Banbury Reservoir Pete Upton was victorious with another fine weight of 40lbs, 6oz comprised of perch, tench, bream and roach.

Barry Barnes won our fourth match with a truly magnificent bag of carp weighing a stunning 120lbs, 7oz.

Returning to Manor Farm Lake, the match

was won by Steve Arthurs with 13lbs 6oz

At our first match on the Evenlode, Don Barnes caught 21lb 8oz consisting of Chub and bream. We then returned to Banbury Reservoir where John Swan emerged victorious with a good mixed bag of fish - 26lbs, 13oz.

Our next match fished at Lodge Farm, Hook Norton and was won by 'Yours Truly' with 46 lbs of carp.

The following match on the Oxford Canal at Heyford offered a totally different type of fishing and produces another win for Barry Barnes of 7lbs, 2oz - a nice weight for the canal.

Back to the river for the next one, once again

won by Barry Barnes - I sometimes think I maybe taught him too well!. Total weight 29lbs, 7oz.

Pete Upton won the match on our return to the canal with 4lbs 8oz and Colin Cox caught 10lbs, 13oz of chub and roach back on Evenlode. Staying on the Evenlode, Steve Arthurs won our subsequent match with a fine weight of 20lbs, 12 oz.

Our Christmas match was won by Pete Upton with a magnificent weight of 51lbs, 5oz - a new match record for the Evenlode. The total match weight for the day was a tremendous 179lbs.

In truly wet and windy conditions, Barry Barnes won our next

match once again with 9lbs, 9oz.

The Evenlode was now in flood and we fished the following match at, Butler Lake, Rollright. Mark Rivet won this one with 63lbs, 12oz. – mainly carp.

Last but not least, we returned to the Oxford Canal, Heyford, Barry's favourite venue. He showed us why winning with 9lbs 1oz.

Don Barnes

FARMERS MARKETS 2004

Witney - 3rd Thursday
of the Month

Woodstock - 1st Satur-
day of the Month

Chipping Norton - 4th
Friday of the Month

Charlbury - Quarterly
on Saturdays (Dates to
be Confirmed)

Further details from
Thames Valley Farm-
ers' Market Associa-
tion on:

0870 2414762

or

visit the web site at:
www.tvfm.co.uk

Tiddy hall -April 2004

In January we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the opening of the new Tiddy Hall with a local band, Ragged Edge, a disco and supper. The evening was well attended, the food was excellent and everyone enjoyed themselves, in fact some seemed quite reluctant to leave!

Unfortunately, on a more serious note, we are sad to report that there has been some vandalism on the outside of the hall, with damage to the rainwater down-pipes, covers on the lights broken/removed and graffiti scratched onto the wall. We would please ask anyone seeing damage done to the hall or people acting suspiciously around the hall to report them to a committee member or the police.

Committee members:
Roger Shepherd (Chair-
man) -830227 Lyn
Collins (Secretary) -
830114

Kathy Pearce (Treas-
urer) -830058

Rosemary Dawbarn
(Booking Clerk) -831632
Simon Gidman -831479
June Holmes -830272
Pauline Plant -830349
Adam Scully -830221
Ros Shepherd -
830227

A date for your diary -Saturday 22nd May -The Abe Singers -7.30 pm

This will be the 5th time the Abe Singers have performed at Tiddy. They first offered to hold a concert as a fund-raiser in 1994. It was so well received and the choir enjoyed themselves so much that we all decided to make it a bi-annual event. For the last two visits we have arranged the seating around tables and this gives a more informal feel to the evening.

The Abe Singers was formed in 1989 when Daphne Abe (Roger Shepherd's sister) left full time music teaching in order to concentrate on other musical projects. The choir started with a handful of

Tiddy Hall con't...

keen ladies and has gone from strength to strength. They use a broad spectrum of vocal music, both classical and modern, all arranged for women's voices. In recent years the choir has been in demand throughout Kent (their

local area) and beyond, raising money for charities, in particular the Hospice in the Weald.

If you would like tickets please contact Ros Shepherd on 830227 or Lyn Collins on 830114. Tickets cost £6 each (Seniors/Juniors £3)

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830122

Tiddy Hall Events

Regular Activities

Monday to Thursday
Mornings Pre-School-
Contact Pauline Plant
07968006451

Saturday Mornings
Dog Training. Contact
Sharon Wilson 01993
831801.

To book the Tiddy
Hall contact: **Rosemary
Dawbarn 01993 831632.**

Friday Mornings
Mother and Toddler
Group. Contact Pauline
Plant 07968006451.

Tuesday Evenings
Yoga. Contact David
Billham 01993 842061.

Wednesday Evenings
Badminton. Contact
Chris Morgan 01993
831958.

Thursday Evenings
Yoga. Contact Chris Set-
ters 01608 676236

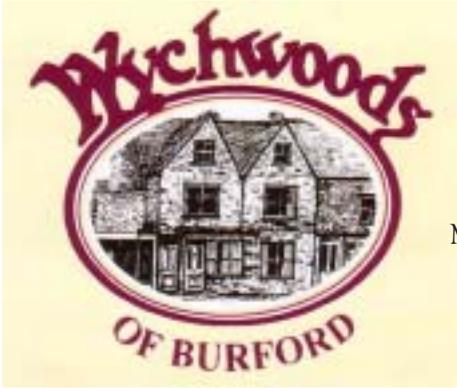
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**For more information contact:
COLIN FREEMAN o.s.m & I.T.E.C.**

On
HOME 01993 212337
MOBILE 07881 583191

or
E-MAIL:- colin_freeman2002@yahoo.co.uk
Or visit my web site
www.holistic-practitioner.co.uk



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Email: sales@wychwoods.com

Website: www.wychwoods.com

Associated Park Lane Office

Wychwoods Estate Agents Ltd t/a Wychwoods

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Our new office in Milton Under Wychwood is now open.

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So if you are considering a move or just want to look into any options that may be available to you, contact us for a FREE MARKET APPRAISAL or an informal chat and some advice.

Poem

When I awake some
April morn
Happy as the lark on
high
All around the
spring adorn'd
The hedgerows and
the fields and sky

And though the
meadows wet with dew
Bright sunlit rays will
warm the air
Over wildflower
carpets I will go
Up hillsides wander
without care

Though many springs
have now gone by
And I have lost the
dreams of youth
Life holds wonder to
the eye
Each reborn springtime
to the earth

Great men are pleased
with richer things
Others seek material
gain
Voicing hopes that days
may bring
Everything they can
attain

Richer is the man
who knows
Nature is the one
true friend
Over joyed when
cuckoo sings
When spring breaks
winters hold again
- Fred Russell

TIDDY HALL

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ABE SINGERS



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7.30 pm for 8.00 pm start

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01993 830227 or 830114
Tickets £6 (Seniors/Juniors £3)