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# The Ascott Grapevine

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## Grapevine Appeal

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

Although 'The Grapevine' does receive support from the Parish Council and the PCC, it only raises a limited amount of revenue from advertising. 'The Ascott Grapevine' survives mainly on donations. If you would like to help The Grapevine continue, any donation large or small would be appreciated. You can give a donation to any member of the editorial team.

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in the Grapevine please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas.

**Articles for the Winter issue of The Grapevine should be submitted by 5th January 2010.**

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

*Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,  
Wendy Pearse, Maggie Lyon.*

## Content & Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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## A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends

The old saying '*Tempus fugit*' – time flies – has never seemed more true for me. It seems like only yesterday I was writing an article about my planned sabbatical. Now it is all over – and I have to wait for another 10 years before I can take another one! Time flies indeed!



So what did I do on Sabbatical? Well, much as I set out to do: I spent time with my family; I spent three weeks away on retreat at various monasteries; I did some weaving; I flew my kites; I read some books and I visited some long neglected friends. Amongst all of that I was able to find space to pray and just 'to be'. But I think one of the things that I valued the most was not having evening meetings and being able to spend time with the children every night. Sitting in the garden at the Vicarage, with William on my lap, watching Barn Owls flying in the meadow is a memory that I will long treasure. The whole Sabbatical was pure gift and I am very grateful to all those – especially Mary – who made it possible for me.

So what next? Who knows! I returned back to work on Sunday 16 August and since then I have been spending time catching up with what has been happening since May and visiting people. I am enjoying being back in the Benefice and worshipping and praying in our beautiful buildings.

Over the coming months our attention as a Benefice will be focused on worship. We will be reviewing our experimental pattern of worship, and looking at how we might do things in the future.

In preparation for this, I will be preaching on the subject of worship: looking at such questions as 'What are we doing when we come to Church?', 'Why do we worship?' 'Who is our worship for?' and 'How can we best worship?'

If you are interested in the future type of services we have in our Churches, and when we have them, please try to come along and join the debate. After all, as William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury at the turn of the nineteenth century so rightly said, "The Church is the one institution that exists for those outside it"!

Kind regards

**Mark Abrey**

## BIRTHS

On the 6th September 2009, to Lisa and Peter Greening, twin sons, Monty and Nat.

## CHRISTENINGS

On Sunday the 11th October 2009, Georgina Rose Pratley, daughter of Philip and Helen Pratley.

## DEATHS

On the 22nd July 2009, Peter George Badger, son of the late Arthur John and Monica Badger, aged 57 years.

On the 30th July 2009, Pamela Joan Sheppard, formerly of Yew Tree Cottage, High Street, aged 92 years.

On the 16th September 2009, Cyril Charles Edginton, aged 86 years.

## WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The new season began with a very interesting talk about the villages and churches between Burford and Lechlade by Derek Cotterill.

On November 19<sup>th</sup> at Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. Kate Tiller will give a talk entitled Chapel and Community – The Impact of Methodism in Rural Nineteenth Century Oxfordshire.

**There is no meeting in December.**

Then on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010, again in Milton Village Hall at 7.30.p.m. Ken Betteridge will talk about Exploring the Western Half of Wychwood Forest.

Old and new members are welcome. Subscriptions are £6 for an individual and £9 for a couple which includes a copy of Wychwoods History when published. Visitors are welcome at any meeting at £2 per head.

**More information about the Society can be obtained from Wendy Pearse on 831023.**



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## CENTENARY OF INCOME TAX

The following is an extract from the Bristol Times and Mirror, Tuesday, November 16, 1897 that I chanced across. What a shame we missed the opportunity to celebrate this great event in 1997!

“These days we celebrate all sorts of anniversaries, jubilees, and centenaries, but to date we have not observed signs of any movement to celebrate in a fitting manner the centenary of the income-tax, which is due next year. There was something of the nature of an income-tax imposed early in the sixteenth century, to enable us to carry on war with France; but the thing was not firmly established on anything

like the present basis until 1798, when Mr Pitt carried a scheme “as an aid for the prosecution of war” – the war being, of course, against France. It was a war tax pure and simple, and it has never been popular except in time of war. There have been protests and even riots against the imposition, and Governments have tried all sorts of expedients in the hope of gilding the pill because of their natural reluctance to sacrifice so useful an income. Reference was made to the subject by Mr Lewis Fry at the Dolphin banquet, and he humorously predicted even greater popularity for the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he should find himself

able to take off a penny. Alluding to what the Chancellor said in reply, the *Birmingham Post* feels “bound to remind him that eightpenny income-tax rankles in the breast of a good many who earn anything but a modest competence, and who feel that the imposition is one which ought not to be recognised as a matter of course during a Unionist Administration.” It is not likely that the general public will take any steps for marking the centenary of the income-tax with rejoicings and festivities. But there is fine scope for the Government. They might celebrate the occasion by reducing the tax to sixpence.”

For those too young to remember, eightpence equates to about 3 ½ ‘new pence’, in other words 3 ½ % income tax. Whatever would they have made of 50% or 10 shillings in the pound! Perhaps we need to seriously consider ‘protests and even riots against the imposition’!

**Tim Lyon**

**DEADLINE FOR  
WINTER 2010 EDITION**

**JANUARY 5TH**

**PLEASE DON'T BE LATE**

## **SO YOU THINK YOU'RE FUNNY**

Someone once wrote you can accuse a man of many things, but never of not having a sense of humour. What is a sense of humour – do we all have it? I know I have been guilty of thinking I was funny, when all I was doing was annoying people, until they were glad to see the back of me.

Is wit the same as being funny? Wit can be destructive and cruel. I see many young comedians on T.V. I envy their wit, but I don't find many funny. If I have ever written anything half amusing it hasn't come from being the happy life and soul of the party, it's come from being miserable and depressed. I think the best of British comedy comes from these. I am thinking of Hancock, Steptoe and Son, Rising Damp and One Foot in the Grave.

I have often heard ladies say, when asked what qualities they look for in a man, that they must include a sense of humour. That's a joke for a start. I suggest you put this to the test. Invite a lady out for the evening. If she accepts, turn up for your date wearing dirty overalls and wellingtons.

Perhaps we are at our most amusing when we don't mean to be.

Many years ago now, I often went with friends at weekends, walking on the Mendips in Somerset. We would pitch our tents on a camp site in Prid-dy. This one Saturday I decided I would walk alone, where my Dad grew

*Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

up around the hills above Shepton Mallet, a distance of about six or seven miles. I had been given a pair of knee-length brown leather boots, which I thought looked smart. From first putting them on, they felt a bit tight, and sure enough by the time I got back to Priddy I was limping badly, with big blisters on both heels – only to be told by Sandra, our walking companion, they were the sort of boots worn by men of a certain sexual leaning. I couldn't get them off quick enough. But they wouldn't come off, even with Steve and Sandra pulling on them, and dragging me for yards across the grass. After a lot of cursing and tugging, I did get them off, never to wear them again. On another occasion on the same site, on a very wet and windy Saturday afternoon, Steve and I thought we were being clever and could help two young ladies put their tent up. After about an hour, with bits of tent frame spread around the grass, they had to seek help elsewhere. It must have been very funny for people watching, but on both occasions, I DIDN'T think it was.

So what do I think is funny? I will give three examples.

I was a great fan of the Goon Show, so this is the first.

***Ned Seagoon dragged from the sea:***

**SEAGOON:** That sea is taller than me.

**BLOODNOCK:** It ought to be, it's older.

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The second is one of my favourite jokes told by Blaster Bates who became well known for blowing up old buildings. In later life he became a popular after dinner speaker.

***This is the joke:***

**I was walking along the road the other day, when I saw a blind man with a white stick and a guide dog. After a while the dog cocked it's leg and wet all down the blind man's trouser leg. I thought I must go and tell him what the dog had just done. As I crossed the road the blind man took from his pocket a biscuit and gave it to the dog. When I got near enough I said to the man, "You are very generous and kind after what your dog has just done." "Am I," the blind man replied, "I'm trying to find which end its head is, so I can kick its backside."**

My third example is a cartoon of a man being tortured on a rack.

**The caption reads, Would you mind repeating the question please?**

So there you have it. What would a Trickcyclist make of it, I wonder? Perhaps after all a good comedy is like making love – it's all a matter of timing.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**Fred Russell**

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## CHANGES IN THE HAY FIELD

I had a spare field of grass this year, so I contacted a haymaking friend and neighbour, and with the hot, dry weather at the end of June, the job was done in quick time. Chatting about it afterwards we agreed that the basic principles of haymaking are the same as they always have been, but what has changed is the method of doing the job. The crop has always been cut, spread out to dry, and when dry enough, then gathered up and stored. If it is too sappy or damp when it is stacked or baled, it can go caked, rotten, mouldy, dusty or even set itself on fire. Any significant rain during the second half of the drying process will have a dramatic effect; the colour becomes less green and more brown, the smell becomes less pleasant and the feed value for livestock is much reduced.

Traditionally grass was mown by men with scythes, then spread on the ground by gangs of people who subsequently tedded and turned it with rakes and forks until it was dry enough to gather in. This would have taken anywhere between

three and ten days, or even more, dependent entirely on the weather. The hay was then forked up into rows of cocks about 1.5 metres in diameter at the base and 80 cms high. A wagon or cart was drawn between the rows and if the cocks were properly built, they could with a fork, be picked up clean at one lift and pitched up onto the wagon. Back in the rickyard, the wagon was unloaded and the hay built into a rick. This process can hardly have changed at all over thousands of years, ever since farmers started feeding livestock through the winter months. As late as 1880 J.S. Calvert's Diary records a dozen men with scythes mowing grass in a field on Fairspeare Farm.



A major advance was made in the 1880s with horse drawn grass mowers being used. These had a reciprocating

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cutter bar which moved at high speed and cut the grass with a scissor action. The drawback was that if the grass was twisted about or knocked down by heavy rain, they would frequently clog up and need to be cleared by hand, and the blades needed sharpening every two hours or so. This type of mower was later adapted to operate with tractors.

A range of horse drawn tedders and turners were being used early in the 1900s but I can remember several farms in the mid 1940s, where hay was being pitched by hand up onto wagons. By then however, most farms were using a sweep. This was a wooden frame with long wooden tines. Two horses were used, one each side to pull it forward along a thick row of hay. The man in control walked behind it and when the sweep was full, he drove it to where the hayrick was being built. He then lifted the back of the sweep so that it pitch -poled over and emptied the hay off. Many farms had an elevator to carry the hay up onto the rick usually driven by a petrol engine. By 1950 most sweeps were fitted to the front of tractors making it quicker and easier; also at this time some farms were sweeping the hay to a stationary baler and the subsequent hay bales, about 50kgs each, were stacked on trailers and taken away to a barn.

We used a hayloader to collect up the hay. This was towed behind a wagon and it lifted the hay up onto the load whilst it was moving forward. From the

age of seven I was able to drive the tractor which towed the whole assemblage along a row of hay, whilst dad built the load on the wagon. The hay was then taken back to the rick and I was able to help by lifting the forkfuls across the rick when grandfather was building the side opposite to where dad was unloading. When he worked round to the side by the load, grandfather would say, 'Right. You tread the middle down now Jim, to keep the rick firm.' This was quite hard work when you sank up to your knees in loose hay. The ricks would settle to about two thirds of the original height and sometimes developed a lean which would increase alarmingly if they were not propped up in time. In later years dad was happy for me to be builder and I'm pleased to say that most of my ricks stood upright without props.

By the early 1950s the pick-up baler was a common sight. This was a major change and the bales, now tied with strings, were produced much quicker and were easier to handle. A small wooden sledge with a man standing on the front, was towed close behind the baler. He built a stack of six or eight bales as they were ejected and then pushed them off the sledge. He had quite a rough ride and was usually standing in a cloud of dust billowing from the baler. Many farmers were baler happy at first and baled field after field before collecting any in and

it was a common sight to see hundreds of bales sodden in the rain.

In the 1960s the man-saver bale sledge became available. This could be emptied from the tractor and could collect about a dozen bales at a time. Also about this time a bale grab was invented which fitted onto a fore-end loader and could lift a stack of six bales up onto a load. Previous to this all bales had to be lifted from the ground by hand. Ironically the man-saver bale sledge left them loose so

they had to be stacked into sixes before you could use the bale lift. Bale elevators were used to lift the bales onto the stack when they were unloaded. By this time much of the grass was being made into silage but that's another story.

The grass mowing job became much easier in the 1970s with the advent of the drum mower. The blades revolve at very high speed and slice through everything from loose grass to a badly battered crop. They can last through a season with little attention.

The ultimate improvement came with the flat eight system. A mechanical sledge behind the baler guides the bales and leaves them in flat squares of eight. Then an hydraulically operated bale grab on the front of the loader on the tractor will pick up each set of eight and carry it to a load or a stack.

This removes most of the manual labour involved in the hay making job, and after many years of mauling bales by hand, it is a joy to sit on the tractor seat, pick up eight bales at a time and lift them onto a stack, eleven layings high.



The latest introduction is the “big square baler” which is drawn by a large high powered tractor at a fast pace and makes bales about 8 feet long weighing about 3 bales to a tonne. The drawback is that the hay must be thoroughly dry or it will go bad in the centre of the bales.

So after making hay in my grass field for the last 60 years, it was a change to see someone else doing it. The grass was mown very early on the Monday morning, then spun out and thrown about several times over two days. On the Wednesday afternoon the hay was crisp and dry enough to be in perfect condition. So the family team was mobilised. The daughter fresh from taking A Levels, gave up her afternoon out to line up the hay in thick rows. The father followed behind with the baler. Then the son, home from

college, loaded the eights onto trailers and took the loads up to the barn. The brother unloaded the bales with another loader and stacked them expertly in the barn. The sweet scented hay was cleared from the 17 acre Honeydale Field and stacked away high and tidy in little more than five and a half hours, and all but a few bales were untouched by hand.

Whilst watching the progress from the sanctuary of a shady patch, I decided that my generation of farming people have lived through a unique period of time. No-one living earlier or later would have seen or will be able to see so many changes in their lifetime.

**Jim Pearse**

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## CHRISTMAS IN BLACK AND WHITE

A long time ago now, in the days before coloured television, when the whole world was in black and white, I was a little boy growing up in the years of the Second World War. The excitement and the build up to Christmas began soon after the clocks went back. Mother would say, "Christmas won't be long now, soon time to hang your stocking up." During the dark nights huddled around the kitchen fireplace with only a candle for heat, which we sometimes burnt at both ends, to keep warmer, I knew it was time to unpick my woollen pullover, so Mother could use the wool to knit my Christmas stocking. Times were hard but we were happy, even if it meant on cold November mornings I would run shivering to school wearing only a shirt and trousers.

In the backwaters of Ascott most families were poor. They were always trying to make both ends meet, the trouble was most couldn't find the two ends in the first place but it was a jolly time.

I looked forward to finding in my stocking, two apples and some nuts. Sometimes, when there were no walnuts, I had shrivelled prunes instead. And of course there was always a small toy Dad had made. One year I got a sink plug on a chain, another year I had a piece of string knotted at both ends. It became my favourite toy, until I was caught trying to garrotte the cat...

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Christmas morning all the family went off to church, where we had to listen for over an hour to the parson's sermon. Like Dad said, it might have been boring and went on too long, but it was the only time in the year he earned his pay.

After church the whole congregation would gather outside the front door of the Manor. The Squire would then ladle out hogs head broth, and if we were lucky he left the eyes in to see us through the week. All the children were then given a small gift. I remember one year I was given a small book called How to Touch your Forelock in Three Easy Lessons. We were then marched back to the schoolyard, where we all stood to attention and listened to the King's Christmas Message on the wireless, which was supplied by the headmaster. When it was all over, we all sang Land of Hope and Glory and Rule Britannia.

Then it was teatime. Tea usually consisted of bread and lard, but at Christmas for a treat we sometimes had sugar on it, while looking at pictures of Christmas cake, cream buns and jelly. By seven o'clock we were all in bed, with the winter stars twinkling in the sky. Ascott returned to sleep in the backwaters of old England, to be discovered some fifty years later, by the missionaries that brought us modern BRITAIN.

**Fred Russell**

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# The Swan at Ascott

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## NEWS FROM THE SWAN



The good news for us is that the Swan has been included in the Michelin Guide 2010, an accolade that we could barely dream of achieving within eighteen months of reopening. Huge thanks must go to everyone who works here and especially to Head Chef Alex...he has worked at the Swan for a year now, without any holiday, and deserves a large slice of the credit.

Christmas is coming and we have put together a very economical seasonal menu for parties of eight or more. If you are planning a Christmas party we would appreciate your support so please call us or ask at the bar for details.

We are also holding a gourmet feast on New Years Eve which will follow the format of last years very happy event. Booking is essential and menus are ready and waiting so please ask at the bar.

And finally, many thanks to Alice Day who has just moved to Boots after 18 months at the Swan. With so many good qualities I am sure she will be running the store before too long!

**Richard Lait**

### **STOP PRESS**

#### **ASCOTT SIGNAL BOX IS SAVED!**

**Following a review by Network Rail they have decided not to centralise signalling at Didcot, as this was not proved to be cost effective, but to retain the signal boxes at Ascott, Moreton and Evesham for the foreseeable future.**

**Ascott signal box will assume control of a larger area of the rail network, including Charlbury.**

**Stuart Fox**

## THE BEST DAY OF THE YEAR?

If you could transport yourself back in time to 1961 and travel to Hoylake, a pleasant seaside town on the end of the Wirral Peninsular, you might spot a little lad, aged nine or ten, wandering along the seafront. We will call him Tim. He is wearing brown Clarks sandals with those strange white crepe soles and a sort of sunburst on the front. He has blue shorts and a green Ladybird jumper. Rather disconcertingly he also has a sheath knife hanging from his belt, but boys needed knives to prise limpets off rocks, chop up bait, cut fishing line, whittle sticks and things like that.

If you stopped him and asked him which is his favourite day of the year, what would he say? Would it be his birthday? Well, birthdays were OK but they had to be kept a deadly secret, because if your school friends found out, getting the bumps was a very real threat. So perhaps not his birthday. What about Christmas? Christmas was fab but the good bits were really all over by breakfast. When you were a child did you ever wake up in the night and hear the clock downstairs chime quarter past? But quarter past what? You had to lay awake and listen to half past chime, then quarter to and then the

hour and then dong, dong, dong. Oh no, only three o'clock and a long sleepless night ahead spent counting dongs on the blessed clock.

Of course eventually morning arrived and opening the presents in the stocking was great and the getting the big presents and giving presents to people and the special Christmas breakfast but then it is kind of all over. Dad and the uncles are busy playing with your new train set or Scalextric or whatever and 'of course you can have a go when they have 'sorted it out''. So instead you make the Airfix ship



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that was supposed to keep you quiet on Boxing Day and then it is lunch time. The trouble with Christmas lunch is that it always involved sprouts and, frankly, the surreptitious trips upstairs to sample the content of the Chocolate Smoker's Outfit that Santa had brought (start them young on chocolate pipe, cigarettes, matches etc) has rather taken the edge off your appetite. After dinner the effects of the third sherry (oh, go on then dear, it is Christmas after all) has taken its toll on the grannies and the aunts who are all fast asleep. You read your new Eagle Annual cover to cover and, in desperation, even read your little brother's Rupert Annual. Then they all wake up and it is Christmas cake and off to bed. So maybe not Christmas.

Actually, the very, very, very best day of the year was Bonfire Night! Perhaps it was such a great day in young Tim's year because he had to wait all day in gleeful anticipation of the evening's excitement, or perhaps it was because of all that hard work that had gone into preparing the bonfire.

As if by some ancient instinct, boys would start to gather on the waste ground by the market gardens on the

first Saturday after the school term had started. The glories of last year's 'bonny' were discussed and plans started to be laid for the coming event. A 'Bonfire Master' was elected and charged with the task of project managing the undertaking. His role was to allocate tasks and supervise the construction of the pyre. There were



builders and gatherers. Young Tim was a gatherer with his mate Michael. Gatherers had to possess a trolley. Now for the benefit of those not familiar with trolleys, they were the primary source of transport for the under 11's, because your first proper

bike tended to be the bribe that (hopefully) got you through your 11 plus. In the days before baby buggies, children used to be transported in prams and prams had decent sized wheels. Once the pram was obsolete, the wheels and axles were removed and attached to either a large strong plank, or sometimes a wooden framework with decking to make a 'trolley'. The front axle was mounted on a swivel to provide steering by way of ropes. The trolley was designed for two boys, with the motive power coming from the boy sitting at the back, facing back-

wards and pushing along with his feet. He was often also the braking mechanism. Sometimes attempts were made to construct a lever that pressed against one of the back wheels, but more often the 'pusher' was given the instruction 'Whoa there' and had to use the soles of his shoes, pressed against the pavement, to bring the vehicle to a halt. Given the popularity of The Lone Ranger and Roy Rogers, most instructions were given in cowboy speak.

Back to the bonfire. The gatherers were allocated streets by the Bonfire Master and would speed off on their trolleys to go knocking from house to house asking 'Anything for the bonny please? The householder would take advantage of this request and have all his autumnal garden rubbish removed to the bonfire site. I seem to remember that a fair amount was also strewn about the streets! Of course sometimes it was not just prunings, sometimes you got something really great and the best ever was an old armchair. Something for Guy to sit on! The key to a good bonny was a strong centre pole which was set deep into the ground and the collected materials built carefully around it. There was a great science to this and the bonny itself would often be at least eight feet across and twelve feet tall requiring ladders to be used for the last parts of the construction.

At last November 5<sup>th</sup> would dawn and a day at school had to be endured in squirming anticipation as the clock ticked slowly round to home time.

After tea it was fireworks in the back garden and then round to the bonny for the great lighting at 6.30. I would have to admit that the pockets of Tim's dufflecoat would be secretly stuffed with bangers and jumping jacks (not a good idea children). The lighting was the culmination of weeks of work and the Bonfire Master's reputation was on the line. Would it light OK? Would it burn evenly and, most importantly, would it be a good long burn? All of these factors would be noted and discussed at length when we all gathered round the embers the following day.

So bonfire night was pretty special; looking back we performed a useful service in clearing rubbish and we learned to work together as a team as well as having a lot of fun and, dare I say it, finding out more about explosives than is probably good for ten year old boys!

**Tim Lyon**

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## **ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Parish Councillors and the 2010 Elections**

I have to report that, understandably, Cllr. Peter Greening has stepped down from the Parish Council due to family commitments. Congratulations to Peter and his wife who have gone from a family of three to five. This leads me on to the looming elections in 2010 and the Parish Council's necessity to recruit more councillors. Ascott-under-Wychwood needs five councillors and after Peter having stepped down and at least two long serving councillors wishing to do the same at the end of their term the Parish Council could potentially be looking for three new members. Please remember that without the dedication and hard work of the councillors things like the Christmas Tree, the Signal Box and the re-development of the Village Pound to mention but a few, would not have been possible without them.

**If you feel you may like to join the Parish Council and help to make a difference in your Village please approach either myself or indeed any of the Councillors who are listed below or perhaps come along to one of the meetings.**

### **Dog Fouling**

The Parish Council and the conscientious parishioners are still keeping a watchful eye on this issue with the help of WODC.

### **Planning Applications**

Planning is particularly quiet with only two applications having been received in the past few months.

### **Flooding/Contingency Plan**

This continues to feature on the Parish Council Agenda and the follow up meeting with David Cameron held at the New Beaconsfield Hall in Shipton-under-Wychwood in August proved very successful for Ascott.

### **Christmas Tree**

The preparation works on the Village Green have now been carried out and the SEC will shortly be connecting the power. The Christmas Tree Lights have been ordered and the next issue will be the erecting and lighting of the tree and the organising of Mince Pies and Mulled Wine, Carol sheets etc etc.

### **Ascott Signal Box**

Cllr. Stuart Fox is actively pursuing this and has written chasing Network Rail for a meeting to discuss the future of it. **See STOP PRESS page 15.**

Once again, the above are but just a few of the ongoing issues that the Parish Council faces on a monthly basis and to remind you all that they meet every second Monday of the month in the Tiddy Hall at 8pm, with the exception of August. The monthly Agenda is displayed on the Notice Boards at the bottom of High Street and Dawls

Close one week before the meeting. Should anybody wish to speak with a Parish Council member, the contact details are noted below and of course on the Village website.

**Parish Council:**

Stuart Fox	832004
Elaine Byles	831427
Bridgette Crundwell	830671
Rob Morgan	831958
Angela Barnes (Parish Clerk)	01608 641045

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## SWYCH Report

On International plastic bag-free day, outside Milton C-op, we gave away hand made cloth bags and special recycled bags provided by the Co-op. We joined in the worldwide movement on Tuesday 22nd September - the 'Wake up!' call to governments for serious participation in the coming climate change summit. We also had another successful Swap Shop - thanks to The Wychwood primary school for the use of their hall.

### We've been thinking about food waste:

Is there enough food grown to feed the whole world? **YES!** But tons of it is just thrown away! Did you know - the amount of food thrown away by the USA and UK is between 3 and 7 times as much as would feed all the hungry people in the world! This waste begins on the farm, when supermarkets reject perfectly good food which doesn't look symmetrical. Supermarkets then order food that they know will not be bought, because they want to give the impression of ever-full shelves and no shortages. Then we buy food and often throw it away untouched! Food wasted from UK homes alone is 5 million tonnes! This amount could have lifted 84 million people out of hunger! (figures from Waste, Tristram Stuart, Penguin 2009). If all this waste could be stopped, the land used to grow it could be used to grow food for people who are dying from malnutrition. **We can all make a big difference now to this state of affairs - it's simple! Just BUY WHAT YOU NEED AND EAT WHAT YOU BUY!**

### Recycling:

Several people have asked us if it is necessary to sort the stuff that goes into recycling bins. No - just shove it all in. There are amazing machines that do the sorting at the recycling centre.

**If you're interested in joining SWYCH, please contact Jenna – 01993 831338**



# **Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens**

*The Park remains open throughout the year and is a popular attraction over the winter months. There are a number of indoor enclosures and the restaurant serves hot snacks and meals.*

Visit over half-term and see recently hatched Morelet's crocodiles.

GIFT IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS include Season Tickets, and Day Tickets valid throughout 2010.

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**See [www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk) for full information on the above or call 01993 823006.**

**The Park is open daily from 10.00am and is situated on the A361  
2.5 miles south of Burford (OX18 4JP)**

# A WINDOW ON THE PAST

## PART 3

### AUSTRALIA BOUND

In our affluent world of today, it is very difficult to visualise what life must have been like for the villagers of Ascott in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Rev Yorke, through the pages of the Leaffield and Ascott Parish Magazine, and later the Deanery Magazine, recounts various happenings and events but it is almost impossible to glean the reality of everyday life for the craftsmen and labourers of the village. What were the conditions like within the houses? How did they obtain their food and water? How about sourcing clothing and footwear? Where did they obtain fuel to heat their houses and cook their food? That particular period of the century hit the British countryside hard. Farmers were finding it difficult to compete with increasing imports from abroad. Wheat and refrigerated meat from other parts of the world were increasingly unloaded on British shores, thus lowering the price of the home market. Imported cattle were bringing in diseases to which indigenous breeds had little resistance. And the weather was atrocious, providing climatic conditions totally opposite to those necessary to aid the production of food. Farms were difficult to rent out, resulting in less available work for farm workers. Wages were poor, and the lower down the class system, the greater the problem

of providing for a family. For many living in Ascott, daily life may have been dire indeed.

However, primarily for the young, there was a source of hope, and apparently a fair number of Ascott's born and bred were prepared to seize this opportunity. The promised lands on the far side of the world beckoned, and the possibility of acquiring land of their own and the chance of setting their feet on an upwardly spiralling ladder, proved difficult to resist. In the early 1870s many people left the Wychwoods to seek a new life in New Zealand, partly with the assistance of the emerging Farm Workers' Trade Unions. But a decade later, Perth and Western Australia appear to have had the most to offer to the youth of Ascott, and through the Deanery, we can follow a number of these youths as they set out on their greatest adventure.

In 1875 when Rev. Samuel Yorke and his wife Frances arrived in Ascott, it seems that Mrs Yorke proposed the establishment of a Night School for the village youths. This she pursued, her students ranging in age from twelve to the middle twenties and totalling around 30 in number. Apparently these young villagers were already giving thought to improving their lot in life. Five years later, Rev Yorke reported that some of the earlier students had

already taken advantage of their additional qualifications by, joining the Railway Company, the Post Office, the Army or indeed, by emigrating abroad. Three past students, Frederick White, Raymond Pratley and Jacob Moss had emigrated to Western Australia where to all intents and purposes, they were doing well. Raymond Pratley was the son of a farm labourer and Jacob Moss the youngest son of a shoemaker. They were approximately the same age, born in Ascott and had probably known each other all their lives. Frederick White however, was a few years younger than the other two and must have only been about sixteen or seventeen when he left England. This may have been due to family matters since his father, the village blacksmith, had died in the late 1870s, his mother was left with other young children and an older stepson, so maybe he decided the time was right to make his own way into the world.

In 1880 in the last issue of the Leaf-ield and Ascott Parish Magazine, Rev, Yorke reported that Mr Hyatt whose family had farmed at Stone End Farm (now Ascott Earl House) for generations, had recently seen three of his grandsons depart for Australia. They

were Frank Gomm, the son of his daughter living in Tackley, and Alfred and Edwin Townsend sons of his other daughter Sophia, the widow of Edwin Townsend of Long House Farm in High Street. The Townsends like the Hyatts, were another family of long established Ascott farmers. James, an elder brother of Alfred and Edwin had sailed for Australia in 1876, probably an added incentive to his younger brothers desire to emigrate. Alfred was twenty and Edwin, like Frederick White, only sixteen or seventeen. The three young men sailed on the steamship 'Potosi' on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1880, from London.



**Potosi**

The 'Potosi' built in 1873 had only been purchased by the Orient Line from the Pacific Company's fleet in the past year. She was considered a good, seaworthy vessel and was known for fast steaming. She had a gross measurement of 4219 tons, length 421 feet, beam 43 feet and the depth of the hold was 33 feet 5 inches.



The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser reported, following her initial arrival in Australia in July 1880, ‘...it is lit up at night with the new electric process (Siemens), and this is the first vessel that has been in this harbour lit up in such a manner; and the satisfaction the light has given is likely to lead to all the Orient boats being fitted up in a like manner. The second saloon is lighted in the same method, but in a lesser degree of brilliancy. The light in the saloon having been found to be too dazzling, gauze coverings had to be put round the globes to temper it. There are four of these globes, one under each corner of the large skylight in the main saloon. The Potosi is propelled by engines of 600 horse-power nominal, with inverted cylinders; these are two in number.’

In the Deanery of January 1881, Rev Yorke reported, ‘The ship ‘Potosi’ of the Orient line (with the three Ascott youths bound for Perth, Western Australia) reached Adelaide after a voyage over the 12,000 miles of 43 days from London, including stoppages at Plymouth, St. Vincent and the Cape. In their letters received from the Cape, they say that the voyage thus far had been a most pleasant one, after passing Madeira and the Canary Islands, or about 1,500 miles from home, the weather became so hot that they could not sleep comfortably in their cabins below, and passed the nights on deck; the sight of the flying fish seemed specially to strike them, flying sometimes in the air

for a distance of about a chain and a half and then diving again into the sea. ... the passengers on board the ship numbered nearly 700, chiefly English, but some from Germany and others from Russia.’

By the time the ‘Potosi’ reached Adelaide half the passengers had already disembarked, including the Ascott lads, who had reached their destination at Perth.

The following June, Rev. Yorke reported, ‘Four other Ascott youths, James and Albert Weaver, George White and Henry Pratley, have sailed in the ship ‘Charlotte Padbury’, for Perth, Western Australia; also Thomas Ward and his newly wedded wife. Let us wish them all a prosperous voyage. With the others who have previously gone out from our Parish there will be quite a little Ascott colony settled in those remote parts. But there is an abundance of room for a very large population; the inhabited portions extend for about 350 miles in length and 200 miles in breadth, (or nearly the entire size of England), but the whole population does not at present exceed 10,000 persons and thus many districts are very thinly peopled.’

Brothers James and Albert Weaver had been born in Ascott and were the sons of a shoemaker, Charles. James was twenty and Albert eighteen when they left to seek their fortunes abroad. George White, aged twenty two, was the stepbrother of Frederick White who had already sailed for Perth, and

eighteen year old Henry Pratley was the younger brother of Raymond Pratley who had left at the same time as Frederick White. So it would appear that favourable reports had been winging their way across the world to family members in England.



**Charlotte Padbury**

The 'Charlotte Padbury' was a clipper barque of 636 tons, significantly small in comparison to the 'Potosi'. Her Commander was Thomas Barber and on this particular voyage he had taken his wife with him. She had been a cabin passenger, together with one other, in what were reputed to be well ventilated cabins. The saloon was said to be spacious, a bathroom was included and the accommodation was declared superior. The number of steerage passengers, including the six from Ascott, was twenty four. The Charlotte Padbury left London on 26th June 1881.

In the August issue of the Deanery, Rev. Yorke had reassuring news to impart, 'The painful rumour that was spread abroad in the Parish, early in last month, of the total loss of the ship containing those who have lately left us for Australia, has happily proved to be unfounded: the owners, Messrs.

MacDonald, have written to say that they have every reason to believe that the vessel is quite safe and pursuing her voyage.'

The December issue of the Deanery reported the following, 'Tidings have come of the safe arrival of the ship 'Charlotte Padbury' at Perth, Western Australia, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, conveying, amongst other passengers, James

and Albert Weaver, George White, Henry Pratley, Thomas Ward and his bride (formerly Sarah Ann Hone), all from Ascott. The voyage occupied about 12 weeks.

A newspaper sent to the Vicar from Perth, announcing their arrival, states that it was a pleasant and welcome sight to see the fresh English faces of the emigrants, healthy looking and cleanly dressed.'

The March 1882 Deanery contained the following; the letter writer is probably Albert Weaver. 'The following is an extract from a letter, lately received from one of the Ascott youths who emigrated to Western Australia in

*Don't forget about the Ascott website:*

the summer of last year: he was a Church bell-ringer and also one of our best cricketers:-

“Swan Bridge, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1881. Christmas has come again and found me a long way from the post I occupied, last year, that of ringing the old Church Bell. I am now in the burning sun of our midsummer, while you, probably, are in a land of snow and ice. We travelled up into the bush from Perth with a team, and we felt it rather strange having to roll ourselves up in our blankets and sleep under the wagon; after 5 days we reached our destination but we found ourselves in a very rough place and resolved to leave it as soon as possible. I left the work and took to my trade again (shoemaking) and am doing capital well, but I must tell you that if one comes out here they must not care how they live, or they had better stay at home, though a man can earn more money here, but I would not advise anyone to come out here for I shall not stay for long.”

Four months later there was news of the Townsend family. ‘Tidings have lately come from Mrs Townsend’s three sons, in Western Australia: they seem to be doing well, but the Colony has suffered, in the past summer, from a terrible drought such as has not been known there for 10 years: the pastures have been dried up, and the sheep, cattle and horses have been dying by the hundreds. Mr James Townsend, who left England shortly before his lamented father’s death, in 1876, has

married and settled down in Geraldton, in Champion Bay, almost 300 miles north of Perth; he kindly signifies that he will shortly send a few notes giving some account of the country, which may appear in our Magazine. Alfred has gone several hundred miles higher up into the bush, where a white man is rarely seen, near to the pearl fisheries: a Church is not to be found in his district, he seems to feel the want very much, Edwin is with Mr Padbury, in the neighbourhood of Perth.’

The Walter Padbury of Perth, whom Edwin was with, was a significant figure in Western Australia history. He was born in 1820 at Stonesfield, Oxfordshire, the second son of a small farmer. He emigrated with his father to Western Australia in 1830. They intended sending for the rest of the family once established. Unfortunately within five months, his father died, and a couple whom his father hoped would look after Walter, took his money and disappeared. He found work around Perth, eventually becoming a shepherd, until aged 22, he took to fencing, shearing and droving. He acquired his own stock which he sold at profit and eventually secured enough money to bring the rest of his family to join him. He married 18 years old Charlotte Nairn and established a butchery in Perth in 1845. He became a property owner, built a flour mill and was very good to his employees. Eventually he went into shipping and set up with William Thorley Loton as general

store keepers in Perth and Guildford. One of their ships, the 'Charlotte Padbury' was built for them in Falmouth. He was very active in public affairs, long associated with the Agricultural Society, he became a justice of the peace, and mayor. He contributed generously to the church, to the establishment of children's homes, hospitals, to the poor and other charities. He died in 1907, and after legacies to relations and friends, left about £90,000 to be divided amongst named charities. He had also been a great letter writer and at the end of 1882 appears to have written to Rev. Yorke.

'Our Magazine obtains a wide circulation: it has readers in America, South Africa and Western Australia. Mr W. Padbury has written from Perth, in the last named Colony, drawing attention to the letter of an emigrant from Ascott published in our parish notes of March last. He does not dispute the facts stated therein, but writes:- "There is ample room in any of these Australian Colonies and New Zealand for half the population of England: but they must not come here with the notion that they can at once make a fortune, or jump into the shoes of those who have been here all their lives; if they are industrious and economical as a rule they will certainly do better than they can in England." Mr Padbury adds statements of wages given, corresponding with those set forth on the first page of last month's Magazine in Sydney, New South Wales. On the

other side of the question it is only fair to consider the length of the voyage, extending at times, to over 100 days in reaching Perth; the extreme heat of the climate in Summer, and its liability to not infrequent droughts; also the separation from friends and acquaintance, the many hardships to be encountered and the like.'

I have been able to uncover a few more facts about the emigrants and it seems that mixed fortunes attended the Ascott lads.

As far as the Townsend family is concerned the only additional information is about Edwin. He married Lucy Ann Drummond in 1887 but unfortunately died in 1900, only thirteen years later, aged 36.

Both Raymond and Henry Pratley married in 1884, but nothing further is known.

Albert and James Weaver also married in 1884. Albert married Charlotte Staples in Freemantle. They had at least one son, Charles George, born in 1889. Charlotte died in 1914 and Albert in 1938.

James Weaver's marriage to Sarah Hyde was very shortlived. She died the same year aged only 18, and their son of three months, James Albert, died the following year. It would appear that James married again in 1888 and hopefully fortune then treated him more kindly.

Nothing further is known about Frederick White, but George White married Jane McGowan in 1884. Sad-

ly fate was not kind to them either, since George died the following year aged only twenty six. However, it would appear that the oldest son of William James White, the Ascott blacksmith, and the brother of Frederick and George, had, like the eldest Townsend son, preceded his brothers to Perth. In 1879 he married Annie Coffin at Yatheroo and in the following years, they produced a family of four sons and three daughters. Three of their sons joined the Australian Expeditionary Force in the First World War. The eldest George Eustace, named for his uncle who died the same year that he was born, joined the Australian Army Medical Corps and served in Egypt. Bason, the youngest, perhaps fortunately for his mother's peace of mind, was too young to leave Australia before the War ended. The second son, Cecil, married Ivy Derepas in Perth in 1915 and later, as a sergeant in the Australian Expeditionary Force, was shipped to England. On leave, whilst completing his training, he travelled to Ascott to see his father's birthplace. Then in January 1919 he sent to his cousins, the White family living in Centuries House, copies of the photographs of Ascott which he had taken during his visit. His photographs follow this article.

**Wendy Pearse**



**Centuries House**



**The Church**



**The Forge**



**The Swan**



**Cecil White**



**The Row**



**The Station**



**London Lane**

## CHADLINGTON DANCE

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month from September to June, from 7.30 until 9.15pm in Chadlington Memorial Hall. On November 11th we are holding a Ceilidh with Nina Morgan and her musicians and, on 9th December, our Christmas event will be another of our popular and successful Belly Dance evenings to be led by Val Rainbow. The cost is £5 per session. Chadlington Dance is not a club but is open to all and neither partners nor previous experience are needed. Most sessions are led by experienced dancers and involve tuition. This is a really enjoyable way to get some healthy exercise - why not come? You will be made very welcome.

**For further information please contact me on 01608 676302 or by e-mail to:-  
andmorton@waitrose.com.**

**Ann Morton**

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**Taken from the Bristol Times and Mirror, Tuesday November 16 1897**

## LITTLE ROLLRIGHT

Little Rollright is one of those places that you pass when you are going somewhere else. I have often looked across the valley at it as I return from Stratford upon Avon via the country roads to Over Norton and Chipping Norton. On 7<sup>th</sup> August this year, the day dawned warm and sunny after a few days of heavy rain and I was ‘stir crazy’. The only thing to do was to get out and go for a walk – but where?

Looking at the map (Explorer 191, Banbury and Bicester), my eyes settled on Little Rollright. Off I went. I parked on the side of the road near the stream on the road from Over Norton and set to explore. In recent years there has been considerable improvement to the estate with the introduction of roadside trees, new fencing and metal gates at, what I would think, was great expense.

To get to Little Rollright you have to turn off the road along a private track which is also a footpath. As you approach the buildings there are very clear but discreet signs telling you where you can and can’t go. I

first took the right turn across the cattle grid to the church dedicated to St Philip. To quote the handout ‘St Philip’s Church, Little Rollright, was once at the heart of a thriving community, but now lies in a quiet unspoilt valley’. The only other buildings are Little Rollright Manor and its outbuildings.

This little church is unusually light with its large clear windows dat-

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ing back to the middle ages. It is a very simple building with only a chancel and a nave and a substantial tower which was built in 1617. The chancel contains two impressive memorials dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

I can add nothing to that other than its first Rector was Wald de Cler in 1224.

On leaving the church I retraced my steps and then followed the signed footpath, past the new farm buildings and then up the hill towards Salford. The footpath is fenced on both sides and the field edges are newly planted with a range of indigenous trees and shrubs, all suitably staked and with provision for watering. The wide range of butterflies and other insects testify to the choice of planting. As you climb up the hill there are lovely views over the valley towards Over Norton and Chipping Norton. It is an easy walk to Salford. When you get to the outskirts of the village, Rectory Farm, turn left and follow the path down the hill to the valley floor. When you reach the gateway turn left and follow the track along the valley. As you continue your walk you will pass two lakes on your right hand side. These are both private fishing lakes. The walk back to your car along the path is gentle and you can take your time to enjoy the scenery. Happy walking!

**Rob Morgan**

## GARDENING NOTES

I'm hoping there will be an Indian summer because there are so many lovely plants which begin to flower in late August and September and good weather is needed to allow enjoyment of them for the longest possible time. I'm thinking of michaelmas daisies, the cone flowers - yellow rudbeckia and purple echinacea - and many grasses. Michaelmas daisies are not very popular at the moment which is surprising because they bring so much colour to the garden as the flow-



ers of summer go over and the garden starts to look tired. They are thought of as old-fashioned flowers which is strange since they go so well with plants of the very popular natural gardening style of prairie planting and combine so well with the essential elements of that style, the other late flowering plants mentioned earlier.

Michaelmas daisies, more properly known as perennial asters, cover the whole range of shades from deep purple through deep red to pale pink and white. They are very easy to grow and clumps expand in size quickly so you can often divide them to make more

plants as soon as their second year in your garden. Some reach a metre or more in height, useful for the back of the border, while others will only be 30cm or so and can go to the front of the bed. I love the tall asters but they are difficult to find, possibly because they can look a sorry state as young plants seen in isolation in the garden centre. What you often see is four or five long bare stems with small bunches of button flowers at the top with little foliage, not a promising-looking prospect nor an easy money-spinner for the garden centre. The aster novi-belgiae varieties do suffer from mildew which makes the leaves look tatty and then fall off but when you plant them carefully in a garden behind a plant which hides the stems, the flowers look joyful, prolong the feeling of summer and stave off the coming of winter. I've loved these plants ever since I saw the common, almost wild, pale mauve variety lining railway embankments and when I found the same plants in our garden in Buckingham I was hooked. But I've learned to love this 'wild' variety from afar because in a garden setting it proved to be a thug which kept seeding prolifically and had strongly running roots so it turned up everywhere. I should have realised this from its con-



stant presence along the railway but at that time I was naive in the ways of plants. The aster novi-angliae varieties do not suffer from mildew but do not always reach the height of some of the belgiae varieties.

The best place to see michaelmas daisies in all their gorgeous array of colours is the Picton Garden in Colwall Herefordshire, an easy outing for the day or even half day and so well worth the trip in late September. Even closer is Waterperry Gardens near the Oxford M40 junction which has had a special michaelmas daisy event this year. As I'm writing this before I've visited I cannot tell you anything about it but rest assured I will have gone along ready to purchase a few of these wonderful plants. I will be looking particularly for a tall dark purple flowered aster, a colour and size I do not have and I'm sure I will find a home for it somewhere in the garden. Both locations mentioned are good examples of proper nurseries which grow plants for the love of them rather than for a quick, easy, cheap profit which so many garden centre chains do. The nurseries keep numerous plants and their individual varieties alive by their work of cultivation whereas chains will major on a limited number of cheap, pile-them-high varieties, biased towards annuals to keep

profit coming in yearly. Of course there is a place for annuals for brightly coloured and beautiful summer hanging baskets and tubs, and for filling ugly gaps in borders but not at the expense of perennial plants of which there are thousands of different types and varieties. Anyway, for people who love their gardens perennials work out cheaper in the long run and are labour-saving because they last for years and do not need anything doing to them for three to five years after planting except for a water in low rainfall times and a dollop of compost every year. Added to which, from one plant you can make many others. Patience is all that's required in this and many other gardening activities, not always easy when you are waiting to fill bare ground or excited to see the impact of a new plant on your precious designed border.

So Autumn is upon us and winter almost here. It is such a busy time now clearing away dead vegetation, sweeping up leaves and pruning shrubs and trees. We've very 'cleverly' designed out a bonfire area and I'd like to think it was deliberate. But no, we've just woken up to the fact we haven't got

enough clear space for a bonfire without setting light to things we would rather keep! We will just have to have many small fires in a dustbin with a chimney, such a shame because having a proper bonfire is like going to the tip with household debris. It gets rid of the clutter and rubbish so quickly and easily and brings a wonderful feeling of release from a burden. I suppose we

will go to the tip more often, a bit of a pain with green stuff, and we will have to do a great lot of shredding which is better for the environment but not half so much fun and therapy as a big blazing bonfire on a raw day.

Unlike most years, I am looking forward to hacking back the garden. I am sick to death of dodging low branches and avoiding

sprawling plants. Am I beginning to learn the wisdom of regular cutting back and that a relaxed garden is not achieved by just letting everything grow at will? We have deliberate wild areas but at the moment it would be difficult to tell them from more formal areas. Apart from being diffident about cutting back, I never want to tidy any plant until it has completely finished flowering or putting on whatever it's grand show is, so I wait until the very



last moment in Autumn/winter to start tidying. This means that sometimes I wait until the weather is too bad or the ground too wet to do anything. The result is nothing gets done until February/March when new growth is beginning and garden life is starting to be busy in other directions like getting the greenhouse ready for seeds, sowing the seeds, finishing any vegetable bed preparation etc. and I am becoming a wreck never catching up with myself. This year a new leaf is being turned. I shall start tidying and cutting in October. Will it happen? Await the next exciting instalment.

**Yvette Keauffling**

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## **THANK YOU**

In the last edition Tim Lyon wrote about the aging lawn mower and the difficulties in maintaining the church grounds. I am delighted to report that since that article a lawn mower has very kindly been donated by John Gripper, but not only that, I also received 3 cheques. So after discussing it with the people who made the donations: Tony and Lyn Collins, Paul and Madeline Galistan and Bob and Mary Webb (who married in the Church in 1953 and read the article!) Tim and Fred are now in the process of upgrading the strimmer, with the additional funding being donated by the Ascott Village Charity. This will certainly be an excellent start to next year's cutting and strimming, thank you all very much.

On another note....I wasn't exactly inundated with volunteers to help Tim and Fred this year, so perhaps some of you could give it some thought for 2010?

**Debra Cull**

## THE RIVER EVENLODE - A LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP

We've all had them, those moments when it's as if someone has just turned on the light. Well, I've had a few recently.

It was in the darkest days of trying to put my home back together – no plaster, dehumidifiers, a damp that chills the bones, battles with insurance and builders. I had attended a few heated public meetings about flood relief and was complaining that people in authority didn't seem to

'understand'. With northern bluntness my brother-in-law said, 'You can't expect others to do what you're not prepared to do yourself'.

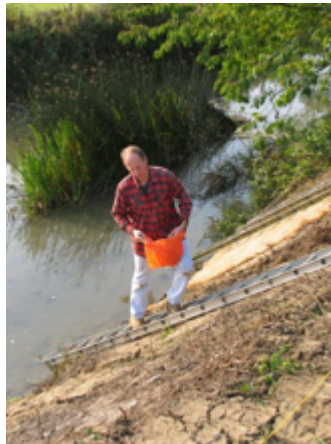
OK, but what can I – a recent incomer and 'townie' – do? Listen, read, learn, and fast ..... because Oxfordshire councillors take no prisoners! Well I learnt pretty quickly that there were almost as many theories as there are residents in Ascott and that even the most gilt-edged professional advice had its sceptics who had heard it all before. But the next person

to switch on the light was David Benfield – 'It doesn't matter how many ditches and dykes people clear, if the river is not cleared then nothing gets away. It's the main drain of the village.' Pretty straight forward really - why didn't I think of that?

Our only source of professional advice at the time was a hydrologist's report organised by Keith Macaulay. 'Clean the banks, remove the obstructions and for goodness' sake

make sure the river can flow through the bridges properly,' the expert said. The Environment Agency (EA) also advised on ways of improving the flood plain. Well, we could make a

start and we did. Residents had a wonderful time clearing Gypsy Lane, landowners cleared their river banks and Coldwell Brook had a makeover. But still, every 2 months or so, we at our end had to clamber over our neighbours' 5ft wall to leave home and motorists at the other end would get





stuck in flood water by the Chippy Bridge. More work needed – those bridges.

Gypsy Lane bridge was easy to organise – thanks to a gang of men and boys for a morning and a digger for an hour, no bureaucracy!

The railway bridge was a challenge as Network Rail didn't seem too worried by the collapsed footings, cracked bridge walls and weeping concrete, that is until Councillor Hilary Byles and David Cameron MP got involved. But now (early Oct) the project is into its 6<sup>th</sup> week and entails driving in piles for new footings, clearing all debris, stabilising the river bank and rebuilding a narrower access path under the bridge which will widen the channel. Also in October the EA will dig a flood channel (swale) to carry high water more directly and more quickly through the bridge. A short training wall of grassed earth (bund) will be built by the bridge to keep the water in the channel and stop it from flowing

straight on towards The Grange. Enormous thanks to the Grippers, Ridleys and Macaulays for putting up with a lot of disruption to their land. The contractors hope to be finished by December.

Chippy Bridge was more complex



than you would expect – 4 landowners, 2 tenants, a trust, a charity, the EA, OCC, WODC, all had their responsibilities and points of view. Lord Rotherwick supplied the key to solve the problems and the

EA, OCC and residents (through the village charity) supplied the funds. And what a handsome bridge it is! Once the digger had cleared the banks, a working party of very able-bodied residents took up the challenge to stabilise the high bank with biodegradable



matting and sow seed. With a bit of luck and some rain, we should have wild flowers next year on the lower banks and a stable grassy bank on the north side. Thanks to EVERYONE involved.

So now, how do I feel about the river Evenlode? I understand that we can't tame it com-

pletely. It was beautiful and benign when we first moved here, it was the demon that flooded my home and seemed to stalk us for a year, it has given us inordinate amounts of extra work and cost us a lot of money. But when I complained the other day John Gripper switched on another light – ‘You should also see it as a privilege to own a river bank’. And when I see the heron, swans, kingfisher and signs of an otter I have to agree.

**Philippa Carter**

(PS - This is my very personal experience of flood relief work and other works have been completed that I have not been involved in. I wish to add that, despite bureaucracy and constraints in budgets and policy, every organisation and council has played a part in reaching this stage in Ascott's flood relief programme)

**DEADLINE FOR  
WINTER 2010 EDITION**

**JANUARY 5TH**

**PLEASE DON'T BE LATE**

## **NATURE NOTES**

After the poor summers of 2007 and 2008 it's been good to see the return, in reasonably large numbers, of many of our more common butterflies, both in our garden and the surrounding countryside. The floods of 2007 were devastating for many of our grasslands species, such as the Marbled White, Speckled Wood, Gate Keeper, Ringlet and Skippers, whose caterpillars feed and pupate amongst the sort of coarse grassland often found on our flood plains.



When so much of our native wildlife is under pressure, because of weather conditions, development of land and intensive farming systems, our gardens become increasingly important as a refuge and reserve for many animals, insects and birds, particularly if they can be managed with wildlife in mind. Native plants can be mixed with exotics, ponds can be created, flowering plants will provide nectar and pollen throughout the year and if you have space an out-of-the-way area can be left totally wild. Trees and shrubs provide shelter and nesting sites for many

bird species. If space is available areas of grass can be left uncut and planted with native meadow flowers.

Garden management is important; a cautious approach to overall tidiness needs to be adopted with some areas being left in a more natural state. Also, pesticides and other poisons are best avoided. Satisfying as it may be to zap every greenfly and caterpillar, what will be left for the Blue-tits that rely on these insects to feed themselves and more especially their young? Kill and remove every native plant (weeds) and you remove the food plants for many of our butterflies and moths. Compromise and have a neat and tidy area close to your house and leave the more “out-of-the-way” spots more unkempt.



When planning a garden aim to create a variety of habitats; including open spaces, bare ground, low and tall growing shrubs, trees if you have the space, ponds and a supply of drinking water. The greater the diversity of structure then the greater will be the potential number of species that you will attract and support. Hedges, particularly if they consist of a mixture of native species such as beech, hornbeam and hawthorn, will provide fine nesting and

roosting places for garden birds and a supply of berries in the winter. Lawns that are regularly trimmed are a bit of a wildlife desert, but if you have the space consider letting an area of grass grow longer and create a wildflower meadow. This will provide an ideal habitat for a wide variety of insects, which will in turn provide a source of food for birds, hedgehogs and amphibians. Compost heaps are not only good for replenishing the soil but offer temporary home and shelter to hibernating Hedgehogs and Grass Snakes.



A pond, however small, is one of the best investments for the wildlife gardener; not only will you encourage Frogs, Toads and Newts to breed, but you might be lucky and find dragonflies and water beetles taking up residence. Dragonfly larvae require a reasonable sized pool, preferably four metres square or more, anything smaller will not provide them with a sufficient supply of food. Site your pond in an open area away from too much shade from overhanging trees. Allow for a shallow end and plant



plenty of marginal plants around the edges.

A grass edge is better for wildlife than a stone one. Use water lilies to provide some surface shade but leave other areas open and ensure that there are plenty of aquatic oxygenating plants to help keep the water clear. If possible use a pond liner rather than a pre-formed pool. By extending the liner under the soil on one side of the pool a bog garden could be created, making another habitat.

Suggestions for plants rich in nectar to attract butterflies, moths, bees and hoverflies include; wallflowers, bluebells, lady's smock, honesty, primrose, foxgloves, buddleia, candytuft, honeysuckle, nicotiana, golden rod, sedum, lavender, michaelmas daisies, scabious, thistles, thyme and in the late autumn ivy flowers.

If you would like butterflies to complete their full life cycle in your garden then you need to provide food plants for their caterpillars. Stinging nettles are host to Small Tortoiseshells, Red Admirals, Peacocks and Commas. Garlic mustard is the preferred food plant for the Green-Veined White and the Orange Tip, whilst the Large and Small Whites feed on nasturtiums and brassicas, usually on my allotment! The Brimstone larva feed on the leaves of two shrubs, the alder buckthorn and the purging buckthorn whilst the Holly Blue prefers ivy and holly. If you have an area of uncut mixed grasses this will provide a breeding ground for many

species including; Speckled Wood, Wall Brown, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlets, Marbled White and Large and Small Skippers.



A well planted garden will also attract beneficial insects, such as Hoverflies, Ladybirds and Lacewings, whose larvae are all voracious feeders on Aphids. Bumble Bees too will take advantage and these natural pollinators are under considerable pressure and their numbers are declining. Ground Beetles and the Devil's Coach Horse will be encouraged if a log pile can be constructed in a damp shady area and they will help rid your garden of many unwanted pests. A wood pile, compost heap or even a pile of stones provide potential shelter for Slow Worms, Grass Snakes and Wood Mice.

Not all gardens are large enough to provide all of these habitats but providing just one will help to conserve and encourage our native wildlife.

**Stuart Fox**

**Stop Press:** a pair of Water Vole has been seen on the Evenlode in Ascott Parish.

## LEAFIELD SCHOOL NEWS

We have all settled in well to the new term and the school has welcomed 14 Foundation children and 4 new pupils in other classes.

After school clubs are well under way, with staff kindly offering something on most days - children can participate in a range of activities, including Art, Music and Dance. The Friday morning breakfast club is also still on offer and staff at the school are currently investigating the possibility of running a healthy breakfast club everyday.

As a welcome reminder of the fun we all had at the end of last term, the DVDs of the Key Stage 2 Buggy Malone show are now available - it's great to have a lasting record of such a great event.

Although Christmas still seems a long way off, the Friends of Leaffield School have come up with a fantastic fund-raising idea. All children have been given the opportunity to design their own Christmas card, which will be printed for friends and family to buy.

At the start of October, our children

participated in the Harvest Festival in the church. Everyone sang beautifully and we were treated to a wonderful and imaginative rendition of the story of the Creation by Class 4 children.

October is Walk to School month and children have brought booklets with fun activities to help them get into the swing of things.

As we start this new term, there are two vacancies for School Governors and the Head teacher, Mrs Ryde, welcomes enquiries from anyone interested in taking on this important role.

**Carole Bartlett**

### **Leaffield Picture Framing** (Tony Croft)

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## REPORT ON FOREST FAIR 2009

The 10<sup>th</sup> modern Wychwood Forest Fair ‘came home’ in style on Sept 6. By the kind invitation of Lord and Lady Rotherwick, this year’s Fair was held in beautiful Cornbury Park, close to the site where the 19<sup>th</sup> century Fairs were held until they were shut down “for bringing into the neighbourhood vast numbers of idle and disorderly characters”.

Volunteers from the charity Friends of Wychwood, who organise the Fair to raise funds for the Wychwood Project, were delighted that the weather was kind and that people came in their thousands. The Friends’ tea tent did excellent business, as did their huge second hand book stall and their plant stall. The Wychwood Tapestry was on view in full and young Wychwood V volunteers were in evidence, resplendent in green, making their point about local habitats and climate change. Rural crafts were shown in action and there were over 160 stalls of all kinds, plus Hatwell’s funfair, competitions and a storyteller. With entertainment from archers, Morris dancers and a brass band, plus plenty of Wychwood Brewery beer and fresh local food, it was a party for all the family against a serene backdrop and the most successful Fair yet.

**Stuart Fox**





## ASCOTT VILLAGE CHARITY

### "HELPING THE COMMUNITY WHERE IT MATTERS"

The last few months have seen a flurry of activity for the charity. We were pleased to be able to help three community groups in the village by approving funds totaling nearly £900.

Firstly, we were able to support the Parish Council in providing funds for christmas tree lights for this year's carol singing on the Green. (Details will be publicised closer to the day but with singing, mulled wine and mince pies al fresco - it promises to be a traditional event not to be missed! )

Second, the charity has been able to help the Church by funding 50% towards the cost of a new grass strimmer. Together with a donated second hand lawnmower, this should help make Fred and Tim's workload a little easier and for all of us who enjoy the tranquility of the Church - it provides a pleasing environment at the heart of the village.

Lastly, the charity was approached to help with funds for clearing the river around the bridge on the approach to Ascott hill. As one of the riparian land-owners bordering the river close to the bridge, not only do we have a responsibility to keep the river bank free from obstruction but it is also a legitimate aim of the charity to help in environmental matters. We were fortunate to be able to use some of the flood fund to carry out this work.

All of these funding opportunities are examples of what we are here to

do. We work in partnership with others; assessing proposals, approving funds quickly and signposting elsewhere where we can. That way we all benefit.

As a reminder, the Village Charity is set up to help **ALL** individuals and groups in Ascott for the purpose of education, recreation or the environment.

So, if you need a helping hand do get in touch with one of the Trustees.

We're here to help.

#### **The Trustees are:**

John Cull - Chair  
Mark Dawbarn - Secretary  
Stuart Fox - Treasurer  
Mark Abrey  
Elaine Byles

On behalf of the Village Charity we wish everyone in Ascott a wonderful Christmas and a positive and prosperous new year!

**PS** If you have any ideas on how the Village Charity might evolve for the benefit of the community, **please contact John Cull on 831621 or [john@wowmatters.com](mailto:john@wowmatters.com)**. We are currently looking at some potential exciting projects in the new year so keep an eye on future editions of the Grapevine for further information.

**John Cull**

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# **Art @ Christmas at The Loft Gallery**

***Crown Farm Ascott-u-Wychwood OX7 6NS***

**5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December (Weekends)  
10am-5pm**

As well as the work permanently on show by Christopher Townsend (sculpture/painting) and Liz Hogarty (painting/drawing), we will also be showing a range of work by other local artists, including jewellery, glass sculptures and wood-turning.

Please come along and enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie with us.

**For further information please contact:**

**Christopher on 07941503519**

**[info@christophertownsend.co.uk](mailto:info@christophertownsend.co.uk)**

**Liz on 07769906965 [info@lizhogarty.co.uk](mailto:info@lizhogarty.co.uk)**



**By Liz Hogarty**



**By Christopher Townsend**



# Re-opening of the Loft Gallery

**Christopher Townsend** and **Liz Hogarty** have recently re-opened the Loft Gallery at Crown Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, permanently exhibiting a range of their work.

**Christopher Townsend** works in a variety of mediums including mild and stainless steel, creating sculptures for the home and the garden. He accepts **commissions** of all sizes and can make special pieces for special occasions; birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas.

**Contact Christopher on 07941503519**  
[info@christophertownsend.co.uk](mailto:info@christophertownsend.co.uk)

**Liz Hogarty** has her studio next to the gallery. She paints and draws a variety of subjects, with a special emphasis on animals. She is also pleased to accept **commissions**, and can produce pet-portraits either from life or from photographs. **Please see her website for examples of her recent commissions and other work:**  
[www.lizhogarty.co.uk](http://www.lizhogarty.co.uk)

Liz is also making use of the space available in the Gallery and is now offering **DRAWING COURSES** for all levels of ability. Proving particularly popular is the 6-week course for those of you who would love to draw but believe you can't... she is happy to prove you wrong!!!

**Contact Liz on 07769906965** [info@lizhogarty.co.uk](mailto:info@lizhogarty.co.uk)

## FOXBURY FARM

Foxbury Farm has moved across the farmyard, evicting last year's sheep, lambs and odd chicken to become your new larger local Food Shop. Still supplied by its own farm and managed by the same family. Why not come and see us in our new shop during the pre-Christmas shopping week-end Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 November? Our superb new premises (with parking for over 50 cars, plus disabled spaces and the most luxurious farm toilets) will feature a large butchery with an even greater range of meat cuts and sausages and an even wider selection of local products. In addition Foxbury will now have both a deli and a fresh fish counter. As always the Foxbury team will be on hand to answer your questions and offer advice on your Christmas food and, for the first time, you will be able to buy wine and beer to complement your food.

As in past years we will be hosting a large number of craft stalls providing great ideas for Christmas presents ranging from books and toys to jewellery, hand knitted items and wooden boxes. There will also be a selection of charity cards available and cookery demonstrations from professional chef Katherine Frelon.

Don't miss this exciting week-end! Hot refreshments made in our own kitchen will be available and, as always, Mickey the donkey and his friends will help to keep the children occupied while you do your Christmas shopping and place your food orders. The craft stalls will be open between 10.00 and 4.00.

We will be holding our annual Charity Book Sale on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 November. Come and fill a bag with books and donate £2 to charity. This year we are raising money for our local Witney Community Hospital. The hospital has recently opened a 10-bed stroke unit and is now in the process of refurbishing the day room. This is an ideal opportunity both to re-cycle those unwanted books and to acquire some new reading material. Please deliver your surplus books between 10 and 20 November. (No magazines, Reader's Digest or out-of-date travel guides, please).

From November 13 our new extended opening times will be Tuesday to Saturday 9-6 (Thursday late opening 'til 8) and Sunday 10-4. Closed Monday.

Our Christmas 'Living' Nativity Play will be taking place again this year in early December. Come dressed as your favourite Christmas character – king, shepherd, wise man, angel ... and take part as the story unfolds. The date has yet to be confirmed so keep an eye on our website [www.foxburyfarm.co.uk](http://www.foxburyfarm.co.uk) for further information.



*Dates for Diary: Saturday 14 (9.00-6.00) and Sunday 15 (10.00-4.00)  
November: pre-Christmas shopping week-end.*

*Saturday 21 (9.00-6.00) and Sunday 22 (10.00-4.00)  
November: Charity Book Sale*

*13 December (3.45): Christmas 'Living Nativity' Play*

**Contact details: Foxbury Farm  
Burford Road  
Brize Norton  
OX18 3NX**

**01993 867385 (answer phone and fax)**

**01993 844141 (office)**

**[shop@foxburyfarm.co.uk](mailto:shop@foxburyfarm.co.uk)**

**[www.foxburyfarm.co.uk](http://www.foxburyfarm.co.uk)**

## **Dates for the Diary:**






**Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th November 2009**

**Foxbury Pre-Christmas Shopping Day  
Music & Cookery Demonstrations  
10am to 4pm both days**

***Foxbury Farm Butchers and Farm Shop  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, OX18 3NX  
Tel: 01993 844141 [www.foxburyfarm.co.uk](http://www.foxburyfarm.co.uk)***



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Opening hours (term time only) :  
9am - 3pm Monday Tuesday Thursday Friday  
9am - 11.45am Wednesday

For more information please contact:  
**Donna Kowalski on 01993 878667**

## HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT ASCOTT DOYLEY?

### ROGER'S DOWNFALL

A tale I have to tell you of Ascott's ancient past.

It's roots set in the century that saw the Norman blast.

Robert Doyley was Will's soulmate,  
the Conqueror's right hand man,  
Rewarded with great riches and a share  
of Ascott's land.

Years passed and the locals felt the  
Doyleys' iron fist

As son succeeded father, a strong presence  
in their midst.

Then when Stephen fought Matilda for  
Britain's pleasant land.

Roger Doyley craftily took the chance  
to erect a castle grand.

Built of stone, a mighty keep, his status  
it proclaimed,

By the crossing of the river, soon all  
should laud his name.

Rich tapestries and hangings, battle-  
ments and cellars,

And a chapel where a priest could pray  
for Roger and his fellows.

But Roger built illegally, for the king  
gave no permission,

In those lawless days, the greatest  
Lords flouted all traditions.

Banquets were held with sumptuous  
food for Roger's guests from far and  
near.

Tables laden with fine dishes, in the  
centre, the King's deer.

So close to Wychwood Forest, no  
strong king to stop this man,  
Roger rode and hunted, made free play  
of his sovereign's land.

Eventually fate dealt it's hand,  
Matilda's son succeeded Stephen.

Henry the second, young and sturdy,  
strong and powerful, time for evens.

T'was brought to Henry's notice, Rog-  
er Doyley had a castle

Where he shunned his king's authority.  
Roger was an arrogant rascal.

At king's command, he was sum-  
moned, at court he must be tested.

Illegal poaching called for punishment,  
Roger instantly arrested.

Languishing in London Tower till  
fines could be collected.

Did he rue his past misdeeds, the regu-  
lations he rejected?

But t'was not all his penalty, the castle  
must be dealt with.

An edifice of such grandeur where he  
had no rights to live.

Down must come his bastion, the stur-  
dy keep completely humbled,

To make it fully desolate, each stone  
layer carefully crumbled.

When Roger finally left the Tower,  
home to his Ascott manor,

The locals smirked behind his back,  
the king had crushed the hammer.  
Shortly after, Holy Trinity Church was  
gracefully erected.

I wonder, did the Doyleys feel their  
souls had been neglected?

Could the tumbled stones have been  
reused, a bequest to Christian men,  
And did a lofty man regret his sins and  
seek God's grace again?

We shall never know!

**Wendy Pearse**

**DEADLINE FOR  
WINTER 2010 EDITION**

**JANUARY 5TH**

**PLEASE DON'T BE LATE**

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# NOTICE BOARD

## What would you like to see In The Ascott Grapevine?

If there is anything you feel you would particularly like to see included in future editions of the Grapevine, either on a regular or ad hoc basis, then please feel free to let any member of the Editorial Team know (there is a contact telephone number and email address on the inside cover of this issue). Please remember this is your local magazine and we endeavour at all times to bring you items that are interesting, amusing and sometimes dare I say it, controversial!! Please help us to keep The Ascott Grapevine your magazine by telling us what is of interest to you.

The Editorial Team

**HAVE YOU A FAVOURITE OR SEASONAL RECIPE YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE? THEN PLEASE JOT IT DOWN AND  
HAND A COPY TO STUART FOX, WENDY PEARSE, ELAINE  
BYLES OR MAGGIE LYON OR EMAIL IT TO:  
wendypearse@btinternet.com**

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?

If you would like to become part of the Ascott Grapevine team, then we would be delighted to have you on board. Being part of the Editorial team is interesting and fun with a real feel of community involvement. Please contact any member of the team (whose names are listed on the inside cover) or email wendypearse@btinternet.com

## WHAT'S ON IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE(S)
Xmas Presents Fair	Burford Methodist Hall	6 - 7 Nov. 20 - 22 Nov. 4 -5 Dec.
Gifts & Treats Fair	Chipping Norton Town Hall Langdale Hall Witney	7 Nov. 21 Nov. 28 Nov. 5 Dec.
Woodstock Antiques Fair	Woodstock Town Hall	14-15 Nov.
Burford Flea Market Burford Antiques Fair	Warwick Hall Burford Methodist Hall Burford	14 Nov. & 15 Dec. 21 & 22 Nov.
Blenheim Palace	Living Crafts at Xmas Ghosts in the Garden Christmas Nostalgia Blenheim Singers Excerpts from Messiah Carol singing with silver band	20 & 22 Nov. 24 Oct. to 1 Nov. 14 Nov. to 13 Dec. 6 Dec. 12 Noon and 4.00pm 12 & 13 Dec.
Pantomime - Dick Whittington	Chipping Norton Theatre	17 Nov. to 9 Jan.
Farmers Markets	Witney Chipping Norton Woodstock Charlbury	18 Nov. & 16 Dec. 21 Nov. & 19 Dec. 7 Nov. & 5 Dec. 12 Dec.
Music & Mulled Wine Dressed for Christmas And Conservation Talk	Chastleton House	12 & 13 Dec. 5 & 6 Dec.
Christmas at Lodge Park and Sherborne	Lodge Park	12 & 13 Dec. 11.00am to 4.00pm
English String Orchestra Mozart, Bach etc.	Burford School	11 Nov. 7.30pm

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE(S)
Gloucester Youth Orchestra Handel, Tchaikovsky etc	Burford School	2 Dec. 7.30pm
Royal College of Music String Orchestra	Burford School	13 Jan. 7.30pm
<b>Cotswolds AONB Walks</b>		
Wychwood Forest 8.5 miles	Meet Co-op Charlbury	10.00am 8 Nov.
Guiting Wood 5.5 miles	Meet Temple Guiting	10.00am 12 Nov
Leaffield/Wychwood 12 miles	Meet Leaffield Village Green	9.30am 15 Nov.
Roman Ways and Deserted Villages 7.5 miles	Meet Spendlove Centre Charlbury	10.00am 17 Nov.
Sarsden Circle 5 miles	Meet Sarsden Cross	10.00am 21 Nov
Windrush Valley 5 miles	Meet Maytime Pub Asthall	10.00am 2 Dec.
Rollright Stones 5 miles	Meet Manor House Little Compton	10.00am 3 Jan
Chipping Norton paths and pavements 3 miles	Meet New St. car park	10.30am 21 Jan
Ramsden 4.2 miles	Meet Ramsden War Memorial	10.00am 11 Feb. 10.00am 16 Feb
Thor's Stone 6.5 miles	Meet Spendlove Centre Charlbury	

***These listings were correct at the time of publication but please check dates and venues before attending any of the above.***

# WYCHWOOD LIBRARY

What a wonderful summer we have had at Wychwood Library. A record breaking 184 children joined “Quest Seekers”, the summer reading scheme with exciting tales of dragons and a quest and lots of new books to read. Nearly everyone read at least six books and most read considerably more so were rightly rewarded with a certificate and a medal. Well done everyone.

Ancestry Week in mid October was a great success. The library hosted one hour “one-to-one” introductory sessions with help from the Wychwood Volunteers. The Ancestry web site is free and available at all libraries in Oxfordshire and includes US and UK Census records, Birth, Marriage & Death indexes 1837 – 2005, British Army pension records 1914 – 1920, UK Incoming Passenger Lists and British phone books 1812 – 1984. We also hold here the local Oxfordshire Parish Register Transcripts for Baptisms, Marriages and Burials from 1569 to recent times on CD. Come along and discover who you are.

SWYCH have placed two energy monitors with us for the purpose of lending these out for a month at a time to check on your energy usage. Come in and sign up for one. This is also free.

If you are finding it difficult to get to the Library, our new service may help you. The WRVS has recruited Angela Townsend to visit customers in their homes to deliver and collect their

books. Just let us know if you would like to be part of this.

We have lots of new book stock coming into the Library every week and we have also reduced the cost of taking out DVD's. The latest DVD's are still £3.50 for a week but are quickly discounted to £2.50 then £1.25 so a cheap night in.

We look forward to seeing you at Wychwood Library.

**Ruth, Liz and Angela**

## **Opening Times:**

### **Monday:**

2.00pm to 7.00pm

### **Tuesday:**

**Closed**

### **Wednesday:**

9.30am to 1.00pm/2.00pm to 5.00pm

### **Thursday:**

**Closed**

### **Friday:**

2.00pm to 7.00pm

### **Saturday**

9.30am to 1.00pm



## HARVEST SUPPER IN THE TIDDY HALL

For those of us privileged to live in the countryside, the changing seasons have real meaning as we see the rotation of the seasons reflected in the fields all around us. On

October 4<sup>th</sup> the congregation of Holy Trinity gathered to give thanks for the harvest and after the service they were joined in the Tiddy Hall for a celebratory meal and entertainment.

The people of this valley will have met too in similar circumstances for many millennia, sometimes

rejoicing that their barns were full and at other times despairing as to how they would survive the winter. How fortunate we have been in our lifetimes that, for the most part, the local shops have been able to provide, even in time of war. Perhaps we should not take this situation for granted as climate change affects so

much of the plant and animal life around us. It is said that civilised society is just three missed meals away from anarchy.



For this year though, all is well and grateful thanks to all those who organised the evening and to those who provided the superb spread and drinks

that we all enjoyed. Thanks also to those who entertained us, Kiara and Predwin for the three haunting songs that they sang, Jim Pearse for reciting the poem written by Wendy (elsewhere in the Grapevine) and Fred Russell for his 'Name that Hymn' competition. A great time was had by all.

**Tim Lyon**



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## **TIDDY HALL**

### **Regular Activities:**

**Monday – Friday Mornings**  
Pre-school

Contact: Mrs Pauline Plant  
07968006451

### **Wednesday Afternoons**

Piano Lessons

Contact: Pauline Carter  
01993 774568

**Tuesday Evenings 7.30 – 9pm**  
**Yoga**

Contact: Jan Holah 01608 810620

**Tuesday Evenings 6 – 7pm**  
**Karate Class**

Contact: Rachel Ealey  
07929 338813

Post Office runs every Friday  
afternoon 2pm – 4pm

### **Special Events:**

**Flix in the Stix Supper Evening**  
**Saturday 14 November**

**Village Pantomime Friday 11**  
**December**

**To book the Tiddy Hall contact:**

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

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## **HELLS BELLS** **2009 PANTOMIME**

Ascott's very own panto last December was such a pleasurable occasion for both cast and audience that you are once again invited to this year's production - Hells Bells. Scripted by Fred Russell and produced by Danny Brainin come to be entertained by bad jokes, play spot the neighbour in drag and enjoy a drink to celebrate Christmas.

Complimentary tickets for residents of Ascott, for the one evening only at Tiddy Hall on Friday 11 December at 7pm, will be available from the shop towards the end of November.

**Sue Richards**

The Post Office Stores  
Milton-under-Wychwood

The Post Office, The Green  
Shipton Road  
Milton-under-Wychwood, OX7 6JL  
Tel: 01993 832243

Opening hours:  
Mon.-Fri. 9am - 5.30pm (Closed 1-2 for lunch)  
Saturday 9am - 1.00pm

Post Office Services Available at 'The Tiddy Hall', Ascott  
Friday 2.00pm - 4.00pm (Bank Holidays Excepted)

We have a good selection of Greeting Cards, Stationery, Agents for Dry  
Cleaners, Passport Photos  
We will be pleased to see you





**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD**



13th December	Carol Service at 4.00 p.m.
24th December	Crib and Christingle Service at 3.00 p.m. Midnight Service 11.30 p.m.
25th December	BCP 10.00 a.m.

**Please check notice boards for any changes.**



## Monday to Saturday except Public Holidays



### Chipping Norton-Kingham Station-The Wychwoods

notes	NS	NS	NS	S							
Chipping Norton, West Street .....	06.07	06.45	07.15	08.00	08.30	09.30	10.35	11.35	12.35	13.35	14.35
Churchill, Bus Shelter .....	06.12	06.51	07.21	08.07	08.37	09.37	10.43	11.43	12.43	13.43	14.43
Kingham, Church Street .....	06.15	06.55	07.25	08.11	08.41	09.41	10.47	11.47	12.47	13.47	14.47
Kingham Station  [arr]	06.19	06.58	07.28	08.14	08.44	09.44	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50	14.50
Kingham Station  [dep]	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.55T	10.55T	11.55T	12.55T	13.55	14.55T
Idbury .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.58	10.58	11.58	12.58	13.58	14.58
Fifield .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	10.01	11.01	12.01	13.01	14.01	15.01
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	10.05	11.05	12.05	13.05	14.05	15.05
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	10.08	11.08	12.08	13.08	14.08	15.08
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	10.14	11.14	12.14	13.14	14.14	15.14

notes	NS	S	NS	S	NS						
Chipping Norton, West Street .....	15.30	16.20	16.35	16.55	17.30	17.45	18.25	19.10			
Churchill, Bus Shelter .....	15.38	16.28	16.43	17.02	17.37	17.52	18.32	19.17			
Kingham, Church Street .....	15.42	16.32	16.47	17.06	17.41	17.56	18.36	19.21			
Kingham Station  [arr]	15.45	16.35	16.50	17.10	17.45	18.00	18.40	19.25			
Kingham Station  [dep]	15.50T	16.35	16.50T	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			
Idbury .....	15.53	16.38	16.53	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			
Fifield .....	15.56	16.41	16.56	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	16.00	16.45	17.00	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			
Shipton-u-Wychwood Post Office ...	16.03	16.48	17.03	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	16.09	16.54Z	--R--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----			

### The Wychwoods-Kingham Station-Chipping Norton

notes	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	S					
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	13.30
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.36	10.36	11.36	12.36	13.36
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.39	10.39	11.39	12.39	13.39
Fifield .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.42	10.42	11.42	12.42	13.42
Idbury .....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.45	10.45	11.45	12.45	13.45
Kingham Station  [arr]	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	09.50	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50
Kingham Station  [dep]	06.30	07.00	07.30T	08.15	08.30T	08.55T	09.55T	10.55T	11.55T	12.55T	13.55
Kingham, Church Street .....	06.34	07.04	07.34	08.19	08.34	08.59	09.59	10.59	11.59	12.59	13.59
Churchill, Bus Shelter .....	06.37	07.07	07.37	08.22	08.37	09.02	10.02	11.02	12.02	13.02	14.02
Chipping Norton, West Street .....	06.43	07.13	07.43	08.28	08.43	09.08	10.08	11.08	12.08	13.08	14.08

notes	NS	S	NS	S	NS	NS					
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	14.30	15.30	16.15	16.30	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	14.36	15.36	16.21	16.36	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	14.39	15.39	16.24	16.39	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Fifield .....	14.42	15.42	16.27	16.42	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Idbury .....	14.45	15.45	16.30	16.45	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Kingham Station  [arr]	14.50	15.50	16.35	16.50	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Kingham Station  [dep]	14.55T	15.50T	16.35	16.50T	17.20T	17.55T	18.10T	18.50T	19.25T	19.50X	
Kingham, Church Street .....	14.59	15.54	16.39	16.54	17.24	17.59	18.14	18.54	19.29	19.54	
Churchill, Bus Shelter .....	15.02	15.57	16.42	16.57	17.27	18.02	18.17	18.57	19.31	19.57	
Chipping Norton, West Street .....	15.08	16.03	16.48	17.03	17.33	18.08	18.23	19.03	--R--	--R--	

## Monday to Friday except Public Holidays

service	C1	C1	C1	C1	T1	T1	T1	T1	C1	C1	C1
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	06.40			07.56							
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	06.42			07.58							
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	06.48			08.04							
Leaffield, The Fox .....	06.10	06.56	07.25	08.12	09.30	10.30	12.15	13.15	17.25	18.10	18.55
Ramsden, Royal Oak .....	↓	↓	↓	↓	09.40	10.40	12.25	13.25	↓	↓	↓
Finstock, School .....	06.16	07.02	07.31	08.17	09.45	10.45	12.30	13.30	↓	↓	↓
Charlbury, Five Ways .....	06.19	07.06	07.35	08.21	09.49	10.49	12.34	13.34	↓	↓	↓
Charlbury, Browns Lane, Co-op .....	06.21	07.08	07.37	08.23	09.54	10.54	12.39	13.39	↓	↓	↓
Charlbury, Rail Station ⇌ ... [arr]	06.25	07.12	07.41	08.27	09.57	10.57	12.42	13.42	17.50	18.35	19.40

route in Charlbury: Fiveways, Sturt Road, The Slade, Enstone Road, Browns Lane, Market Street, Dyers Hill, Station ⇌

service	C1	C1	C1	T1	T1	T1	T1	C1	C1	C1	C1
Charlbury, Rail Station ⇌ ... [dep]	06.25	07.12	07.41	10.00	11.00	12.45	13.45	17.10	17.55	18.40	19.45
Charlbury, Browns Lane, Co-op ....	↓	↓	↓	10.03	11.03	12.48	13.48	17.12	17.57	18.42	19.47
Charlbury, Church St, The Bell .....	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	17.14	17.59	18.44	19.49
Charlbury, Hixet Wood .....	↓	↓	↓	10.04	11.04	12.49	13.49	↓	↓	↓	↓
Charlbury, Five Ways .....	↓	↓	↓	10.06	11.06	12.51	13.51	17.16	18.01	18.46	19.51
Finstock, School .....	↓	↓	↓	10.10	11.10	12.55	13.55	17.20	18.05	18.50	19.55
Ramsden, Royal Oak .....	↓	↓	↓	10.15	11.15	13.00	14.00	↓	↓	↓	↓
Leaffield, The Fox .....	↓	07.25	↓	10.25	11.25	13.10	14.10	17.25	18.10	18.55	--R--
Ascott-u-Wychwood .....	--R--		--R--					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--
Shipton-u-Wychwood, Post Office ..	--R--		--R--					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--
Milton-u-Wychwood, Quart Pot ...	06.40		07.56					--R--	--R--	--R--	--R--

route in Charlbury: Station ⇌, Dyers Hill, Thames Street, Nine Acres Lane, Enstone Road, Browns Lane, then

C1: Church Street, Park Road, Fiveways

T1: Sheep Street, Hixet Wood, Fiveways

**Notes:** --R-- continues to these points on request

Buses will wait up to five minutes for late running trains except up to 20 minutes for the last journey



The C1 is normally operated with wheelchair accessible buses

**T1: Journeys will only operate if requested in advance with the operator**

**Phone 01993 869100 at least two hours before you wish to travel**

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

As we move into the Game season, one of my favourite recipes for this time of the year is; PHEASANT EN CROUTE with redcurrant relish.

### **Serves 3-4**

1 pheasant ( I use 2 )  
450ml stock  
1 onion, finely chopped  
2 tbs butter  
225g mushrooms, finely chopped  
25-50g raisins  
100g cooked rice  
1 tsp mixed herbs  
350g puff pastry (bought or home-made )  
1 egg, beaten.

1. Place pheasant in a heavy casserole and pour over the stock, Cook in a moderate oven (180c, 350f, gas mark 4) for 1- 1½ hours. Remove from oven and when cool, remove meat from the carcass and cut into slices. Melt the butter in a frying pan and gently soften the onion, add the mushrooms and cook well. Stir in the raisins, rice and mixed herbs, season well.
2. Roll out the puff pastry into an oblong, about 20cm (8in) wide by 30cm (12in) deep, and place down the centre slices of pheasant sandwiched together with the rice stuffing.
3. Fold up the pastry to resemble a large sausage roll, sealing the edges with beaten egg and decorate with left over pastry pieces. Brush the whole with beaten egg and bake for 45 minutes in a hot oven (200c, 400f, Gas Mark 6).
4. Serve with a rich gravy, made from the stock in which the pheasant was cooked, to which may be added wine and redcurrant jelly if desired.

For the Redcurrant Relish;

1 Red Onion, finely chopped  
3 tbs good quality redcurrant jelly  
2-3 tbs fresh redcurrants (or chopped fresh cranberries, according to season)  
1 medium chilli, chopped

Gently warm the redcurrant jelly. Stir in the chopped onion, chilli and redcurrants or cranberries. Cook for a few minutes and serve while still crunchy.

**Kathy Pearce**



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