

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN
www.whitchurchonthames.com

JULY 2004

Meeting of The Parish Council

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 5th July in the Village Hall.

In attendance were the Chairman Matilda Oppenheimer and Councillors Nigel Groves, Harry Butterworth, Vincent Aldridge, Elizabeth Robinson and Kate Thatcher.

Also present were the Parish Clerk Janet Holmes, District Councillor Pearl Slatter, County Councillor John Farrow and three members of the Public.

Cricket Ground

Jill Bradon updated the Council about the Cricket Ground. A meeting between the Cricket Club and the Whitelock family has been arranged to discuss purchasing the Ground. The Cricket Club are keen to widen the fund-raising to include the Parish Council and the Village.

The Parish Clerk has ascertained that a loan could be obtained by the Parish Council from the Public Works Loan Department which would need to be repaid by the community charge payers of Whitchurch over a number of years. Such a loan could be dependant on the market price of the land. A Grant has been offered to the Cricket Club from SODC, which could be transferred to the Parish Council if necessary.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would hold a meeting to discuss the future of the Cricket Ground on the 19th July.

Flooding Alleviation Scheme

Our District Councillor confirmed that works to prevent further flooding in the village will be done before next winter.

Toll Bridge

Planning permission has been granted to the Toll Bridge Company for the installation of a new toll collection system. For more detailed information please see the District Councillor's report in this Bulletin.

Playground

The Playground was officially opened by Mr Sam Josefovitz on the 26th June. Despite the rain this was very well attended, lots of children climbed all over the Play equipment, many Villagers gave their support and Mr Sam and Mrs Popper's family thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. The extra land at the back of the Playground will be available soon once the legal details for the transfer of the land are finalised. New fencing will then be put up, the area cleared (leaving the trees) and more new equipment and bench seats installed.

The Parish Council are grateful to Mr Sam for this very generous addition to the Playground.

Planning

New Applications

The following planning applications were discussed. The Parish Council's comments are in bold.

Rosemead, Eastfield Lane

Demolition of existing conservatory, construction of two storey rear extension and alterations to existing dormer window to the rear extension.

NO OBJECTION

Decisions

Beechlee, Hardwick Road - Granted

The Hive, Hardwick Road - Granted

Finances

The following cheques were agreed for payment.

The Clerk for salary and expenses, Annual grant to the Village Hall Management, Grant to the Pre-school for the new Gas heating.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday the 19th July in the Whitchurch Village Hall at 7.00pm. This meeting is to discuss the future of the Cricket Club. This will start with a Public forum to give an opportunity for all interested parties to express their views. An agenda will be posted on the Parish Council Notice-board opposite the Greyhound before the meeting.

Matilda Oppenheimer
Chairman

REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

TOLL BRIDGE, HIGH STREET, WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES

That SODC granted temporary permission for 12 months for the replacement of two road traffic barriers and installation of two coin/swipe machines adjacent to toll booth (as amplified by letter received on 24 October 2003)

The temporary permission is granted in order that the impact of the barriers and coin/swipe machines on traffic flows and the highway network can be assessed.

You can view the planning decision notice and plans on SODC website www.southoxon.gov.uk -Online Planning – Planning Application No P03/E0364

The Council's reason for decision is:

The new coin/swipe card machine and replacement barriers are discreet and do not have an adverse impact on the character of the area or on local amenity. The consultants report also demonstrates that the proposed barrier system is expected to work at least as efficiently as the existing system, indeed that the system will allow greater flexibility by metering traffic through the toll at a rate which does not exacerbate delays elsewhere. It is considered that although there are reasonable grounds to assume that there will not be any significant impact on the character of the locality and the amenity of local residents, a temporary one year planning permission with a requirement to monitor traffic flows is appropriate.

THE CRICKET FIELD

Following the application by the Whitchurch Cricket Club to South Oxfordshire District Council for financial help in purchasing the Cricket field, the Community Investment Fund has made an award of £50,000 to the Club towards the cost of the field!

WELL DONE SODC!!

FLOOD ALLEVIATION GRANTS

Monies have been allocated by the new administration to continue the investigations into the annual flooding by the Greyhound, and hopefully to start work in curing the problem.

Ann Ducker & Pearl Slatter

COMMUNITY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

In the future there will be a weekly service, as follows:-

THURSDAY MORNINGS 8.00 TILL 11.00 AM IN GORING

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS 12.00 TILL 3.00 IN WOODCOTE.

There will be 2 vehicles provided, one for household waste and one for garden refuse between April and October. There will only be one vehicle between November and March.

Remember if you haven't got your free green box yet or would like another one, please contact Public Amenities on 01491 823416 or email public.amenities@southoxon.gov.uk

From your County Councillor.

Mineral Extraction

Recently there has been debate regarding the possibility of mineral extraction in the South of Oxfordshire, as suggested I have been watching this very closely and I am pleased to say that I have been part of the group that has worked to secure an important reduction in the suggested regional allocation. Although the Woodcote area was not directly identified as a possible site I have opposed the creation of any new minerals working area in South Oxfordshire.

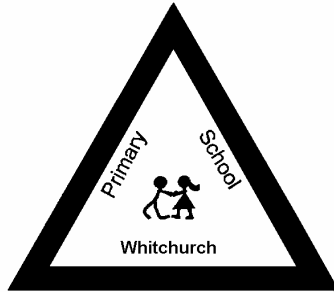
Unfortunately this may be the last time the County Council will be able to have their say on such an important matter, as in the future, the Regional Assembly in Guildford will recommend a plan to the Deputy Prime Minister on behalf of the eight million people in the South East, the Deputy Prime Minister will then decide whether he likes it or not. Though one thing is certain, we as Oxfordshire residents – along with the rest of the South East – will have much less input on these important matters.

Highway Standards

I am always very concerned about the state of repair of our roads. As your Conservative County Councillor I am consistently in support of the motorist and the motor car, doing all I can by putting pressure on the highway repair team to ensure safety and improve the quality of County Council roads, recognising that for most people in the rural areas, there is no alternative to the motor car.

Newspaper headlines tell us damages against councils are rising in respect of claims for poor quality roads. Against this background, it is interesting to note that Oxfordshire is bucking the trend.

*John Farrow
County Councillor*



As you all know, Penny Smith will be leaving Whitchurch School at the end of this term.

There are very few parents at the school now who can remember what the school was like before Penny came, indeed the changes that have come about under her headship now feel so natural that we tend to forget how hard she has worked to achieve them. For example, Penny managed to work through all the bureaucracy to get a school bus running. In addition, many positive changes have been made to the layout of the school, especially in classrooms 3 and 4, as well as the lovely new staff room and offices. Many parents possibly don't realize that there were only three classes at the school when Penny started: years 4, 5 and 6 were all in class 4. Penny was the driving force behind all these initiatives.

On behalf of the governing body at Whitchurch Primary, I would like to thank Penny for all her dedication and commitment to our village school.

*Tracy Glass
Clerk to the Governors*

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL CONCERT

I have always been jealous of those people who can play a musical instrument. Even more so, of those who can transcend the technology and reveal the heart of the music. When, on Thursday morning the music started to play at the opening of the Whitchurch Primary School concert it was obvious by the end of the first bar that this was one of those people.

But it went so much further than that. This teacher had managed to make it rub off onto a bunch of kids, the youngest of which was four years old and the oldest was eleven. I have the reputation of being a bit of a square: I enjoyed "Figaro" on *Performance* the other evening, but the idea of a musical does not appeal. Yet I really enjoyed that concert. Judging by the applause (and there is a world of difference between a parent clapping for little Johnny and an audience showing their appreciation), everyone else did too.

I can't imagine how someone dreamt up the idea of a Syncopated OwlCat. I still keep thinking I can hear a chuckle, which must be Edward Lear! It worked brilliantly and there was nothing polite about the response to the OwlCat song. The audience cheered. I reckon it would win the Eurovision song contest hands down.

I do have one complaint. The School Hall is too small. Perhaps next year they might use the Village Hall. Then lots more people could enjoy it.

Harry Butterworth



With the Summer Holidays coming we have a jam packed few weeks before the end of term. We had our annual Sports Day on Tuesday 13th July, and our Summer Picnic took place in our own gardens this year on Thursday 15th July.

Our children are learning about numbers and maintaining their own garden patch, which everyone has enjoyed.

If you would like more information about our Pre-School please call 0118 984 4516 and speak to Helen.

Fireworks Spectacular

By kind permission of Sir Julian Rose

At
Hardwick House
Whitchurch on Thames

Saturday 18th September

Gates open at 5.30 pm

Hardwick Organic BBQ
Beer Tent
Live Music

Tickets:

- Adults £6 (£7 at the gate)
- Children £4 (£5 at the gate)
- Family £18 (£20 at the gate)

Tickets from Emma Barker 0118 9844038,
Lucy Norman 0118 9845058, The Greyhound & The Sun

All Proceeds are for St Mary's and St John's Churches
Whitchurch & Whitchurch Hill
Major sponsors Lane Fox, Castrol & Mercers

South Oxfordshire District Council's Summer Holiday Sports Programme 2004

South Oxfordshire are putting on a variety of courses for children aged between 7 and 14 years old. They range from a 5 day sports camp, to lessons in tennis, golf, hockey, cricket and Soccer even lawn bowls.

Dates and venues vary but for more information telephone the Press Officer on 01491 823748.

Or if anyone wants to ring me I have a leaflet all about it.

THE WHITCHURCH THYME MAZE

Full Circle

By Nick Brazil

On a quiet summer evening on June 20th Peter Woolhouse laid the final named brick in The Whitchurch Thyme Maze. It was only ten weeks since the first turf was cut by Geoff Weir but we had met our target of having the Official Opening on the same day as The Garden Walk on the following Sunday. In that time Pete had laid over 2000 bricks and I had mixed four tons of mortar in a wheelbarrow. His phrase: “*Knock up another gauge of muck just to keep your hand in.*” will remain with me into my dotage.

When Sunday 27th dawned I glanced anxiously at the sky. The previous day had been dreadful with torrential rain. The forecast for that day was better but one can never take the weather for granted. In the event, it was perfect with brilliant sunshine interspersed with fluffy clouds.

It is often said that people vote with their feet. Well if that is so, they certainly gave the Maze a resounding vote of confidence on that memorable day.

I had no idea how well attended the opening would be so I was delighted to see a hundred and fifty people filling the meadow. Many of them of course were residents who had engraved bricks. Others came from as far afield as Northampton, Stevenage and Derbyshire. Their backgrounds might have been diverse but these visitors had one thing in common, they were all friends and supporters of the Maze.

As I launched into my speech I bore in mind Polonius’ advice in Hamlet: “*If brevity is the soul of Wit then I’ll be brief*”.

I think I followed his advice better than he did. In four minutes I had said all I needed particularly in thanking everyone involved. Indeed I owe a great debt of thanks to many people for ensuring my original idea become a reality in such a short time.

We were also very grateful to Tony Voysey for agreeing to open the maze with his thoughtful speech reminding us of the ancient origins of mazes and labyrinths. After that the proceedings really went with a bang.

It was a rare privilege to have this event marked with a salute of ancient musketry. For this we are indebted to the local branch of The Muzzle

Loaders Association of Great Britain. Without doubt their volley added a uniqueness and style to this historic occasion.

Large numbers of people stayed to enjoy their picnics in the beautiful surroundings of The Maze Meadow. This reinforced my belief that Whitchurch is not only a village but also a large “family.”

We often do not realise the ultimate consequences of our actions. When I first thought of the Maze I never foresaw how it would set fire to the collective imagination. Whether it was purchasing engraved bricks or actually coming to help create it by cutting turf so many members of the community helped to make the maze a reality. During the course of its construction I came to know many of my neighbours well. I also feel that the project has had a positive bonding effect on the village.

The involvement and interest of children, particularly the pupils at The Whitchurch Primary School was immensely rewarding. They have already adopted the maze as their special place and I know many of them are regular visitors.

So what about the future? Although the main part of the Maze is now complete there are the distance and village history plaques to be installed. Once again, the pupils at the school are providing valuable help by identifying special places throughout the world to have a place in the Maze.

The plan is to create these plaques in high strength mortar with lettering impressed in them. But if anyone has a better idea regarding techniques or materials please do not hesitate to contact me at the address given at the end of the article.

In creating The Whitchurch Thyme Maze we also hope to have provided a focal point for future village activities. A barbecue marking the first anniversary of its opening is already planned. We also think it would lend itself to concerts such as “Jazz at The Maze” and some form of open air art exhibitions. Certainly a Maze cutting party would help keep it in trim. Just bring your mowers and turf cutters!

If anyone has other ideas for Maze based events please do not hold back. It’s your Maze please use it as much as possible.

Nick Brazil, The Garden Flat, The Mount, Hardwick Rd.,
Whitchurch-on-Thames, Reading RG8 7HW

Telephone: 01189841602

e-mail: nicholas.brazil1@btopenworld

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Recent Twinning Events:

Annual Boules Evening

This was held on Friday 25th June in the new location of No. 20 Swanston Field, home of the current Chairman of the Twinning Association, David Robinson. The event was timed to coincide with David's leave from his assignment in Saudi Arabia. 30 or 40 people attended, 24 of whom participated in the boules match with the final taking place, as is traditional, in the near pitch dark. The winning team included the husband and wife duo, Mike & Sue Barlow, and the star of the evening, 11 year old Natalie, a very welcome new participant who came with her mother, Debbie.

A superb table of food, organised by Liz and David, but contributed to by twinning committee members and supporters, was provided. Not a drop of rain fell to spoil the sport and the evening was counted a great success.

Thyme Maze Inauguration

By special request of Nick Brazil, Martine Cousin, the President of the La Bouille Twinning Association, was invited to attend the inauguration ceremony. Fortunately Martine was due to visit friends in Whitchurch for the Henley Regatta and was able to advance her planned arrival date so as to be present at the opening. Martine videoed the proceedings to show twinning members back in La Bouille - including the engraved brick commemorating the founding of the twinning of the two villages.

Ian Bruce

THE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

The Allotment Society is thriving at the moment. We would still be interested in any unwanted baths if there are any villagers out there "doing" their bathrooms!

We have a couple of vacant plots for any keen would-be allotmenters, they could be shared if you feel one might be too large. The Autumn is the perfect time to start digging a plot ...

I am always happy to show people around the Allotments site.

Rosamund Heath
984 2358

THE WHITCHURCH ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION

The weekend of 20th/21st November 2004

This is a gentle reminder to everyone to get cracking on your entries for this year's show! Apologies for repeating myself, but we really do welcome ALL entries so don't be shy and think you can't match the standard of work displayed in previous years - the ethos of the exhibition is that it is a 'whole village' event for the participation and enjoyment of all. If you have never entered before, remember that there is a special prize for 1st time entries! This year's theme for the Joyce Voysey prize is "Birds" – plenty of scope for your vivid imagination!

As I mentioned in the last Bulletin, please let me know if you would like your prize-winning work from past years included in the Archive Corner or if you have any paintings by Jack Orford that you would be prepared to loan us for the display we are planning in his memory. (Thank you to everyone who has already contacted me with kind offers!)

We shall hopefully be giving prizes again to winners in all categories - this is thanks to the generosity of local businesses. If you would like to be a sponsor this year, we would be delighted to hear from you! Our website (www.wotarts.co.uk or via the Village website) has been updated recently with details of the classes, rules of entry etc. for 2004 and **all this information, together with sending-in times, will be printed in full in the next edition of the Bulletin (September).**

Sally Woolhouse (Tel 0118 984 4365).

VILLAGE FETE

Saturday, September 4th 2004 at 2.00 PM

The Fete will again be held at Walliscote Farm, by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Aldridge.

We hope to have stalls from all the village societies, as well as the bouncy castle, kids corner, and tea and beer tents.

If you would like to run a stall, please give me a ring. If you have any quality bric-a-brac for Granny's Attic please call Sarah on 984 2922.

I look forward to seeing you there.

MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARY!

Kate Thatcher 0118 984 4656

Dr Matilda Oppenheimer

I have decided to take part in a sponsored 400km Bike ride along the River Nile in October with Prof Robert Winston and 80 women!! We are raising money for The Women for Women Appeal, which is administered by the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Trust. The money raised will be used to fund research into the health of women and babies, especially helping pioneering work into miscarriage, pregnancy and premature babies.

I am very out of practice at cycling, can hardly go up-hill at all and have not even worked out how to use all the 24 gears on my new bike yet. It will be a bit of a triumph for me to get fit enough to go and I will be practising hard all around the local countryside for the next few months. If I can get up Whitchurch Hill I think I can cope with anything!

I am making a contribution myself so that all the money I raise will go to the Charity and not pay for my trip.

If you feel able to Sponsor me I would be very grateful. Cheques should be made payable to The Institute Trust Fund and sent to me at the White House, High Street, Whitchurch, RG8 7HA

A huge thank-you if you feel able to Sponsor me
Any contribution would be very welcome indeed.

.....oooo0oooo.....

This is a message from your local Crime Reduction Advisor.

A reminder to all - please ensure that front doors and windows are secure when you are in your back gardens. Also, we have had a spate of overnight burglaries through open windows and unlocked doors - please lock up before retiring to bed, especially when the weather improves again.

Getting Married at Blenheim

Couples wanting to celebrate their marriage with panache and in one of the most architecturally outstanding venues in the country can now do so at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock. Couples who choose Blenheim for their special day can be married in any of 3 exquisite rooms within the palace: The Marlborough Room, the Orangery or the Oudenarde Room. To enquire about a civil wedding ceremony at Blenheim Palace, visit the Blenheim website: www.blenheimpalace.com telephone the Register Office on 0845 1295900

Swan Upping

On Thursday 22nd July the annual Swan Upping Ceremony will pass under Whitchurch Bridge. The Queen's Swan Marker and the Swan Uppers of the Vintners' and Dyers' livery companies, in their six traditional Thames rowing skiffs, will be looking out for this year's cygnets which are then caught, weighed, marked and released.

This historic ceremony dates from the 12th Century, when the Crown claimed ownership of all mute swans – so they could be eaten at royal feasts and banquets!

Nowadays Swan Upping provides useful information to help with the welfare and conservation of the swan population.

The Queen's Swan Marker, the Queen's Swan Warden and the Swan Uppers all wear traditional scarlet uniforms, and the skiffs fly appropriate flags and pennants. The Ceremony will make a fine spectacle as it passes Whitchurch, soon after leaving Mapledurham Lock, travelling upstream, at 12.30 pm on Thursday 22nd July.

For more details, visit www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page384.asp

Geoff Weir

THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY

The New Chairman of the Whitchurch Society writes:-

This year's garden walks, as usual organised by the Whitchurch Society, took place on Saturday 27th June following the Opening of the Maze.

Thanks go to all who opened their fascinating gardens and of course to Matilda and Neil King for the generous opening of their house and gardens for tea. This was a heroic effort on the part of all helpers, as the Heavens opened with unseasonal rain at short intervals. Numbers however were high and we successfully fundraised for the Society for schemes and events such as those to benefit the village.

This year we were pleased to welcome two gardens in Manor Road. Martin Wise's colour schemes were as fetching as ever at Swanston House, and Aelethea Hill's Kashmere setting was evocative of jewelled gardens of the East and at the Old Farmhouse unusual plant combinations were enjoyed.

Anne Tuckwell

Don't be shy, there are plenty of sections to choose from and so there is bound to be something for everyone to enter, especially the Children, we do need LOTS MORE of you to enter.

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

In what must be the coolest library in South Oxfordshire - in all senses of the word - July promises to be a hot month! Not only can you use our free People's Network computers to track the events of the sporting calendar- football racing and of course the Olympics, but also we have the antidote to sporting fever in the shape of great Summer reads, videos, DVDs and story tapes for adults and children. New for young children is the collection of First Reads which have just arrived in the library and will be gradually extended. They are intended to help with the progression from picture books to "proper" books and can be found at the top of the Young Readers' shelves. By the end of the month, or the beginning of August, we expect to have our computerised issue system up and running. All those who have signed a joining card will get a credit card style library ticket in the post and this can be used in any library in Oxfordshire. We should be able to answer all your questions far more easily with the new system and avoid a lot of routine tasks, so the staff are quite looking forward to the new way of working. However, there are bound to be a few blips so we crave your indulgence in the early days of our new dawn!

August the 12th is the date for our Summer Storytime, from 2.30 to 3.30 pm. Children from 3 to 8 years old are invited to the free event of story reading on the roller coaster theme, plus a little colouring and sticking.

Please come into the library to obtain your tickets as we need to know numbers in advance.

During the summer we will also be running a reading scheme where children read six books over the holidays and collect stickers and medals - a useful way of keeping up with books outside school hours. We will be closed on Monday, August 30th for the bank holiday, and then not again until Christmas!

LANGTREE NEWS

Preparations for the performing arts specialist status bid continue in full swing. In particular, the fundraising is really gathering pace and by the end of May the total had reached over £18000, a remarkable achievement in six months. We are hoping that by the time the Challenge Day sponsorship is all in, the total will have reached £20000.

The Challenge Day itself was great fun with all pupils completing a number of challenges such as swimming, dancing, trampolining, football, rounders etc. having first obtained sponsorship for their efforts. We hope we will have raised £4000 from the day and we are particularly grateful to the Oratory School for allowing us to use their pool for the sponsored swim.

On 21st May we held our first ever “Peripatetic Concert” when our talented team of instrument and voice teachers produced top quality performances for over 100 people in the Music Centre. This event was a huge success and we hope to repeat it in the future.

Meanwhile, the Parents Association have been hard at work organising events which are both enjoyable and entertaining as well as fundraisers. On the 15th May they held a “West End Night” with the Giffords, a local entertainment group performing scenes from West End musicals. The next event being planned by the Parents’ Association is a Tramps Supper on Saturday 25th September. This will include supper (Fish and Chips or Chicken and Chips), a licenced bar and Disco. The highlight of the evening will be the culmination of a very special draw which will involve a robotic vacuum cleaner and a square area and a stop watch. The owner of the square where the cleaner stops will be the winner of a large amount of money. Squares are already on sale at a number of local pubs.

Apart from our fundraising events, the highlight of the term was definitely the Y11 Prom held at the Calcot Hotel. Almost a hundred people attended with the students resplendent in evening dress arriving in the usual fleet of stretch limousines. The Prom is now well-established in the Langtree calendar, but this was reckoned to be one of the best ever.

LANGTREE NEWS

A busy week of public events was brought to an end with the resounding success of our “Auction of Promises” held in the school hall on Saturday 3rd July. This event, organised by the Parents’ Association raised over £4000 to go towards the fundraising for the school’s specialist status bid in the performing arts. The evening was made thoroughly enjoyable by the wit and “know how” of well-known local estate agent Dudley Singleton. Among over 60 lots for auction the star items were a number of week-long holidays in France, Spain and this country, plus a champagne balloon flight for two people. Some very competitive bidding took place, but even so, most of the lots were sold for bargain prices. This event took the fundraising to around £32000 mark in just over six months, with the Parents Association contributing over £6000 with the events they have organised.

On the Wednesday of the same week we held our first-ever community concert featuring Langtree students, pupils from the primary schools at Woodcote, South Stoke and Whitchurch and the Goring Concert Band. The primary schools each took a turn to perform with Woodcote singing “I’m the Urban Spaceman” and “Eternal Flame”, Whitchurch performing and singing three extracts from the musical version of “The Owl and the Pussycat” and South Stoke performing “Peace Perfect Peace” and “Saltwater”. The second half opened with the Goring Concert band playing the “Radetsky March”. They then joined forces with the Langtree Wind Players to play “Cabaret”, “September Song”, “Feelings”, “Georgy Girl” and “People”. These items were shown great appreciation by the audience. Other items in the concert included songs performed by the Langtree Chamber Choir and by individual and group musicians. The evening was rounded off in fine style by combined primary and secondary singers with “Thank you for the Music”, the audience joining-in enthusiastically.

On Tuesday 15th June the school put on another highly successful event in conjunction with our very busy and committed Parents Association. This was our very own “Fashion Show”, a unique occasion which attracted an audience of over 200 people and which displayed to the maximum, the artistic and musical talents of our Y10 GCSE students. As part of their GCSE projects, Art students had designed and made a combination of outfits and fashion items on a wide range of themes including Japanese, Spanish and Persian, as well as an outfit inspired by the designs of Mary Quant. There was also a wonderful environmentally friendly dress made entirely from “Capri Sun” containers. All these items were displayed on the specially made catwalk by the models drawn from Y10, to music performed and composed by Y10 music students. The school’s part of the evening was arranged and co-ordinated by Head of Art, Debbie Mallam and Head of Music, Maureen Idowu. In the second half of the evening, “Travelling Trends”, a company which specialises in helping schools to raise money, gave their own show of high street fashions which were on sale after the show.

AN APPEAL

We now have every confidence that we will reach our £50,000 target, but in order to qualify we need a proportion to come from business sponsorship. So far we have experienced little success in this direction, perhaps not surprisingly since we are not surrounded by industry and commerce like some schools. However, we think it likely that somewhere in the circulation area of this journal there are business people who will be impressed enough by the enterprise of our school community in raising so much in such a short time that they will want to declare an interest in helping us to reach our goal. If so, we would be delighted to hear from them.

Pangbourne Bowling Club

If this were for the “Sun”, or probably the “Daily Mirror”, I would start this article with a headline like: “Whitchurch Wizards Win” – or “Chatwin’s Courageous Challenge”. Instead I’ll go for the more prosaic and simply state that against all the odds (but with the wishes of nearly all spectators) Margaret and Charles Chatwin overcame stiff opposition and beat the favourites in the Pangbourne Bowls Club’s prestigious Saxon Shield. This is a two wood competition that needs not only skill and ability, but also perseverance and bowling of an unusually high standard. Margaret and Charles had demonstrated the perseverance throughout one of those June days of alternating sunshine and scudding rain. The Green was like a pudding; to send the woods to anything like a reasonable length jack they had to be delivered with an enormous amount of effort. How on earth the slim, tiny figure of Margaret was able to display this strength was beyond my comprehension. Yet, she did.

Playing against five times champion Alan Blacklock and last year’s men’s single’s winner, Don McLeish, these two stubborn, wonderful Whitchurch people, out played them in the Final. Charles, who was lead, comprehensively out bowled Alan – even though on one occasion the pressure got to him and he bowled the wood on the wrong bias – that was his only mistake. Margaret, facing the mighty Don kept her composure and with a neat gentle flick of the wrist sent wood after wood onto the target. At the final end, each round consisted of five “ends”, she was so far in front that it wasn’t necessary for her last wood to be bowled; but she did – and put the wood squarely onto the jack. And won!

In the bar afterwards Charles was more than generous and this author even managed to get into the throng and have a “Club Double” – a large Grouse, at £1.50: probably the best value in any bar in Berkshire.

The Bowls Club is not having a very successful year in the friendly matches, but are top of the Kennett League, captained by the afore mentioned Alan Blacklock, and half way up the respective Ladies Thames Valley and Manchester Unity Leagues. We have a lot of new bowlers who just need a little time to settle down, but there are still a few vacancies if any resident from Whitchurch wishes to join. Who knows; there may be another Margaret and Charles living in the village – we won’t know unless they come across and join in. Every Thursday evening we have a free coaching lesson on the Green at the far side of the Recreation Field at the end of Thames Avenue in Pangbourne. If you are interested please give me a ring on 9419437, I’ll be happy to hear from you. As the season has started the Committee have decided not to apply the joining fee, of £10, and the annual subscription has also been reduced. If you have ever wanted to learn anything about bowling, this is your opportunity.

Bill Ayling

An evening stroll through the Stokes – just under 5 miles (allow up to 2 hours)

When the weather improves (it is dreadful as I write) this is a very enjoyable evening stroll or one to use for your Sunday visitors. It is flat, not too long and gives an introduction to three Stokes and provides you with a riverside walk and a return through the fields.

Park carefully in the village street of South Stoke outside the Perch and Pike. I am sure that if you intend visiting the pub before or after your walk the landlord will not mind you parking in the now extended parking area behind the pub.

Walk down the village street (with the pub and St. Andrew's Church on your right-hand side) towards the river. As the road turns right you turn left and follow the sign for the Ridgeway path. You are on the extension of the Ridgeway walk as it heads towards Ivinghoe Beacon, some 40 miles away to the north-east. Soon you will reach the river and see the 'Beetle and Wedge' on the opposite bank. There was a ferry here that plied between the two villages. Your path is obvious, turn right and with the river on your left follow it upstream in the direction of Wallingford.

The whole scene hereabouts is enjoyable in all seasons, it is well used by people engaged in a multitude of activities associated with the river. You will soon pass under another of Brunel's splendid bridges and you can admire the skill of the bricklayers who built it.

Eventually the path turns in away from the river at Little Stoke, follow it for a few yards and then turn left parallel to the river; the paths are all well signposted (you are still following the acorn of the Ridgeway path). This path leads through the fields and brings you to North Stoke by an unusual route, straight across the riverside gardens of the nearby houses and then by entering the churchyard.

Cross over the stile into the churchyard, on your immediate right stop to look at the grave of Dame Clara Butt and her husband and also that of their son. Take time to look at St Mary's Church, there is an Anglo-Saxon vertical sundial on the tower (its markings unusually indicated the times of the services – a Mass dial). Look for the dated stone that is upside down nearby. The tower collapsed in 1669 and lay in ruins for sixty years. Take note of the lychgate as you pass through; it was erected by Dame Clara in memory of her son. Walk down to meet the main street and turn left to look at the houses in this charming village until you pass the Mill. This is the end of the village and on this occasion turn round and follow the road back through the village. When the road turns left you carry straight on down a broad path towards Little Stoke to meet and follow its connecting road, you will see a footpath leading to the river but you continue on the road until you meet a splendid wall at Littlestoke Manor Farm.

Just by the main entrance to the farm there is an unusual and charming stile built into the wall, cross over and follow the right hand edge of the field in its obvious onward route. The views to the East are open and beautiful, almost unspoilt. The path follows two sections of field walks where the farmers respect the use of the path since it is never ploughed and thus the walker is provided with an excellent route to South Stoke. It even has its own tunnel under the railway embankment. The path turns and eventually leads you into South Stoke by a back lane, the whole route is obvious and very enjoyable (even suitable for train spotters).

I used to enjoy the view of the well-maintained farm opposite as you meet the road into the village but is it now rather too modernised for me. South Stoke is another lovely village just

sufficiently far away from the madding crowd and the passing motor cars to have retained its charm and its character. Cross over the road, turn right onto the pavement and then bear left down the main street of the village to reach your car and perhaps refreshment at 'The Perch and Pike'.

Eric Hartley

MEMORIES

Whether you were fighting on the front line, serving on the Home Front or growing up in a country at war, everyone who lived through World War Two has a fascination story to tell.

The BBC's People's War website – www.bbs.co.uk/ww2 - is an exciting new way of sharing all these stories and Oxfordshire CC's Centre for Oxfordshire Studies has become an Associate Centre to help local people put their memories on to computer. For further info please contact Malcolm Graham on 01865 810826

Interested in becoming a school governor??

Have you ever thought of becoming a governor at a local school?

Together with the headteacher they set the future direction for the school and decide how the school's budget should be spent. If you are interested in becoming a governor or for more information about governance, please contact Harmony Ashworth 01865 458775.

or harmony.ashworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**

sarah@pongo.freemove.co.uk or on disc.

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