

# WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

[www.whitchurchonthames.com](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com)

MARCH 2006

## **The 2006 Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting is your opportunity to

- Hear what has been happening in the Village
- Find out what the Parish Council has been doing on your behalf
- Meet the Parish Councillors

Please join us in the Village Hall on Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of April.

Tea and coffee will be served from 7.30pm, the meeting will start at 8pm and we aim to finish at 9.00pm when there will be an opportunity for an informal chat and a glass of wine.

## **Meeting of the Parish Council**

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> March at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall.

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

Also present were the Parish Clerk Andrea Gardner and our District Councillor Pearl Slatter.

## **Parish Clerk**

Parish Clerk Email address: [clerk@whitchurchonthames.com](mailto:clerk@whitchurchonthames.com)

### **Whitchurch on Thames Website**

Philip Weir has redesigned and modernised the website to make it easier to navigate and is willing to continue to maintain the website for the Village. We are most grateful to him for making his considerable expertise and time available to us.

Geoff Weir has edited the Whitchurch website for the Parish Council since it was first set up. We are very grateful to him for this and would like to thank him for all his hard work. Geoff is stepping down from this role and David Robinson has very kindly offered to take this over on behalf of the Parish Council.

[www.whitchurchonthames.com](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com)

### **Garden Waste**

Eco paper sacks are currently being used to collect garden waste for the SODC to compost. This has proved very costly for SODC, £13 per bag to recycle and is to be discontinued after the 28<sup>th</sup> April. A twice weekly collection system using “Wheelie-bins” will replace the bags. The Bins will be supplied to householders free of charge but it will cost £29 per annum to use this service. The garden waste will be composted locally. Many people compost their own garden waste but if this is not possible please consider this scheme.

We remain grateful to Pearl Slatter for all her hard work distributing the bags from her house.

Please see the village notice board or [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) for further information.

### **Train Times**

Further changes to the local train services and mainline train times from Reading are planned in the near future. For information please contact:

[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or 08457 484950

### **Whitchurch Roads**

It has been drawn to the attention of the Parish Council that Eastfield Lane and the Swanston Field alleyway remain in a poor state of repair despite some repair work done recently at the school end of the lane. We are in contact with the Council to improve the maintenance of roads and pavement in the Parish especially in these places.

### **Toll Bridge**

The Toll bridge has decided to go ahead with their scheme for partial automation of the Toll Collection using “Bridge cards”.

Representatives from the Whitchurch Parish Council and our neighbouring Parish Councils Goring Heath, Woodcote and Pangbourne have been invited to a meeting with the Whitchurch Bridge Company on Saturday to discuss this. We will have the

opportunity to update you about this at the Parish Annual Parish Meeting. The Parish council will continue to press the Whitchurch Bridge Company to re-instate the local concession for residents of the four Parishes involved.

## **Planning New Applications**

PO6/E0017 Mellow walls. Erection of single storey garden room and porch extension. Construction of a new garden wall

Also second amendment to above

**NO STRONG VIEWS**

PO6/E0044 George Cottage, Eastfield Lane. Erection of a single storey and two storey rear extension

Also amendment to above

**NO STRONG VEIWS**

PO/E0147 The Chevin, Eastfield Lane. Demolish existing building and outbuildings and erect single replacement dwelling with attached garage and alteration to the existing access.

**OBJECTION**

PO/E0051 Playground, Manor Road. Change of use from Private garden to playground

**APPROVED**

## **Decisions**

PO/E1318 11 Hillside, Hardwick road.

Erection of outbuilding in garden

**GRANTED**

PO/E1323 Whiteways, Hardwick Road

Erection of green house in garden

**GRANTED**

## **Appeal decision**

PO/E0501 The Chevin, Eastfield lane

**DISMISSED**

## **Finances**

The following cheques were agreed for payment.

To the Ridgeway Press for the Bulletin, Parish Clerk for wages, training and reimbursements, RM Weavers for grass cutting and NALC subscription.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in the Whitchurch Village Hall at 8.00pm. An agenda and the dates of future meetings will be posted on the Parish Council Notice-board opposite the Greyhound before the next meeting.

Matilda Oppenheimer

Chairman

Views of individual contributors are the views of those contributors, and are not necessarily the views of the Parish Council, or the editor.

## **Council gets South East Plan Changed**

Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, Ann Ducker, successfully persuaded the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) to make a last minute change to the South East Plan to exclude any part of South Oxfordshire from the development area known as the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley. This will lift the threat of development from a number of parishes in the southern part of the district.

At its meeting on the 1 March, SEERA was signing off the South East Plan, the document that sets out broad development proposals for the region up to 2026. Most development is focused on a series of sub-regional areas throughout the region of which the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley is one. This sub-region covers a corridor along the M4 motorway stretching from Slough in the east to Newbury in the west. The boundary incorporated a small part of South Oxfordshire covering all or part of the seven parishes of Binfield Heath, Mapledurham, Harpsden, Kidmore End, Eye and Dunsden, Shiplake and Whitchurch.

Cllr Ducker, who represents the district council on SEERA, submitted a motion drawing its attention to the fact that the South East Plan proposed no development in that part of South Oxfordshire within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region. She argued therefore that it made sense to redraw the boundary to align with the county boundary. This would provide peace of mind for the residents living in the area by removing any risk that development proposals might emerge later. The motion was carried by 44 votes to 29.

Cllr Ducker says:

“I am absolutely delighted to have persuaded SEERA to change its Plan. I felt like David taking on Goliath but was delighted with the widespread support I received from colleagues across the region to make a small change but one that will bring great relief to residents in the southern part of South Oxfordshire. As a Council, we set out to provide leadership for our local communities and yesterday was a real example of how we can deliver that.

For three years whilst the South East Plan has been put together, we have argued that it made no sense to include any of our district in the Western Corridor area.

Finally, others have listened to our arguments and SEERA has taken a very sensible decision. We must now be vigilant to ensure that the new boundary remains in place as the Plan passes from SEERA to the Deputy Prime Minister, who will ultimately decide what is included.

## **From S.O.D.C.**

### **New look website and email alert service**

The Council's website has undergone a complete revamp to make it quicker and easier for residents to find Council information and access services online.

The revamp coincides with the launch of a new email alert service which enables residents to receive an email when new information is added to the Council's website. So far, people can sign up to receive alerts of planning and licensing applications submitted in their area, press releases the Council has issued and new consultations. To register for the service please visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

### **Watch Council meetings from the comfort of your home**

In January, the Council launched a service to broadcast Council meetings on its website so residents can watch councillors making decisions from the comfort of their home - a real bonus in these winter months! The Council is currently broadcasting planning, Cabinet and full council meetings. To view past and present meetings visit the Council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

### **Over £300,000 awarded in community revenue grants**

At its meeting on 12 January, the Council's cabinet agreed to give over £300,000 of revenue grants to community and voluntary organisations in the district for 2006/07 and provisionally approved grants worth over £600,000 for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Revenue grants are for projects benefiting the community and improving the quality of life for residents within South Oxfordshire.

For further information about revenue grants visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) > Community, people and living > Grants > revenue grants scheme

### **Capital projects grant aid**

Application forms are now available from South Oxfordshire District Council for proposed community capital projects within the district - the closing date is 31 March 2006.

The types of projects the Council can fund include extending buildings and buying equipment.

For more information on the Council's capital grants scheme and who can apply please visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) > Community, People and Living > Grants > Community Investment Fund or contact Jayne Bolton, Grants Manager on 01491 823136 or by email to [jayne.bolton@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.bolton@southoxon.gov.uk)

## Housing strategy for 2006-2011

South Oxfordshire District Council is preparing a new Housing Strategy for the next five years. A consultation questionnaire is available on the Council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) > Housing > housing strategy for residents to make their views on housing heard. Let the Council know whether you agree with the proposed themes of the new strategy, and tell the Council your priorities for housing in South Oxfordshire.



....ooOoo....

## Whitchurch Bridge – Introduction of “Bridge Cards”

From April 2006 the Whitchurch Bridge Company will be trialing and subsequently introducing a new method for paying the discounted Toll rate using proximity cards (similar to London's Oyster cards) and modern technology. This will replace the current paper ticket system. It is expected that this will increase the efficiency of the Toll collection process.

Once the system has been trialed it is intended that Bridge users will be able to purchase discounted crossings at the current discounted price of 9p per crossing on a pre loaded “Bridge Card”. The price of a Bridge Card will be

£10 - this comprises a £3 deposit for the Bridge Card, which is fully refundable on surrender, plus £7 worth of discounted crossings. Thereafter, a Bridge Card can be topped up at the Toll Booth in multiples of £5. This transaction should take no longer than buying a book of tickets.

For the user the process will be easy:-

Drive up to the Toll Booth window and stop. Hold the Bridge Card close to the card reader under the window sill. The system reads the card and displays how many pre-paid crossings there are remaining. The barrier will rise automatically enabling you to drive away. The barrier will then close automatically behind you.

Before the new system is introduced we will be carrying out trials and seeking comments from Bridge users, the local Parish Councils and our staff. We will introduce the new system for all Bridge users when we are satisfied that it is convenient and reliable.

Once the system is introduced for all Bridge users we will cease selling pre-paid books of tickets. For a limited period thereafter pre-paid tickets will continue to be accepted and the cost of unused tickets will be refunded.

Cash Tolls will be unaffected by the new system. For the foreseeable future there will always be a Toll Collector in the Toll Booth during operating hours to whom a cash Toll can be handed.

More information on this development is posted on the Company website at [www.whitchurchbridge.com](http://www.whitchurchbridge.com)

**Geoff Weir Company Secretary**

## THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **AGM Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April**

This will take place in the Village Hall starting 7.30 pm. Following the business meeting, at around 8.15 pm, there will be a presentation by Mike Beckley, chairman of the Whitchurch Bridge Company, supported by fellow director, Geoff Weir. The main subject will be the **History of the Bridge and the Origins of the Company**. Both speakers will be ready to respond to more topical questions from the audience following the talk. This is a

great opportunity to gain an authoritative understanding of recent developments.

Light refreshments will be served and all are welcome, so please book the date in your diaries: it should prove an interesting session.

### **Garden Walks Sunday 11 June**

The ever-popular Garden Walks will be on Sunday 11 June. Matilda and Neil King have kindly agreed to host the tea party once again at the White House. They have also offered the use of their swimming pool and tennis court on the day.

Have you thought about putting your own garden on view, but not quite taken the plunge? We are always delighted to have 'new' gardens to visit as well as old friends. Please ring 9842516 if you are interested.

Ian Bruce Secretary

### **BUS PASSES AND TRAVEL TOKENS**

In last year's Budget, Gordon Brown announced free bus travel for everyone **aged over 60**. As a result, new rules apply for the issue of the Bus Passes and Travel Tokens supplied by South Oxfordshire District Council.

**Bus Passes** offer free travel and are valid for five years. They can be used on journeys that start and finish within the district and can also be used on journeys to Reading and Oxford. They can be used at any time after 9 am on weekdays and at any time on weekends and public holidays, but cannot be used on tours and excursions. These Passes are also available for the disabled.

**Travel Tokens** (value £20) will now be offered as an **alternative** to a Bus Pass **only** to those aged **over 70** and to disabled people. These Travel Tokens can be used on buses (as above), voluntary schemes (such as the Pangbourne and District Volunteer Centre), certain taxis (check in advance whether they will accept tokens), and can be used towards the cost of a rail pass. They cannot be used on tours and excursions.

Please bring pension cards, passports or driving licences as proof of eligibility.

This year's Bus Pass Application Forms and concessionary Travel Tokens will be distributed in the Village Hall on **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April** and **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April** between **10.30 am and 12.00 noon**.

For further information please phone me on 9845214.

Alison Michael, Parish Representative.



Pre-School's numbers are very healthy at present and it looks as if this will continue well into the next academic year. We are all very pleased as it was only 18 months ago that quite the opposite was the case. In fact, everything is going very well here at Pre-School; the building is well-maintained, the new central heating is proving invaluable and we now have an almost complete Committee in place ready for September thanks to Kate Thatcher's hard work and enthusiasm in drumming up parental support.

The only negative is the muddy state of the garden. However, Spring is almost here.....the bulbs have started to emerge from the muddy depths and we're hoping for a bit of colour to bring our garden to life again. Hopefully, the Easter holidays will give the grass a chance to recover too!

This term's theme, 'Let's Investigate' is proving a hit with the children. We're especially looking forward to investigating 'what's inside' and 'what's underground' with the children...the mind boggles !

The annual visit to Rushall Farm for the lambing is coming up at the end of the month, which is always an enjoyable (if rather cold) morning out and this year's Easter event will be a treasure hunt organised by our Fundraising Team.

As always, if you are thinking of sending your child to Pre-School and would like to visit, please telephone Helen on 0118 9844516. You can also find out more from our web site [www.whitchurchpreschool.org](http://www.whitchurchpreschool.org)

Please also register your child ASAP to avoid disappointment as unfortunately we were unable to accommodate every child this year.

# Whitchurch Primary News

[www.whitchurch.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.whitchurch.oxon.sch.uk)

Dear Parents/ Guardians

I hope that the parents of the instrumental musicians enjoyed the concert on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup>. I am very proud of the progress the children are making and I extend my thanks to the specialists that work with them in and out of school. It looks as if music is emerging as a particular strength of the school and we will be looking at how this can be developed further.

The drive has been completed by the Oxfordshire Health and Safety team and I am sure we will all benefit from the changes. It is a temporary installation with an undetermined lifespan, but planning permission has been applied for to have something more permanent done in the near future. I would like to add a new bench under the big tree for walkers so they can stop and enjoy the lovely setting.

We had a *Dance Workshop* at the school for the whole day on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> February, it ended with a wonderful show for the parents in the afternoon. I thought it was fantastic to see all age groups participating and we believe that more of this should be done in the future.

Thank you to the parents that took part in the work party last term. Class 2 was transformed and is now a much improved learning environment for the pupils, Ms Wallington is very grateful.

Finally, we are able to announce the exciting news that our Parents Association have booked the international 'Lashings Eleven' cricket side to play against the village team on Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> June on the village cricket ground. Well done to Mrs Stovell and her committee!

*Grant Mottram*

## **WoTHABS (Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group)**

### **RECYCLING**

WoTHABS is in the process of drafting a simple recycling guide of contacts, addresses and advice for Whitchurch residents. This is so we can pool information about rubbish that can't go in green bins, but that can be recycled – particularly if it has some monetary value - or that is hazardous and must be disposed of safely. This may also help reduce 'recycling' mileage and time spent making car trips to Oakley Wood and other waste sites.

**If you already collect and pass on any recyclable items for charities or good causes, and would like us to add these contacts to our list for local publication, or have any other suggestions that could be useful, please contact** John Southey (984 1802), Alison Michael (984 5214) or Gill Goodwin (984 2934).

### **TRE E-PLANTING PROJECT**

On 25<sup>th</sup> February, WoTHabs members with some additional help from villagers, cleared and prepared three sites along the allotment path for the planting of 100 small tree saplings. The plants (together with stakes and tree guards) have been supplied free of charge to the parish by South Oxfordshire District Council. The only stipulation was that they were planted in a position where they could be enjoyed by the whole community.

After discussions between the Chairman of the Parish Council and members of WoTHabs, it was agreed that the vegetation along the path was deteriorating, especially the dead elms, and could benefit from some new material. A few of the plants will be put in at the Whitchurch Play Area.

The trees that have been supplied to us are all native species : Buckthorn, Crab Apple, Whitebeam, Guelder Rose, Field Maple, Dog Rose, Amelanchier, Spindle and Hazel. In a few years' time, they should provide attractive flowers and fruits and good habitats for birds and insects.

The actual planting is scheduled to take place on 11<sup>th</sup> March – we shall be giving an update report in the next Bulletin.

### **COWSLIP WALK**

Will be held at Boze Down Vineyard on **Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>**. This has proved a very popular and enjoyable event in previous years. Look out for posters around the village nearer the time for full details.

## **The Hairy Legs Challenge comes to Whitchurch**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May**  
[www.hairylegs.org](http://www.hairylegs.org)

Following the success and fun of last 4 year's events, the 5th Hairy Legs Challenge will take place this year on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2006, with over 300 competitors in the main event from around the region expected to take part. The event is designed for all abilities – as you can complete the course as a solo or as part of a relay team.

The Hairy Legs event begins at 10am, consisting of 3 legs (Hairy ones!) a 5km run, then a 20km bike ride, then another 5km run, starting and ending in the Sheepcote Field in Goring.

This year the bike route will be routed from Goring to Whitchurch via the Bridle path and then through to Mapledurham before turning up to Whitchurch Hill and back down to Goring. The course will be well marshalled and provide an interesting spectator sport for the short time that the athletes are passing through the Village.

Like the previous years, the Hairy Legs Challenge will be a relaxed, fun and challenging event, raising money for local charities including Whitchurch Pre-School and Cancer Research.

The event also includes children's races for all age groups called Little Legs for the under 11's and Teenage Kicks for the older under 17's. These are running races over various distances dependant on the age group – see our web site for further details [www.hairylegs.org](http://www.hairylegs.org)

Again our main sponsor, Mountain High in Pangbourne, would be pleased to provide advice and expert assistance on all bike related matters if you would like to be a competitor rather than a spectator.

And for those who are slightly less fit:-

### **BENSON 10K ROAD RACE. (Bun Run 3)**

It's time to put on those trainers and get your entries in for the third Benson 10k Road Race which takes place on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2006 at 10.30am from Benson Parish Hall. Money raised will go towards local charity groups. £2,500 was raised in 2005. All finishers will receive a medal, a hot cross bun, sponsored by Cottage Kitchen of Benson, and a jar of honey! Sponsored by Rowse's Honey of Wallingford, our main sponsors! Please send your entries in asap to ensure your place.

Entry forms are available from Benson shops, and [www.bensonbulletin.com](http://www.bensonbulletin.com)  
For more details please contact Les Bond tel 01401 838585, or email [benson10k@btinternet.c](mailto:benson10k@btinternet.c)

### **Pangbourne Bowls Club**

The new "season" is nearly upon us and there are a couple of important dates about which I need to inform you before we get the summer bowls fixtures underway.

Firstly, the club "Open Day" is **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm**. This is primarily intended for current club members to re-register with the club (and pay subscriptions!) and for potential new players to come along and view our set up. On **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April** we have our "Welcome Day" from **3pm till 8pm**. This will give all potential new players the opportunity to come along and check the green, roll up some woods and to mix and chat with some of the other club players. I'm sure you will all be made to feel most welcome.

As a bowls club we are always interested in improving the overall quality of the playing membership so if you are a player of established ability, or at least would like to participate in some competitive matches, then do please turn up at the green (on Pangbourne recreation ground) on either or both of the above mentioned dates. Players new to the game can also be accommodated as we are fortunate to have a couple of county coaches amongst our club membership who will be happy to help.

We look forward to welcoming back our current members and to welcoming some new players as well.

**Nigel Cabeldu. Secretary**

## WOODCOTE LIBRARY

In March Spring has definitely arrived - officially at least- and the library has much to offer at a time of new beginnings. Come in and take a look at our gardening or travel books, or try some of the new fiction. Our special event this month is an exhibition of paintings by Robert Kidner, a resident of Woodcote for over 30 years, and incidentally an ex pantomime dame. He paints mainly in watercolour but also uses pen and wash techniques and you can see - and buy - his paintings at the library from March 4th.

The librarians in charge of the video and DVD stock are warning that many new titles are not now being issued in video format. We will of course continue to carry our present stock, which includes many interesting films of all vintages, but in the future DVDs will be in more plentiful supply. More details soon.

In April we will have a special exhibition of photographs of Woodcote from the Photographic Archives at Oxford Central Library. The images include the old school, Woodcote House, and many pictures of the village and its people going back a hundred years. Come and have a look, and perhaps bring in any old photos or items of interest you may have that can add to our knowledge of Woodcote past.

We will be continuing with the 'Big Picture', a chance to vote for the best film of all time and have the chance to win £50 worth of DVD hire. There are entry forms at the counter - please ask for one.

Looking forward to May, we shall be exhibiting the work of Pam Hobbes' art class and also holding a "Share a Story" week where readers recommend good books. So do let us know what you thought of the books you have read so that we can pass on your views to others.

## GORING, WOODCOTE AND DISTRICT LIONS CLUB

The Lions Club are once again collecting unwanted spectacles which are then graded, cleaned and sent to Third World countries to help people with impaired sight. If you have any spectacles or sunglasses that you no longer use and are willing to donate, please phone us so that we can arrange to collect them to pass on to the Lions Club. All donations will be very gratefully received.

Bob and Alison Michael: Tel 984 5214



*Join the charity for your community*

### **Volunteer for the CAB now!**

Thame CAB provides a free and confidential information and advice service to all the communities in and around Thame. We can't do it without volunteers and we are currently recruiting again for people to train as advisers, with training to start after Easter.

We give **free** training for you to obtain the CAB Certificate in Generalist Advice Work. The work is challenging and rewarding. We need you to be keen to develop new skills, want to help others and enjoy working as part of a team. If you are looking for a way back to work in the social sector, this training is for you.

For more information, please contact Sarah Westcott, the bureau manager, on 01844 217186, or call in or write to us at Market House, North Street, Thame OX9 3HH. You can also e-mail us on [thamecab@cabnet.org.uk](mailto:thamecab@cabnet.org.uk)

The closing date for applications is 13<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

## **Come-Together at Henley in May**

The fantastic annual volunteer run community festival is set to fast-forward you into summer on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May, situated on the Oxfordshire bank of the Thames in Henley from 11am to 11pm.

Described as a mini WOMAD style day of FREE fun for all the family will bring together local artists and musicians together with local craft and food stalls.

For more information visit [www.come-together.org.uk](http://www.come-together.org.uk) or phone Jo on 01491 571078

# **South Chiltern Choral Society Presents**

## **MOZART**

### **Prodigy and Genius**

On Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 the South Chiltern Choral Society is celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mozart, with an interesting programme of works chosen to show Mozart's growth from infant prodigy to genius.

The simple but fantastically effective first work, Missa Brevis in G was written when Mozart was only 12! We're progressing through works written when he was 15, 23, 27 and finishing with Ave Verum Corpus, composed in the last two months of his life.

The beautiful C Minor Mass, written in 1783, has a rich Sanctus movement, written for 8 parts which sees the two choirs, in effect overlapping their parts and creating a truly stereophonic sound. For this concert the conductor, Gwyn Arch, has moved the choir round so that they are sitting as two choirs, four parts on one side and four on the other. For some of the old timers it's like being in a completely new choir!!!

As usual there will be a large orchestra and four well-known professional soloists, performing in the Great Hall of the University of Reading, off the London Road, in Reading. 7.30pm start.

Tickets are available from Judy Griffiths on 0118 9345746 priced at £12. (£8 for concessions)

## **Happy Birthday Mozart!**



## **TWIN TRIUMPHS FOR LANGTREE : PRAISE FROM OFSTED AND THE DfES**

There is cause for a double celebration at Langtree School in Woodcote this week, as the school announces its success in being awarded specialist status in the Performing Arts. The DfES confirmed the news on Tuesday, following Langtree's bid in November and a visit from an assessor in December.

The status will have a huge impact on the school. Funding of £150,000 will be used to finance a major capital project in the school hall, to refurbish the existing stage and to create a state of the art performance space for drama, music and dance. This will include a dance studio and gallery space for exhibitions of visual art, as well as enhanced rehearsal and performance space for local arts groups. The performing arts centre will be available for use by the school and the wider community. In addition to the capital project, Langtree will receive annual funding of over £67,000 to provide additional staffing, technician and ancillary support, as well as additional ICT hardware for use across the curriculum. The successful bid was supported by a number of generous local sponsors including Goring Gap News who kindly donated £3,000 and Invesco Perpetual of Henley, who donated a total of £9,000 to ensure that Langtree had the necessary funding to submit an application.

The government's specialist schools strategy is designed to raise attainment across the whole curriculum, not just in the specialist areas, and this will be the objective at Langtree. Although results have been consistently above county and national averages for many years – in 2005 the school secured the second best GCSE results ever with 68% of students achieving 5 or more A\* - C grades – the aim will be to use the additional funding to increase attainment still further. The arts have been a particular strength at Langtree in recent years with GCSE pass rates in excess of 95%. However, all subjects will continue to flourish in a broad and balanced curriculum which offers excellent choice to students.

The excellent news about the specialist status comes on the back of a hugely successful Ofsted report for the school. Inspectors visited Langtree towards the end of the winter term under the new Ofsted inspection

framework, and delivered a very positive report on the progress of the school. Ofsted's headline is that Langtree is 'a good school which provides good value for money', which is entering a 'new and dynamic phase of development'. Judgements in teaching and learning, standards and achievement, the curriculum, student support and overall efficiency were all rated as 'good', with particular praise for SEN support and the support given to students in their learning. The inspectors also reported that: 'students attend school regularly, show interest in their lessons and enjoy their education'; 'pupils have excellent opportunities to take part in residential experiences'; and also that 'students feel safe and are well supported'.

The school's own processes for self evaluation were also applauded by the inspectors, who felt that Langtree was a school which was clearly well aware of its own strengths and areas for development and had structured plans in place to improve still further in the future.

Far from being a 'winter of discontent', this has been a period of great satisfaction and pride for the students, staff, parents and governors at Langtree, as the plaudits from Ofsted and the recognition of excellence by the DfES support our development into 2006 and beyond. This is a very exciting time to be a part of the Langtree school community!

## Swop your stuff for FREE

Where does the rubbish go? Answer: it goes somewhere else!



The Oxfordshire Freecycle Networks are open to all in the local area who would prefer to "freecycle" to others, rather than throw away unwanted items such as unloved bicycles, pianos, fax machines etc.

Freecycle is an email based free swop-shop. Just "post" a message on your local Freecycle page, listing your free items or for something you want yourself. Charity organisations will be informed of this site so they too may be in touch to pick up your things. Rules:

All items MUST be 100% free and no commercials.

You can find a Freecycle network in all these Oxfordshire areas:

**Banbury, Cherwell Valley, Chipping Norton, Henley-on-Thames, Oxford, Vale of the White Horse, Wallingford, Witney.**

For more information visit [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and find a Freecycle network near you!

# WHITCHURCH HILL FETE

SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MAY  
2 p.m.

Steel Band                      Ferret Racing  
Juggler                          Punch and Judy Show  
Children's Races and Games  
Bottle Stall  
Beer and Tea Tents  
Stalls and Plants Galore  
Raffle                          Barbecue

## OLA!

Goring and Streatley Branch of the Arthritis Research  
Campaign

invite all Latin (and would be Latin) Lovers to

### **'Una Fiesta Latina'**

on  
Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

in  
Goring Village Hall.

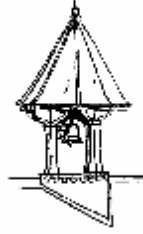
Margaritas will be served at 8pm,  
followed by dining and dancing – and entertainments – until midnight.

Dress to enjoy the mood.

Tickets are £30 and are available from Jenny Boyd 01491 872109

and GailCarrier 01491 872071.

**GORING HEATH PARISH CHARITY**



Notice is hereby given of:-  
**The Annual General Meeting**  
Of the  
Goring Heath Parish Charity  
**To be held on Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup> 06**  
**At 8pm**  
**In Goring Heath Parish Hall**  
**All Welcome**

**On Saturday April 1st, the Spring Gardening Show is due to be held, again in Goring Heath Parish Hall.**

**The titles for the Photographic section are as follows:-**

- 1. Winter visitors.**
- 2. Craftsmanship.**
- 3. Patterns in plants.**

Good luck & I hope you all find plenty of inspiration to take an even greater selection of interesting & varied photos.

New look schedules are now available. Come on now, just have a look at a schedule and you will see just how easy it is to enter. All you have to do is pick a daffodil or tulip and put it in a vase! Phone 0118 9842056 for a schedule and one of the committee members will deliver it to your door!

Other news. The Hearing Loop is now fully operational. There are three different microphones that can be used for different situations and it can be booked at the same time as the hall.

The hall is due for redecoration and this is scheduled to take place a little later in the year.

The management committee would like to remind everyone that the hall is strictly “No Smoking” and that parking is not permitted in the private road outside the hall.

## **WHITCHURCH HILL CAMERA CLUB**

Our April programme continues to offer a good balance of meetings with all aspects of photography including Digital Imaging being covered.

Our first meeting, on the 5th April, features our annual Natural History competition when our prints and slides will be judged by Barbara Lyddiatt who is making her first visit to our Club. The following evening (Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> April) sees the regular monthly meeting of the Digital Group with tips and practical help on digital imaging.

On the 12th April, we are hosting the annual JPCR competition when six local Camera Clubs battle it out with the best prints and slides for valuable prizes. The judge for the evening will be Stan McCartin LRPS CPAGB from Wendover.

One week later sees the final round of our Print Competition which will be judged by Mark Buckley-Sharp from the Harrow Camera Club.

The month's programme ends on the 26th April with an evening in the company of Paul Keene FRPS EFIAP MPAGB who will show his latest images capturing wildlife and Natural History.

If you want a good evening out mixing with a friendly crowd for the price of a cup of coffee, come along and see us at any of the above meetings. Visitors are asked to pay just £1.00 for the evening whilst Club members pay just 75p per meeting.

Our joining fees are the lowest in the area and there are big reductions for Joint Membership, Senior Citizens and Under 21's. Come down to the Village Hall in Whitchurch-on-Thames next Wednesday evening at 8pm and see for yourself what we are doing.

Full details of our Club, including a complete Programme, are available on our website, [www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.co.uk) or you can pick up a printed version from Woodcote Library.

## **Walking, health, village life and friendship**

In the 1990s Civil Service mortality statistics appeared to show that male employees who retired at 60 lived, on average, until they were 74; those who retired at 65 lived, on average, to 67. A recent study by a large American company indicated that those employees who retired at 55 had a higher risk of mortality than those who retired at 60 or 65. I was puzzled by this but actually both studies are compatible; male civil servants retiring at 65 (the normal retirement age was 60) were less likely to have a hobby, an occupation, something to do, a 'raison d'être', when they retired. Loss of status, change of life style, loss of work friends and associates can all have a detrimental effect. The Americans who retired at 55 were sometimes in poor health but even after discounting this later retirees had a better survival rate.

In an ensuing e-mail dialogue with the author he recommended that in order to stay fit and to extend my life I should consider walking! I have invited him over to enjoy our countryside, our villages and our pubs by walking with me.

The American company is trying to encourage its office employees to walk and has just started a walking programme with the aim of getting them to walk 10,000 steps (about 5 miles) a day – most of us walk between 2-3000 steps a day in our normal activities. I usually walk an additional 25 miles a week so it is a huge step change (sorry for the pun) for someone with a sedentary occupation. The company is providing free pedometers for those who sign up to the 8 weeks programme but they anticipate a participation rate of only 4-5%

Commuting by car whilst living in a village is often less healthy than living in town. Anyone using a bus service or the underground can easily get off two stops early and walk. In Whitchurch the walk to and from the station provides many of us with some daily exercise and we can all enjoy our lovely surrounding countryside at weekends. There can be an additional benefit from living in our village – that of communal 'friendship' – we all like to be and want to be here.

In addition the American study has shown a definite link between regular physical activity, prolonged life and a reduction in the risk of cancer – of the colon by 30%, breast 20% and of the prostate by 10%.

Over the years I have tried to encourage you to walk locally and to use our extensive network of footpaths; perhaps this article will provide further encouragement with the prospects of better health and improved longevity?

Eric Hartley



Oxfordshire, City & County  
Registered Charity No 1091529

Age Concern Oxfordshire is delighted to announce a series of  
**Activity & Information Fairs** in South Oxon:

Friday 10 March Didcot Civic Centre  
Wednesday 22 March Christchurch in Thame  
Thursday 27 April Christ Church Centre Henley  
Thursday 4 May Regal Centre Wallingford

9am until 4pm

These fairs are to raise awareness of Active Ageing. Celebrate and embrace your 50 years - and onwards - you really can choose to age gracefully and even disgracefully! All are welcome! Bring your friends and family.

Throughout the day you can watch, take part or interact with:

Free musical entertainment programme, Free exercise and dance classes, Free mini treatments in the Mind Body Spirit Section, Free independent and confidential advice on outings, special grants, benefits, respite care for Carers, Free Ageless Glamour - mini-make-over with this season's colours from Colour Me Beautiful, Free tailor made fire plan including fitting a free smoke detector,

Stands include: Information and advice from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Computer corner, local leisure and recreation opportunities, South West Oxon Primary Care Trust, Pension Service, South and Vale Carers Centre, Harmony in Health Clinic, Financial Planning for Nursing Homes, Committee on inclusive transport, Anchor Staying Put, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Age Concern Services.

Age Concern wants to raise awareness about 'My Life and My Choices'.  
There are changes in society, which will affect how we age.  
We are living longer and healthier and becoming an ageing population .

## NEW FEATURE

Contributions welcome for this column if anyone knows of a date that would be of interest to the village.

## DIARY DATES

### MARCH

6<sup>TH</sup> Parish Council Meeting  
30<sup>th</sup> GHPC AGM

### APRIL

1<sup>st</sup> GHPC Spring Gardening Show  
3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Meeting  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly  
8<sup>TH</sup> Bowls Open Day  
9<sup>th</sup> Benson Bun Run  
14<sup>th</sup> Hairy Legs Challenge  
19<sup>th</sup> Bus Pass and Travel Token distribution  
22<sup>nd</sup> Goring & Streatley 'Una Fiesta Latina'  
24<sup>th</sup> Bus Pass and Travel Token distribution  
24<sup>TH</sup> Whitchurch Society AGM

### MAY

7<sup>th</sup> Cowslip Walk  
8<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting  
27<sup>th</sup> Whitchurch Hill Fete

### Special Rubbish Collection

The winter service is now in operation.

A van will be at Woodcote Car Park on Wednesdays from 12 noon till 3.00pm to collect household rubbish. It will also be there every third Saturday in the month from 8 am till 12 noon.

### Garden Waste

The kerbside collection service for green waste will continue until Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April. The freephone booking number 0800 7318752 will remain available or we will accept bookings by email at [public.amenities@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:public.amenities@southoxon.gov.uk)  
Outlets for sacks are listed on the Councils website or contact 01491 823416 for more details.

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN** will be published in MAY 2006.

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**  
[sarah@pongo.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:sarah@pongo.freeserve.co.uk) **by** 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006