

# WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

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

MARCH 2008

## Meeting of the Parish Council

### Parish Council update from 17<sup>th</sup> March meeting

#### Speeding solution

The Parish Council has been working with parishioners to find a suitable solution to the speeding problem in the village. Because the County Council cannot install safety cameras in the village the Parish Council have decided to fund some vehicle assisted signs. Vehicle activated signs (VAS) are road side digital signs that display a message when they are approached by a driver exceeding the speed limit. These signs are normally used to reduce a driver's speed by displaying a message 'Too Fast - Slow Down' together with the speed limit. The Parish Council are seeking more information from the County Council and will provide another update in the next bulletin issue.

#### 9am 142 bus service

Oxfordshire County Council has confirmed that this service will continue as normal and there are no immediate plans to stop it. For more information on the bus service contact the Public Transport Team on 01865 815766 or email [sustainable.transport@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sustainable.transport@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

#### Road surface

Two parish councillors walked around the village making a record of road surfaces and pavements that are in need of repair. The Parish Council will take this list to the relevant authorities to request that repair work is carried out. This document will be updated as the repairs are carried out and reviewed regularly.

## **Village plan**

The village plan is making even more progress. Castrol have provided £1500 of funding. Sub committees are being set up as working groups for different issues, for example for the village hall and leisure issues. For more information or if you would like to be involved please contact Steven Trinder at [s.trinder@virgin.net](mailto:s.trinder@virgin.net)

## **New email address**

The new email address for the clerk, Jo Wheeler, is [wotparishclerk@aol.com](mailto:wotparishclerk@aol.com)

## **Annual assembly**

The Parish Council is holding its annual assembly on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April in the village hall at 7pm. All parishioners are welcome to attend. There will be updates from various organisations and groups from the village, as well as a report from district, county and parish councillors. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information contact the parish clerk at [wotparishclerk@aol.com](mailto:wotparishclerk@aol.com)

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## **Whitchurch Cricket Club**

is preparing for another season of friendly matches on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the season- starting in April. Currently we are also holding coaching sessions each Monday evening for all age groups at Langtree School. If you are interested in playing for the club or taking part in the evening coaching sessions, then phone David Mattimoe on 0118 984 3347.

# Whitchurch Society AGM

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**Friday 25th April 2008**

at the Whitchurch Village Hall AT **7.30 pm**

Following the business meeting at about **8.15** there will be a talk on

## **How Climate Change could affect Whitchurch**

by Dr Richard Harding  
Head of Climate Change Section  
The Centre of Ecology & Hydrology at Wallingford

There will be time for questions from the floor

At the business meeting there will be an opportunity to nominate and elect new committee members.

## **Twinning Trip to La Bouille Normandy, France**

**Leave early 3<sup>rd</sup> - Return late 5<sup>th</sup> May**

Enjoy French hospitality in family homes

Evening social event

Day trip to a local place of interest

Cost of £100 max (children half price) includes all travel by coach and ferry  
Accommodation and meals provided by host families

Enquiries and bookings to David Robinson 0118 984 4142,  
[david@whitchurchtwinning.org.uk](mailto:david@whitchurchtwinning.org.uk) or Ian Bruce 0118 984  
2653 [ian.bruce@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.bruce@btinternet.com) or Vicky Jordan 0118 984 3260,  
[vickyjordan5@hotmail.com](mailto:vickyjordan5@hotmail.com)

## WOODCOTE LIBRARY

Please don't return books or discs to the library while we are closed from March 31<sup>st</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April as we will have no computers and will be unable to discharge them. You can return or renew books at any Oxfordshire library and take out their stock with your ticket. The Oxfordshire County Council website ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)) has a list of all libraries in the County. The nearest are

### **Goring 01491 873028**

Mon 9.30 – 12.30  
Tue 9.30 – 12.30 & 2.00 – 5.00  
Wed closed  
Thu 9.30 – 12.30 & 2.00 – 5.00  
Fri 9.30 – 12.30 & 2.00 – 5.00  
Sat 9.30 – 1.00

### **Henley 01491 575278**

Mon 9.00 – 8.00  
Tue 9.00 – 5.30  
Wed 9.00 – 1.00  
Thu 9.00 – 5.30  
Fri 9.00 – 8.00  
Sat 9.00 – 4.30

### **Sonning Common 01189 722448**

Mon 2.00 – 5.00  
Tue closed  
Wed 2.00 – 7.00  
Thu 9.00 – 1.00 & 2.00 – 5.00  
Fri 9.00 – 1.00 & 2.00 – 5.00  
Sat 9.30 – 12.30

### **Wallingford 01491 837395**

Mon 9.30 – 5.30  
Tue 9.30 – 5.30  
Wed closed  
Thu 9.30 – 7.00  
Fri 9.30 – 5.30  
Sat 9.30 – 1.00

## **South East Mobile Library**

Tue 1 <sup>st</sup> April	North Stoke	Village Hall	10.00 – 10.10
	South Stoke	Farm	10.20 – 10.30
	South Stoke	Freedom Cottis	10.35 – 10.45
	Great Oaks	School	1.40 – 2.10
	Whitchurch Hill	Post Box	2.45 – 3.00
	<b>Whitchurch</b>	<b>Manor Road</b>	<b>3.05 – 3.45</b>
Tue 8 <sup>th</sup> April	Ipsden	Village Hall	9.30 – 9.45
	Braziers Park	College House	9.55 – 10.05
	Checkendon	Emmens Close	10.20 – 10.40

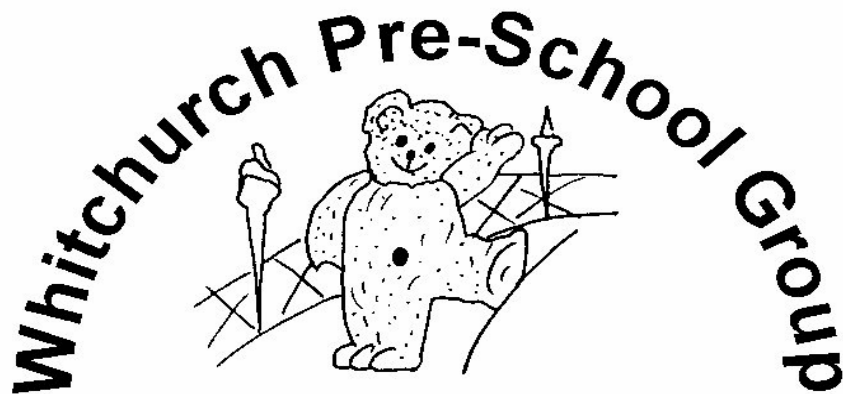
Tue 15<sup>th</sup> April as on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Renewals and Reference Enquiries** can be dealt with at Central Library Oxford, open 9.00 – 7.00 ( 5.30pm Fri & Sat) telephone 01865 815509.

There is the 24hour renewal line 0845 1202811 (you need ticket number & PIN)

On-line at [www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk) you can renew or refer to the catalogue with ticket number and PIN.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ALL OUR READERS AGAIN ON MONDAY 21ST APRIL**



## Learning Through Play

### From Whitchurch Pre-school Group to the Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club

The parents, committee and staff would very much like to thank the Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club for their kind generosity in donating funds to Whitchurch Pre-school Group.

A recent failure of the fire alarm system led to the need for a complete replacement and installation of alarm and smoke alarms, an unsightly cost that the pre-school could well have done without. However, the pre-school applied for grant funding to many community and district organisations including parish and district councils. One of which was the Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club who have very kindly supported the funding of the replacement alarm.

The committee, staff and children are all so incredibly grateful for this kind donation. It has relieved the pre-school of a hefty bill, which allows them now to spend the 'little free funds' they have on new equipment, educational aids, books etc on the children and so very much appreciate what they have done for us.

### **Our slipway in The Daily Telegraph**

A recent copy of The Daily Telegraph carried a 1/3 page article about Thames access via public slipways. The feature in the Weekend section of 19<sup>th</sup> Jan concerned an ongoing campaign by the Thames Traditional Boat Society to ensure our slipways are better used and don't disappear. The campaign, which encourages better awareness of slipways, is also supported by the Environment Agency.

As an illustration of access, a double skiff and trailer posed for photographs on the Whitchurch slip beside the toll booth. People going past the toll bridge that afternoon may have wondered what a beautiful skiff was doing, with all its equipment, seats and rugs, standing on it's trailer ready for launching in the middle of winter, the crew and photographer having retired to The Greyhound for lunch. Unfortunately it was too dark that day to make use of photos from our slipway so alternative photos were used in the article.

The article describes the skiff being prepared for launching on our slip though misspells Whitchurch-on-Thames as "Pangbourne". No doubt poetic licence to make a link with Kenneth Grahame.

Within our village there are 4 similar skiffs, so one day we may see them all being launched here.

John Southey

## **Works at Whitchurch Bridge**

The following works were carried out at Whitchurch Bridge during March.

### **1. Pier cap inspection**

There is a long standing problem with cracking of the pier caps, particularly at the Pangbourne end of the Bridge. The position and length of these cracks have been measured during previous inspections, and this inspection measured what changes, if any, have taken place since the last inspection in October 2005.

### **2. Exploratory boring**

The planned reconstruction of the Bridge in 2013 (which is subject to Planning Permission) will involve the installation of new piles in the river bed to support the Bridge.

This will require knowledge of the load-bearing capacity and other attributes of the river bed. This information will be obtained from the exploratory boring which has now been completed and which included:

- Cable percussion boring of 3 vertical holes of 150mm (6 inches) diameter to a depth of 30 - 40 metres (100 – 130 feet).
- Containment of the drilling arisings in a separation pool, with the clean water being returned to the river, and the solids taken away (to minimise pollution of the river).
- Penetration tests at various depths.
- Collection of various samples for laboratory analysis.

### 3. Abutment investigation

A series of horizontal and vertical borings was carried out on both brick abutments to gather information on their construction and condition. This work involved drilling down through the roadway, which necessitated some periods of one-way traffic control outside the morning and evening peak hours.

The Company regrets any inconvenience to Bridge users and others affected by these works.

There is more information about the Bridge on our website at [www.whitchurchbridge.com](http://www.whitchurchbridge.com).

Geoff Weir  
Company Secretary

## **The Village Plan**

### **Village Plan Up-Date**

The great turnout at the Village Party produced a wonderful variety of ideas about what needs to be done in Whitchurch - big and small ones; cheap and expensive ones; short and long term ones and all really helpful. They fall into broad categories – traffic, development, village hall and so on. The Steering Committee will now be setting up working groups to study these subjects in more depth and to develop recommendations for action.

A number of people have already volunteered to help but please call Stephen Trinder or any other member (see below) if you have a particular field of interest. We are anxious to involve the young residents and so do encourage any under 18s in your household to let us have their opinions, perhaps via our website, and to participate in the focus group we shall be setting up specifically for them. Later in the year a full-scale questionnaire to every home will invite your specific response to different proposals.

It is also important that everyone has their say as we develop the ideas. First off therefore will be a short presentation at the Parish Assembly on **Tuesday 8 April**. Come along and give us your initial reactions to such suggestions as a new village hall, a shelter on the playground for youngsters, a footpath to Eastfield Lane,

affordable housing, seniors lunches and extra activities in the church, school and village hall.

The village web site is being extended to provide a forum for the exchange of views, through the generous assistance of Philip Weir and David Robinson. So just log on to [www.whitchurchonthames.com](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com), go to Village Plan, click on Make your comment and give us your opinions. Or you can comment on postings by others.

So far there has been a very enthusiastic response from village residents about the Village Plan. We're keen to involve as many people as possible in planning Whitchurch's future. If you can suggest any initiatives to bring in all sections of our community, please get in touch with a member of the Steering Committee: Harry Butterworth, Dr Catherine Kelly, Audrey Kingham, Dr Matilda Oppenheimer, Kate Preston, Stephen Trinder or Richard Wingfield.

Stephen Trinder (Chairman)  
0118 984 2610

### **Village Plan – Study Groups**

Do you have any special interests, ideas or skills that you would be willing to share for the benefit of the village? If so we would very much like to hear from you. The Steering Committee is in the process of setting up four study groups to look at some of the key issues for the future of Whitchurch:

- Community and Public Services – bus, refuse, information, facilities/support for young people and the elderly
- Village Hall & Leisure – extent of facilities wanted, a new or refurbished hall
- Traffic, roads and pavements – maintenance, calming, parking and ‘virtual’ pavements
- Housing & Environment – planning/development/design, open spaces, affordable housing, signage and footpaths

Please get in touch with a member of the Steering Committee: Harry Butterworth, Audrey Kingham, Dr Matilda Oppenheimer, Kate Preston, Stephen Trinder or Richard Wingfield.

Stephen Trinder(Chairman)

## MR TOAD'S TRAVELS

To escape the dark grey winter days Mr Toad has disappeared to sunnier climes. His first stop was at Durban in the exotically named Southern African province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. From there he went straight off to Mexico City and thence to catch the longer summer days in Copenhagen.

Now, I had better explain what I on earth I am talking about. Towards the end of January I received an encouraging letter from the British Council. It informed me that my documentary "Mr Toad's Village" was being considered for inclusion in a number of short film festivals supported by that organisation. Because this process would take up to twelve weeks I was advised to continue submitting the film to festivals with imminent closure dates.

Frankly, I do not know how I would have done this before the introduction of the web. It would have involved at least half a day in the reference section of Reading Library pen and notebook in hand. In truth I would have probably not attempted such a daunting task.

But typing "Film Festivals" into my search engine I was immediately given a confusing array of sites from which I chose Wikipedia. Yes, that much maligned organ of peoples' knowledge actually has a whole section devoted to film and video festivals. I suppose film festivals to most of us means Cannes, Sundance or San Remo. But they represent only a fraction of the festivals in this fascinating and often surreal realm of creativity.

In Europe alone there well over 200 festivals catering for every kind of cinematic offerings from animation to videos shot on mobile phones. There are even three festivals devoted to films made for and by the deaf community. After some thought I decided "Mr Toad" was not suitable for the Kik in Der Kok Festival in Tallin which is devoted to erotic and pornographic films and promises to give "a refreshing spank to Estonian culture."

At present I have entered "Toad" into The Durban International Film Festival, The Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival, The Flanders International Film Festival in Belgium and the Festival International de Cine Pobre in Mexico. The chances of the documentary being picked has to be rated rather slight, so selection would be a real bonus.

But the film has already reaped a rich reward in another respect. At the time of writing sales from dvds have now raised over £1900 for The Helen and Douglas House Hospice. Hopefully the magic figure of £2000 will be reached soon.

Meanwhile dvds of "Toad" have now found their way to all four corners of the earth and the film has been enjoyed in countries as diverse as India, the US, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. But I think the following e-mail meant more to me than anything:

*“What a delight to sit and watch your beautifully presented film on Whitchurch on Thames this morning. The electricity is off - again; we have no water - again, and that made the watching and the ability to get lost in your world for a while - a real delight.”*

It was from Cathy Buckle, the fearless civil rights campaigner in Zimbabwe. I had included a copy of “Mr Toad’s Village” in a parcel I sent her about a month ago. Who says miracles don’t happen? Nick Brazil

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

WoTHABS dates for your diary:

**Cowslip Walk on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>** at Chalkhills, formerly Boze Down Vineyard, between 11.00 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. An opportunity to enjoy a walk in the woods and across the hills, or alternatively to take a tractor ride and a short walk to the top to admire the fine view as well as the cowslips. There will be refreshments at the bottom from where the walk begins, but you are very welcome to bring a picnic. There will be a children’s quiz and other points of interest will be indicated en route for all ages to enjoy. Unfortunately, no dogs allowed, but otherwise, bring all the family and friends. Look out for posters nearer the time for further details.

**Maze Working Party: Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. start**, then first Saturday in every month, to help keep the maze in good shape until the end of the growing season.

Four of our members had an interesting time at ONCF’s (Oxfordshire Nature and Conservation Forum’s) Recording and Conservation Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. In Oxford, It was an ideal time to exchange news and information with other groups. There will be a further opportunity, nearer to home, on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 9.30-4.00** at Langtree Secondary School. Workshops already confirmed for the day include Moth identification and Pond Assessment and Management. Others are still in the planning stage. If you would like to attend please contact us.

WoTHABS is always pleased to welcome new members. Check out our entry on OXNET Community Website:  
[www.oxnet.org.uk/club\\_homepage.asp?clubid=25019](http://www.oxnet.org.uk/club_homepage.asp?clubid=25019) for more information.  
(That’s an underscore between club and homepage, not a space.)

**Our next meeting: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 8.00 p.m. at Chalkhills**

Contact: Tel. 9842934, [gill\\_goodwin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gill_goodwin@yahoo.co.uk)

# **Don Pasquale**

sung in English

**Hardwick House  
Whitchurch-on-Thames  
RG8 7RD**

**Saturday 19 July 2008 at 7.00pm**

By Kind permission of Sir Julian Rose, Garden Opera Company is delighted to be performing in the stunning garden setting of Hardwick House at Whitchurch on Thames.

The opera sparkles with wit and the most enchanting music and is well suited to Garden Opera's company of talented young professionals. Whether an opera lover or absolute newcomer you'll enjoy the entertaining, intimate and approachable style.

Why not make up a group of friends and bring a picnic to enjoy on the stunning lawns to the side of Hardwick House. Gardens open at 5pm. Seating is provided for the performance.

Tickets: £27-. Numbers limited, pre-booking essential

Box Office: 0118 984 4959 / 2437

Tickets also available at Warmingham, 4 High Street, Goring

***In the case of extremely inclement weather this performance may not take place. Please note all tickets are non-refundable***

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

## Pangbourne Bowls Club

In previous years I have written about Pangbourne Bowls Club with the assumption that everyone in Whitchurch knows about our club and its location. For those of you who are not aware, the club green is situated at the far end of the recreation ground in Thames Avenue, Pangbourne next to the tennis courts.

The first important diary date for the new season is the club “Open Day” on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm**. This is primarily intended for current club members to re-register with the club (and pay subscriptions!) and also for any possible new players to come along and view our set up and see if they might enjoy the game. We have obtained a number of sets of woods over the winter season for potential new members to try out bowls and our club coaches will be on hand to introduce you to the sport and offer advice. If this date is not suitable however then do please come along to the green at any time during late April or May when most days and evenings (weather permitting) there will be either matches being played or club members practicing to get ready for the new season. Thursday evenings are especially good as both our county coaches will be on hand then for guidance or assistance.

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 at some time and introduce yourself to any club member who I am sure will “point you in the right direction”.

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

Nigel Cabeldu

Secretary - Pangbourne Bowls Club

Tel: 984 4171

## PANGBOURNE HERITAGE GROUP DIARY 2008-2009

2 April: A Visit from Jane Burrell (Newbury Museum) to discuss the archiving of historical material or collections. This will be of interest to many of you, especially if you are looking at a family history project. Everyone is welcome to join us.

14 May: Down Memory Lane. Please bring along any personal belongings that are more than fifty years old ( not necessarily related to Pangbourne), such as artefacts,

photographs, utensils or ornaments, art or craft work that you think would be of general interest. All welcome.

11 June: An Evening in the Churchyard – a working group mapping and identifying gravestones.

9 July: Members meeting- a follow up on progress from the working groups.

August: date to be arranged – summer social.

10 September: Who lived in your House? An evening led by Bob Dearden on researching the history of properties in the village. All welcome.

8 October: AGM

12 November: Commemorating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. A talk led by those involved in researching the War Dead of Pangbourne. All welcome.

December: date to be arranged- a members meeting followed by a social evening.

14 January 2009: A report by Lyn Davies on the sale of the Breedon Estate. All welcome.

Unless otherwise indicated, meetings are held in St James the Less church, starting at 7.30pm. We welcome all visitors and prospective members on any occasion, and if you would like further information, please contact Rosie Nurick on (0118) 9842565.

## Calling all **STUDENTS!!**

**The trustees of Whitchurch United Charities want to remind all students and families that the Charity has funds available to help with the cost of books and equipment or other educational expenses.** Eligible students are young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the parish of Whitchurch. (Note - if you receive the Parish Magazine for St Mary's and St John's churches, you are in the parish and therefore eligible).

The trustees have recently changed the way the applications are handled – from now on, they will be processed twice a year, with the closing dates being 31st Jan and 31st July. However, late applications are considered if the available funds for the previous 6 month period have not been fully allocated.

All applications and decisions are treated in strict confidence by the Trustees.

If you would like more details or an Application form and Notes, please write to:-

Mr Peter Hawley, The Grant Application Secretary  
Whitchurch United Charities

3 Whitchurch House, High Street Whitchurch-on-Thames,  
Reading RG8 7EP

## **Langtree Sinfonia Summer Concert**

will take place on Saturday 17th of May at 7pm in the glorious setting of Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames.

The concert opens with Brahms Tragic Overture to be followed in contrast by the Organ Concerto op 4 no4 by Handel. The soloist will be Jeremy Boughton director of music and organist at Dorchester Abbey. Members of the Thames Consort and Dorchester Abbey choir will also accompany this piece. Jeremy was educated at Reading Blue Coat School and Newton Park, Bath where he studied under John Parry, and took part in operas and masterclasses. He sang in Bath Abbey where he developed an interest in choral and church music. With the violinist Sharon Warnes, he has given many recitals in the UK and abroad. Jeremy will again play the organ in Saint Saens powerful and exciting Organ Symphony no3. Paul Cox will conduct the concert.

Tickets. Adults £8.50 including Programme.

Students and Children under 16 £4.00.

Available at the door and at 'Inspiration' 1 The Arcade, Goring or 0118 9415498.

Langtree Sinfonia is the local orchestra of the area, based at Langtree School where rehearsals take place each Wednesday evening during term time. Our members come from areas of South Oxfordshire and around and we give concerts twice a year. In May at Dorchester Abbey, in November at Christ Church Henley. Paul Cox is the musical director and conductor. He is also a professional 'cellist and is now a leading Professor at Southampton University, tutor of youth orchestras and both conductor and soloist in National and European concerts. Paul spent his childhood in Woodcote where his mother taught the piano.

The orchestra is always keen to welcome new players with out auditions. Interested persons should contact:- Chris Winch 01491 574653



## **South Chiltern Choral Society**

**Concert on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**Time: 7.30pm**

**Venue: Reading Concert Hall (Old Town Hall)**

**For our Spring concert this year we are performing one of the greatest**

**of all choral works, *Verdi's Requiem*.**

**If your start to the New Year has been a little dull and you want to enrich your lives with a fantastic drama then book your tickets now for the SCCS concert on April 19<sup>th</sup> when the choir return to the Concert Hall, Reading.**

**This is going to be a big one!**

**The choir will be joined by a well-known French group from Grenoble, the '*Ensemble de Meylan*', who are making an exchange visit to us after S.C.C.S performed with them last year in France.**

**We also have '*Parenthesis*', a Reading-based choir, so will have a combined choir of about 220 voices!**

**Singing the beautiful solo interludes will be soprano Julia Sporsen, mezzo soprano Rachael Lloyd, tenor Paul Hopwood and baritone Roland Wood, all young professionals already successfully launched on their sparkling careers.**

**The choirs will be accompanied by the South Chiltern Orchestra and conducted by *Gwyn Arch*.**

***Tickets from the Choir Box Office: 0118 9345746***

***£12 Adults £8 Under 18's***

**Publicity - Emma Sieling  
emma.sieling5@ntlworld.com**

## **WHITCHURCH HILL CAMERA CLUB**

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

Our first meeting, on the 2nd April, features our annual Natural History competition when our prints and projected images will be judged by Malcolm Taylor. One week later, we have a presentation called “Winter in the Alps” which will be given by Gordon Roberts CPAGB from the Wallingford Camera Club.

The final round of our Print Competition takes place on the 16<sup>th</sup> April and the judge for the evening will be Keith Adams LRPS from the Ealing club.

On the 23rd April, we have a presentation by one of our own Club members, Matt Whorlow, who will be showing a selection of his images taken during the last twelve months. The following evening (Thursday, 24th April) sees the regular monthly meeting of the Digital Group with tips and practical help on digital imaging.

The month’s programme ends on the 30th April with the last round of the Slide and Digital Competition which will be judged by Chris Whiting from the Newbury Camera Club.

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 £1.50 for the evening whilst Club members pay just £1.00 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 Pangbourne Library.

## Whitchurch Walks

I was thrilled and delighted to see so many people on the New Year's Day Walk. I likened it to the Pied Piper of Hamelin as you appeared from all corners of the village. Hopefully it gave a first introduction to some to the paths and the local landscape and, indeed, to other members of the village community.

We will head north again next year but then turn west at Coldharbour and then on to Stapnall's Farm and Upper Gatehampton, returning via the nature trust site and the bridle path from Goring – probably about 6½ miles with a shorter leg of about 4½ miles. The other impressive point of 01/01/08 was the number who completed the whole round – so slightly longer in 2009?

How about a walk to and through the Stokes for Easter or the early Spring?

Drive to South Stoke and park in the vicinity of the Perch and Pike; I am sure if you warn the landlord and intend to eat there after your walk you will be able to park in the pub car park. Otherwise use the road outside but do remember it is a working village so take care not to impede or restrict any resident's normal access or use of the village facilities or roads.

With the pub on your right walk along past the School and the Church, as the road turns right you turn left and follow the Ridgeway sign and head towards the river. You are on the extension of the Ridgeway walk as it heads towards Ivinghoe Beacon, some 40 miles to the north-east. A ferry plied its trade across from this point on the river to the Beetle and Wedge on the opposite bank at Moulsoford. Since you will walk to and through Little Stoke and to North Stoke it is worth noting that the word Stoke may be a corruption of 'stake' – it is possible that these three locations could, at times, have been safe crossing points at which to wade across the river. The safe routes would then have been staked. Remember that this would give a connection from the Ridgeway on the Berkshire side to the Icknield Way on the Oxfordshire side – the Icknield Way leading to the land of the Icenis (Boadicea).

Turn right and follow the river along this delightful stretch. You will meet and pass under one of Brunel's magnificent bridges – look at the arched brickwork and admire the workmanship.

When you reach Little Stoke you will have to leave the river, the Ridgeway (and your route) turns right towards Little Stoke and then immediately left

down a well sign posted path towards the fields. It is still a charming route and as it crosses the odd small bridge you will see North Stoke in the distance. You will pass through the gardens of a sequence of houses on the outskirts of North Stoke (now fenced and well defined) and then suddenly cross over a stile and into the churchyard. Look to your right for the grave of Dame Clara Butt (sadly neglected today).

Look also at the side of the church where you will see a 'mass' sundial (it gave the local priest some idea of when to hold the services). You may also note an upside down date in the stonework above, the tower collapsed in 1669 and when it was re-erected this stone was mistakenly put in the wrong way up.

Go into the Church (hopefully it will be open for your visit) - there are traces of medieval murals on its walls. As you leave the churchyard by the lychgate look at its inscription – it was erected by Dame Clara as a memorial to her son who died tragically at the age of 19.

Go up the Church drive to meet the main road of the village and then turn right and follow the road, it turns left but you go straight ahead down a broad lane on your return to Little Stoke. The lane meets a road which you now follow without deviation (ignore the turning and marked footpath on your right which leads back to the river) until you reach the lovely wall surrounding Little Stoke Manor Farm. Again the road turns left but again you go straight ahead to and over an unusual and charming stile in the wall opposite. Follow the right hand edge of the field on an obvious path and return route. The views to the east are open and beautiful, almost unspoilt. The path crosses a small footbridge and follows two sections where the farmers respect the use of the path since they are never ploughed and always provide an excellent route and it is even provided with its own tunnel through the railway embankment. As you emerge you follow a similar path towards a hedge and turn left and then right down a back lane which will lead you by a few houses (and a number of cars) to meet the road leading into South Stoke. Just before you turn right look at the farm and farmyard opposite – perhaps it looked like that when it was first built. Turn right and pick up the pavement leading you back past the Church and the School in this delightful village which is just sufficiently far away from the madding crowd and the passing motor cars to have retained its charm and its character.

The walk is about four miles in length and will take you about an hour and a half which might be useful information if you want to drink or eat in the Perch and Pike?

Eric Hartley, March 2008

## NEW IDEA

It has been suggested that in every Bulletin there is a short piece about one of the Village Societies. This would act as an introduction to new residents, and a reminder to existing residents of what they are missing!

## NUMBER 2

### Theatre Club

*The Whitchurch and District Theatre Club has excursions once a month or more to concerts, musicals, plays, etc. in the Provinces and London. Tickets are purchased at group discount prices and we usually go to matinees in the week on Wednesdays or Thursdays, but concerts are sometimes evening trips. Before the theatre visits are often made to museums, gardens or historic homes.*

*In the past year we have made trips to Bath with a visit to the American Museum in Bath beforehand, Chichester, Richmond preceded by a trip to Kew Gardens and the Proms amongst others. Trips to London have included The Sound of Music and Boeing Boeing. In August of this year we are planning a trip to Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat.*

*Subscriptions are £3 p.a. per person. If you would like to join please contact either Christine Martin tel: 9844252, Ian Bruce tel: 9842653 or Sally Trinder tel: 9842610 or email Chris at [c\\_nmartin@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:c_nmartin@tiscali.co.uk) or Ian at [ian.bruce@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.bruce@btinternet.com).*

## RECYCLING

Aluminium Foil    Bottle tops & Foil

Cans - Clean & Crushed	Primary School
Mobile Phones	
Inkjet & Toner Cartridges      tel 984 2828	Primrose Cottage
Stamps	Help the Aged
Glass Bottles and Jars	The Village Hall Car Park
Spectacles	Boat House Surgery or Alison Michael
Cardboard, papers, plastics (not polystyrene), tins & cans	Green Box on dustbin day
Cans, bottles, books, clothes, magazines, shoes etc	Savacentre Car Park

The Refuse Centre at Oakley Wood, Crowmarsh Gifford, has facilities for the disposal of: household items, metal, plastic, bottles, paper, batteries, engine oil and green waste.

Any queries call Public Amenities on tel:- 01491 823416

## DIARY DATES

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

### April

8<sup>th</sup> Parish Assembly  
 19<sup>th</sup> bowls club open day  
 19<sup>th</sup> South Chiltern Choral Society Concert  
 21<sup>st</sup> WoTHABS meeting  
 25<sup>th</sup> Whitchurch Society AGM

### May

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Twinning visit to la Bouille  
 4<sup>th</sup> Cowslip Walk  
 5<sup>th</sup> Maze working party  
 17<sup>th</sup> Langtree Sinfonia Concert

### July

19<sup>th</sup> Don Pasquale

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN** will be published in MAY 2008.

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

[Sarah.pongo@talktalk.net](mailto:Sarah.pongo@talktalk.net) by 7<sup>th</sup> MAY 2008

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