

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

www.whitchurchonthames.com

MAY 2004

Meeting of The Parish Council

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 10th May in the Village Hall. In attendance were the Chairman Councillor Geoff Weir, and Councillors Harry Butterworth, Nigel Grove, Matilda Oppenheimer and Kate Thatcher. Also present were the Parish Clerk Janet Holmes, District Councillor Pearl Slatter and one member of the public, Nigel Cabeldu representing the Cricket club.

Matilda Oppenheimer was elected as Chairman of Council for the next year. Vincent Aldridge will continue as Vice Chairman.

Liz Robertson has agreed to join the Parish Council, following the resignation of David Robertson.

Cricket ground

Nigel Cabeldu updated the Council about recent changes in the arrangements for the Cricket Ground.

After 18 years of using the Cricket ground the Club are no longer able to do so after this summer.

The Club has been involved in discussions with the Whitelock family, who own the land and have been given a couple of options for the future, one of which is buying the ground for a significant sum. They do not have the resources to do this and are actively fund-raising. The District have been approached and the Club hope to secure a grant. All donations are welcome.

Further discussions are underway between the Cricket Club and the Whitelock family and Nigel Cabeldu will keep the Council informed.

Traffic Calming

This was once again discussed by the Council.

A further letter has been received from OCC, this suggested that to achieve a 20mph limit in the Village speed bumps would have to be built in the High street. A copy of the letter is printed in the Bulletin. The Parish Council will discuss the matter again in July.

Manor Road Play Area

The Parish Council are planning a Party to open the Playground officially.

We hope that Mr Sam Josefovitz and members of Mrs Popper's family will open the Playground for us. We will have wine for the adults with drinks and buns for the children. We are planning on a Saturday at lunchtime in July.

Mr Sam has promised the Village a strip of land from his garden at the back of the Playground. This will be developed into a shady area for picnic benches and perhaps more play equipment in due course.

The Parish council are negotiating with SODC to transfer the land ownership of the Playground at the same time as receiving this kind gift.

Allotments Field

A meeting was held on the 21st April between representatives of the Parish Council and the Allotments Society to agree the rental that the Allotments Society should pay the Parish Council.

The Parish Council are currently paying about £325 in rent per annum to the NSALG (National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners).

It was agreed that the present payment of £2 per family toward this rent should continue this year.

It was also proposed that over the next three years the Allotment Society should move towards paying 25% of the sum that the Parish Council pay to NSALG, which would be in the region of £94 per annum.

The Allotment Society only actually use about half of the total area of leased land.

The Parish Council recognize the huge value of the Allotments as an important Village amenity and the two groups want to work together to secure the Allotments future.

Wothabs and the Maze

Wothabs are continuing their invaluable contribution to the village flora and fauna by making a wild flower meadow near the Maze.

Planning

New Applications

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

PO3/SO321 14 Swanston field

Amendment to approved plan (single Storey extension) with the addition of a fixed circular window to the east side of the garage extension

NO STRONG VIEWS

PO4/Fawley

Conservatory to side of property

NO STRONG VEIWS

PO4/EO556 Beechlee, Hardwick Rd

Extension to existing garage and construction of new pitched roof

NO STRONG VIEWS

PO4/EO557 The Hive, Hardwick Rd

Extension to existing garage and construction of new pitched roof

NO STRONG VIEWS

Rivendell, Hartslock Bridleway - Application withdrawn

Toll House, High St application to be considered by SODC planning committee on the 12th May. Parish Council representative Vincent Aldridge to attend the meeting.

Decision Notices

The following decision notices have been received from South Oxfordshire District Council:

Uplands, Hardwick Rd – Appeal rejected

Finance

The following cheques were agreed for payment.

The Clerk, for salary and expenses. Geoff Weir for Chairman's expenses.

Allianz Cornhill for Insurances, Ridgeway Press for Bulletin printing, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils for subscription, RM Weavers for grass cutting.

Philip Weir for Website development and Management and Impact for software support.

Next Meeting

The next full meeting of the Parish Council will be at 8 pm on Monday the 5th July at Whitchurch Village Hall. Residents are most welcome to attend this meeting and to address the Council on any matter of concern to them. An agenda will be posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard opposite The Greyhound before the meeting.

*Matilda Oppenheimer,
Chairman.*

Parish Council Expenditure 2003 -2004.

At this year's Annual Parish Meeting we did not include a financial report. Some parishioners have since asked about this, so summarised below are the details of our expenditure for the last financial year.

We use a computer-based accounting package specially designed for Parish Councils. We agreed our budget for 2003 – 2004 in January 2003, and all expenditure is formally agreed and minuted at Council meetings. Net expenditure for the year was £12,550.

| Budget Heading | Includes | Expenditure |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Administration | Clerk's salary and expenses, stationery, insurance, audit fees. | £4,320 |
| Recreation | Play area (excluding new play equipment), allotments. | £2,490 |
| Environment | Grass cutting, new bench. | £2,240 |
| Village Hall | Grant, electrical repairs. | £2,100 |
| Publicity | Bulletin, website. | £1,150 |
| Other | Grants, donations, election expenses. | £250 |

Please contact myself or the Clerk if you would like more details.

Geoff Weir

TRAFFIC CALMING

Letter to the Parish Clerk, from Peter Ronald, Area Traffic Engineer

Dear Mrs Holmes.

I refer to your letter of 25 November 2003.

I can confirm that an order to refurbish the two narrowings at either end of the village was issued on 4th March 2004, this also included the relocation of the give way markings from southbound vehicles on the southerly narrowing.

The problems with carriageway surfacing at the junctions with Eastfield Lane and Manor Road are also in hand, Mr Purcell Smith is dealing with these issues. Your request for imprint surfacing on the southerly narrowing and the provision of a new length of footway on the northern narrowing have been considered and an alternative solution to the problem, as used in Stoke Row Village is being considered. I will let you know of the decision taken in the near future.

Your request for a 20mph speed limit has been noted, but there is currently a hold on all speed limit amendments at present pending a review to be completed this year. I would however inform you that any 20mph zone requires a suitable level of traffic calming. To reduce the vehicle speeds to 20mph, this may involve several road humps at 60m centres, and I would question whether this would receive the support of the local residents before progressing this option further.

REPORT FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR

The last twelve months complying with Government requirements have certainly been a year of 'All Work and No Play'.

To start the new financial year we as an executive looked into the way departments were spending their budgets; then having completed this extensive exercise we had a sound base to ensure that our services were being adequately provided against provision.

Having carried out our homework, we then commenced the difficult task over the many months that followed of assessing and administering departmental pressures for our County Services. In doing so, we have tried to strike a balance between keeping the Council Tax down and protecting the services people have told us they value the most. I believe that this year's budget of 6.25% is a fair one that strikes the balance to provide value for money.

Last year I mentioned that there would be changes in working practices. I am pleased to report that within my portfolio I have been directly involved with Trading Standards with the implication of the Animal Welfare Act and the transportation of heavy goods, the overloading of Heavy Goods Vehicles and the New Legislation relating to Citizenship and Civil Ceremonies for the Registration Service, the legislation relating to Safety with Fireworks, The Fire and Rescue Services Bill to ensure that we maintain our existing first class service and The Anti-Social Behaviour Act where I hope we can act in a more positive way against vandalism.

Although I have been heavily involved within my portfolio, I know that there are always a lot of local issues that have needed attention. When any local issues have been drawn to my attention, I have always dealt with them to achieve the best result possible, the majority I am pleased to say in favour of the local area. Before you shout, I know that there is still a lot of work to be done on our roads, I can assure you that I do keep pressure on the Engineers, and will do so until we get the satisfactory repairs we want.

I was very pleased to see that our local Schools have done very well with good results with their GCSE exams thanks to dedication of the teachers and the hard work from the pupils.

Looking to the future, it is as always my intention to continue my fight for maximum efficiency from all of the County services.

*J. Farrow
County Councillor*

REPORT FROM SODC MEMBERS FOR THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Following the elections held last May, the Conservative Party Group took control of the Council and this follows eight years of a hung Council, run by the Liberal Democrats and Labour. The number of Councillors has been reduced from 50 to 48 and this ward changed to include Whitchurch, Goring Heath, Goring and South Stoke, as agreed by the Boundary Commission. The Council has a Cabinet of eight Members, one Scrutiny Committee, one Overview Committee, one main Planning Committee and one Licensing Committee. There are several Task Groups that work up various issues to the Council's work.

A major change has been the one main Planning Committee that meets every other week. Targets are being achieved, set by the Government and a more efficient way of dealing with applications.

The Council communicates and consults in several ways: Outlook magazine three times a year, Area Forums, Parish Digest, press releases and a new initiative of a Citizens' Panel made up of more than 1,000 residents across South Oxfordshire, all of which helps us identify the Council's priorities for setting the budget and delivery of services.

When we were elected we stated our main aim was to keep Council Tax within inflation and this we have done with a 2.6% increase. We have also set out our priorities following the various consultations:

Fear of Crime - we are introducing CCTV in Henley and Wallingford by this summer and Didcot by next year. There is £100,000 in a growth budget to have eight Police Community Support Officers with a matching grant from the Police.

Work with the Community Safety Committee involves Parish Councils, volunteers and the Police. We have given out some Anti-social Behaviour Contracts that has resulted in fewer problems in those areas.

Cleaner Environment – we reintroduced the Parish skips for green waste only in the late summer and early autumn of 2003 as a trial, still keeping the green waste and household waste collections at the four town and rural community waste sites. This scheme started on the 1 June 2003.

Abandoned cars are now taken away within seven working days. We have achieved this target by working with the Police. We have used additional money for an extra crew and vehicle to enable the quick removal of fly tipping and litter on roads and verges. Fly tipped material is currently being removed in 2/3 days from reporting whereas in 02/03 it was taking 16 days.

It is now possible to have more than one green box for the weekly collection of recyclables (paper, cardboard, tins – aluminium and tin and plastics but not polystyrene). We must continue to increase amounts of recyclables collected to minimise residual waste that goes to expensive ‘Landfill’. Composting also helps reduce residual waste and this current year we have sold, using the subsidised cost scheme, over 2,000 composter units. Our waste awareness campaign with two dedicated officers working on education in schools, door knocking, recycling competitions, informative leaflets, green box promotions, visiting fetes/public meetings and working with SOZON, the Council’s recycling mascot, has produced excellent results and will continue. We must all work together to achieve our Government given targets on recycling and to have a cleaner environment. The clearing of litter is a very costly process so please help us by organising ‘Clean Up’ events through Town and Parish Councils and reporting to the Public Amenities team anyone fly tipping and the location of fly tipped material so that collection is arranged.

Affordable Housing – more houses are being allocated to South Oxfordshire with the majority being in Didcot; 3,000 new houses.

Within planning developments the new Local Plan, if agreed by the Inspectors, there will be 40% affordable homes for developments of 15 or more dwellings built. In rural areas the figure is 50% of two or more dwellings built. Exception sites; sites in areas where a housing survey has been carried out showing a need and where planning permission would not normally be agreed. There are several completed schemes in the District and more in the pipeline. By the end of March we must have all families out of bed and breakfast accommodation, a directive from the Government and we will have achieved this.

In our budget we agreed £1m from the community Investment Fund (money from the sale of the Council’s housing stock) towards providing new homes. The Government changed its method of funding schemes and this has caused huge problems for all Councils to provide houses.

There is a lot of pressure on the Council to build more houses as the County Council prepare their Structure Plan with a proposal requiring us to build 1,000 houses in the Green Belt outside Oxford, which we are fighting against. Gravel extraction in the areas of Stadhampton, Berinsfield, Warborough and Benson (SBWB) –again, we are fighting against this by suggesting to Oxfordshire CC that they do not put the amounts of gravel in their Structure Plan but that it is left for the local minerals plan. This would then allow time to receive clarity on the amounts required. It would certainly change the beautiful countryside. It is not just nimbyism but the actual need and is it the best option?

Flooding – last winter we had not only the river flooding but also springs causing problems. We have allocated money into the budget for some schemes to improve those areas liable to flood and have been working with landowners, Parish Councils, and the County Councils.

Didcot - has been the designated growth area for many years, taking 3,000 new houses. The Council has worked with Taylor Woodrow to achieve a new town centre of new shops that will include Sainsburys, Argos and Woolworths that is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2005. This Council is committed to build a five-screen cinema and an Arts Centre integrated with the new shopping centre costing £10.9m in total.

Local government has changed so much over the last few years and it will be for residents to judge if it is for the better. We are being asked to be Community Leaders, work in partnership with other organisations, broaden and cross cut our services and produce a Community Strategy for South Oxfordshire. The South East Region is taking a leading role in planning and other council services.

For the last three years your Council Tax for this Council rose by 6%, 7.7% and 6.7% and this year 2.6% - a big difference. We will, no doubt, have to make hard choices of the future services but there are no plans to make any drastic changes.

Ann Ducker and Pearl Slatter

COMMUNITY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Council has been reviewing the Community Waste Service that it provides to residents in the district, looking at how it could be improved to meet the needs of residents and collect garden waste separately so that it can be recycled. As a result the service has been changed from June 1st 2003.

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

Whitchurch Bridge Company
Vacancy for Part-time Relief Bridge Manager

The Whitchurch Bridge Company has a vacancy for a part-time relief Bridge Manager. This position would ideally suit a local person who is happy to work in a supervisory role, has good numeracy skills, and enjoys dealing with people, both staff and our bridge users.

The successful applicant will share the workload with others to cover for the Bridge Manager's time off. The role consists mainly of weekend standby cover (ie at home or nearby, but on call to deal with any problems) for up to two weekends per month with availability for some weekdays by arrangement. It is likely that there will be some toll collection involved.

If you would like to discuss this opportunity further, please contact me at the Toll Bridge, or on 984-3126.

Colin Lyons, Bridge Manager

WoT HABS
(Whitchurch Habitat Study Group)

The weather turned fine for the Cowslip Walk and well over a hundred turned up to enjoy themselves. £120 of the money raised goes to BBOWT, the Wildlife Trust. Thanks to everyone who made the day such a success.

Work is going well on the Maze and primroses, bluebells and wild garlic will soon be planted in the adjacent garden.

There has been an encouraging response to the Garden Pond Survey, and we are mapping the locations of ponds we now know exist in Whitchurch and would be delighted to add yours to the bigger picture. If you have not already done so, you could just note down brief details (see below) and drop them in (1 Swanston Field), or ring me and leave a message if I'm not in. Recording forms for those who wish to be a little more fully involved are being distributed to those who requested them, and there are back-up leaflets about amphibians, reptiles and about invasive pond plant species for anyone who would like them - all with good colour illustrations. (Please let me know if you are missing any of the leaflets you would like).

Pond Size: length, width, depth (shallowest and deepest), shape, age of pond (approx.), your name and address and anything else you would like to add (such as what wildlife you have seen there in the past year or so) and say whether or not you would like a recording form.

Gill Goodwin (0118 9842934)

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Biennial Visit to La Bouille

The coach left Whitchurch in the pouring rain at 12 noon on Friday 30 April heading for the Tunnel with 22 on board. Our spirits were low. Eating our Sunday picnic under an umbrella was a depressing prospect.

However, we needn't have worried. On Saturday the sun came out. The day was spent with the host families. Outings included a visit to Rouen where a 24 hour speedboat race round an island in the Seine was underway. At 6.30 pm the mayor hosted a reception with drinks in the Mairie. Later in the evening some host families organised joint dinner parties. Others took their guests to a restaurant in the village.

Sunday was a brilliantly sunny, warm day. The coach came nearer to filling its 53 seats with French host family members. We headed for Amiens, a journey of about 2 hours. The first stopping place was Les Hortillonages, an ancient series of water ways interspersed with market gardens and weekend retreats. We made a tour of the area in gondola-like boats driven silently by electric motor. An idyllic experience.

The picnic was taken in a large adjacent park with a lake. A big sign in the middle said Bagner (bathing), the following word, presumably Defendu, being obscured by the higher than normal water level. The muddy water however did not look at all inviting.

The first part of the afternoon was spent inside the Gothic Cathedral (13th Century), the largest cathedral in France, with an English-speaking guide. The whole of the frontal facade has been expertly cleaned, but no attempt has been made to restore the colours on the statuary. Impossible to know what colour schemes were used, said the guide.

We emerged into the sunshine for the remainder of the visit to tour the Quartier St Leu. This used to be a run-down area close to the cathedral. Fortunately, a proposal to clear and redevelop the site was resisted and instead the buildings have been restored. The area is now given over to arts and crafts, with cafes and restaurants along the banks of the canal.

The evening meal was organised much as the night before, but with a larger party attending a dinner at a restaurant in the village.

On the day of departure, Monday, trips to local super and hyper markets were organised. The coach left La Bouille at 1 pm for the return trip via the Tunnel, reaching Whitchurch about 9 pm.

"A very successful visit, greatly enhanced by the warm sunny weather."

Ian Bruce

THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY

The Society held its AGM in the Village Hall on Thursday 22nd April. The Chairman reported on the year's activities including: Aelethea Hill's travels in Kashmir at the previous AGM; the annual garden Walk; Sir Michael Oppenheimer's illustrated talk about Italy; the Art & Craft Exhibition; and Graham Morfey's presentation of his yachting experiences in the Pacific Ocean. The Treasurer then presented his report showing a balance in hand of £1,041 at 31st March, excluding the Maze Fund for which the Society acts as bankers.

Of the nine members of the Committee, Alison Powell had already resigned when she left the village at the end of March; Nigel Grove and Roy Rosekilly indicated that they were retiring; the remaining six members had agreed to continue in office, leaving four vacant places. Four nominations had been received – Ian Bruce, Claire Drazin, Christine Minton, and Peter Smith – all of which were accepted by the meeting. In addition to these four, the Committee comprises Nick Brazil, Wendy Ferguson, Aelethea Hill, Chris Martin, Jenny Plumb and Anne Tuckwell.

In view of the retiring Chairman's ten years in office, the Hon Secretary proposed that he be elected a Vice President of the Society so that he could advise the new Committee if called upon to do so. As a memento of his past contribution, he was presented with an inscribed coaster, a cut glass whisky tumbler and a bottle of the hard stuff - the first should last a lifetime, the second might with a bit of luck, but the third certainly will not!

After the AGM, Nick Brazil presented the Village Maze Project from inception to the present day, illustrated with his own pictures of the site and work in progress. Judging by the response of the audience, the project has certainly captured the imagination of many villagers. Nick is accepting orders for named bricks up to the end of May.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the Committee members over the last ten years for their support and encouragement and for making my Chairmanship so rewarding. I wish the Society every success in the future.

Nigel Grove, Vice President

Dear Friends,

I am sorry that I am not able to attend the AGM this year. Well – no I am not really, because I shall probably be enjoying a nice cold one, sitting on the deck of my brother's house in Lakes Entrance, Australia. However, Nigel our Chairman for the past 10 years or so, is retiring and I could not let my absence prevent me from saying a few words to thank him for his enthusiastic stewardship of the Society during the period of his Chairmanship.

We have enjoyed many interesting talks and meetings. He always seemed to conjure up the sun for the Annual Garden Walks which were inaugurated while he was Chairman.

He has presided over a succession of excellent Art & Craft Exhibitions and has managed to find organisers for that event when the post became vacant.

The Society has been able to keep in touch with developments in all aspects of Planning and development in the Village and surrounding area. We must not forget the Committees that have served with him during his tenure of the Chairmanship. Those hardworking folk are extremely important to the smooth running of events.

Nigel leaves the Society in strong health and we are grateful for this Stewardship.

In closing I would welcome the new Chairman who will be appointed by the new Committee and look forward to many successful years for the Society.

Tony Voysey

THE WHITCHURCH ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION
The weekend of 20th/21st November 2004

Spring has sprung, the dark days of winter are behind us, so now is the time to start thinking about your entries for this year's Exhibition! If you have never entered before, remember that there is a special prize for 1st time entries! We really value ALL entries so don't be shy and think you can't match the standard of work displayed on previous years - the ethos of the exhibition is that it is a 'whole village' event for the participation and enjoyment of all.

This year's theme for the Joyce Voysey prize is "Birds" – plenty of scope for your vivid imagination! This class is open for adults and children to enter - art, craft or photography. We hope to get plenty of interesting and entertaining entries for this class. Also, don't forget that there is now a Photography class for 18 year olds and under.

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Whitchurch Society, we are planning an 'Archive Corner' to display winning exhibits from the past years' shows. If you have won any of the Cups (Whitchurch, Chairmans, Orford, Butterworth, CPL) and can still lay your hands on your winning entry, we would be delighted to include it. We have all the records of who won what and when, so we can check out any details for you. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like your work included in this display.

Also, another special display that we are planning is one to commemorate the work of the well-known local artist, Jack Orford, who sadly died earlier this year. There must be many 'Orfords' gracing the sitting-room walls of Whitchurch – if you would be prepared to loan yours to the Exhibition for the weekend, again please let me know as soon as possible.

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 lots of details about last year's event and the categories, rules of entry etc. for 2004 will be loaded soon.

Sally Woolhouse (Tel 0118 984 4365).

VILLAGE FETE

Saturday September 4th 2004 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 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 9842922.

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.

THE WHITCHURCH MAZE PROJECT

The Naming of Names

By Nick Brazil

This year work on the Maze has been steady and encouraging. Its centrepiece the sundial, has been in place for some months now and orders for nearly 80 named bricks have been taken.

We had hoped to have these put in the ground by the end of March but unfortunately the original Matthews bricks we planned to use proved unsuitable. A search is on for an alternative brick and it is hoped this small obstacle will be overcome within the next week. The original idea of picking the letters out in black paint has been dropped. This is because no matter how tough and weatherproof the paint it would inevitably suffer wear and tear making the bricks look tatty. We also feel that unpainted lettering actually looks better.

In January we applied for a grant from the SODC Community Investment Fund in order to buy all the bricks for the Maze. A decision on this is expected within the next month. Naturally we hope this will be successful, but if this does not prove to be the case, the bricks will be purchased anyway at no drain on the public purse. Our main concern is to have the bulk of it completed in time for it to be a feature in this year's Garden Walk.

In the meantime Peter Woolhouse and I have been developing a method to create the "watershed" plaques. Some of these will mark important landmarks in the village history and others the distances and directions of significant places such as The Thames Source and The South Pole.

An additional purpose of the Maze is to create an ecological haven of peace and tranquillity where humans and wild life coexist. To this end several bird boxes and an owl hide have been placed at various points in the surrounding undergrowth. This way we can ensure that the abundant bird life will continue to visit and nest in this beautiful corner of our village.

WotHabs are also planning to establish an area of wild flowers in memory of Lady Rose. This will be situated on the southern boundary of the maze.

Within the next month excavation will start on the Maze paths and volunteers to help complete this task would be more than welcome. If you would like to help or purchase a named brick please do not hesitate to contact me Nick Brazil at The Garden Flat, The Mount, Hardwick Rd., Whitchurch-on-Thames, Reading RG8 7HW Telephone: 01189841602 or e-mail : nicholas.brazil1@btopenworld.com

Nick Brazil 2004

MAY 2004 HALFWAY!

On Easter Saturday April 10th 2004 another important milestone was reached in the creation of our Thyme Maze. At nine o'clock on that overcast morning, Geoff Weir, the Leader of the Parish Council cut the first turf in the Maze.

Since then our progress has been quite breathtaking. Peter Woolhouse has laid nearly 1000 bricks. Many of these have the names of both past and present residents engraved on them. These are held in place by two and a half tons of the mortar all hand mixed in a wheel barrow. No wonder the Maze site has been nicknamed "Woolhouse and Brazil's Green Gym"!

Generous support from everyone in the village continues unabated which is extremely encouraging. It is very heart warming to see people just arrive at the site prepared to roll their sleeves up and cut turf, infill or carry bricks. As a result we have now nearly excavated the fourth of five circles. In three of these the brickwork is now complete.

Many people have also responded generously and bought engraved bricks. To date we have sold approximately 160 named bricks although the number increases by the day. There can be few more satisfying experiences than showing someone a brick with the name of their children or pets occupying pride of place in the Maze.

As the project takes shape, we have had an increasing number of visitors. Whilst many of these are local, there have also been people from as far afield as Canada and Denmark. On one memorable occasion a group of South American students came to admire our work.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Brazil," they replied.

"Well, you'll be pleased to know that you are standing in the middle of a genuine Brazilian Maze."

It is not often in life one is handed such tailor made punchlines.

The giant sundial at the centre of the Maze has fascinated many of our younger visitors. Indeed, there is a special magic for children of all ages about becoming part of this timepiece and seeing one's shadow fall across the Roman numerals. This has also helped to educate these visitors in the passage of the sun and the seasons.

On Easter Monday another group of children also had an impromptu history lesson. One of the bricks at the top of the inner circle bears the date 1066. It is placed in this prominent position because it was the year that England was last invaded changing the land forever.

"What do those numbers mean?" One of the young visitors asked pointing at this brick.

"Well," I replied in my best schoolmasterly tone. "That is Ten Sixty-Six, a very important year in our history. Can any of you tell me what happened then?"

As the children hummed and hahed screwing up their faces it was clear none of them knew the answer. Then one little boy had a burst of inspiration.

“I know!” he shouted. “It was the year we won the World Cup!”

Well, what’s nine hundred years between friends?

We hope people continue to visit the Thyme Maze since it continues to grow by the week. If you are still wondering whether to buy a brick then hurry because the cut off date is May 31st.

Nick Brazil

JACK ORFORD

Some of you will remember Jack Orford (who left Whitchurch seven years ago) and some will know that he died on 5th April at the age of 90. Jack and his wife Margaret came to live in Hardwick Road when the ‘new’ houses were built around 1959. Margaret, who died many years ago, was a leading member of the erstwhile Whitchurch Women’s Institute.

Jack in his spare time and his retirement was a water colourist and draughtsman of exceptional talent. He helped to establish the Art & Craft exhibition and worked untiringly to encourage young people and aspiring painters to develop their artistic abilities. He donated the Orford Cup which is still the top prize for painting each year at the Exhibition.

Jack and Margaret are commemorated in the Village Hall, where so much of their communal activity took place, by Margaret’s poem ‘The Women of Whitchurch’ scripted and illustrated by Jack.

Nigel Grove

THE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Growing is well underway, veg as well as weeds. It is a good time to be down at the Allotments, the soil is warming up and the moisture levels are good! And there has even been a little sunshine!

With the Allotment Society being so popular at present we are extending the water system and I would be pleased to hear from anyone with an unwanted bath!

There are a couple of plots vacant at the moment, I cannot say they are weed free but it is very satisfying growing your own fruit and veg. Some people also grow cut flowers for the house.

Rosamund Heath
984 2358

Cricketing Woes for Whitchurch CC

Whitchurch Cricket Club was founded in 1877 and cricket has been played there ever since down at the ground in Eastfield Lane. The club is in serious danger of disbanding at the end of this 2004 season.

The club has been given notice to quit by the ground owners unless it can acquire the freehold of the ground for a sum of £300,000 by September 2004. For a club with some 20-30 playing members this will be a monumental task. However, always eager to rise to the challenge the club is exploring all possible options with the ground owners and also the local community. The club has already put in an application for an SODC grant, and is also seeking pledges and loans to help us to get towards the required sum.

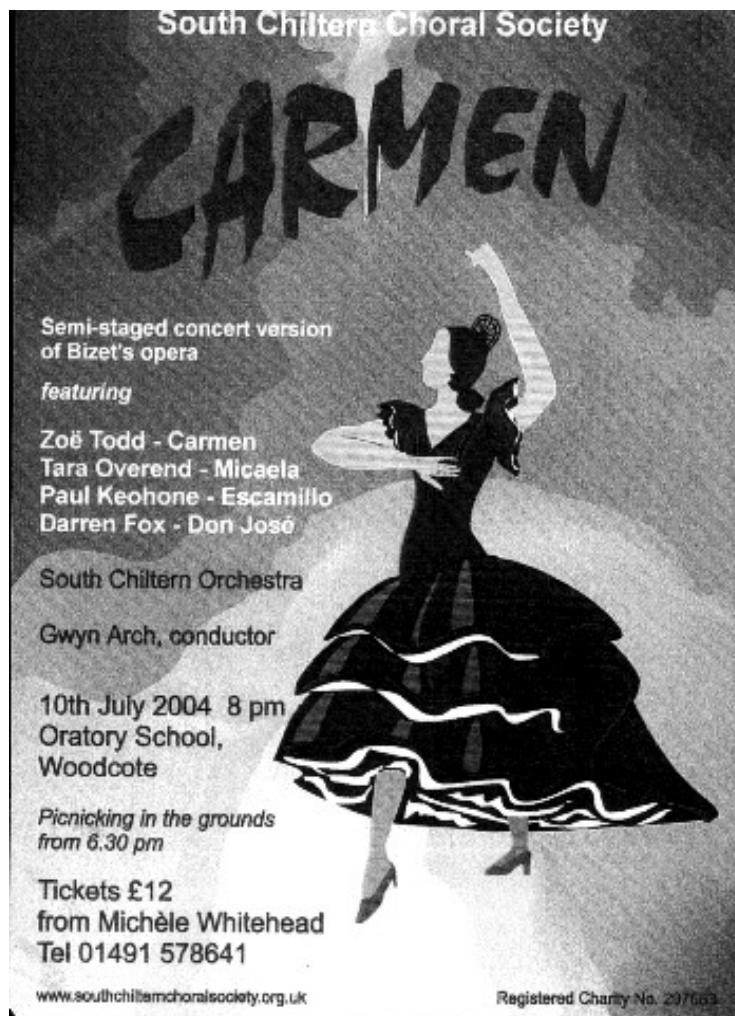
Obviously this is more than just a concern for the club itself, with Whitchurch residents also keen to ensure that the tradition of playing cricket is maintained. We are seeking opportunities to come together with other local sporting facilities (such as AFC Whitchurch), we are working with the adjacent primary school and their governors to look at sensible use of shared facilities, and also we are involving the Whitchurch Parish Council.

We would welcome support from all residents of South Oxfordshire who would wish to see the continuation of cricket for Whitchurch – surely after 127 years it is a tradition we can't consider losing now!

For further details of how you can help please contact:-

Nigel Cabeldu
Hon Secretary Whitchurch CC
6 Hillside
Hardwick Road
Whitchurch on Thames
RG8 7HL
T 01189 844171

All support,donations and advice appreciated



.....oOo.....

Checkendon School Fete – 3rd July 2004 2pm – 4.30pm

Come and join us for a fun filled afternoon on Checkendon Recreation Ground where there will be many stalls including: -

Hook a duck, tombola, toy stall, beat the goalie, tug of war, cakes and teas, lucky dip and much much more.

Please come along and give your much appreciated support to our school.

Woodcote Adult & Community Learning

FIRST AID SATURDAY - 12TH JUNE 2004

The British Red Cross are running a First Aid Course from 9am - 4pm at Checkendon Village Hall.

It will cover Basic First Aid Module 7. Most suitable for people to retake outdated qualifications but newcomers welcome as well.

Price: £58 or £29 for concessions.

To book your place please contact Liz Clark at Woodcote Adult & Community Learning on 01491 681359

Liz Clark Centre Administrator

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

Nina Hollier is going to be reading stories for pre-school children for about twenty minutes in the library on two afternoons in June. She will be ready to start at 2.45pm on Tuesday June 15th and on Tuesday 29th. Mums can bring in their young ones before picking up school children, and enjoy the stories. Do come along.

June also brings exams and we can offer a quiet studying area - though it is worth ringing the library in advance to make sure there is space, as sometimes there are Langtree school classes in the library.

Holidays are also in the air. A long journey can be made more enjoyable with story tapes for adults or children, now issued for three weeks. We can get guide books for most areas of the globe and information via our free internet access, and there is of course a wide range of holiday reading or books to enjoy as you laze in the garden.

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

Adult Learners Week is celebrated May 17th to 22nd, when there will be information on local courses. May 21st is Silver Surfers' Day, so please feel free to come in and use our computers, with a little help from us if you'd like, on that morning, from 10am to noon.

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service South Area

My name is Peter Cleary and I am the Fire Risk Manager for the South area based at Didcot Fire Station. I have the overall responsibility for the Community safety initiatives and the performance of seven Fire Stations, which are located in Didcot, Thame, Wallingford, Watlington, Wheatley, Goring and Henley.

The South area Annual partnerships within our initiatives which we will communities a safer place and work in:-



plan this year will build on existing area and include the following strive to achieve to make our to live

- Ø The reduction of accidental dwelling fires by using Home Fire Risk assessments and the fitting of smoke alarms in domestic properties.
- Ø The reduction of vehicle fires by reducing the amount of abandoned vehicles on our streets using hazard spotting and reporting mechanisms.
- Ø The reduction of Arson incidents in specific target areas.
- Ø Raise the awareness of the impact of Road Traffic accidents.
- Ø Increase the awareness of fire to our Thatched property owners in our area which will aim to reduce the impact on our culture and heritage.
- Ø Provide Community safety awareness to our Key Stage 1 children within our towns and villages.



If you would like any further information on any of our area initiatives, please contact our Community Safety line on 01235 213028

or E - Mail me direct on peter.cleary@oxfordshire.gov.uk

LANGTREE NEWS

It has been another busy and eventful half-term at Langtree. On the first day of term teaching began for the first time in our wonderful new purpose-built Maths Building. Appropriately enough, this coincided with the arrival of Helen Hancock, our new Head of Maths. At the same time we were able to re-open the tennis courts after resurfacing work.

In the week immediately prior to half-term a party of over 50 Y10 students enjoyed a week's skiing and snowboarding in Switzerland with four teachers, Mike Markham, Karen Bridges, Mark Vitty and Sarah Darkins. There have also been visits to two History plays, "Doomed Youth" for Y9 and "Hitler on Trial" for Y11. On 28th January 50 Y8 students attended a special educational preview of the film, "School of Rock".

In sport our excellent achievements continue apace. Y9 students Alex Fletcher and Taz Mottram have been selected to represent the County in Cross Country as a result of excellent performances in the County Championships. The U15 boys football team has reached the quarter-final of the County Cup with Joe Prior scoring 4 goals in two matches.

On 21st January Keith Bartley, the Oxfordshire Director for Learning and Culture, paid us a visit and toured the school. Unfortunately, a planned visit by local MP Boris Johnson had to be postponed due to the bad weather.

We have had some good news from the Department for Education and Skills. An analysis of our GCSE and SATs results shows that we are among the top 25% in terms of adding value. This means that students at Langtree achieve results above the average for students of similar ability.

Recently, we sent out a questionnaire to all parents similar to the one sent out by the Ofsted Inspectors in 2000. The responses were very encouraging both in terms of the number of people who took part and in the positive image parents have of the school. 89% said their children like school; 93% feel their children are making good progress; 89% think behaviour in school is good; and 89% think the teaching is good.

Finally, our bid for Specialist Status in the Performing Arts is gathering momentum. We will be writing the bid shortly after half-term. Meanwhile we are busy fundraising. We have a very active parents association who are organising a range of events. Recently they held a successful Jumble Sale and their next major venture will be a Sponsored Swim at the Oratory School on 1st April. This will be part of a major fundraising day in school which will include a music marathon. The parents' association is also organising an "Auction of Promises" and a "Variety Show" in the summer term.

So far, we have raised £8000 so we still have a long way to go. We are allowed to receive donations from individuals and sponsorship from businesses. We also welcome offers of help with fundraising. The carrot is that if we can raise £50,000 the government will fund us to the tune of an additional £350,000 over the next few years.

I wonder if you can help me. I am currently seeking promises that we may auction at our proposed "AUCTION OF PROMISES" to be held in July this year. The event is fund-raising towards our bid for Performing Arts Specialist Status. What we really need are a couple of

holiday homes that owners are willing to let, free of charge, for a holiday for 2/4. We can then auction these to raise, hopefully, larger amounts of money towards this aim. Can anyone help, or put me in contact with someone I could approach directly? I look forward, in anticipation of hearing from you.

Jane Stephens Headteacher's PA

Rotary Club of Pangbourne

COME ALONG --GET IN THE PICTURE!

ANNUAL PAINTINGS EXHIBITION

Saturday and Sunday, June 5 and June 6--Pangbourne Village Hall

It is expected some 400 paintings by about 100 local artists will be exhibited at Pangbourne Village Hall, on Saturday and Sunday, June 5 and June 6, 2004. This will be the seventh year the Rotary Club of Pangbourne have organised this very successful Paintings Exhibition.

Last year over £2,600 was raised and distributed to mainly local charities. This year the main charities to benefit will be The Living Paintings Trust, the Society for Deaf Children plus various local good causes.

So please do come along and support local artists.

The exhibition will be open to the public on Saturday from 10 am until 6 pm and Sunday from 10 am until 4pm. Admission is only £1.

This is your opportunity to see probably the largest display of the work of local artists and maybe to purchase a picture. Prices start from about £15. Artists are mainly from within a radius of 15 miles of Pangbourne, including Reading, Newbury, Mortimer, Henley, Pangbourne, Basildon, Tilehurst, Whitchurch, Goring and other local areas.

Last year there was considerable interest in the exhibits, about 500 visitors coming along to view the work of the artists. As a result over 80 paintings were purchased.

For further information contact Cliff Meredith on 0118 984 3721

Pangbourne Choral Society: 30th Anniversary Season Climax

Pangbourne Choral Society will be concluding their 30th Anniversary Season at 7:30pm on Saturday May 22nd with their summer concert which will include a performance of **Rossini's *Petite Messe Solonnelle*** in the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College.

Tickets (£8 adults, £2 U-18s) are available from Premier Pet Store Pangbourne, or (with cheque to 'PCS' and SAE) by post from PCS Tickets, 13 Shooters Hill, Pangbourne, RG8 7DZ.

Further information from www.pangbournechoralsociety.fsnet.co.uk or pcs@musician.org

RED CROSS COLLECTION

The recent Red Cross collection in Whitchurch realised £401. Thank you to all contributors and to the team of collectors.

Betty Hartley

NSPCC BRIDGE TOURNAMENT

The recent NSPCC bridge tournament made £450. Many thanks to all who played and contributed and thanks to Bozedown Vineyard and Bozedown Alpacas for donating prizes.

Jane MacCaw

LIFEBOAT WEEK 2004

The Pangbourne & District branch of the RNLI held its Lifeboat fundraising week this year from 28 March to 3 April.

The District covers Pangbourne, Goring, Streatley, Bucklebury, Chapel Row, Ashampstead, Frilsham, Yattendon, Aldworth, Woodcote, Whitchurch, Whitchurch Hill, Beenham, and Theale. We are very grateful to all the collectors in those villages whose efforts contributed to an excellent result, raising £4,481 towards the cost of maintaining a life saving service around our coastline.



Roger Swainston – Box Sec.

Rotary Club of Pangbourne

A brief summary of what do we do?

At the recent Senior Citizens' annual party, organised by the Rotary Club of Pangbourne, a guest commented that she thought the purpose of Rotary was to 'raise money'. Well, yes we do. But we also get involved in many other things, in particular in supporting the local community around Pangbourne and district.

We support the community. These are some of the local community events in which we have been involved: Senior Citizens' Annual Party in Pangbourne for nearly 100; Kids Out Day when handicapped children have been taken to Thorpe Park or Legoland for a day; Rotarians assist with conducting Mock Interviews at local schools; Youth Speaks public speaking contests held annually between local schools; Transport for the Annual Christmas Carol Service at the Falklands Chapel; Vocational Training Schools for able-bodied and handicapped local participants and last year we sponsored a local handicapped youth for a week on a Jubilee Sailing Club course to go around the Canaries on a sailing ship.

We do raise money. The money we raise is targeted towards supporting many local worthy causes with funding. The Rotary Club of Pangbourne has four main annual fundraising events—a Golf Day; a Dragonboat Racing at the Fete; Bowlathon; and a Summer Paintings Exhibition in the village hall. I have no doubt that there are those of you reading this who will have attended some of the events and will have contributed to their success.

Funds raised are for mainly local charities. Some of the beneficiaries have been Brookfield Special School, Tilehurst; Purley Park Trust for Adults with Learning Disabilities; Breast Cancer Awareness; Berkshire Hospital Cardiac Unit; Naomi House Children's Hospice; Sue Ryder; John Simmonds Trust summer camp for children; Berks Community Fund; the Dolphin Centre; the recent Iran earthquake appeal, and many more.

Rotary is in an international service organisation with clubs all over the world and in 163 countries, with hundreds of thousands of active members

Rotary has been the main supporter of the eradication of Polio worldwide, having contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to this cause; setting up eye camps for cataract removal, providing wells and other basic needs in third world countries. The list of international aid is endless. The Rotary Club of Pangbourne also contributes some funds annually to international causes.

The Club meets weekly on a Monday at The George Hotel, The Square, Pangbourne. If anyone would like to know about Rotary in general or your local Club, please contact Cliff Meredith on 0118 9843721.

Cliff Meredith

Goring Heath Parish Charity

Another Spring Gardening Show has come & gone and strange to say, that although there were less entrants, the number of entries in each section was higher. So well done to our worthy winners. Overall winner of the Cup & Gardening voucher & a long way ahead of the rest on points was -:

1st Jim Cairns. 2nd Liz Gibson. Joint 3rd Julie Whatmore & Sally Bergman.

The Photographic Cup was won by Kate Giles, with 2nd Liz Gibson, (that's an on going battle between those two). The Baking Cup went, of course, to Jim Cairns with Pat Turner 2nd. The Children's section produced some really clever entries, with 1st Amy Holland & 2nd Shane Cairns but, as in all the sections, more competition is needed!

The next Gardening Show will be held on Saturday August 28th 04 in Goring Parish Hall and is open to *all* residents of Whitchurch and Goring Heath. We hope to see you there.

WHITCHURCH HILL CAMERA CLUB

Our meetings in June commence on the 2nd when we have a presentation called "Near and Far with two Cameras" given by Graham and Lesley Laughton CPAGB from Croxley Green.

Two weeks later, on the 16th June, we have "An Evening with David Probert", one of our own Club members who will share his photographic skills with fellow Club members.

The following week features an evening of the very best photography from our successful Club members who share "The Winners Enclosure." All the best prints and slides from all of our Competitions this season will be shown again providing an opportunity to learn a little of how and why the shots were taken.

The last meeting of the current season will take place on Wednesday, 30th June when members of our new Digital Group will be showing a series of sequences using laptop and digital projector. The evening will close with a Presentation Ceremony when the club trophies will be handed to the winners of this season's competitions by our special guest, Ian Bateman ARPS from the Wantage Camera Club.

Our Programme for next season has already been prepared and our first meeting will take place on September 15th.

We meet every Wednesday evening from mid-September to the end of June at the Village Hall, Whitchurch-on-Thames starting at 8pm.

If you enjoy taking photographs or just like looking at pictures, come along and see us.

Further information and a copy of our full Programme for next season is now available on our website: www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.co.uk or from Alan Copeland on (01491) 681471. Copies will also be available at Woodcote Library.

Pangboure and District Tennis Club

The Open Tournament was held on a bright sunny afternoon (luckily!), and when the results were counted up, Rob Allen and Sandra Pike were the winners of the two sections.

Since then matches have started, and also the junior coaching programme. There will be a tournament for junior players in July, for both members and non members to join in and practise their skills.

Look out for us at Pangbourne Fete on 12 June. We have a Raffle with a sporty theme and a star prize, and we also sell used tennis balls at greatly reduced prices.

We have a combined social event with the Bowls Club booked for 2 July, when we shall have the opportunity to try out each others' sports, and finish with a barbecue supper.

Family membership will be offered again for the summer holidays as from 23 July. Please contact Brian (9845650) for application details or for any other information regarding membership.

The courts are available for public hire when not used by the club at £4 per hour. Please look at the noticeboard on the singles court for details.

We can offer two club sessions per week, match play, and also for the first time this year, adult drills (Drill till You Drop) on Tuesday evenings in June. Contact Lesley (9842581) for dates. Alternatively, look on our website to find out more. www.pangbournetennis.org

Lesley Crimp

Whitchurch Hill Fete

SATURDAY 29th MAY

STEEL BAND JUGGLER BOTTLE STALL
BEER TENT RAFFLE FERRET RACING
CHILDREN'S GAMES TEA TENT
STALLS GALORE BARBECUE

2pm

Whitchurch Hill Recreation Ground

SOME EXTRACTS FROM:

WHITCHURCH BULLETIN
Vol. 1. No. 1. October 1965.

Published by Whitchurch Parish Council on Alternate Months.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Byways,
Hardwick Road, Whitchurch.

We hope that you will read this Bulletin with interest.

Its intention is to keep you informed of what your Parish Council is doing by giving a clear account of important matters that may be discussed at our meetings. It is also to remind you that the Council Meetings can be attended by any elector and, frankly, we would like to see more electors at our meetings.

We would like this Bulletin also to become a vehicle for the dissemination of news of interest to all residents and we invite all organisations to send us details of any events or meetings they would like to appear. Would you kindly send such information to Councillor D. H. J. Holmes at The Haven, Eastfield Lane.

Our thanks for this Bulletin are due to Councillor Holmes who has taken on the job of Press Officer of the Council and who has brought to its production a very great deal of enthusiastic interest.

H. C. SYKES,

Work had now commenced on the new primary school, but it was agreed to ask for a progress report from the education authority to ascertain if the school would be ready for the autumn term 1966. If it could not be completed on time, the council were to ask if extra accommodation would be provided at Woodcote Primary School.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN will be published in July 2004.

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**
sarah@pongo.freemove.co.uk **or on disc.**

Formats can be Word (.doc) or text (.txt or .rtf) or PagePlus (.ppp), or Acrobat(pdf).

Other formats by arrangement

Alternatively you can send hard copy to the Editor:

Sarah Butterworth, The Little House, High Street, Whitchurch on Thames, Reading,
Berkshire RG8 7EX (0118 984 2922)

no later than Wednesday 7th JULY 2004 .