

The Bulletin of Whitchurch on Thames

Whitchurchonthames.com

July 2014

At long last the new bridge really does seem as if it is going to happen. Whoever it was who took on the job of renovating the lattice girders has made a great job of it.

Many people have Bridge Cards with some tens of crossings available and there may be an inclination to treat them as free crossings. However we know that the actual cost of the bridge bears little relationship to early estimates. We also know that toll charges are to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the Bridge Company. Currently there is a legal cap on the fee for cars at 40p,. The outcome of that meeting is of course unknown at the moment but the probabilities are clear enough. So my suggestion is that you treat the crossings that are sitting on your Bridge Card as worth whatever you guess the cost of replacing them will be.

In the meantime there is warmth and sunshine at last. Everything seems to be growing furiously. A soggy winter may have slowed the start but the mix now of warmth and moisture seems to be working wonders. Even our much loved but failing Judas tree has suddenly found a new lease of life.

Where planning matters are concerned every application which comes before the Parish Council presents a different set of questions for us to consider. Two items have appeared recently which illustrate the sort of thing which comes up.

For the PC the easiest one is the request for 1, Swanson Cottages. The cottage itself is said to date back to Henry V111 . Al least most of it

may do. The windows are either Victorian or early 20th century. But the “cruck” (a section of tree chosen so that its shape could be the main support member of the building) is still visible in the kitchen and the walls and roof are known to be original.

Personally, my problem with any application of this sort is that in my opinion the very best way to preserve any building is to have someone living it who enjoys living in it because of what it actually is. The difficulty is that for this to work at its best the accommodation has to be acceptable in terms of 21st century ideas.

The building is listed and SODC officers with much better access to information than we can hope for will automatically examine it. As we felt that we had no information they would not have we agreed to report to SODC “no strong views”

The other application is for Paddock Lodge which if you look closely enough is exactly what it was built to be. For example, although it is filled in there is an arch in the brickwork that suggest a door big enough to take a carriage and a high window looks as if it once had the winch needed to get hay bales into the loft. Over the years people have added this and changed that in a very random fashion. The new owners want to pull the whole thing together.

The boundaries of property in that area can be very difficult to determine. Agreement about boundaries with neighbours is therefore essential and the question of intrusion into neighbouring property has to be checked.

So far as we (the Parish Council) could ascertain the proposals are acceptable to neighbours. There was a question of whether the increased height of the kitchen roof would take light from adjoining premises but a check of the plans indicated that this would not be the case.

The Parish Council therefore concluded that the application represented a proposal by people who had thought carefully about the building they wished to be their long term home.

Now I need to get on my high horse about the Village Green. We are getting reports from Eastfield Lane residents about the amount of litter left on the Green, especially at the northern end. Most people respond with “what litter?” because the good people of Eastfield Lane regularly clear it up.

So do enjoy our Village Green. That is what your Parish Council and our SODC member battled so long for. Provision of a new litter bin is being negotiated but in the meantime PLEASE take your litter home.

By the time you read this the SmartWater campaign will be under way. The idea is very like the use of microchips to identify pets. SmartWater comes in a small bottle which can be used to mark about 50 items. The mark is almost invisible, very difficult to remove and carries a dust which has been coded. One code number is allocated to one bottle exclusively and any police station in the country can read that number.

It is not just a deterrent in itself. If we can get 80% of our households to join in the Thames valley police will pay for roadside notices at the three entrances to the Village and arrange planning permission with OCC Highways. Anyone entering the Village with nefarious intent won't know which houses have marked items and which items in a house, shed, garden or garage are marked. The police say that it works: such people go somewhere else.

You can even mark your smartphone or laptop so that if you leave it on the train and it is handed in to the police it will quickly get back to you.

Normally the price of a bottle is £70. However our local policeman Mark Bell will be touring the Village and he can provide a bottle for £10 because the Thames Valley Police see the subsidy as a very good investment.

At the recent Parish Council meeting the unanimous reaction was “When can I get some?”

At the time of writing the start date for the project was undecided. There will be more information on our web site.

Now to turn to the project to fund a new pavilion on the Village Green. The strategy has to be based on the fact that grants are available but for them to be made available it is necessary to show that half the total cost can be raised locally. This means we have a minimum target on the region of £75K. for a build cost of £150K. Anyone who can help should contact Harvey whose details are inside the front cover of this Bulletin.

Finally, don't forget to put the date of our Village Fete into your diary.

Harry Butterworth

SUMMER EVENING WALK

Thank you to all those who turned out for what proved to be a very enjoyable summer evening walk. The weather was perfect, the distant views excellent and The Sun hospitable.

I hope to take you on a walk to and through Hardwick in October and will use the route that I held in reserve for our wet Spring walk. We will cross the boundary of the two estates at the east gates before turning up to Westfordhill Copse to enter Bottom Wood and start our return.

For the poster I will use a copy of a 1793 painting which depicts a lone walker on an approach path to Hardwick at a higher level than our route along Hardwick Road.

Eric



Whitchurch on Thames

Village Fete

Saturday 30th August 2-5pm
Village Green Eastfield Lane

Kids Go-karting
and entertainment

Tea and beer tents

Dog Show

Live Music and BBQ

Plus fantastic selection of stalls
and many more attractions!

GRAND PRIZE DRAW

Apple mini iPad . 1 night stay at Hotel du Vin . £100 John Lewis Vouchers
And many more!

PAWS Meetings

July **Anaerobic Digester Visit** Benson, Oxfordshire
Friday 18th July (details TBC)

August Holiday **Whitchurch Fete** -30 Aug

September **Iain Tollhurst Organic Farming Talk**
Old Stables
Thursday, 25 Sept, 8- 9:30pm

Barn Dance - Hardwick Vegetable Packing Shed -
Saturday 27th September

October **Apple Juicing Day**
Sunday, 19th October Whitchurch Maze
Quiz Night – Saturday 18th October,
Pangbourne Village Hall

Pangbourne District Carers Support Group

If you look after someone who can't manage without your help, join this friendly group to enjoy a break and meet other people in a similar situation. The group, run by Berkshire Carers Service, is free and for unpaid carers who live in Berkshire

The group meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month between 12:30 – 2:00pm at the Pangbourne Small Village Hall, Station Road, Pangbourne, RG8 7DY

The next meetings are 3 September, 1 October, 5 November, 3 December

Call Berkshire Carers Service free on 0800 988 5462 or email helpline@berkshirecarers.org for further information

Advice, information and support on all aspects of caring can be obtained via the above contact details or through our website www.berkshirecarers.org



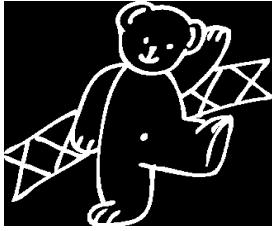
Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group and Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group

We had a fine day for the **Haymeadow and Wild Flower Walk** on Sunday 6th July. We set out from the gateway, on Sheepwash Lane, across the 40-acre field which forms part of the Hardwick Estate. Those who joined in - forsaking the Wimbledon men's final - included regulars and some first timers. There was a wonderful variety of plants in that one meadow as well as butterflies, damselflies, lapwings and a flock of flycatchers. Identifying plant species and noting the subtle differences between varieties of a single species was guided by Martin Parham and James Norman, as we walked, and by Sandra Parkinson, with her usefully labelled display of plants and more reference books, when we returned to the gate.

The varied ecology and plant habitats include marshy areas of reeds and sedge, riverbank with balsam, great willowherb, lots of meadowsweet - there and in the marshier bits - and sinister stands of hemlock (which is regrettably similar in appearance to angelica and other parsley-like umbelliferous plants. You may recall the poet Keats longed to drink its juice so he could go the way of his lamented dead brother. It was the way Socrates did go. The drier areas were studded with numerous flowering species, some of them harder to reliably identify because they have grown so tall this year. James pointed out where, to his annoyance, grass cuttings had been dumped and explained how quickly this apparently harmless act can alter the ecology. A new arrival we spotted as we returned was the marsh valerian, with hollow greyish-green fleshy stems and clusters of white flowers which reminded me of snowflakes.

Many thanks to Sally Woolhouse who provided refreshments and for Vera Parham for her generous supply of home-made cakes. Thanks especially to James for inviting us. It is his traditional management practice of cutting only after the flowers have had a chance to set their seed which has supported the evolution of a wonderful population of wildflower species over many years. Thanks also to his daughter, Juno, for helping us identify what we found and adding to our enjoyment of this beautiful site.

Gill Goodwin



WHITCHURCH PRE SCHOOL

A great start for your child.

Whitchurch on Thames Pre-School

Our aims are to provide children with a happy, safe & stimulating environment in which they feel included, secure and valued, whilst “Learning Through Play”.

- * OFSTED Rating ‘Outstanding’**
- * start from 2yrs 6mths**
- * idyllic village location with links to
Whitchurch Primary School**
- * New LONGER OPENING HOURS from
September,
8.45am to 3.15pm Monday to Thursday
8.45am to 12.15pm Friday**

For further information please contact Kathleen or Shenel on 0118 984 4516 or check out our website at www.whitchurchpreschool.org
Whitchurch on Thames Pre-School Group, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch on Thames, Oxfordshire RG8 7EJ

Whitchurch Theatre Club visits Paris

On Friday, 30th May, 24 members of the Whitchurch Theatre Club boarded a coach in Pangbourne to take them to St Pancras. From there they caught Eurostar to Paris. We were met on board the train by our guide Andy from Riviera Travel. Upon arrival in Paris he took us by coach to our hotel, Hotel Ibis Bercy in Bercy Village, an area about three stops south east on the Metro from Notre Dame.

That evening we went out to dine in the nearby Bercy Village, where there was a large choice of restaurants in this busy market area. Bercy Village was once 19th Century wine warehouses that have been converted into shops and restaurants.

The next morning, we boarded a coach to be taken on a guided tour of the City. We saw the usual sights of Paris which included Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tour, Place de la Concorde, L' Arc de Triomphe, L'Élysée Palace etc.

Then a drive to Versailles. Some just had lunch in the village of Versailles, whilst others visited the Chateau and its gardens. The weather was fine and sunny. That evening, after dinner, there was a coach tour to view Paris by night.

On Sunday morning we visited the artists area around Montmatre and the Sacré Cœur. Behind this cathedral we discovered Église St Pierre de Montmatre with its vibrant and colourful stained glass windows. Afterwards there was a trip on a Bateaux Mouches down the River Seine and then we were left to our own devices. Some ventured on the local buses and others took the Metro. One group visited L'Orangerie in the Jardin des Tuileries to see Monet's Water Lilies, whilst others visited the Petit Palace Museum, off the Champs Élysées. A few caught the bus down towards Notre Dame and others visited the Louvre. Again the weather was fine and sunny.

That evening, eleven of our members went to Paradis Latin for a 'Dîner Spectacle' for a cabaret and dinner at the theatre. The theatre was built by Gustave Eiffel in 1889.

Monday morning arrived and we were on our way home. When we reached Gare du Nord we discovered that there had been a bomb scare and the station had earlier been evacuated. So our train was running late and the departure area for Eurostar was packed. Some time after the train left the station we were informed by the guard on the train that half the party had been left behind. The gates had been closed and they had not been allowed to board. Other members only just caught the train and had had to leap on as it left the station.

Our guide had also been left behind. But we arrived at St Pancras and they joined us on the next train. We were met by the Stewarts coach, which took us back to Pangbourne.

So apart from this somewhat chaotic departure from Paris it was a very enjoyable weekend. With special thanks to our Riviera Guide, Andy, who did an excellent job.

Chris Martin

COME FOR COFFEE AND CAKE

Where Whitchurch Village Hall

When Friday 26th September 10am

Why So people facing cancer can have the support they need to feel more in control of their life, from the moment they're diagnosed, through treatment and afterwards

Come and join us - everyone is welcome

For more information please contact Mel Taylor

0118 9841354

mellyctaylor@hotmail.co.uk

The Whitchurch Hill Village Fete

Another successful year for the Whitchurch Hill Fete – despite an early morning downpour, and a nagging worry that the Toll Bridge closure might deter some of our regular visitors from ‘across the river’.

‘Is it still on?’ was a question that the Organising Team fielded more than once as the morning’s rain lashed the Recreation Ground – but as if by magic, it stopped, a bit of sunshine appeared, and the crowds rolled in. And not just people – the Fun Dog Show brought in a record number of canine competitors. Indeed as one visitor observed “I haven’t seen as many dogs in one place since I watched ‘101 Dalmatians!’” The general feedback from the day was very positive, with the various stalls and refreshment tents running at full pelt all afternoon. Not surprisingly visitor numbers were slightly down on last year, when we enjoyed a day of blazing sunshine - and an open Toll Bridge! - but all in all, the event was extremely well supported, and the organisers are very grateful to all who took part - the visitors, the stall holders, our service providers, and everyone who helped with the running.

The regular stalwarts were well to the fore. The Bottle Stall was as popular as ever, and a big ‘thank you!’ to all who donate ‘a bottle or two’ year after year – your generosity makes a huge contribution to the success of the Fete. The BBQ team worked flat out to feed the multitude, the WI Tea Tent provided alluring cakes and refreshments, while the Community stalls offered a range of attractions. And the Beer Tent, ably operated this year by the new management of The Sun, drew the crowds with some fine local ales!

The Raffle generated a record level of receipts – our thanks to all who bought tickets, and to the team who put a huge amount of work into making it our best ever Raffle. Several people commented on the terrific range of prizes on offer this year, and we are grateful to the local businesses who very kindly donated these – The Highwayman, Nino’s, The Ferryboat, The Cross Keys, The Sun, The Woody Nook, Kimberley’s, Lina Tandoori, Grey’s Cheese Company, and Woodcote Garden Centre, as well as several individual donations.

The Fete is always well attended, so clearly it’s seen as a popular community event. But it does take a certain amount of organising, and this goes on quietly, year after year, in the background. It’s probably also worth noting that, as they say, ‘it doesn’t come free!’ – a significant level of up-front cost goes towards paying for many of the performers, plus of course essentials such as Red Cross cover and insurance. So your support is very much appreciated, and again, we thank you all for helping to make the 2014 Fete such a great day for the village.

The Organising Team.

News from Basildon Park

It's summertime and Basildon Park is looking at its most beautiful. We've enjoyed the sight of Lady Iliffe's rose garden in full bloom for the past month – from the lightest sugary pinks to the deepest fuchsias.

It's nearly time to put those school uniforms to the back of the wardrobe for six weeks so we're getting ready for a summer of adventure with '50 things to do before you're 11¾.' Go on a Friday wildlife walk and see how many pretty flowers, singing birds and terrific trees you can spot or have a go at building your own secret den in the parkland on a Wednesday. We've still got our brilliant Ball Run too – see how many stickers you can collect in your Ball Run journal before the end of the summer holidays.

Basildon Park is the perfect place for a summer picnic. We have benches dotted around the gardens for you to sit back, relax and take in the views of rolling green hills, or bring a colourful rug, spread yourself out on the front lawn and admire the Iliffe's golden home. If it gets too warm, wander into the tea room and pick up an ice cream to cool you down.

Looking for a new challenge?

Our volunteer team is vital to our work and we are on the look-out for new recruits to help us share Basildon's story with our visitors. We have a role for everyone; from driving our special Basildon buggy, bringing the house to life through room guiding, or pulling on your wellies and helping in the garden.

Our next volunteer open day is on Tuesday 5th August – come along and chat to our team about all the volunteering opportunities we have at Basildon Park.

If you can't make it, we'd still love to hear from you. Drop an email to volunteer.basildonpark@nationaltrust.org.uk or call us on 01491 672382.

News from Woodcote Library

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the Great British Summer will have arrived and be well underway!

From barbequing to beach combing, mysteries to music and thrillers to travel books – we have just the book for you.

If your child hasn't already registered for the hugely popular Mythical Maze Summer Reading Challenge – it's not too late. Signing up to the challenge is free.

The scheme runs through to 13th September 2014, so there is still time to let the mythical creatures guide you through the maze by reading up to six books and also to collect some great prizes and certificates.

We are planning on having a special presentation ceremony here in the Library in September for those children that successfully complete the Challenge.

Following the success of the previous one, there is another chance for you to take part in one of our free children's 'creativity sessions' on Thursday 7th August from 10.30am. Places are limited so please get your ticket at the counter.

Looking forward to September, we now have the information booklets both for local Adult Learning courses and for Part-Time courses at Oxford University. These are free to collect from our local information desk.

The next adult book club meeting is on Monday 18th August at the usual time of 6pm.

New members are most welcome.

Win a weekend in Paris for 2, with 39 other excellent prizes also available

Pangbourne Twinning Association would like to invite you to take part in our

Fun Quiz and Treasure Hunt.

The Quiz, which runs from 1st to 20th September, consists of 60 clues, the answers to all of which are within ½ mile of the centre of Pangbourne, accessible on foot, mostly on the flat and all visible from public roads and rights of way. **The ‘Treasure’ is the top prize, a weekend for 2 in Paris courtesy of Triangle Travel, Strutt & Parker and Eurostar, as well as 39 other excellent prizes.** There are easy, medium and hard clues, with prizes at all levels. The prize-winners will be announced at 6.00 pm on Sunday 21st September at the Prize-giving to be held at the Lamborghini Pangbourne Showroom, at which all entrants and their families are welcome. Refreshments will be available, in return for a small contribution.

The sheet that has on it the clues, the conditions and a full list of the prizes will be available from 1st September from Garlands Organic Shop, Pangbourne, RG8 7LY, or downloadable at www.pangbournetwinning.com. The entry fee is only £5, **so I do hope that you will feel able to take part in what is primarily intended to be a bit of fun.**

Nigel Suffield-Jones

PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT

VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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Activities

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Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30 – 11.30am

Please keep our number safe – you might need our help

Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society

After a relaxing August we start our Autumn lecture programme with an unmissable meeting on Thursday 18th September.

Stephen Barker, Centenary Projects Manager at the newly-opened Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, will talk about the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at the Battle of Mons in August 1914.

It was the first major action of the British Expeditionary Forces, fought on the frontier of France and Belgium, and managed to delay but not stop the German advance into France.

The lecture starts at 8pm, with coffee served from 7.30pm, and is held at Goring Heath Parish Hall. Visitors are welcome, £2 to include coffee.

DIARY DATES

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

AUGUST

Saturday 2nd Maze working party

Saturday 30th VILLAGE FETE

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 6th Maze Working party

Thursday 18th History Society - Goring VH

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in September 2014

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

Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com by 8th September 2014

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