

# **The Bulletin of Whitchurch on Thames**

**whitchurchonthames.com**

**November 2013**

November is here, the temperature is falling, the nights are closing in and we are getting used to walking to Pangbourne.

## **The Bridge:**

I believe one of our historic Generals once commented that meticulous plans must be prepared beforehand but as soon as the battle starts you must be prepared to tear them up. When Geoff Weir addressed the Parish Council meeting on the 4th he accepted that they had hit unexpected problems, some of which were unforeseen because the original plans were destroyed in bomb attacks on Reading by Adolf's lads in the early '40s. He declared that with the contingencies allowed for in the project plan and additional resources which are available there was no reason to believe that the original re-opening date would not be met.

He also pointed out that all information released by the Bridge Company was available to everyone.

.There is of course still the one question none of us can answer. Every winter in recent years has been totally different from any other. The only credible assumption about the coming winter is that it will be different again. Time alone will tell!

In the meantime the Village seems to have slipped into the new "bridge-less" regime with remarkably few real problems. Businesses on both sides of the bridge initially reported loss of trade, but I am told that most have recovered and that some, such as Pangbourne coffee shops, have reported an increase. A casualty was the Tuesday afternoon surgery in the Village hall which turned out to be too difficult to run properly and had to be abandoned.

## **Parking considerations**

Daytime parking in the Village is, as had been expected, increasing slowly. The increase is expected to stop eventually as cars have to be parked further away and walking distances become unacceptable. The evidence I have suggests that turning arrangements at the Toll Booth work as intended *It is simply a question of general courtesy and good manners.* In the late evening a couple of cars left while pre-ordered take-aways are collected don't obstruct anyone else. More than that and turning becomes a problem and I hope that people will respond appropriately.

Sadly it does seem that a few people are taking undue advantage. We are getting complaints of cars being parked along the High Street in a way that makes access to driveways difficult. This is obstruction, therefore it is an offence and we are considering how such things should be reported to the police

## **We can stay all day?**

There is also evidence of cars being left in the High Street for extended periods. Nevertheless parking space is very limited and although that is technically acceptable it also means that one long-stayer deprives a lot of short stay visitors the opportunity to use that space. We have contingency plans for this but they spoil it for everyone.

## **Streatley High Street**

One thing that everyone has appreciated and has made a major impact is the parking restriction on Streatley High Street. I am sure we all understand that this is achieved at significant inconvenience to people living on that Street, but there can be no question that it has also made an important difference to the lives of thousands of others.

The agreement which keeps that road clear from 7 a.m. To 7 p.m. was achieved after a sustained effort by Lee Turner ( Principal Traffic Technician, Oxfordshire County Council Highways) and his opposite number in West Berks CC . Past and present County Councillors from both side of the River also spent much time and energy in support.

## **The Apple Day**

But to move to happier matters. The Apple Day was a huge success. About fifty of the intrepid Burgers of Whitchurch turned out in pouring rain to celebrate Apple Day and the re-opening of the Maze. It certainly went with a bang! Our County Councillor Kevin Bulmer sheltered under his Trilby while he valiantly declared the Maze with its new bricks duly open. There were literally heaps of apples. Oddly enough I think the rain actually helped. Instead of dispersing over the whole area people collected in clusters under any available shelter. It was a very sociable gathering.

The event is reported in more detail on the web site and a picture of the Nine Muzzle Loading Musketeers in action also appeared in the Henley Standard.

## **The Village Green**

Surely it is an essential part of English Heritage that on a balmy summer afternoon there should be cricket on any Village's Green. Now the cricket season is over the goal posts on the football pitch are getting some exercise. When not in use by organised groups, small groups of youngsters and even families with very young children can often be seen enjoying kicking a ball about.

## **Help to keep the Council Tax down!**

The Village Green belongs to us as a community. There is some income from users but inevitably there is a cost to the Parish and that cost re-appears as part of Council tax. The newly planted trees and the new seats were all donated but all the general upkeep including grass cutting is on going. Keeping costs to a minimum depends on everyone doing their bit. Please make sure you leave everything as you find it. Or better than you found it if you can. There are always a few bits of litter to be removed. And if you must ride a bike please keep close to the edges of the field. Dogs love the open space and if you take your dog, please also take a plastic bag so you don't leave anything behind for others to stumble into.

Although we don't actually own the land, similar thinking applies to the Maze Area. Please enjoy both and help to care for both!

## **A new Pavilion?**

Another project which is gaining momentum is the rebuild of the cricket pavilion. The VG management group led by Harvey Ainley is now actively pursuing it and has opened a New Pavilion fund. The cost will be substantial but there are grants which we believe will be available. To receive grant moneys it is necessary to have funds available which would cover about half of the cost.

## **Arts and Crafts.**

With a bit of luck and printer willing, this should get to you before the Annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition. This is another of the events which brings our community together. I hope you will be there, better still have an exhibit there, and enjoy the remarkable things that members of our community have achieved in their leisure time.

## **Saw Point?**

The recent storm brought a lot of autumn leaves down, but the only significant damage reported to me was that a lot of timber fell off a tree in Muddy lane and blocked the entrance to the allotments. Peter Woolhouse went to the rescue. There is more about this on the web site.

## **Cuts to Government funding of the County Council**

At the Parish Council meeting on the 4th County Councillor Kevin Bulmer emphasized that cuts to OCC funding will impact everyone. It may mean that services we used to take for granted will no longer be available. The upshot of that appears to be an even greater need for our volunteers to set to and get the job done. We will all have to start thinking like Peter Woolhouse.

## **Planning applications**

At the Parish Council meeting on the 4th of November only one planning application was reported. The application was to demolish the existing building at Firhill and replace it with another, significantly larger one. After a lengthy discussion the meeting decided that as the building is not visible from any other property there was no reason to object to it.

**Art and Craft Exhibition 2013**  
**The Whitchurch Society**

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
(Entries submitted on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November)

Rules can be found at:  
[www.whitchurchonthames.com](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com)  
(Village Groups/Whitchurch Society)

The theme for the Joyce Voysey prize is  
“Wild & Free”

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**COMMUNITY**

**COFFEE MORNINGS**

EVERY TUESDAY IN TERM TIME

10.30 am - 12 noon

IN THE OLD STABLES ROOM

FREE REFRESHMENTS AND FRIENDLY CHATTER

Toys for the children

**Volunteers needed to help make coffee etc.**

Contact Yvonne on 984 1424

## **Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society**

Our November meeting, on the 21st, takes place at Goring Heath Parish Hall at 8pm. We will be welcoming Brian Stovold for an illustrated talk on the Wilts and Berks Canal - present and future. Coffee is served from 7.30pm, and non members are very welcome, though a charge of £2 is made to help cover expenses.

In December we go our separate ways, but reconvene on January 16th 2014 at Whitchurch Village Hall in Manor Road, when we will be reporting our findings about the Polish Camp.

## **PANGBOURNE CHRISTMAS EVENING**

**6 DECEMBER 2013**

Come and help us light up the village as we enjoy an evening of festive fun from 5 pm onwards. The Village Hall, the Church of St James and local shops and businesses all hope to welcome visitors through their doors and show what Pangbourne has to offer.

There is something for everyone and we can promise you a night to remember. If you would like more details, please visit the parish council website, or buy a copy of the Nov/Dec issue of Pangbourne Magazine, available at various outlets in the village.

## WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitchurch Pre-school and Primary School would like to offer a huge thank you to the Whitchurch Community, both individuals and businesses alike who so generously supported our Auction Evening at the Ferryboat recently. The total raised completely exceeded our expectation and couldn't have been done without the kind support of the following:

Graham and the Ferryboat team who not only gave us the pub for the night but also helped us in many other ways including donating a meal voucher and 12 bottles of wine.

We'd also like to thank those who donated or sourced a donation for the auction. Thanks to Peter Kemp, Marc Botham, Scarlet Page, Chris Mulrooney, Tracey Robb, Tracey Maslen, Lindsay Austin, Helen Kemp, Kim Day, James Lafferty, Philippa Strub, Mel Taylor, Sarah Moghul, Peter Watson, Andy and Vicky Arthur and Geoff Weir.

A special mention for James Lafferty who offered a car valet for auction, not expecting he would end up with an alpaca trailer on his hands!

Thanks also to those local businesses with no direct link to the school who have supported us : Annie Asheton cookery classes, the village Modern Artists Gallery, Mark Kemp hairdressing salon, Laithwaites, Checkendon equestrian centre, PR motors, Renzacci dry cleaner suppliers, Newbury racecourse and Mapledurham golf club.

Last but not least, Peter Watson for the Facebook page, Paul Underhay for the music, our helpers on the night Mel Taylor, Fiona Ackworth and Vicky Arthur and our amazing auctioneer Alex Hilton who definitely helped maximise funds raised.

Within the pre-school itself the children are very busy this term creating beautiful artworks inspired by Van Gogh some of which we hope will be displayed at The Whitchurch Society's annual exhibition of Art and Craft on Saturday 16th November. The children are also busy designing their own Christmas Cards.

Finally, we are planning a yummy biscuit and treat stall at the Pangbourne Christmas Shopping Evening, 6th December. Hope to see you there!

## **Hauling a boat over the weir in** **1786**

The front cover picture is of a sketch of the river drawn in 1786 – probably as part of the survey as to the location of our lock. We have reproduced it with the kind permission of the River and Rowing Museum in Henley.

Read this article and then as you walk across the new temporary footbridge stop as you approach the surgery end and look upstream at the distant weir and imagine the scene as depicted in the sketch and hopefully adequately described below. A better viewpoint is to follow the lane towards the station and the weir is then fully exposed for your imagination to take hold!

The sketch shows the flash lock in use (if you visit the Rowing Museum you can see a painting by Jan Siberechts (1627-1703) of the Henley flash lock in use). The boat is being towed up against the released water and a steadying and drawing winch is in use on the land of Walliscote Farm.

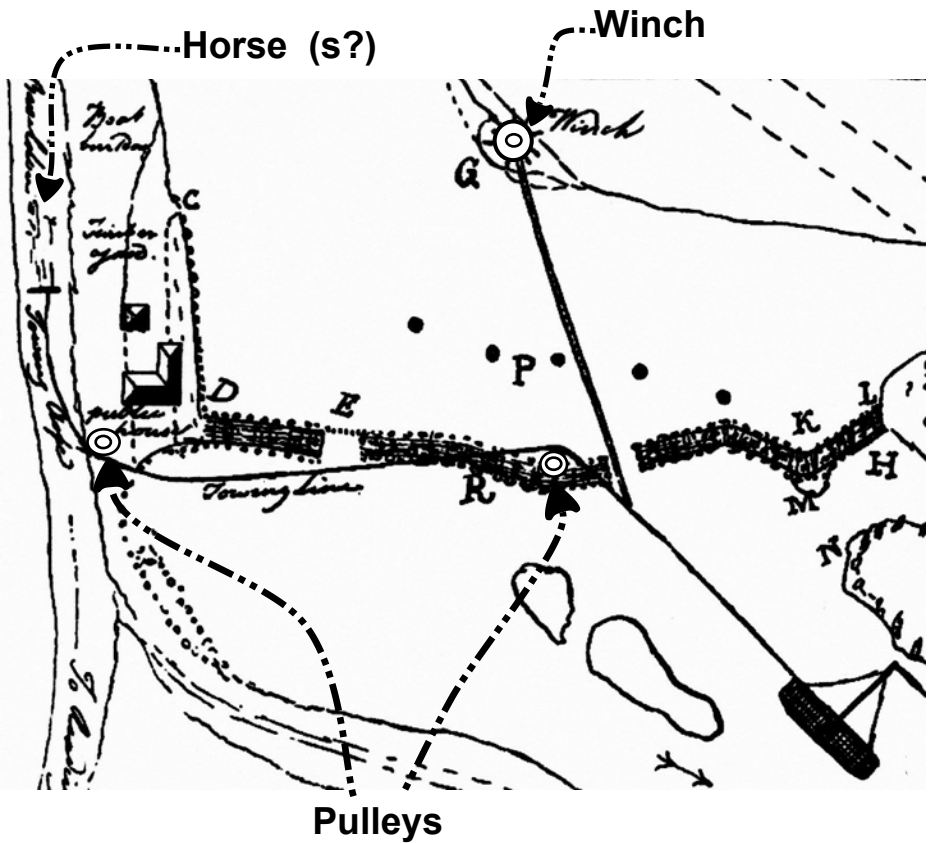
The poor old horse or horses are taking the towrope, which passes round two pulleys, up past the Swan!

The weir and its gate (the vertical beams [rymers] and the paddles) held back the water. The Miller was always in charge of the water and permission had to be obtained from him in order to remove the gate and release the water. Boats often had to wait for days to move up or down the river.

Whitchurch Lock began life as a flash weir in 1580. It was converted into a wooden pound lock in 1787 just after the sketch was drawn.

Note the route of the ferry from Ferry Lane in Pangbourne, I had always assumed that it plied between there and our slipway. The passengers left the ferry and crossed the island and then walked or drove directly across the front of the Mill.





Before or after a church service the villagers would promenade to and from the lock side. After 1918 this access was up for sale and it was proposed that the area should be purchased as a village pleasure garden as a form of War Memorial. There was little public support and today's memorial was erected halfway up the hill (perhaps to ensure that it was actually a joint memorial?). Remember that St John's Church was built to provide for the Whitchurch Hill villagers who had become discouraged from attending St Mary's by the development of the lower village and the houses built for the wealthy. So take the opportunity to stop, to look and to reflect.

# WOTHABS

On the weekend of October 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, WoTHabs co-hosted an event at Chalkhills with the Thames Valley Fungus Group to mark National Fungus Day. There was a display of 88 different fresh fungi which had all been collected locally, set out in their natural habitats. About 90 species were brought in to Chalkhills over the weekend, but a few could not be identified by the TVFG as they were too old and not in good condition, or needed microscopic examination of their spores. Richard Fortey, the well-known academic and broadcaster came along on Sunday morning before heading off to lead a Foray at Rotherfield Greys. October is a very busy month for mycologists!

The weather was very kind to us on Saturday when we led a Fungus Foray for families, starting at the Village Green, along Muddy Lane and across the Maze and finishing at Chalkhills, where the experts then had the long job of identifying all the finds! The Foray was very well attended and much enjoyed by all who took part.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> was a very different story weatherwise with persistent rain all day. There were lovely displays of artwork by two accomplished local artists, to complement the fungi displays, but very few visitors came to enjoy them unfortunately.

It was the first time that Sandra Parkinson has held this type of event at Chalkhills and she plans to hold a similar event next October, hopefully with less inclement weather conditions.

As a follow-up, the TVFG and WoTHabs had a stall with displays of fresh fungi at the Squash and Pumpkin Festival at Hardwick on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> – there was plenty of interest in the work done by both groups and much discussion about which fungi are good to eat! Several people showed photographs on their phones of fungi they had seen on their walks, and even outside their place of work. Sandra managed to make a guess at some identifications, but the photos were mostly of the tops of the caps only, so she could not tell if there was a ring on the stem - or more importantly - whether the cap had gills or pores - a very basic requirement for working out what the fungus might have been!

## **Hardwick Road**

You may have noticed that SSE have commenced work on the clearing of tree growth around the overhead power lines at the east end of Hardwick Road. WoTHabs had another site meeting with them before they started, to discuss our aim to create an off-road path through that overgrown section of hedge. SSE were very helpful and hope to finish the necessary clearing to meet their safety standards but promised to keep in mind the environmental and amenity value of the area. We shall be holding another working party when SSE have finished, to tidy up and form a useable safe path. Keep an eye on the village website for the date.

*Sally Woolhouse*

### **Notes from the Town And Parish Forum**

At South Oxfordshire District Council Offices on 6th November

#### **Arts Development**

Contact: Miranda Laurence: [miranda.laurence@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:miranda.laurence@southoxon.gov.uk)

Support for participation and inclusion in the arts, youth arts, professional and community arts groups, arts centres, venues and spaces, public art.

#### **ORCC Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**

Contact Emily Lewis: [emily.lewis@oxonrcc.org.uk](mailto:emily.lewis@oxonrcc.org.uk)

“Make your community more dementia friendly” campaign. Help with information, training sessions etc,.

#### **Thames Valley Police**

The policeman assigned to our Village has changed again and Mark Bell is back.. Although his patch has fifteen parishes in it he does appear to be in good contact with us. He was aware, for example of that recent mugging which was reported to be this side of the river but was actually in the middle of Pangbourne.

#### **Forum:**

The forum was chaired by Council Leader Ann Ducker and presentations were made from various SODC officers including Adrian Duffield, head of Planning. The relaxations of planning regulations proposed by the government do seem to be a developer’s charter. If it does dilute the power of our elected representatives at SODC, as much as it appears to do, we will have real problems when a developer wants to do something our residents are not happy with. The Eastfield House situation may become more familiar!

## **New initiative for unpaid carers at Pangbourne Surgery**

Carers are being championed at Pangbourne Surgery with a new initiative aimed at bringing information and advice closer to home.

Patients who are looking after someone else will be able to see a support worker from Berkshire Carers Service at the Whitchurch Road surgery on a monthly basis from Tuesday October 15. She will be able to offer advice about sources of support, benefits and how to plan for an emergency. Staff at Pangbourne Surgery are pioneering several initiatives aimed at ensuring they identify patients at their surgery who may be caring for someone else and have nominated Veronica Rys, a member of their reception staff, to be their Carer's Champion.

Patients that are identified as unpaid carers will be offered yearly health checks and a flu vaccination, as well as being provided with information about Berkshire Carer's Service.

Elsbeth McPherson, chief executive of Berkshire Carers Service, said as many as one in 10 of all patients seen by GPs are unpaid carers yet nationally only three per cent of surgeries actively seek to identify carers. She said: "This is a really welcome initiative and an important step forward in ensuring that the needs of carers are recognised. Many carers neglect their own health and well-being because they are short of time and their attention is often focused on the needs of the person they care for. However, it is proven that offering support to carers before a crisis starts results in carers reporting a significant reduction in stress related to their caring role."

The doctors at Pangbourne surgery, led by Dr Manjadhria, said that they are delighted about this initiative and hope to improve the wellbeing of patients who are themselves caring for others.

To book an appointment with a Berkshire Carers Service support worker, please call freephone 0800 988 5462. For more information about support for carers visit [www.berkshirecarers.org](http://www.berkshirecarers.org).

# **New Year's Day Walk 2014**

***"A few new paths"***

**From Whitchurch Eastfield Lane**

**to Woodcote Eastfield Lane and return**

**About 6 miles so allow 2+ hours**

Meet outside the Greyhound at 11:00 hrs and walk up to and along the Bridle Path at Whitchurch Hill, then through Great Oaks Wood to and along Eastfield Lane.

Return via Blackbird's Bottom and Cold Harbour, Furzemoor and Coombe End.

Meet at the Greyhound for a drink afterwards.

**Eric**

## **SOUTH CHILTERN CHORAL SOCIETY**

Present

## **CHRISTMAS AND ALL THAT JAZZ**

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December, the South Chiltern Choral Society will perform Bob Chilcott's "On Christmas Night", plus "Born in Bethlehem" (beautiful Christmas Spirituals arranged by Gwyn Arch).

Venue: Chiltern Edge School, Reades Lane, Sonning Common. RG4 9LN.

Dates: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 p.m. and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 2.00 p.m.

Tickets: £12            £6 Under 18s  
from Mary Esslemont Tel. 0118 9874346, or via the website:  
[www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk)

# Whitchurch & Goring Heath Twinning Association

In the cold dark days of winter it is pleasant to contemplate the possible activities that spring will bring. One of these is the visit to La Bouille, our pretty twinned town on the bank of the Seine near Rouen, which will take place at the beginning of May. We shall be holding an AGM in February, to which everyone is invited, to discuss the visit arrangements. In particular we want to investigate the possibility of journeying out on the Friday before the Bank Holiday, which will give us four days away. It is our policy to keep costs to a minimum, so we will pay for the coach and crossing only - all accommodation, food and entertainment being provided by the people of La Bouille.

Something to look forward to, and open to everyone in our area - look out for further information, or come to the AGM, date and venue will be advertised early next year.

## HARDWICK LECTURE

### In Defence of Life - A Radical Reworking Of Green Wisdom

In this lecture Julian Rose describes the contents of his 'hot off the press' new book and explains how it challenges the current ethos behind much of today's 'Green' thinking.

An evening that is guaranteed to stimulate our powers of lateral thought.

Thursday 12th December 2013 - 6.45 for 7.00pm

Hardwick House, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Oxon RG8 7RB

To book a place please call the Hardwick Estate Office on

0118 9842955 or e-mail [hardwickestate@btinternet.com](mailto:hardwickestate@btinternet.com)

The lecture will be followed by a bowl of "life" soup

Tickets £10

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

Hardwick Estate Office Tel: 0118 9842955

[hardwickestate@btinternet.com](mailto:hardwickestate@btinternet.com) [www.hardwickestate.co.uk](http://www.hardwickestate.co.uk)

## Woodcote Library



We have resumed our rhyme time sessions for the under 5s on Thursday mornings from 10. – 10.30, please come along and join in the fun.

**The Neighbourhood Plan** has reached the next stage and has now been published. Members of the public are invited to comment on the proposals contained within the plan, which continues to be on display in the Library until 8 November 2013.

You can also access all the documents and information by visiting [www.southoxon.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans)

Comments may be sent through to: [planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk)  
The policy planning team may also be contacted on 01491 823725.

**Do computers confuse you?** Want to know how to ‘surf the net’? Just how DO you send an email? If any of that applies to you, then why not try one of our free IT classes. Hopefully starting in November, we are offering a six week course where you can access a computer in a relaxing and friendly environment. Learn at your own pace. Please contact the Library on 01491 682323 for further details.

Our Nov **Book Group Meeting** is Monday 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

**Rhyme time sessions** for the under 5s are on Thursday mornings between 10-10.30am, please come along and join in the fun.

With the continuing closure of the toll bridge at Pangbourne, some people might find Woodcote Library is a more convenient place to borrow books . We are always happy to welcome new members.

## DIARY DATES

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

### November

<b>Saturday 16th</b>	<b>Art &amp; Craft Exhibition</b>
<b>Thursday 21st</b>	<b>History Society</b>
<b>Sunday 24th</b>	<b>PAWS meeting</b>

### December

<b>Friday 6th</b>	<b>Pangbourne festive evening</b>
<b>Thursday 12TH</b>	<b>Hardwick Lecture</b>
<b>14th &amp; 15th</b>	<b>SCCS Christmas Concert</b>

### January 2014

<b>Wednesday 1st</b>	<b>New Year's Day Walk</b>
<b>Thursday 16th</b>	<b>History Society</b>

### THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in January 2014

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**  
[Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com](mailto:Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com) by 9th January 2014

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are the views of those contributors,  
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