

From the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Parish Council has been busy sorting out all the problems we face in the light of cuts to our local government budgets with possible closures of our bus service and our local recycling centre at Oakley Wood. We also seem to have problems with HGV's ending up at the toll bridge lately and causing chaos!

All these issues are being pursued by your councillors through the appropriate channels on the district and county council and we are doing our utmost to resolve these problems.

Our latest initiative, the Village Green survey was carried out in order to find out exactly how the village envisaged the development of this facility and we had a good response. The information which we have collected will go towards making it a valuable place which everyone can enjoy whether it's playing cricket or football, exercising dogs or providing activity for children or just taking a pleasant stroll. We must be grateful to all those who work so hard to make this and the Maze such a lovely area of which Whitchurch on Thames can be very proud.

I must mention our new recruits Felipa House and Richard Williams who have taken on the tasks of Parish Clerk and Bulletin Editor respectively, we welcome them to our happy band of people who are looking after your interests.

The recent Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial on the hill was well attended showing the importance of this special monument which reminds us of those local people who gave their lives so we can live in peace. This is why we are considering, along with Goring Heath PC, funding its refurbishment. So I hope everyone will participate in the survey which we are carrying out.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Keith Brooks

CAPTURING THE PAST BY DESIGN AND ACCIDENT

Anyone visiting the Historic Photos section of the village website will see that it has recently grown significantly. Both the number of photographs and variety of subjects has been increased to cover a wider spectrum of village history. This is thanks to the fact that I have recently been delving through my extensive archive of photographs that stretch back over fifty years. Why have I decided to do this now?

Recently, I realised with a shock that not only have I been a serious photographer for over half a century, but I have never mounted an exhibition of my work. So, I decided on a project which I have called "Photos Are My Life - Half a Century Through the Lens of Nick Brazil". I am now well on the way to selecting the 150 – 200 pictures that will comprise this exhibition.

Naturally, I wanted to show photographs that represented every stage of my life as a photographer. It was this that led me to rediscover the photographs now residing in the Historic Photos section. I am sure that many village residents will find these pictures interesting especially if I explain the stories behind some of them.

The first two photographs show the "old" War Memorial being cleaned. This was an annual event which I was keen to capture on film in about 1980 because I had planned to produce a book on Whitchurch called "The Village Year". Although the book never reached fruition, I am now very glad that I took the photographs. The War Memorial with its Celtic style cross was destroyed in the great storm of 1987. I suspect that catastrophic event marked the end of the annual cleaning. As in the case of many of the pictures, I failed to record the name of the gentleman who cleaned the cross on that occasion. So if anyone knows his name please contact me or the website.

I am very glad that I had the presence of mind to photograph the knife grinder. He was a regular visitor to the village in the mid to late 1970s. On this occasion, I photographed him for my proposed book. This was a very good thing because that was the last time I ever saw him in the village.

No doubt many people will find the photographs of the 1977 Jubilee Celebrations of great interest, not least because they were one of those colourfully dressed children. Yes, its difficult to believe that was thirty eight years ago isn't it? That would put those children in their mid forties today.

The bee keeper was Jim Read who lived with his family in Eastfield Lane. I shot a whole sequence of photographs of him attending to his hives down at Hardwick. On that occasion, I shot on black and white film which often stands

the test of time better than colour. Once again some of those photos were planned for my book but now at least one will grace my upcoming exhibition.

The allotment photographs were also intended for my book. To my shame I omitted to record the name of the green fingered gentleman who is the subject, so if anyone can help with that information, I would be most grateful. I remember at the time thinking it was important to record allotment life since I was sure it would soon disappear. I am delighted that I was completely wrong on that count! Of additional interest is the background in these photographs and how it has changed over the years.

Finally, there is the photograph of the farm house at Bozedown which I think I took in the Autumn of 1980 or it could be earlier. This is pretty topical since that particular building has only recently been demolished. This is actually two photographs stitched together in Photoshop to make a panorama. Doing a series of village panoramas was another little project of mine which circumstances would cause to be temporarily stillborn.

As I discover more pictures from Whitchurch in the past I will add them to the archive on the website, so please look at it regularly.

And remember, whenever we use our cameras we are all accidental historians.

Nick Brazil

The Exhibition "Photos Are My Life – Half a Century Through the Lens of Nick Brazil" is planned for the Twinning weekend at La Bouille at the end of April/early May 2016 followed by further exhibitions in England next year. Exact dates and locations to be confirmed.

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

If you're starting to think about next year's holidays the good news is that we shall be visiting La Bouille for a long weekend at the end of April/beginning of May next year which will include a promised visit to the lovely harbour and town of Honfleur. More details to follow. All are welcome, and generous hospitality is assured.



Christmas Wishes from John Howell MP

Firstly, as this newsletter will appear in December magazines I would like to take this opportunity to wish all constituents a peaceful Christmas and to send my best wishes for the year ahead. May I also say thank you to all those who work hard in our communities to make them special for the rest of us. So many different things go on across the constituency that help to keep our communities vibrant and good places in which to live. It is always a pleasure when I get the opportunity to visit community activities and I look forward to learning yet more about what is being done in 2016.

News Update

In a brief newsletter I cannot cover all that are on my mind at present. I will therefore leave those that have been widely covered in the media and focus on some of the other issues that have been more frequently raised with me.

With the 2015 Paris climate change conference on the horizon some key issues have been raised on this. I am pleased that the UK is taking a leading role on this. The Secretary of State has said that she wants a strong, ambitious, rules-based agreement that makes the shift to a clean global economy irreversible. I don't believe that climate change is a side issue that we can take or leave. The environment is important in itself but it also has implications for the economy and our economic security.

Access to personal communications data has been another key issue. Whilst many people understand the need for our intelligence agencies to be able to intercept potential terrorist activity, the Investigatory Powers Bill has raised some concerns. Following independent reviews I am pleased that the Home Secretary has announced that there will be a 'double-lock' authorisation process for interception warrants, requiring approval by a judge as well as by the Secretary of State.

A totally different concern that has been raised over time is that of funding to our schools as historically Oxfordshire schools are among those disadvantaged by the current funding formula. I recently arranged a meeting at the House for representatives from the schools and all of the Oxfordshire MPs. Although there are no quick solutions to their concerns. I am pleased that they have been able to raise them face to face with the MPs including the Prime Minister.

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*You can also follow me on twitter @johnhowellmp or
Facebook www.facebook.com/john.howellmp*



Whitchurch-on-Thames Christmas Fayre

Saturday 6 December

11am to 3 pm

**Whitchurch Primary School
Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames**



*Raffle, Santa Grotto, Craft and Gift Stalls,
Tea and coffee, Beer and Mulled Wine,
children's craft and activities*



***Come and visit Santa
in his grotto!***



Many thanks to our kind sponsors

Warmingham



Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability News

When	What	Where
Thursday 26 November 8.00pm - doors open 7.45pm	Chasing Ice film Acclaimed photographer James Balog was once a sceptic about climate change. But through his Extreme Ice Survey, he discovers undeniable evidence of our changing planet.	Pangbourne Village Hall Tickets £4 from Garlands, www.wegotickets.com/event/337068 or on the door
Sunday 29 November 12:00-16:00	Climate March	London

Barn dance

The local environment was celebrated by PAWS in September with the annual barn dance held in the packing shed of Tolhurst Organic farm in Whitchurch. Set amidst beautiful countryside where farming methods work with nature to respect the complicated relationships between species, the dance reflected the joy of harvest and sustainable living.

Apple pressing

The following day continued the theme of harvest when the apple presses were hard at work in the Whitchurch maze. This year's bumper harvest of apples meant three hours of solid labour for all who came. All the children had a go at washing, chopping, stirring and pressing the fruit and of course drinking the tasty produce! Many people brought fruit collected from neighbours and it was great to see what would normally be wasted being turned into gallons of juice. So many families came to this event and it was great to see everyone enjoying an old fashioned rural activity.

Paris summit

So from local environment events the focus now turns to the global environment with the UN Climate Change Summit taking place in Paris at the beginning of December. For those of us who saw the Kyoto and Copenhagen summits fail to bring about consensus between countries on how to reduce carbon emissions it is with renewed hope that we turn to Paris. Already a larger number of countries have signed up to a global agreement, with China and the US expressing the intention to engage this time around. Professor Nigel Arnell, one of our PAWS members will be advising at the Summit and on Thursday November 26th following our film presentation of **Chasing Ice** he will be able to give us some insight into how the summit is run and up to date information on the major emerging issues.

www.pawsg.com

www.facebook.com/Pangbourne-and-Whitchurch-Sustainability-PAWS-106318139412610

AFC WHITCHURCH FOOTBALL CLUB

Our season has started well and we are enjoying some great games. We have now opened up our Saturday morning Academy training to Reception age children so please join us at 9.15-10am at the Village Green if you haven't already.

We have been very fortunate this season to secure three sponsors for our kit. So we would like to thank Krazy PlayDays for sponsoring our U7s, the Ferryboat for sponsoring our U12s and inTank Technologies for sponsoring our U16s kit. We are extremely grateful for your support and hope we do you proud!

Finally, we now have our own Facebook page at facebook.com/afcwh so please like us!

Jane Ireland

Club Secretary



MOBILE LIBRARY UPDATE

Oxfordshire County Council are looking to discontinue the Mobile Library service due to funding pressures. There is a consultation going on and any interested party can contact; Julian Southwell, Library Service Manager, Cultural Services, Oxford Central Library, Westgate, Oxford, OX1 1DJ to express their views/concerns.



WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

After a break in December, our very successful lecture season continues, when we move down to Whitchurch Village Hall on Thursday 16th January for a meeting when we hear talks by members. We look forward to an enjoyable evening, with a mixed bag of subjects, usually very local in context. The meeting starts at 8pm, with coffee served from 7.30pm, and non-members are welcome for a payment of £2, to include coffee and biscuits.

THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY: NEW YEAR'S DAY WALK 2016

Eric started the Village Walks on New Year's Day 2008, and during the following eight years he planned 27 interesting, varied and beautiful walks. His knowledge of all the paths (and of their historical associations) was unrivalled, and we must have walked parts of all the paths going east, west and north from Whitchurch. This means it will be difficult to find completely new routes in future, assuming we stay north of the Thames.

So, on New Year's Day 2016 we (i.e. Roger Crawford, Richard Williams and I) thought we would repeat the very first walk from NYD 2008, parts of which we haven't walked for some time. We shall meet outside the Greyhound at 11.00 am and proceed up the hill past the war memorial and Stonecroft Plantation to Beech Farm. After this we shall make our way across the main road to St John's Church, and then to the Iron Age fort. We shall go up Town Lane and across to Path Hill Farm and then enter the woods above Hardwick House. We can take a shorter route when we reach the so-called Bear Pit by walking down to Hardwick House and Hardwick Stud and so home. The longer route takes us east to the boundary of the woodland and to the open land beyond with its beautiful views of the Thames and Whitchurch Bridge. We now drop down to the ancient bridleway below, which we follow past Hardwick House and so home.



If we wish, we can then reward ourselves for our efforts by taking some refreshment at the Greyhound.

This will be our second village walk; the Autumn Walk was much enjoyed by the select group that joined in, and we welcome all residents and their guests to participate.




WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

The children at Whitchurch pre-school continue to have a wonderful time – enjoying visits from a fire engine and the local police this term. Meanwhile, the committee and parents are busy trying to keep the pre-school going as this year we are experiencing a natural decline in numbers. We still have spaces available and are keen to fill them. So, instead of asking you all to give money out of the kindness of your hearts (again), we've come up with a business plan that can directly benefit you. It's a win-win situation but does require a bit of input please.

We'd like to take any old toys, or general saleable items (electronics, furniture etc) and sell them for you over the internet. We'll give you 50% of anything we sell so you can benefit from a good clear out, a bit of extra pocket money, and the pre-school can earn commission to help us break even. If you have anything you're thinking of getting rid of please email us on whitchurchpreschool@me.com or phone 0118 9844516. We'll even come round and collect items from you and drop the money back to you – easy money!

We know not everyone will read this so don't be surprised if we pay you a visit in the upcoming few months.?



Whitchurch Community Coffee Morning

10.30am till midday

*Every Tuesday in term time
at*

The Old Stables, High Street,

Refreshments and friendly chatter awaits all.

Do come and meet us.