

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

I mentioned in the last report that I thought summer was fast approaching however as I write this today it seems to be still thinking about it. Thank goodness we have had good weather when we needed it. I speak particularly of the Queen's birthday celebrations on the Village Green which was well attended and everyone had such a good time in the sunshine listening to the excellent band, eating and drinking and just all enjoying each other's company. Well done to the people who organised it all, too many to list, but I know that our village can always rely on people to step up to the mark when we need them!

We have had good success with the bus service which was going to be discontinued as the subsidy from OCC is being removed. However we have got together with Goring Heath PC and agreed to share the costs so that it will continue until next April. The important thing is that we use it as much as we can so we can justify the expenditure.

Another bit of good news is the re-surfacing of The Cut which we have been trying to get fixed for many years and now it's done, many residents have expressed their delight when walking along it.

We also hosted the Village Plan consultation which was attended by around 50 residents, all keen to let us know what they had in mind for the development of the village or alternatively what they wanted to stay the same. There is a summary of the issues that were brought to our attention in this edition of The Bulletin and anyone who missed the consultation but wants to be involved are urged to contact the PC (details with the summary). We will need groups, consisting of volunteers, to cover different areas of the plan and we already have many people who came forward at the consultation to offer their services.

The new allotment gates are a welcome addition to Muddy Lane and hopefully they will inspire budding young horticulturists. I believe there are some plots available so get down there and get planting. It's very good for exercise, fresh air, healthy eating and social interaction!

On the down side two seats, one at the end of Manor Road and one on the Village Green and the fence around the car park on the Village Green were found to be broken which required the PC to step in and get them repaired. I must sincerely thank Peter Woolhouse who was instrumental in this and without his input the cost to the PC would have been considerably more.

On the up side the open gardens proved to be a great hit with many people taking advantage of having access to the lock, weir and adjacent gardens – congratulations to the organisers.

Lastly this week Councillor Donahue and myself will be attending the South Oxfordshire District Council Summer Town and Parish Forum where we will be representing Whitchurch on Thames and keeping abreast of any relevant changes in policy which might affect us.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Keith Brooks July 2016

POEM FOR THE SUMMER

The stars shine undimmed in the pale moonlight the moon is as god meant it, the celebrity of the night sky shining good fortune to the underlings on earth Whitchurch glows with a beauty so fine.

A positive glow is in the air new life is formed below the Moon, the air is full of the night stocks smell and Jasmine fills my lungs, it feeds my soul; my heart is glad that Summer is here, sweet sweet smells fill the air.

The long grass swings, the dandelions shine like a million suns swishing in the wind, the smell of lavender fills my life with joy, wisteria fills my eyes with beauty, wisened bark of the old Oak trees makes my fingers dance, life is positive, life is full this joyful experience is not at all dull.

Jon Steward

VILLAGE PLAN UPDATE

Back in May we held an open day in our village hall to get your views on how you would like to improve our village, and the things you really like that you don't want to change. It was very well supported with over 50 people coming to share their views and ideas. Thank you so much to all the people that took the time out to speak with us and share your ideas and views. Please see [insert document location] to view the feedback we received during the open day.

A brief summary of issues identified are as follows:

- Village Hall/Pavilion – whether to re-locate to Village Green,
- Road traffic along High Street and Hardwick Rd – in particular bottlenecks and speeding
- Potholes in High Street & Eastfield Lane which go unfilled for a long time
- Parking issues in Village
- Future of 143 Bus after this year
- Future of Greyhound PH and whether this should be a PH
- Village events like Regattas, Village Party, Fetes, etc

We also had a good number of volunteers to form the working groups. We will be shortly holding our first session with these teams to start the process of identifying priority issues and pulling together a proposal of suggested solutions for the village to view and comment on.

You can help! Do you have a view to share but could not attend the open day, or you did but have thought of more to say? OR Would you like to join the volunteers to help develop our village plan? Then send an email wotpeoplesplan@gmail.com or pop a letter to me at 3 Old Barn Cottages.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Rachel Hatcher

WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION

Will be held during the weekend of 19th – 20th November 2016 at Whitchurch-on-Thames Village Hall, Manor Road

This is to remind everyone that the Whitchurch Society's Annual Exhibition is only a few months away, so it's time to get busy with your entries. We welcome all ranges of art, craft and photography – it is an enjoyable, friendly event, not an elitist showcase! All residents (both past and present) of Whitchurch and Goring Heath parishes are eligible to enter their work. Children who attend the Whitchurch Pre-School Group, Whitchurch Primary School or The Oratory Preparatory School are also eligible to enter, regardless of their place of residence.

This year, by popular demand, we have decided to hold the event over two days, so we hope that you will find the time to visit the exhibition over the weekend, and even better, to enter one or more of the classes.

The theme this year for the open Joyce Voysey class is 'Trees'. This class is open to all age groups and the entries can be in any media – art, photos, sculpture, crochet – whatever inspires you!

The details of how and when to enter will be posted on the village website shortly. Meanwhile, start working on your entries and help make this year's event the best ever!

If you would like to get involved with the planning and setting up of the exhibition, please do get in touch – all offers of help are gratefully received.

Sally Woolhouse, Chair of the organising committee

0118 9844365

WOTHABS

Regretfully, we had to cancel Wildlife Explorers Day due to lack of take-up. It is not clear why demand was low and we were very sorry to disappoint those who wanted to join us for what could have been an exciting day for them, judging from our past experience of

these occasions. However one of our planned activities went ahead anyway: around ten of us, including two children, greatly enjoyed seeing and learning about the wonderful variety of moths, large and small, which Norman Hall of Reading Natural History Society caught in traps he had set overnight at Chalkhills. In case you are wondering, the moths flew freely away after we had looked at them. It was quite a collection, especially considering the wet night we'd had.

If that sparks your interest, please note the following opportunity:

Sunday 31st July: NOTHING at CHALKHILLS from 9am to view some of the Saturday night catch. (This is part of Reading Natural History Society's annual programme). Go through a field gate on the left next to Bozedown Alpaca's iron gate (you can park in this field if it is dry). Please look for notices as viewing place and/or parking may change and wear stout footwear.

WotHabs will have a stall at Whitchurch Fete, Sat 3rd September. This is a good opportunity to seek your views on local environment topics and we look forward to seeing you there.

Gill Goodwin, Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group

ONLY PATHS AND HORSES

Whitchurch has a small network of footpaths and bridleways. Like all villages these routes are defined in length and position, sometimes in width, and are registered and numbered by the local authority.

We are fortunate that despite only having 12 footpaths (5 of them short or very short) and 4 bridleways and one R.U.P.P. (a road used as public path) most of these can readily be interconnected with those of our neighbouring villages to provide us with the many 'round' walks that we enjoy. We are doubly fortunate in that we also have access to a number of permissive footpaths on Hardwick land and this adds to our route variations and further enjoyment.

Footpaths, in the main, have been in use for centuries and may well be based on the paths used by local workers to get to their places of work who at the end of their working day used another, probably

more convenient, path to return home. In doing so they allow us similarly to separate and vary our return routes from our outgoing ones.

But bridleways were used for communication, often over long distances, radiating out without any immediate alternative route for the return. This is obviously irritating to today's leisure horse riders who are frustrated by being unable to locate permissible 'round' rides readily and easily. Unfortunately this frustration on occasion leads them to use the footpath network, this abuse leads to paths that are almost impassable on foot in wet weather and uncomfortable underfoot in dry periods.

Although this is understandable, particularly where a previously safe route for horses is now a main road (Whitchurch Hill or Path Hill for example), such use is not allowed on the defined and registered footpaths and on a permissive footpath network only with the consent of the landowner.

Eric Hartley

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

Our last meeting, in May, was on the subject of Votes for Women in Oxfordshire. Unfortunately our speaker's car broke down on her journey from Oxford, so we looked at the piece in "Checkendon, a Short History" about the suffragette meeting in Checkendon, and the ladies of Lovegrove's Farm who ran a recuperation centre for those who had been in prison.

When the speaker heard this, she researched the owner of the farm, Edith (Kate) Le Lacheur, born 1877, of a prosperous Tunbridge Wells family which originated in Guernsey. She had attended Newnham College, Cambridge, became a member of the Women's Agricultural and Horticultural International Union (later the Women's Farm and Garden association), and was manageress of the Leckhamstead Manor Farm near Newbury in 1902. At Checkendon, in 1904 her suffragette dairy and farm school displayed suffragette posters on a barn. The dairy was one of the first dairies to use motorised transport to deliver milk.

In 1912 she married, but retained her name, just changing her title to Mrs. In 1913 she advertised courses at Checkendon offering “practical training for home or Colonial farming”. She had three sons before her husband was killed in the Dardanelles campaign of 1915.

The suffragette meeting on the green at Checkendon that she organised was ambushed by large numbers of local men who threw eggs, tomatoes and other missiles, and set upon Kate’s husband knocking out some of his teeth. The speakers retreated, while a suffragette took the opportunity of puncturing the men’s bicycle tyres with a hat pin, so they had to walk home.

Our June outing was to the Police Museum at Sulhampstead, where we enjoyed a guided tour of the exhibits which included the baby farm murders at Caversham, and the Great Train Robbery. One of the plotters lived at Whitchurch Hill.

The Autumn lecture season will have meetings at Goring heath Parish Hall. We start on September 15th when we welcome back Alan Copeland with his presentation on Eccentric London. On October 20th we will hear about English Country Houses, focusing on Oxfordshire from Alastair Lack, an ex BBC journalist.

Meetings are at 8pm, coffee served from 7.30pm and are open to non-members at £3.

AFC WHITCHURCH FOOTBALL CLUB

Following a successful and highly enjoyable season for all our teams, thoughts are turning to September and the 2016/17 season!

AFC Whitchurch are a small, friendly club based in Whitchurch on Thames, welcoming players from Whitchurch and surrounding areas. We run 6 teams plus our blossoming Academy section for our very youngest players. We are a parent-run club and are all extremely passionate about football, encouraging our children into regular exercise and promoting healthy team spirit.

Team and training details are below, if you are interested in joining us please get in touch – afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk

Academy / U7 – train on Saturday mornings at Whitchurch Village Green, Eastfield Lane. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

U8 – train on Wednesday evenings at Whitchurch Village Green in the summer, Langtree School in the winter. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

U9 – train on Saturday mornings at Whitchurch Primary School, Eastfield Lane. Play in the Reading & West Berkshire League on Sunday mornings.

U11 – train on Friday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

U13 – train on Thursday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

U18 – train on Thursday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the East Berkshire Football Alliance on Saturdays.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for news and photos – [facebook.com/afcwh](https://www.facebook.com/afcwh)

Lindsay Austin, Club Secretary

WHITCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES

A little bit of History:

Over the centuries, residents in Whitchurch have founded charities under the authority of the Rector and church with various local objects in mind. The earliest was Augustine Knapp's legacy of 1602. He left one pound (say £400 today) to be invested for the 'poor lame blind or impotent parishioners' to be distributed at the discretion of the Churchwardens.

The administration of these by the Rector and Churchwardens was time-consuming and difficult, and in 1907 they were combined and a registered charity created under the authority of the Charity Commissioners, who invest the proceeds and pay the interest to the Trustees.

Over the centuries, the funds have provided coal, winter coats and food vouchers amongst other benefits. However, for some while the trustees have felt that with today's welfare system, there could be a better use of the funds.

After considerable debate, the Charity Commission was petitioned to agree a scheme whereby grants could be made to assist local students. This was agreed by the Commission in Spring 2003.

The current scheme:

Since 2003, the Trustees of the Whitchurch United Charities have been managing the distribution of the income from the Charity in the form of grants. The purpose is to assist local students with the funding of essential equipment, such as musical instruments and books, or any other cost associated with an educational need. Eligible students are young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the parish of Whitchurch.

At present, the total income is approximately £400+ pa and the accounts are vetted by the Charity Commission and audited annually, with inspection available on request.

In the past few years, the Charity is fortunate to have received two additional bequests, namely the Lady Phoebe Rose Educational Charity and the Peter Minton Educational Bequest.

It is hoped that in future years, as the scheme becomes known, today's parishioners will leave legacies or gifts to increase our capital and consequently to make more income available for distribution.

Applications are welcomed throughout the year although grants are awarded bi-annually, in March and September. All applications and decisions are treated in strict confidence by the Trustees. If you would like to know more, or apply for a grant, please do contact Peter Hawley (our Grant Application Secretary) on (0118) 984 3069 or write to him at:

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

The Trustees:

Mrs Jackie Kingsley (Chairman); Mrs Sally Woolhouse (Treasurer/ Secretary); Mr Peter Hawley (Grant Application Secretary); Mr David Giles; Mrs Sue Matthews; Rev.Claire Alcock, Mrs Helen Bowsher

We are currently looking to expand our trustee group and are therefore looking for interested parties that might like to join our team. If you would like to know more information or would like to volunteer your services, please contact Sally Woolhouse sally.woolhouse@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES (Registered Charity No. 264826 of 22.7.1907)

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

We held our annual school sports day in the village green on Friday, this year it had a Carnival theme.

All year the children have been measuring their steps using pedometers each week trying to cover the distance from Whitchurch to Rio for the Olympics. The final steps came in the form of a carnival procession, led by Mrs Lombos and the Class 4 Samba band. The other children paraded around the field with colourful masks and shakers.

During the morning the children had taken part in a range of other sports day activities. A special Queen's birthday race sponsored by Mr Leslie Prater, field events, and a number of competitive indoor activities from fruit salad making to retro gaming.

The rain held off in the afternoon and the children were all able to use the new track to take part in a number of different running events. We have introduced a school record system this year, and a number of those were both set and then broken during the afternoon.

The event was closed by Jade Witchalls street dance crew performing some routines.

Sports day was followed by a fete style event with a BBQ, bar, ice cream van and bouncy castle run by the Parent Association.



Whitchurch Primary School

WHITCHURCH PRE SCHOOL

Whitchurch pre-school recently held its AGM and was really pleased to report a small profit. This was a fantastic achievement, due in main to the fundraising efforts of Emily Dalton. Many people in the village contributed and we would like to extend a warm thank you to all those who helped make this financial year a success. From attending the fete and buying raffle tickets, to offering goods for our ebay sales scheme, buying cakes at the art café, buying ice cream outside the school gates and helping with man-power to reduce our spend on maintenance, every little bit has helped and we are extremely grateful. Fundraising has enabled us to source new uniforms for the staff and new trikes for the children, in addition to other educational toys. The pre-school has also had a new roof, thankfully funded by the National Lottery which was much needed.

Over the past few months, the children have enjoyed a trip to Rushall Farm to see the baby lambs, a trip to the library on the bus, walks around the local countryside, trips to the park, sports day and Easter egg hunts. The planning and effort that gone in from Kathleen and

her team, and the parents is a great asset to the pre-school and why we attract children from outside of the immediate area.

We will soon see another class of children move up to the primary school. They have been busy attending step-up days and settling into their new environment and we wish them all the very best as they embark on their new journey. The pre-school has given them an excellent start and they will miss the enthusiasm and close relationships they have built with the amazing staff.

As the old committee and children move on, a new committee and children join us, we would like to thank Angela Sidhu, Emily Dalton and Andrea Joubert who have given fantastic years of service to the committee and have now stepped aside as their children move on.

We are looking healthy in numbers for the new financial year, but still have spaces for September and we welcome children from 2 and a half years to join the pre-school. We are busy organising the Whitchurch Village Fete which is on the 3 September so please make every effort to attend as this is our biggest fundraiser of the year. If you'd like to buy raffle tickets you can contact Vicky, the fete organiser, on v87@hotmail.co.uk and someone will be in contact. We look forward to seeing you there!"

Beth Baxter, Secretary

WHITCHURCH BRIDGE

Following constructive representations from Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council the Company has agreed to install a new combined speed bump and crossing point at the Toll Booth. It will have a flat top level with the footways on either side, and will be in a contrasting colour to help ensure it gets noticed by motorists. The construction work will be planned to minimise inconvenience to Bridge users, and although some traffic control will be necessary we will maintain a two way traffic flow during the morning and evening peak hours. We hope to complete the work by September 2016.

The Bridge Card Toll will remain at 40p until at least August 2017. The timing of any increase after that, to not more than 45p, depends primarily on traffic volumes which are difficult to forecast.

Our engineering consultants Peter Brett Associates are continuing to work on a scheme to widen the Pangbourne approach road and footway. A major issue that has arisen is the reluctance of the Environment Agency to allow any work on the embankments which would reduce flood storage capacity, so widening the base of the embankments or even reprofiling them from the same base are probably not viable options. Other constraints include the proximity of trees to the highway, some of which would need to be felled. However, we will persevere and it remains our intention to develop a scheme as a basis for local consultation and later to submit as a Planning Application.

Finally, may I thank you on behalf of the Company for the courtesy shown to our Toll Collectors, all of whom do their best to collect the Tolls efficiently and good-humouredly. If you are interested in joining our team – all ages are welcome, and hours are flexible by mutual agreement – please pick up an Application Form from the Toll Booth.

Geoff Weir, Company Secretary, the Whitchurch Bridge Company

www.whitchurchbridge.com

FROM THE BULLETIN 50 YEARS AGO

From the Parish Council Meeting held on the 24th May 1966:

Village Hall. A detailed report and plan of suggested alterations and additions to the Village Hall were submitted by Mr. J.R. Caseley. It is recommended that the work should be carried out to an agreed comprehensive plan, whether done piece-meal or in one operation. That planning permission and financial grants be sought initially for the whole comprehensive scheme. The cost of the whole scheme including re-decorations and furnishings should not exceed £2500 (about £43,000 in today's money), for which grants are now available.

Planning. Notification had been received from the County Council confirming that there was no restrictive policy for the development of the south side of Eastfield Lane, each application being considered on its own merits.

Traffic Warden. The question of providing a Traffic Warden for children at the entrance to Eastfield Lane was stated to be a matter for the Education Committee.

Grass verges. It was agreed that the County Council should be requested to arrange for cutting grass verges, also to improve the appearance of the bank in front of the Hillside development in Hardwick Road.

Whitchurch Primary School. Appointments have now been made to staff the school which is due to open in September. The headmaster is Mr John Charles Loveday. He is married with 3 children and is understood to have bought a house on the Old Barn site. His assistant is Mrs Margot Robertson of Pangbourne. Mrs Robertson's husband is an irrigation engineer at present completing a contract with the Government of Pakistan.

BITTER AUGUST BY NICK BRAZIL

Whitchurch Summer 1940

Bert Higson would always remember that bright hot summer's day. He remembered the freshly picked tomatoes lying blood red in his basket like an omen. Then there was the sound of a small aircraft high in the blue bowl of the sky. Looking up, he could just make out the shape of a single engined plane. By its leisurely speed he knew it was not a fighter.

Since he was a boy, Bert had been mad keen on aircraft and would have joined the RAF if they had let him. But no, they didn't want asthmatics like Bert. However, there was nothing wrong with his eyesight and even at that height he recognised the aircraft as a German Storch spotter. Now the Luftwaffe had driven the RAF from the skies there was no need for it to hurry.

Forgetting all about his tomatoes, Bert hurried to the entrance of the allotments where his bike was propped up against a tree in Muddy Lane. By the time he arrived back at his little cottage in Eastfield Lane, his wife Rose was standing anxiously at the gate.

"Oh Bert," she said tearfully. "Mr Churchill's been on the radio. He says the jerries have invaded along the south coast!"

“Yeah I know gal. I’ve just seen one of their spotter planes above the allotments. No more than we expected was it?”

“But Bert, what are we going to do?” Rose wailed.

“We’re going to fight Rose, we always knew that didn’t we? What did Winnie say? Fight ‘em on the beaches. Well looks like we’re going to fight ‘em in the High Street as well. Now I’m going to get my rifle and helmet. You’d better fetch the kids from school.”

Just then, the bells of St Mary’s began to toll. In the distance came the mournful wail of sirens from the direction of Reading.

As Bert made his way up the High Street, he was joined by Joe Mankin the landlord of The Greyhound. He was already out of breath as he tried to keep up with the other man. Joe would never run away from the jerries, he’d be out of breath in no time.

The small contingent of Home Guard gathered at the entrance to the new army camp in Manor Road. They were met by a tall thin man with a shock of dark hair. The flashes on the upper part his shoulders marked him out as a Canadian.

“Captain Joe McGregor, Royal Canadian Fusiliers,” he said by way of introduction.

“I’m Captain Emmerson, head of the village Home Guard,” a bespectacled man in his fifties spoke up. “What would you like us to do Captain?”

What indeed? McGregor wondered as he cast his eye along the rank of assorted farm hands and bank clerks. Most had guns of sorts, but he noticed a few just had scythes and pitchforks. Still, he had no doubt they would do their duty when the time came. But how many would be alive after the Panzers had crashed through the village?

“Well, I guess you had better take up defensive positions with my men along the river and by the bridge,” McGregor said. “That’s the direction they’ll most likely come.”

The invasion of England dubbed Operation Sealion had begun in the early hours of that morning. The main force under the overall command of General Von Rundstedt landed along the coast from Ramsgate in the east to Portsmouth in the west. Although the

German 16th Army quickly established a beach-head along the south coast they had soon become bogged down in heavy fighting. Large numbers of German fallschirmjager (parachutists) had landed in Dover and Brighton just after dawn and were now involved in desperate street to street combat. Both towns were in flames with many buildings reduced to rubble.

Other contingents of the 16th who had landed to the west of Portsmouth had made greater progress having by-passed the main city with her heavy defences. By ten o'clock, they were already to the north of Petersfield as a large group of Panzer tanks and armoured personnel carriers travelled up the A3.

By eleven o'clock Bert Higson was hidden in undergrowth close to the toll bridge. Next to him Dave Smalley, a short-sighted farm worker, was nervously clutching his rifle. It was no exaggeration to say that Dave irritated Bert beyond belief and today was no exception.

"Bert."

"Yeah, what is it?"

"I got to go!" Dave said with a tremor in his voice.

"Go where?"

"I got to have a pee."

"Well you better hurry up," Bert murmured crossly. "We can't keep Adolf waiting can we?" As far as Dave was concerned, they could keep Herr Hitler waiting for the whole of the war.

Just then there was the baleful sound of Stuka dive bombers, followed by the rumble of explosions as they softened up Reading.

"They ours Bert?" Dave asked.

"Oh yes bound to be aren't they?" Bert replied sarcastically. "Probably using the Town Hall for target practice!"

"They wouldn't do that would they?"

The first they knew the Germans had arrived was the low rumble of a diesel engine accompanied by a metallic clanking sound coming from Pangbourne. Suddenly the sound stopped as a volley of shots

rang out. Almost immediately this was followed by a roar as the Panzer fired its massive gun. A huge mushroom of smoke, flame and debris billowed above the rooftops of Pangbourne.

“Blimey, some poor so and so’s copped it,” Bert muttered fearfully.

Then the ominous rumble and clanking began again, steadily growing in volume. Soon the whole ground was vibrating as if the very doors of hell were slamming.

Moments later the camouflaged barrel of a Panzer appeared from behind the undergrowth on the Pangbourne side of the bridge. As it grew in length, it turned and the rest of the tank crashed through the trees and bushes sending a flight of ducks squawking in panic upstream. The huge tank paused filling the entrance to the bridge. Evil sparkles of flame danced around its turret as it fired its machine gun towards Witchchurch. Bert pressed his face into the damp soil as bullets ripped through the summer leaves like angry bees inches above his head. Suddenly Dave gave a sharp cry followed by an ominous silence. Peering through the grass, Bert could see his twisted, lifeless body with his glasses half hanging off his bloody face.

As the Panzer had begun to move forward across the bridge, figures of soldiers in coal scuttle helmets were running along behind using it for cover. A volley of shots broke out from around the tollhouse as a mixed group of home guardsmen and Canadian soldiers opened up with their rifles. But they were no match for the mighty behemoth grinding towards them.

Bert knew this was the day he would die. Closing his eyes he prayed that Rose and the kids would somehow come through all this. The Panzer was now nearing the middle of the bridge and paused to take aim with its huge gun.

Then a miracle happened. With a creaking groan that grew into a huge crash the old toll bridge disintegrated tipping the huge tank into the Thames. The metal girders and road also collapsed, spilling the following soldiers into its waters. As the tank settled into the river with its turret above the surface, its crew began jumping out of the access hatch. The first two men were cut down before the others hastily raised their hands.

The achilles heel of Operation Sealion was now exposed here as in many thousands of other points along the battlefield. Like so many bridges throughout Britain, the tollbridge was nowhere near strong enough to take the German armaments and had simply collapsed. Similar scenes were being re-enacted along the whole southern battlefield as bridges and roads collapsed under the huge weight of German tanks and vehicles. Sure, the invaders would replace them in time, but Von Rundstedt had none of that particular commodity to spare. This advance was to be no rush across flat Russian steppes or Polish plains

The invasion force had met its nemesis not by massed legions but by Chesterton's "Rolling English Road."

St Mary's Churchyard, Whitchurch August 1976

Bert and Rose Higson stood side by side in front of the simple gravestone shadowed by the big yew tree. High above them in the hot blue sky a plane growled through a loop the loop. Bert looked up. No it wasn't a Storch spotter this time, but the weather was just as hot as on that fateful day nearly forty years ago. After bowing their heads in a brief prayer, Rose knelt down and placed a bunch of wildflowers on the grave. Then Bert knelt down and read the inscription on the tombstone as he always did every year.:

Sacred to the Memory of David William Smalley 12th January 1922 – 6th August 1940 Who fell near this place in the service of his country.

"Take care of yourself Dave," Bert said and, as he always did, placed one of his prize winning tomatoes next to the bunch of wildflowers.

WHITCHURCH CRICKET CLUB

The village cricket club season is in full swing with more wins than losses so far this year (makes a change!) We're always looking for new players and helpers; just drop in one weekend and introduce yourself, or email Lyn Williams at lwilliams@britishhorseracing.com. You can also checkout all our fixtures at <http://www.whitchurchcricket.co.uk/>



WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES VILLAGE FETE



SATURDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2-5pm
THE VILLAGE GREEN, EASTFIELD LANE



Kids Go Karting
& Entertainment
Tea & Beer Tents
Dog Show
Live Music

BBQ
Meet Cinderella
& Spiderman!!!
Plus a fantastic
selection of stalls

**Grand Prize Draw
on the day!**
Top prizes include:
Xbox 1, Nirvana Spa
Vouchers, £50 Cash...



Kindly sponsored by:



Warmingham

All proceeds are in aid of:
whitchurchpreschool.org



SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit Village web-site (whitchurchonthames.com) for any updates.

Date	Event	Details
31st July	Mothing at Chalkhills	From 9am, Near Bozodown Alpacas
6th August	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
3rd Sept	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
3rd Sept	Whitchurch on Thames Village Fete	2-5pm, Village Green
3rd Sept	Goring Hth & Whitchurch Autumn Show	2:30-4pm, Goring Hth Parish Hall
15th Sept	History Society lecture: Eccentric London by Alan Copeland	8pm, Goring Hth Parish Hall
1st Oct	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
16th Oct	WS Autumn Walk (provisional)	10am, The Greyhound PH
20th Oct	History Society lecture: English Country Houses by Alastair Lack	8pm, Goring Hth Parish Hall
5th Nov	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
19th-20th Nov	WS Arts & Craft Exhibition	Village Hall

The next Edition of the WOT Bulletin will be published in October and will cover events in the months of November to January (inc). Deadline for articles will be Sunday 9th October and the Bulletin will be distributed w/e 22nd – 23rd October. Articles from anyone in the Village that may be of interest are always welcomed and can be emailed to me at richardwill444@onetel.com

Richard Williams