

# The Bulletin of Whitchurch on Thames

## January 2014

**Whitchurchonthames.com**

### Sandbags in Whitchurch!

It is Friday 10th January and it begins to look as if the level of the River has at last started to go down. Below the weir the level is still above the previous record high. There are pictures on the WoT web site where you will also find Nick Brazil's videos.

This morning there were worries that houses in Eastfield Lane might be threatened. We called for assistance from OCC and Stephen Trinder called for assistance from SODC. Within the hour OCC had delivered sandbags, SODC had sent a truck loaded with sandbags and Chris Softley from OCC Highways had arrived. Chris cleared a couple of drainage grids and those drains started to draw water away. By that stage we could see that although there were some enormous puddles only two houses had real problems. The Greyhound was also at some risk. Chris subsequently arranged for another fifty sandbags to divert water away from them.

My concern now is that none of that water came from the High Street, very little was run off from the land nearby and none of the water on the Lane itself was flood water directly from the Thames. Most if not all of the water on the Lane was welling up from a single drain cover, and that was at the point where the underground culvert turns towards the River.

The other end of that culvert is a considerable distance above the weir beyond Aldridge's farm and is part of an extensive system that is said (probably?) to be Saxon in origin. It is covered by ancient rights and the flora and fauna in it are protected. From the Village's point of view the solution would be to find a way of diverting the water back into the River before it crosses the High Street.

It does seem that we would need lengthy discussions with land owners and also with agencies that are not noted for accepting change of any sort.

Although some people in our Village have been badly affected others have had a much rougher time. Chris said he has been to villages before he got to us where the water was a metre deep. Similar depths have been reported for parts of Pangbourne.

## **Monitoring the River**

For those interested, the Environment Agency has automated level sensors both above and below the lock that are updated every few hours. You can see them if you Google *River Levels* and work your way through the reference to the Environment Agency.

## **Cuts in Oxfordshire County Council Budgets**

We are constantly being reminded by our County Councillor Kevin Bullmer that OCC has had its funding slashed heavily by the government. I think this will trickle down to SODC and then to us when we will find that to keep our Village as we like we will have just two choices. We can pay for the jobs to be done from Parish funds, which of course come back to our households as Council Tax. Or we can get the jobs done by our valiant volunteers.

Quite a lot happens already. I recently saw someone clearing a huge pile of leaves from the High Street just below Hartslock Bridleway. The “Cut” has been cleared. Some guerrilla gardening by Keith *the bandit* Brooks has greatly improved the bank opposite the Gallery. The benches on the High Street have been renovated, the phone box has had glass replaced and a coat of new red paint. That is just a few instances: the list goes on.

All this is of course very ad hoc at the moment. It would be even more effective if it could be organised a little more formally. I am starting to look for a suitable scheme and would be pleased to hear from anyone who thinks they can help.

# **COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNINGS**

**EVERY TUESDAY IN TERM TIME**

**10.30 am - 12 noon**

**Have you been to one yet???**

**If not - why not?**

**A good spot to rest after a shopping  
excursion to Pangbourne,  
before tackling the Hill!!**

**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**

## **NEW YEAR WALK**

In spite of appalling weather a band of 23 hardy people from the village met by the Greyhound pub in Whitchurch and, suitably clad to ward off the inclement weather, strode out bravely with a couple of dogs up Whitchurch Hill, wending their way by lanes, woods and paths through Crays Pond and across farmland to Beech Farm and return back down the hill again to the village, finishing just as a deluge of rain came in from the West.

Warm thanks to Eric Hartley and Mike Scott who reconnoitred the 6 mile route, laying down advanced route signs, and on the walk itself shepherded, marshalled and encouraged the hearty but bedraggled walkers.

The star of the walkers was mum Felipa House and the young champion six year old Izzy who walked all the way. Do we have a budding Arctic Polar explorer in our midst?

People who were not soaked through retired to the Grey Hound pub courtesy of Bob and Carole for well-deserved sustenance.

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

Our speaker for February 20th will be Shaun Morley, on the welfare of the poor in the nineteenth century - a topic which has contemporary resonances! Shaun is a well respected speaker on society in Victorian times and a tutor at the Department for Continuing Education at Oxford. This will be an especially interesting talk for us as it is based on many original documents from Whitchurch, which Shaun consulted for his DPhil.

The meeting will be at Whitchurch Village Hall at 8pm, and the talk will follow a short Annual General Meeting.

At the same time and place on March 20th we will be holding our meeting on the Polish Camp in Whitchurch.

## **Combating Rural Crime Action Days**

Thames Valley Police are running more action days to combat rural crime across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse in January and February. As part of these days PCSOs will be available to visit your farm or rural business and visibly mark your property with a CREMARK pen. This is a paint pen which is then sealed with lacquer and provides an overt visible deterrent to thieves. This is a free service.

The action days are:

Didcot	Thursday	16th January
Abingdon	Friday	17 <sup>th</sup> January
Thame	Saturday	25 <sup>th</sup> January
Henley	Thursday	30 <sup>th</sup> January
Wantage	Saturday	1 <sup>st</sup> February
Faringdon	Tuesday	4 <sup>th</sup> February
Wallingford	Saturday	8 <sup>th</sup> February

To book an appointment in your area please contact Ali Smith, Crime Reduction Advisor on 01865 555129 or email her on [Alison.smith4@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Alison.smith4@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

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## **Our Woodcote Library (OWL)**

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at Woodcote Library on Monday 3rd March at 7.30pm. Consultations with Oxfordshire County Council are progressing, and we will be holding public meetings later in the year to report when the final agreement is reached and to recruit volunteers.

## **Whitchurch United Charities**

Don't forget that our local parish charity is established to support students and families with the cost of books and equipment or other educational expenses. Eligible students are young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the ecclesiastical parish of Whitchurch.

You can apply for a grant at any time of the year. If there are any available funds from the previous 6 month period that have not been fully allocated then your application will be considered immediately. Otherwise it will be deferred until the next closing date of which there are two each year, 28<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> August.

All applications and decisions are treated in strict confidence by the Trustees.

If you would like to know more, please do contact Peter Hawley (our Grant Application Secretary) on (0118) 984 1647 or write to him at:-

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

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## **Whitchurch & Goring Heath Twinning Association**

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 7th February at 8pm in the Old Rectory Stables, Whitchurch. This year, on the first weekend in May, we travel to La Bouille, near Rouen in Normandy to enjoy a weekend of French hospitality and culture, and all are welcome to join us. More information from [vickyjordan5@hotmail.com](mailto:vickyjordan5@hotmail.com) or 01189 843260.

Goring Heath and Whitchurch  
**Spring Show**  
Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Open to all residents of Goring Heath and Whitchurch

Competition classes for Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables and Eggs  
and for

<b>Flower Arranging</b>	<b>Handicraft</b>
An arrangement in a jug	A box for a gift
'Easter Morning'	A bookmark
'Spring has Sprung'	A greetings card
<b>Art (no larger than A3)</b>	<b>Baking and Preserves</b>
Pets in any medium	A Jar of Seville orange marmalade
Bridges	Fruit upside down cake
Circles, squares, triangles	A savoury filo pastry parcel
<b>Photography</b>	<b>Children (up to 12 years)</b>
A single tree	An eggshell mosaic
Roof tops	
A walk on the wild side	

The full schedule and entry form will be available nearer the time on the village website  
[www.whitchurchonthames.com/diary.php](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com/diary.php) and from the committee members shown below

Ann Lewis : 0118 984 2377

Liz Gibson : 0118 984 2012

Rosamund Heath : 0118 984 2358

Sue Sexon : 0118 984 2036

Helen Willis: 0118 984 3620

*Please feel free to phone one of us if you have any questions*

# **HARDWICK LECTURE**

## **GENETIC ROULETTE**

Everything you need to know about GMO – and more.

We are delighted to announce that Jeffrey Smith, the World's leading expert on genetic engineering and its consequences, will be giving this Hardwick Lecture.

The evening will provide a unique opportunity to hear direct from the author of 'Genetic Roulette' and 'Seeds of Deception', who is in the country for just one week, in order to alert the U.K. public to the human and environmental health implications of being on the receiving end of a GMO diet.

**Book early to avoid disappointment.**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 – 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)

Tickets £8 includes a hearty bowl of GMO free soup.  
[www.hardwickestate.co.uk](http://www.hardwickestate.co.uk)

## **The Handicraft Afternoon**

has been very successful and is continuing in 2014  
On the first Thursday of every month  
from 2.00 - 4.00pm.  
At the Old Stables.

Do come and Join in.

**Goring Heath Parish Charity  
Regd. No 1056772**

***??QUIZ NIGHT??***

***GORING HEATH PARISH HALL***

***SATURDAY 15TH MARCH***

***8PM***

*Its that time of year again!*

*Don't miss out on the now famous*

***MIKE HOLLAND QUIZ NIGHT!***

*Teams of approximately six.*

*Its competitive,*

*Its ruthless,*

*Its fun!!*

## News from Basildon Park

Basildon Park had a fantastic 2013, in fact our best year so far. Our local community contributed enormously, especially with the Ball Run success. We want to thank you for all your support and we hope you will continue to enjoy our beautiful property throughout 2014.

Our season will start 1 February with the house open for guided tours only and our wonderful 'Follow your Heart' trail around the grounds. We are inviting you to join the first parkland walk on Friday 7 February at 11am, with our very knowledgeable warden Granville Nicholls that have been working here for 25 years.

This year we are delighted that our opening times have extended throughout Boxing day and New Year's Day, therefore will be open every day except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

You have probably heard about our latest filming project that happened last summer. It was a really busy time for us and we even had to close the house for a couple of weekends. You were really lovely and we appreciate your understanding and support in helping us make this project a success.

We are excited about the coming season and the opportunity to see the elegant interiors of Basildon Park lighting up the small screen of such a well-loved British drama. Please check our website during January for the latest news and updates.

### **Have you thought about join our team...**

We have over 200 volunteers as part of our team here at Basildon Park. We are always looking for enthusiastic people to join our beautiful property. We have something for everyone. From engaging with our visitors upon their arrival or sharing stories about the house to taking care of our gardens or leading a walk through our beautiful parkland.

Enjoy meeting like-minded people who sharing your passion for people history and the outdoors.

You can find out more information on our website  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/basildonpark](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/basildonpark) or call us on 01189 84 3040.

# Woodcote Library

## Happy New Year!

We would like to thank OWL and Woodcote Rally for buying the new rug for the library, the rug is bright and colourful and the children love to sit on it and listen to stories or join in with songs during Rhymetimes. Rhymetimes are on Thursday mornings from 10-10.30 and are led by Joanne Richards. Joanne is a volunteer, we are lucky to have her - she has a great voice and keeps us all on track. Thank you Joanne.

We are about to start our basic Computer course, an hour or so a week for six weeks. This course is run by an Age UK Volunteer, we are very grateful to John for coming in to organise the course. Thank you John.

The beginning of a new year seems a good time to remind people of what Woodcote Library has to offer: We have three public computer terminals with internet access, they are free to use. There is a small charge for printing, you can book a time to use them by phoning us on 01491 682323 or take a chance and just pop in. We also have a photocopier for public use, A4 copies are 10p each.

If you loose your bus pass you can complete a form and pay for a replacement bus pass at the library, the replacement cost is £10, the bus pass will be posted to you within 10 days.

We have a local history section, where you can find books and information about the Woodcote area. The local history section contains a transcript of the St. Leonards parish register of births, marriages and deaths from 1846.

The library has DVDs to rent, prices range are from £1.25 to £3.50 per week. We have jigsaw and magazine swap boxes and we are a collection point for used stamps.

You can download audio and e-books from the website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries)

Lastly, but most importantly, we hold a stock of about 8000 books which we continually change and update - these are free to borrow for three weeks.

During January we are having a systems update so please make sure that you bring your library card with you when you come to the library so that you can access all the library facilities. Thank you.

# PANGBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

## PANGBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY TO SING MENDELSSOHN'S 'ELIJAH'.

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February, Pangbourne Choral Society will open their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season with a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The concert will commence at 7.00pm at Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne College.

Mendelssohn first performed *Elijah* in 1846 just two years before his death at age 38. The classical structure of the work looks back to Bach and Handel, whose music he loved, but is also infused with contemporary romantic feeling. Consequently, the story of the prophet and his confrontation with the priests of Baal is highly dramatic and punctuated by the reflective lyricism of Elijah's solo musings on the challenges he faces.

Jonathan Brown, PCS Music Director, will conduct the Southern Sinfonia and the four soloists are Claire Seaton (Soprano), Claire Williams (Mezzo Soprano) and, making their PCS debuts, Richard Coxon (Tenor) and Quentin Hayes (Baritone).

Comments Diana Smith, PCS Chairman, 'We're really looking forward to singing *Elijah*, for the first time in almost twenty years. To open our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season with it is very special. Claire Seaton and Claire Williams have sung with us before to great acclaim. Both are highly respected and hugely experienced. Richard Coxon is a regular performer at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival and the ENO. And Quentin Hayes has a well-deserved and much acclaimed reputation based on his international performances and his years as a Principal Artist with the Royal Opera House. We look forward to welcoming them both on debut.'

Pangbourne Choral Society gave its first performance back in 1974 under the baton of its founder, Ralph Allwood, and has flourished ever since. Next June there will be a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration concert at Pangbourne College, when the four past and present Music Directors of PCS will each conduct a piece of their choice.

Tickets (£15 including programme) will be available from Premier Pets High Street Pangbourne, online ([www.pangbournechoral.org.uk](http://www.pangbournechoral.org.uk)) and via PCS members or on the door. *Early booking is advised as Pangbourne Choral Society concerts are in high demand and usually sell out fast.*

Further information from <http://www.pangbournechoral.org.uk> or email  
[info@pangbournechoral.org.uk](mailto:info@pangbournechoral.org.uk)

Tony Maynard

## Thimble Mill

It was kindly pointed out to me that on the 1786 sketch of the river a mill is shown on the Pangbourne side named Thimble Mill. I have established that the small bridge over the Pang which we cross to get to the station is called Thimble Bridge.

My researches so far have revealed little else other than that there was a metal working establishment in that area. A thimble is not only the protective device used when sewing, but also the protective metal hoop (the eye) that fits inside a rope bent back on itself and spliced for mooring. It is also used in engineering to describe a ring, a tube, a sleeve, a bushing or ferrule.

According to Wikipedia the earliest known thimble, in the form of a simple ring, dates back to the Han Dynasty in China; 10<sup>th</sup> century thimbles have been found in England and were in common use in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They were produced in Nuremberg in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in Holland in the 17<sup>th</sup>. In 1693 a Dutch thimblemaker (Der Finger hüter) named John Lofting established a factory in Islington and then moved his mill to Buckinghamshire to take advantage of water powered production (the Pang used similarly?). He produced two million thimbles a year!

There must be more information out there?

Eric

# **howdenjones in Concert**

## **'Beautiful Music in Beautiful Places' Tour 2014**

At Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill, RG8 7NY

Friday 28th March 2014 7pm for 7.30pm.

Creating their 'beautiful music in beautiful places' Tour,

Kate and Paul have been sharing their music and stories, often meeting friendly, fascinating people and visiting some wonderful, unusual venues in sometimes remote and always beautiful areas along the way. They write about life and their observations of it, often poignant, sometimes humorous, and gathering new material as they travel, they captivate an audience in a unique intimate atmosphere.

Their show has been described as, 'relaxed and enchanting' and 'an absolute delight', 'their joy, talent and good humour were infectious'.

'music for all ages 'With a variety of instruments including, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, bodhran and banjo, superb harmonies and great musicianship.

howdenjones will promise to give you a foot tapping and thought provoking evening with plenty of smiles!

You can hear examples of howdenjones music by visiting

**[www.howdenjones.co.uk](http://www.howdenjones.co.uk)**

***Drinks and refreshments - Tickets £10 each  
from 01189842056***

## **DIARY DATES**

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

### **February**

<b>Friday 7th</b>	<b>Twinning AGM</b>
<b>Wednesday 12th</b>	<b>Hardwick Lecture</b>
<b>Saturday 15th</b>	<b>Pang Choral Soc concert</b>
<b>Thursday 20th</b>	<b>History Society</b>

### **March**

<b>Monday 3rd</b>	<b>OWL AGM</b>
<b>Saturday 15th</b>	<b>Quiz Night</b>
<b>Thursday 20th</b>	<b>History Society</b>
<b>Friday 28th</b>	<b>howdenjones concert</b>

### **April**

<b>Saturday 5th</b>	<b>Spring Gardening Show</b>
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### **THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN**

will be published in March 2014

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**  
[Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com](mailto:Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com) **by 6th March 2014**

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