

# **The Bulletin of Whitchurch on Thames**

whitchurchonthames.com

May 2014

If the forecasts are correct, by the time you read this those winds and very sharp showers of early May will be a distant memory .

Even now Mother Nature seems to be playing catch-up. Soon there will be the sound of leather against willow on the Village green and that reminds me that one of our Village Projects is to renew the Cricket Pavilion.

The basic idea is for a building with changing rooms that can be used by cricket teams in the summer, football teams in the winter and as a focus and tea room for fetes and other celebrations.

There is of course the problem that such a building costs money and rather a lot of it! There are grants available and Harvey has been looking into what might be available. He thinks that we could get about half the cost covered by grants but we do have to show we can raise the other half ourselves.

It looks as if we will need to show we can raise at least £75K. This Village is certainly capable of that if it decides it wants to. As evidence the trees, hedging, and seats already on the Village Green must have cost their donors something like £2000. I think we can expect any local club which anticipates use of the Green to contribute. Harvey is working on an approach to local businesses and companies.

The Village Green is gradually growing in popularity and it is slowly becoming what it has always had the potential to be, which is one of the focal points of the Village. As such many of our residents will also feel that they would like to be part of the action. The person to contact is Harvey Ainley .

In the meantime volunteers ( and the Woolhouses in particular) have put

much effort into the Green and also the Maze area. At the beginning of May Laura Lucas suggested that as a recognition of the 1914 centenary the long mound alongside the cricket nets would look fantastic covered in poppies. So she obtained seeds from the British Legion and organised a poppy seeding session.

I am sure I have no need to comment on the Bridge delays.

The group working on the Hardwick Road passing place and path project are no further forward and are as frustrated as ever. It is not a question of red tape or being smothered in paper work. On the contrary, it seems (even with the help of our County Councillor) the various OCC departments which might be concerned disagree about which one bit of paper is the one that is actually necessary.

Looking back for a moment to the earlier part of the year, the group working on a report for the flood which caused the foul water pumps in Eastfield Lane to overload in such an unpleasant way, are still collecting information. There is much more detail needed for the full picture than might be expected and with some of it going back to Saxon times it is not always easy to find or to define.

The group, which includes (retired) professional civil engineers, expects to provide an interim report to SODC shortly and a meeting has been arranged for this. Before issuing a final version of their report the group needs the results of a detailed survey of the all the ducts, channels and culverts from the Greyhound to the Thames. This includes sending a camera down all buried pipework. The objective is to make sure we understand the whole situation properly so that when action is taken to prevent a repetition we can be confident that we will get it right.

Finally, you will have noticed that Pam Warren's book has now been released. There is a problem: if you can't find it someone else is reading it.

*Harry Butterworth*

## **Message for local businesses from John Howell MP**

With the extended closure of Whitchurch Bridge I am concerned to know if any local businesses are adversely affected as a result of the lack of access from across the river. If you have experienced a downturn in trade that can be attributed to the bridge closure you may be able to get a discount on your business rates.

If this applies to your business, in the first instance you would need to contact the Valuation Office Agency directly with the appropriate evidence. I am happy to support you in approaching them. If any local business runs into problems with this I am happy to see if I can help.

With best wishes

John Howell

[John.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:John.howell.mp@parliament.uk)

MP for the Henley Constituency

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## **WHITCHURCH SOCIETY**

### **GARDEN WALK SUNDAY 15 JUNE**

Gardens will open from 1.30 to 4.30 pm. As in the past, with the generous agreement of Matilda and Neil King, tea and cakes will be served in The White House garden from 4 pm. Cost £3 adults, £1 children.

Matilda is happy for children to use the swimming pool provided they are supervised. The tennis court is also available if you bring your own racquets. A list of open gardens will be delivered to each household nearer the date. A Garden Open notice will be displayed at each address.

We have signed up five gardens to date, including two new or not shown for many years, but would like 2 or 3 more. Please contact the undersigned ASAP if you are interested in showing your garden.

Ian Bruce

Secretary – tel 984 2653, mobile 07879 405559, email

[ian.bruce@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.bruce@btinternet.com)



## **\*\* Forthcoming Events for 2014**

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### **WILDLIFE EXPLORERS DAY**

**at CHALKHILLS, HARDWICK RD,  
WHITCHURCH, RG8 7QS**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June 11am**

This event is being run for children aged 5 – 11 at this lovely private location of chalk grassland surrounded by mixed woodland, on the edge of the Chilterns.

The children will look for and learn about the different creatures and plants which are found in the fields and woods at Chalkhills, at the same time as having fun and enjoying themselves!

### **HARDWICK HAY MEADOWS WALK**

**at HARDWICK ESTATE, WHITCHURCH**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July PM**

This is a joint event organised by PAWS (Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group) and WoTHabs. It will be another wonderful opportunity to visit the stunning flower-rich riverside hay meadow at Hardwick Estate just before hay-making. There will be guided walks with fun challenges for children and refreshments too. Parking and access to the meadow via Sheepwash Lane.

For more details about these events, look out for posters, contact our Secretary John Bradon on 0118 9841574 or visit our website  
4 on [www.oxnet.org.uk/wothabs](http://www.oxnet.org.uk/wothabs)

**Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Day**  
**Pangbourne Village Hall**  
**Saturday 14th June from 10am to 3pm**

There will be 15 – 20 stands with representatives of local Sustainability Initiatives on hand to provide information and discuss what's happening locally about Energy Conservation options, Biodiversity initiatives, Recycling, Green Economics, Organic Farming and buying local, amongst other sustainability initiatives.

At 12pm, there will be a presentation on the recent UN InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports by local IPCC Contributors Sir Bryan Hoskins and Nigel Arnell which should be of great interest given all the press reports they have had recently. Since September last year the IPCC has issued 3 Reports, on the science of climate change, its impacts and possible policy responses.

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## ***Maze Working Parties***

These will take place on the following Saturdays every month for this 2014 season at 10.00 am

**3rd May, 7th June 5th July**

**2nd August, 6th September, 4th October**

**Please come along and help with edging, sweeping, and general maintenance of the Maze and contribute to the important effort in keeping this special place looking good.**  
**All tools provided.**

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

Our visit over the early May bank holiday weekend was one of the best of recent years. One reason for this was the leisurely travel afforded by starting on the Friday before, another the fascinating programme of visits, and of course the sunny spring weather helped. A constant is the warm welcome and the liberal hospitality we received.

On our arrival on the Friday evening the group joined their hosts and spent Saturday with them on local visits. Many went to the abbey of Bec-Hellouin, whose local connection is preserved in the name of Bec Tithe, in Whitchurch Hill. Saturday evening found us at a reception for sixty people in the hall at La Bouille. Our gift, a delightful watercolour by Stephen Trinder of Whitchurch Bridge, was much admired. After speeches and champagne toasts we settled down for a four course meal with much chatter in both languages, renewing old friendships.

The Sunday visits to the attractive towns of Bayeux and Arromanches will live long in the memory. Our copy of the Bayeux Tapestry in Reading Museum is not completely exact and it was fascinating to see the original, with colours remarkably fresh. The Museum had a great deal of background information about the Norman invasion, shown in models, film and computer displays. After lunch we were lucky enough visit the Cathedral, hear an international choir practice and see the new bell struck in time for the D-Day celebrations.

Not far away on the coast, Arromanches is a pretty seaside town, with carousel, cafes and candyfloss, but more importantly the museum showing the building of the Mulberry Harbour there – some of the concrete blocks can still be seen offshore. The tremendous feat of towing the vast amount of material which made up the harbour was explained in film, exhibits and guide. The reality of D-Day was brought home effectively, bringing a tear to many eyes.

On Monday, after shopping, walks and visits, we embarked on our return journey, bringing with us the best wishes of our French friends. We missed the company of several of our regular twinningers through illness, accident and other engagements, and would welcome new people to join us.

## **A summer evening stroll (just over 4 miles)**

Meet at the Maze at 19:00hrs on the evening of **Wednesday 25 June** for another short walk together and another visit to The Sun.

The route will be familiar to you but, I hope, nonetheless enjoyable.

Walk down Hardwick Road to meet our first footpath on the left; follow this round the hedgerow to reach and cross the stile at the side of Path Hill. Cross over and exercise your muscles by climbing up the Baulk footpath opposite.

At the top turn left by the side of Path Hill Farm and follow the road to reach and turn left at our well-known corner; take care and cross the road to the footpath leading into the field below the cottages.

Our path follows the hedgerow to meet another kissing gate; on this occasion turn right onto Town Lane and continue to its junction with the main road. Turn left and cross with care to the verge opposite, follow round to reach and continue up the road at Hill Bottom to the newly refurbished Sun pub.

Turn right when we leave and then cross over to the small footpath almost directly opposite to reach the road leading back home. You can choose your return route but I will turn down the lane at Hod's Corner to reach the eastern end embankment of the Fort, then right along its northern boundary to meet the kissing gate on the left. This gives access to the open field to reach the kissing gate and the footpath leading to the green opposite.

There are two return routes - across the green and the main road to Beech Farm or left to cross the main road (with care) to the footpath behind the hedge and down to the War Memorial.

Eric Hartley

*The names Hod's Corner and Hod's Lane which lead to our Iron Age Fort may be derived from Odin or Woden and might have been a war path used by rampaging Danes!*

## 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



## Thimble Mill

My request for information was quickly solved and the follow up led me to the records held by the Buckinghamshire Archeological Society. They revealed that our Dutchman (John Lofting) came to Islington in 1686 and used a horse driven mill to manufacture his thimbles. He then moved to Marlow to take advantage of the available water power and the brass from the Temple Brass Mills at nearby Bisham. He produced two million thimbles for sewing in his first year of operation there. Many were exported but his skill lay in the design of the machinery which enabled his workers to produce them in large quantities.

He was a true entrepreneur (he took out a patent to make improved fire engines - lots of brass) and a patent for an engine for making thimbles in 1693. He was involved in not only using his mill for metal working but his and others nearby for grinding seeds, as corn and rape seed oil mills and for the milling and distribution of flour (I think the one in Pangbourne would have had similar multiple uses), The forgotten Buckinghamshire Industry of thimble making at Marlow is recorded in a book of the same name written by Edwin F Holme from where this information has been 'gleaned'.

The first thimbles for sewing were simple protective rings but the cone shape appeared in England in the 14th century and Nuremberg became the centre for their production. However the Netherlands took over in the 16th century and our 'Fingerhuter' Lofting transferred his production to England in the 17th century. Needless to say by the 18th century Birmingham had become the main centre for thimble manufacture in England.

The number of thimbles manufactured is truly extraordinary - I suppose they were easily mislaid but they were also considered to be a desirable present to give to a lady and many were ornate and some inlaid with jewels. It was such a productive industry that Lofting's apprentice soon broke away to set up his own manufacturing facilities. The early examples are now collectors items and there is a thriving trade still in their acquisition and display.

Eric

P.S. I forgot one other use of a thimble - for dispensing spirits - "I will just have a thimbleful".

## Woodcote Library News

National Bookstart week is taking place here between 9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> June . The theme this year is 'My Hero'. Rhymetime on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June will therefore include songs and stories around that theme. As usual we will start at 10 a.m. Please come along and enjoy the fun!

June is also the National Crime Reading Month, so we will be asking readers to nominate their favourite crime novel. We'll have a display of crime books so you can find out about other crime writers and we also have a 'killer' quiz for you to complete. Come in a have a go..

Our display of travel books and language packs has proved popular here. It's never too late to have a go at learning a local language if you are travelling abroad this summer. You can still borrow our packs or use MANGO (details given in last month's Correspondent) anytime. We also have a very useful selection of books for children on various Countries as well as travelling on planes, boats etc.

It was great to welcome the 1<sup>st</sup> Goring Heath Cubs to the library recently. They spent time here working on their Disability Awareness Badge.

From 12<sup>th</sup> July until 13<sup>th</sup> September children across Oxfordshire can join the 'Mythical Maze', which is this year's Summer Reading Challenge, at any of the Oxfordshire libraries.

The Challenge encourages children to read at least 6 books over the summer holiday collecting amazing rewards on the way. On completion, the children also receive a wristband, a medal and a certificate. Visit the library 3 times to complete the Challenge. Join up at Woodcote Library, its fun and it's FREE. Look out for fantastic new books, exciting puzzles and fun activities at the Library too.

We have been thinking about starting a reading group for older children, which would meet on a monthly basis here in the Library. Please do get in touch on 01491 682323 or by email to [Woodcote.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Woodcote.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk) if you are a Year 7 -10 and may be interested.

The next adult book club meeting is on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 6pm. Rhymetime for the under 5's continues every Thursday morning at 10am during Term Time..

# WHITCHURCH 10K

The Whitchurch 10K & 5K is a fantastic run held at Whitchurch Hill Village Green on Sunday 22nd June in aid of Whitchurch Primary School.

Following 5 successful years of the Toad Hall 10k we have decided to iron out some of the bumps and re name the event the Whitchurch 10K. We're still starting and finishing on the village green, with all the great facilities this offers but the course now continues along the river to Mapledurham and then back through the woods, with a more gradual, single climb back. The course is as scenic as the original but less hills, so you won't be staring at the floor and can take it all in!

Our aim for the Whitchurch 10K & 5k is to provide an enjoyable and challenging race for both club and fun runners as well as to encourage local people to give "racing" a go. As with other running events we hope it becomes part of the local sporting calendar, thereby raising funds for the school. The school has an extremely limited budget for maintenance and repair and this year we are fundraising for new children's toilets and a new stage both of which are well beyond their sell by date!

All details of how to enter and the new course can be found at [www.whitchurch10k.com](http://www.whitchurch10k.com)

## News from Basildon Park

April has passed in a blur of Easter eggs, bluebells and ball runs. It's hard to believe we're in May already and we have two busy Bank Holiday weekends and a half-term holiday ahead of us.

We had a lively Easter with lots of young visitors having a go at our Easter trail; weaving their way around the gardens in search of giant painted eggs and learning all about how people celebrate Easter in different countries around the world. Over the Bank Holiday weekend, children were invited to become 'Eggsplorers', donning an adventurer's hat and being issued with a special passport, and of course collecting that all important chocolate egg at the end. Our team were all in need of a bit of chocolate too after welcoming more than 5,000 visitors over the Bank Holiday weekend.

The last couple of weeks have seen bluebells blossoming all around our gardens and parkland. As I write, there are bright patches of lavender-blue blooms, clustered around moss covered trees trunks and sheltered by canopies of spring's fresh green leaves.

On Saturday 26th April, the skies cleared and the sun shone as three-year-old Toby Taylor cut the red ribbon to officially open The Great Ball Run 2014. Armed with their adventure journal, children can plot their route around the gardens as they discover each of the Ball Run challenges. They can try and create the fastest run for their ball and then dash alongside it to see if they can beat their ball to the finish. The Ball Run is here until 7th September so there's plenty of time to return again and again over the spring and summer.

We will be running our Rambling Roses trail from 2nd June. The trail will teach you about these summer blossoms as you meander your way around the gardens and finish up smelling the roses in Lady Iliffe's garden.

On 14th June, the day before Father's Day, amble over to our Old Kitchen where our young visitors will be able to make a special homemade gift for their Dad.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

### **Looking for a new challenge?**

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

We are holding a volunteer recruitment day on Tuesday 27th May, 12 - 3pm. Come along and find out more about the volunteering opportunities we can offer you at Basildon Park. If you can't make it, we'd still love to hear from you. Drop us an email to [basildonparkvolunteering@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:basildonparkvolunteering@nationaltrust.org.uk) or call us on 01491 672382.

## **The Goring Heath and Whitchurch Spring Show**

was held on Saturday, 5 April in the Goring Heath Parish Hall which was, as always, filled with exhibits of flowers, handicrafts, photographs and artwork produced by residents of the two villages. As well as those from many of our stalwart regulars, it was especially gratifying to have a number of entries from people exhibiting for the first time and we very much hope they'll be back at the next show.

The prizes were presented by Tricia Woodage who attends the show with her husband David, our judge for the flower section. The winners were:

The DOUGLAS ALLERDYCE MEMORIAL ROSE BOWL for 'Best in Show' was won by Sally Trinder for a stunning bowl of tulips.

The BETTY HAYTER MEMORIAL CUP for 'the most points in the Flower Section' and the WHITCHURCH HILL TROPHY for 'the most points overall' were retained by regular winner Dave Sexon.

The FLORAL ARRANGEMENT TROPHY (a new addition to the trophies) went to Tricia Clapp who also won the ARTS AND CRAFTS TROPHY.

The BAKING AND PRESERVES CUP was retained by Pam Wilkinson with the judge on the day saying that Pam's entries were the best she had seen for some time.

The PHOTOGRAPHY CUP was awarded jointly to Chris Steven and David Pearson for the most points in the Photography Section which had attracted a particularly high number of entries.

The EGG CUP was won by Peter Dragonetti.

The CHILDREN'S CUP was won by Izzie Pickess for her bold and original egg shell mosaic.

In a break from tradition, the next Show will be held on Saturday, 20 September – a few weeks later than usual – and we are particularly keen to see more children entering an exhibit. Anyone up to 12 years of age and living in Goring Heath or Whitchurch is eligible and the theme is 'Sunflower(s)' which can be grown, sewn, painted, modelled in clay or produced in any other way you can think of. With the summer holiday in between now and the Show, there's plenty of time to work on a masterpiece!

**PANGBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY**  
**40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATORY CONCERT**

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June, Pangbourne Choral Society will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a very special concert. The concert will commence at 7.00pm at Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne College.

All four Music Directors of PCS will be conducting a wide selection of works:

Ralph Allwood (PCS founder) will be conducting Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* and Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine*.

Bob Barsby will conduct Haydn's *Insanae et Vanae Curae*, Mozart's *Ave Verum*, as well as *Love Divine* by Howard Goodall.

Darren Everhart takes on Haydn's *The Heavens Are Telling* (from *The Creation*) as well as Brahms' *Wie Lieblich* (from *German Requiem*), and *Worthy is the Lamb* and the *Amen* chorus from Handel's *Messiah*.

Current Music Director (for the last eight years) Jonathan Brown will conduct Vaughan Williams' *Towards the Unknown Region* and *Geistliches Lied* by Brahms, not to mention the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. The excellent Southern Sinfonia will be joining PCS on this special evening.

Comments Diana Smith, PCS Chairman: 'We hope that as many of our followers as possible will be looking forward to attending this wonderful concert which has something for everyone in it – not too mention one or two little 'surprises!' It will also mark Jonathan's final concert with us prior to moving to Malvern College as Music Director. So we will be striving to give the best possible performance on an evening of celebration and a fond farewell. I am sure that Jonathan will come back to conduct at our Golden Anniversary in ten years time!'

Pangbourne Choral Society gave its first performance back in 1974 under the baton of its founder, Ralph Allwood, and has flourished ever since, now having 130 active members.

Tickets (£15 including programme; under-16s: £8) are now 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

WHITCHURCH HILL FETE  
*Saturday May 24th*

**2PM**

Stalls and Plants Galore  
Ferret Racing  
Punch & Judy

**Bottle Stall Raffle**  
**Children's Races & Games**

**Swing boats**

**Beer and Tea Tents**  
**Barbecue**

**25 Piece Concert Band**  
Entertainer  
Dog Show

Whitchurch Hill Recreation Ground

# DIARY DATES

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

## May

**Saturday 17th**      **Whitchurch Spring Fair**  
**Saturday 24th**      **Whitchurch Hill Fete**

## June

**Saturday 7th**      **Maze Maintenance**  
**Sunday 15th**      **Garden Walks.**  
**Sunday 22nd**      **Whitchurch 5 & 10K Run**

## July

**Saturday 5th**      **Maze Maintenance**

## THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in July 2014

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**  
[Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com](mailto:Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com) by 10th July 2014

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