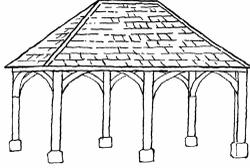


The Charlbury Chronicle



Volume 8 Number 1

March 2004

Good news at last on the new Community Centre front. There is a full report on pp 4-5 which gives an up-to-date account of the situation. Please will everyone make a point of reading this. We are also poised to launch the Charlbury Community Centre Fund-Raising Appeal with a splendid concert in St Mary's on April 25th. We are very lucky to have been offered an opportunity to hear the renowned Band of the Corps of the Royal Engineers and we hope that we will be well supported in our first event. This offer has come rather earlier than we would have wished, but it is too good to turn down and we feel certain it is going to be a resounding success. The blue pamphlet accompanying your *Charlbury Chronicle* gives all the details and we urge you to

**BOOK SOON TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT!**

We are approaching the date for local and district council elections and as usual we ask that everyone will use their vote. It is very fashionable these days to disparage

all local councils and they are a useful target for everyone's discontent with the system. However, this is the way democracy in our society works and until another system is introduced we have no alternative but to continue - so now is the time for all those people who think they could run things better to stand up and be counted and submit themselves for election. Please also read the item in the Town Council Report on p 35 which shows what the Council spends its annual budget on and what its responsibilities are.

The deadline for copy for the June issue is May 14th but do please let us know well in advance if you wish to submit an article so that space can be reserved.

Have a Happy Springtime!

Lynette Murphy

NEWS BYTES

VISIT OF AIR AMBULANCE ON NINEACRES

Great excitement on the Football pitch on Saturday, January 10th when an air ambulance landed on Nine Acres in order to pick up a footballer who sustained an injury in the course of a game. We understand that injured player has made a good recovery.

TIE UP AND TOP UP

Good news for hungry horse riders - The Bell Hotel has introduced a tie rail in the grassy section of its garden, beyond the car park. Riders out for a hack can now plan their ride so that they arrive at The Bell for a spot of refreshment knowing that there is somewhere safe to tie up their mounts while they refuel before continuing on their way.

DID YOU SEE?

The last of the current 'Midsomer Murders' series, which aired on 25 January, had a double Charlbury connection. Directed by Church Street resident, Richard Holthouse, the episode entitled 'The Maid in Splendour' also starred Freddie Jones as a lovable rogue on what turned out to be 'Freddie Jones Night' on ITV (he was also to be seen in the preceding programme 'The Royal').

MARATHON WOMAN

Janet Turner of Wychwood Close

will be running in the Flora Marathon on April 18th. She is running on behalf of the Hope Children's Charity which works through volunteers with handicapped, orphaned, poor and exploited children both in developing countries and the UK. If you would like to sponsor her, please get in touch on 810851.

FARMERS MARKET

There will be a Farmers Market on the Playing Close on Saturday, March 13th.

BEWARE! DANGER! ALERT!

A warning has been issued by the Chairman of the Gifford Trust that the site at the Spendlove can be unsafe if care is not taken, particularly for children. The fencing around the site regularly has to be made secure again because some people are opening up gaps in it. This is irresponsible behaviour and everyone is asked to be aware of the situation – a young person taking advantage of these openings recently had an accident which for a younger child could have been very serious.

WANT TO ADVERTISE?

The *Charlbury Chronicle* is delivered free each quarter to nearly 1,350 homes. There is a mailing list of over 50 subscribers. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity to advertise, please contact Jack Potten on 01608 810991.

CHARLBURY STREET FAIR SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18th 2004

Yes, it's that time again when we are starting to organise this year's **STREET FAIR**. For those of you new to Charlbury, this event is run to help with the upkeep of the Corner House & Memorial Hall, which as you will know is constantly in use by members of the Charlbury community and really does need support in this way.

This year's Street Fair is to be held on Saturday September 18th, and we will have all the usual stalls, together with the evening parade and dancing in the street until 10pm. It always is a great day. So put this date in your diary and make sure you don't miss it.

Organisations wishing to book a stall should contact Teresa on 811000 or by email at teresa@beeb.net. We do need a lot of help – either on the committee, through sponsorship or on the day. If you would like to assist and bring lots of fresh ideas, please contact Sue Cooper on 819139. Our next meeting will be held on March 11th in the Corner House at 8pm.

The success of past Street Fairs is due to the fantastic support given by residents and businesses in Charlbury. Please help us to continue and grow from strength to strength. Look forward to seeing you all then! Finally, if you have a large gas BBQ, approximately 90 x 50 cms, and are willing to let us use it on the day, please can you contact Margaret on 810666.

OPEN GARDENS - JUNE 27th CALLING ALL GARDENERS

This will be the 6th Open Gardens Day held as part of the Street Fair. We are looking for volunteers to offer to open their gardens - of any type – either large or small, formal or informal, established or new - size doesn't matter! The gardens will be open from 2pm to 6pm. Offer of gardens are now coming in, so don't loose your slot!

If you would like to open your garden, please contact Pat Court on 811031 or by email at david.court@tesco.net.

Finally, will residents of Church Street please note that we have applied to WODC for road closure for September 18th.

Susie Finch

THE THOMAS GIFFORD CHARITY - A report from the Chairman Trevor Jones

By the time this report is published, there will have been a public meeting to report on the activities of the Charity since March 2003 and to look forward to the future of the proposed Community Centre.

I have repeated in my report each year that the legal processes to recover losses suffered by the Charity could be long and this is certainly proving to be the case. We sought to take action against the Charity's former surveyor and solicitor through a procedure known as the Professional Negligence Protocol - this was meant to take some three months but unfortunately the solicitors acting for the charity's former advisers dragged this process out for nine months. Although they denied the claims, they made no real effort to answer the substantive allegations. The Charity then sought preliminary advice from Counsel who recommended we obtain some additional information which included an independent expert opinion on the surveyor's advice. This strongly supported our case. However, when counsel prepared his final advice, he stated that the negligence of the advisers was clear but that it would be difficult to produce evidence that the primary loss of the £150,000 penalty payment was caused solely by this negligence. The advisers were negligent in, amongst many other things, advising the trustees to sign the Agreement to purchase the Spendlove site; but the trustees might have avoided the penalty payment if they had entered into a building contract before December 1999. In his view there was insufficient evidence to say that the reason the trustees had not entered into such a contract was primarily due to the negligence of the advisers. Although there was some probability of success in court it was not worth the risk, given the substantial costs of court action - particularly as the Charity has insufficient financial resources. The trustees reluctantly agreed with this advice and reported it to the Charity Commission in November. The Commission is still deciding what further action to take but it moves very slowly.

The financial position of the Charity therefore remains stretched of course. The proceeds of the sale of the Old Engine House and Allotment are 'ring-fenced'. The interest on this money helps the Charity to meet its obligations to maintain the Playing Close, along with donations from users of the Playing Close (although these could be improved), and grants where appropriate from the Town Council towards major items – for example, next year we need to carry out some surgery on the trees to ensure they stay healthy and safe.

We have made an Agreement with the Co-op for their contractors to use the Spendlove site for welfare and storage purposes whilst they demolish the existing building on their site and build the new Co-op foodstore. This agreement will last until the work is completed or September 30th or earlier. The Charity will receive a modest income which we are advised is an appropriate fee for such rental.

Plans are continuing for the proposed community centre on the Spendlove site. During the year we completed an outline specification of the proposed community centre in conjunction with representatives from the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), CEC and W.S.Atkins. We distributed this to the local elected representatives and council officers but have not extended the distribution pending solution of the Charity's outstanding issues. As previously reported the proposal is to provide community facilities for recreation, arts and life-long learning in a

contemporary format accessible to all. The key elements of the centre would be performing arts space, facilities for community education, library and computer room, meeting rooms and sports and social club. We also made an application during the year to move the footpath to go across the Spendlove centre rather than round the outside.

Although some of the financial and legal issues that have dogged the Charity in recent years remain unresolved, we have now taken the decision that we must see if these current plans can be made to happen. The site is derelict and it does no justice to the Town. Many of the facilities proposed are badly needed given the limited availability at the Corner House and Memorial Hall and given the difficulties in making the Corner House properly accessible to the disabled. With the support of our local representatives we have managed to keep the financial commitments of the OCC and WODC intact. In particular the Cabinet of WODC have agreed to extend the deadlines in the Charity's loan agreement with them by one year – this means that the detailed specification and funding plan must be agreed with WODC by December 2004 and the Centre built by March 2006. It is unlikely that there would be a further extension of time. The relevant committee of OCC have agreed that if the 'Shed' site on Nine Acres Lane were sold the proceeds would be re-invested in the Centre in addition to the OCC share of the proceeds from the sale of the old Primary School site. To allay the concerns of the current users of that site OCC would not release it until the new Centre was built. If we miss out on this opportunity, it may be years before we can start again. However, there is little point in pushing forward unless we can be reasonably sure that the proposed Centre is financially feasible. As the next stage we are therefore making grant applications to third party funding bodies for funds to bridge a large part of the gap between the project cost and the commitments that would be made by OCC, WODC and the Town Council. The remainder would need to be met by a substantial local fund-raising effort. The first major applications will be made shortly and we will seek early feedback from the grant-making organisations as to whether we are on the right track. However it will be September before we know for sure whether the necessary grants will be forthcoming.

Lynette Murphy has kindly offered to lead the local fundraising programme but an immense amount of voluntary help and support will be necessary to make it successful. We are conscious that getting the timing of this programme right will be important - given past history, residents will want to have reasonable confidence that all their support will be worthwhile; on the other hand, funding organisations will only support a project that is actively supported by the community. The intention is that as soon as we get positive views from these funding organisations we will devise a programme to communicate with every household in Charlbury and surrounding villages. Substantial sums will need to be raised from the community through local fund-raising events, individual donations and sponsorship. **Money collected will be ring-fenced until it is clear the project can meet its total funding target.** Every group or organisation that can benefit from the proposed community centre can help in its own way.

Anyone who wishes to find out more about the current position can get in touch with William Hackman (811110) or myself (810644 or e-mail trevor.jones@ophiopogon.com); offers of help for fund-raising projects should be made to Lynette Murphy (810549).

[Please look for details of a special Royal Engineers Band Concert on April 25th in aid of the Charlbury Community Centre inside this copy of the Chronicle]

PARLIAMENTARY BILL TO BE CHANGED

Parents with disabled children will be able to dip into new government Child Trust Funds to pay for equipment and care under a concession won by our constituency MP, David Cameron. According to a recent article in *The Times*, he won a promise from ministers that disabled children will also be able to save more in their funds than the present £1,200 a year limit. The MP's 21 month old son, Ivan, suffers from severe epilepsy and cerebral palsy, so he spoke with knowledge of the problems of parents bringing up young disabled children. 'Disability brings lots of costs' said Mr Cameron. 'Families need extra respite care, nursing care, equipment and other services. In some very sad cases expensive operations may be needed. It would be mad to say to such families 'You have the money in the Child Trust Fund, but you cannot use it' he said. Ruth Kelly, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said the arguments for making special arrangements for disabled children were powerful and she promised to change the bill.

The logo for Charlbury Museum features the text 'CHARLBURY MUSEUM' in a bold, serif font, centered within a decorative, scroll-like border.

The Museum will reopen on Saturday April 3rd and will be open until the end of September from 10am to noon on Saturdays, and from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Entrance costs £1, and accompanied children are free.

If you would like to be a Museum Steward please contact Jennifer Bartlett on 810312

SAVE OUR POOL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Work is to start soon on the new swimming pool for Charlbury School, the first stage of the urgent fundraising campaign having been successfully completed. Enough funds have been raised so far to rebuild the shell of the pool and a contract has been awarded for this work. Many thanks to all those who have already contributed so far. In order to complete the refit of this important facility for Charlbury's youngest residents, around £8000 is still needed and fundraising activities are still taking place. The 1920s Murder Mystery Evening on February 28th organised by the Charlbury Beer Festival Committee promises to be an excellent night out and there will be other events coming up soon so please continue to support these whenever you can.

One particularly well supported and innovative idea is that children from the school have paid to paint a tile which will be used to form a permanent part of the fabric of the pool. An exhibition of the tiles will be staged in the school in March prior to their being fixed in place around the pool.

If you have any more fundraising ideas or would like to help in any way in the final push towards raising enough to complete the pool, contact Jane Turner via the school (Charlbury Primary School, Crawborough, Charlbury, OX7 3TX) or at jane.turner5@virgin.net.

Donations can be sent to the school and cheques should be made payable to Charlbury School Association (Swimming Pool).

Alison Holthouse

THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Residents in and around Charlbury know that it's a great place to live, but what many people may not know is that it's in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 1949 the Government gave areas of land special status - land, often remote, with wide open spaces and lots of opportunities for outdoor recreation became National Parks; areas with extensive fine landscapes and a great variety of character became Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). There are 41 AONBs in England and Wales and they are equal in importance to our National Parks. The Cotswolds is the largest covering 2,038 sq kms.

The Cotswolds AONB Partnership cares for the Cotswolds. It is made up of 34 organisations, including the NFU, West Oxfordshire District Council, the Wychwood Project and the National Trust. Working together we conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and is the only organisation to care for the whole of this area. The Partnership has a small team of staff based at Northleach, Gloucestershire and produces the Cotswold Lion newspaper (available in Charlbury library). This includes information about the area and a list of events and guided walks.

The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens is the voluntary arm of the Cotswolds AONB Partnership and several wardens live in Charlbury. Their work includes tree planting, maintaining public footpaths and dry stone walling. They also organise guided walks which are open to everyone - a wonderful way of enjoying the countryside and finding just what makes the Cotswolds an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Written by Annemarie Taylor, Information Officer for the Cotswolds AONB Partnership and resident of Charlbury

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982 (as amended)

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE

NOTICE is hereby given that Charlbury Town Council applied to West Oxfordshire District Council on 26th February 2004 for a licence to use premises at Millfield, Dyers Hill, Charlbury for the following days/times: Saturday 19th June 2004, 12 noon to 10 pm and Sunday 20th June 2004, 12 noon to 8 pm.

Any person wishing to object to this application must give notice in writing stating his objection in general terms within 14 days of this publication to: The Head of Community Safety and Licensing, West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon OX28 1NB

A LIFE'S DAY

Jon Carpenter

Bookseller & Publisher

I am usually awake by 7.30 am; I get up and make tea and drink it in bed with my partner, Sarah. I like Finstock in the early morning with the cocks crowing, the sheep bleating and even do not object to the smell of the

farmyard drifting across the road. I have always enjoyed the country. Although I was brought up in Surrey, the countryside was easily accessible and I spent a lot of my childhood and youth walking south of Banstead. My favourite walk was a ramble out to the top of Colley Hill, from where you could see right across the Weald to the South Downs. After a breakfast of muesli, I drive to Charlbury, and enjoy looking down at the valley full of mist, when the sun is shining brightly in Finstock - or it can be the other way around.

Working in Charlbury is a joy. Charlbury between 8.30 and 9.30 is in that special time frame when commuters have gone and people who work here are gathering their wits and their daily needs, and for a brief interval the greeting is "Good morning" rather than just "Hello". It is after all good to be out first thing when there are papers to be fetched, milk and bread to be bought and the simple cycle of survival kick-started again. I open the bookshop, which is also the centre of my publishing operation, so there is plenty to do. I have to check up on the book orders and also see what deliveries are coming in that day. There are invoices on the internet to be looked at and of course there is the taking care of the customers when they come in. As well as books I sell cards

designed by local artists – I think it is important for shops to have their own character - and for this reason I stock the cards as well as classical music, although it is not a big seller. My aim is to give good service, I give discounts and can usually get a book within one or two days if it is not in stock. My customers are a cross-section of Charlbury and the books they buy are varied. Many are buying for a reading group they belong to, of which there are several in Charlbury. In non-fiction, biographies are probably the most popular impulse buy. My customers are friendly and seem to enjoy coming here. Some of them are good fun. Particularly rewarding are those who are so faithful that they order by e-mail from work and pick up their books at the weekend.

I first had a bookshop in Cowley Road, Oxford in the 1970s. I had spent 6 years at university, doing a degree in Modern Languages and a course in Theology, with a Diploma of Education in between, but I was still left without a sense of direction or career. Careers advice was unknown in those days! I wanted to set up an alternative and radical bookshop and I stocked Virago books, which were only just starting then. Books on feminism were in demand and I supplied books for courses. Cowley Road was a very different place in those days – you could wander around the streets at night without fear; shops did not have to have grilles on their windows. I stayed there until the late eighties. Sarah and I then lived in South Oxford and I went to work in publishing. I worked for a firm in Basingstoke and my employer threw me in at the deepest of deep ends sending me to the Frankfurt Book Fair to sell and acquire books without even explaining how to negotiate a contract or how

royalties were calculated. Happily for me Sarah already worked in publishing so was a fund of skills and information. I learned on the hoof and fast. My experiences of publishing were not proving to be happy ones because my first firm went bust and then when I worked for a smaller company, I found it being ruined by the owners' constant arguments. The great thing about publishing is that because of computers you can publish anywhere. So I became self-employed again and we decided to move out of Oxford. It took us one and a half years to find a house off a main road where our cats would be safe and we finally chose Finstock.

In 1996 I rented an office in the old Spendlove School offices. In sunny weather it was a really hot office as it was under the roof – the kids must have suffered during lessons! I knew that I could fit into niches in the publishing world. I set up the Wychwood Press for books on local subjects and I also have the Jon Carpenter imprint. I publish books dealing with sustainability looked at from a social as well as an economic viewpoint because economic policies are determined by social values and objectives. I soon found I needed more space for my work and one day I saw that the bookshop in Market Street was closing. I went to see Geoff Walton, the owner and within ten seconds I had rented it. It was an ideal place to run the two businesses.

Each day is therefore divided between publishing and bookselling. I always make a point of closing the shop at one o'clock and taking my exercise by walking around the footpaths of Charlbury. I also walk round the town when I deliver my Christmas brochures. I go down every garden path and that is an eye-opener! It

reminds me how much relative poverty there is in a town that outsiders would regard as affluent. It also reminds me how many people live in the town, but are not "of it", how many houses have front doors oriented directly towards the garage and whose owners probably have never walked into the centre of Charlbury. In the afternoon I often look at new book proposals that have been submitted – almost all of them will be rejected. I do the typesetting of the books on the computer and that is very time-consuming. Much of the publishing work takes place elsewhere. The sales reps are based in London, as is the book warehouse. I use printers in Eastbourne, Bristol and Chippenham. The invoicing and mail orders are done by distributors. While these operations are off the premises, they all have to be co-ordinated.

I close the shop at 5.30p.m. and when I get home I am very glad to sit down with a glass of wine and compare notes with Sarah about our days. After supper I usually read or watch television. Sometimes I attend meetings of the Finstock Historical Society, which is my main activity in the village and I am responsible for booking the speakers and organising the meetings. At weekends I like to walk the local footpaths. I also enjoy music: my father passed his love of music to me. He sang in a choir that was occasionally conducted by Vaughan Williams: this early enjoyment of classical music has been an important undercurrent in my life though sadly only as a listener not a performer. In the summer I also relax in the garden. At 9.30 I go to bed and read - at the moment I am reading Alexander McCall Smith's charming "ladies' detective agency" books. I enjoy my life greatly. Running a shop reminds you that stereotypes are never typical, and that the most familiar community is full of surprises. What I wonder will today's surprise be?

NATURE NOTES: Birds and Buildings *by Christine Elliott*

Louise Spicer and I have produced an Illustrated leaflet explaining the nesting behaviour of birds that people will encounter when working around buildings. It's available at the Corner House and is being distributed with the help of local scaffolder Mr Ducker. Some of the information is shown here.

House Martins have a white rump, they arrive from Africa in mid-April. Nesting in colonies, they re-use nests from previous years and build under deep eaves for protection from rain. Nests are made from mud (lack of nearby mud seriously affects success) and are lined with feathers. House Martins nest early May until mid-September sometimes mid-October; migration can start as late as November. They can have up to 3 broods, each of 4-5 chicks, both parents share the incubation and feeding stages which take 5 weeks. Early brood fledglings help feed later chicks, so nests get crowded overnight. House Martins need a clear flight path from below into the nest. Shelves fitted below nests to catch droppings mustn't be too close or the flight path will be disrupted and the nests won't be used. Mud won't stick to replacement plastic fascia boards, but artificial nests can be erected to encourage recolonisation.

Swallows have long tail streamers; they arrive from Southern Africa in mid-April. They re-use nests from previous years and choose ledges inside outbuildings or porches. Nests are built from mud and straw/grass and are lined with a few feathers. Swallows fly into buildings via open doors and windows, so it's important to keep these open - they can fly through very narrow gaps. Swallows

nest mid-April until mid-September. They have 2 or 3 broods of 4-6 eggs each; incubation and feeding until fledging take about 5 weeks. Swallows catch flying insects to feed their chicks, they tend to fly close to the ground to catch insects, unlike House Martins and Swifts which hunt much higher in the sky.

Swifts have long pointed wings, they arrive in late-April when their screeching calls will be heard until their return to Africa in early August. Swifts nest in colonies in small crevices at roof level, e.g. between walls and fascia boards. They only land to breed, the remaining 9 months are spent entirely on the wing; they feed, mate, and sleep in flight. They drop out of the nest to get airborne since their bodies have evolved not to take-off from land. Shallow nests are made from straw and feathers caught in flight and cemented with saliva. They have a single brood of 2-3 chicks in early May which fledge after 8-11 weeks. Parents can travel 500 miles a day to gather food; they fly with mouths gaping wide to trawl the air for insects – these accumulate into a ball glued with sticky saliva which is later fed intact to a single chick. In cold weather, parents fly to warmer areas to find insects. Chicks cope with this apparent desertion by going torpid until their return (sometimes several days), so lack of activity doesn't mean the nest is abandoned.

FEEDING FARMLAND BIRDS IN WINTER (BIRD AID)

Anyone who walks up the Ditchley Road regularly may have noticed that there are a lot of little birds gathering on the roadside just past Broadstones Farmhouse. This is because grain is being scattered on the verges daily to help farmland birds survive the lean times when natural seeds and stubble seeds have all been eaten. The corn is supplied by the Friends of Wychwood who have decided to become involved in the RSPB scheme to help farmland birds. There are five sites in the Project Area where feeding is taking place. Basil Hurrell of Broadstones Farm is a very enthusiastic supporter who is putting out a bucket of grain daily for the birds. Feeding started in mid-December and is attracting large numbers of yellowhammers and chaffinches plus one jay. The hope is that the declining corn bunting and tree sparrow will also be helped. Feeding will continue until the end of March and if anyone would like to send in any sightings this would be very useful.

Louise Spicer

HOUSE MARTIN UPDATE

When the scaffolding was erected at the Rose & Crown Mr. Ducker (the scaffolder) was asked to check the nests for any birds that may not have fledged in order that I could take them to St. Tiggywinkle's Wildlife Hospital at Aylesbury where they would be cared for until they were ready to fly. Apparently no babies were found. Mr. Ducker was unaware of the situation that birds' nests are protected as explained in the *Nature Notes* article. The reference to "no common sense" was not directed at Mr. & Mrs. Page but to the situation in general where wildlife suffers because of what people do. No offence was meant and we regret any misunderstanding that may have arisen from the *Nature Notes* article. We know that Mr. & Mrs. Page are proud that house martins use their home and will do everything in their power to accommodate them successfully in the future.

Louise Spicer & Christine Elliott

HOUSE MARTIN SURVEY ENDS AFTER 9 YEARS

I have been keeping a count on occupied house martin nests in Charlbury for the last nine years and over that time have seen the number rise from 117 to 140 and back to 86 last year. The time has now come to stop this survey, but if anyone with a nest would like to let me know how it is faring, I should be delighted to hear from them.

A leaflet is being produced on how to care for birds that use houses as nesting sites. This will be available in the Corner House shortly.

Louise Spicer (810745)

St Mary's Churchyard

Following work recently undertaken a list of the memorials and tombstones in the churchyard at St Mary's is now available for inspection by people seeking the whereabouts of family burials.

Lists can be located at the Parish Office in the Vicarage, the reference section of the Library at the Corner House, and the Museum.

Anyone interested in studying these lists should know that it will not be possible to remove the lists from these locations.

Ann Simon

Letters to the Editor

From Rose Ogden

This is just a quick note to let you know how appreciative I am of your kind donation from the *Chronicle* towards the costs of my expedition to Cambodia. It will certainly go a long way to helping me achieve my goal, especially as my departure date is getting nearer. As much as I am obviously really excited about travelling, I will also miss Charlbury, so I will make sure I stay in touch. Perhaps those who have supported me would be interested to read of my adventures while I am in Cambodia, and I am glad the editor has agreed to publish a report of my trip if I can send it while I am there - if not I shall do a report for the *Chronicle* on my return. Once again, thank you ever so much for your support.

*Midsummer House,
Rochester Place*

From Annette & Tom Page

We refer to the December 2003 issue, pp18 & 19 - *Nature Notes* by Christine Elliott and *House Martin Survey 2003* by Louise Spicer. Most residents will have noticed the scaffolding around our building in the autumn, and most people will have understood that work on the roof requires scaffolding, and that one cannot always choose the time when busy workmen start the work. We had been waiting for them to come since 2002 and could not turn down their offer to start after the Street Fair. All steps were taken not to disturb any nests and checks were carried out for activity before and during the erection of the scaffolding. To the best of our knowledge no birds fell from their nests during this time, unlike previous years when several birds fell. We do all we can to help protect our environment and wish no harm to house martins, whose arrival in April is much

looked forward to. We felt that the wording in the December 2003 article was rather strong and we are glad to have had an apology from Christine Elliott and Louise Spicer, which has been on view in the bar for all to see. We quite understand their passion for nature and conservation and the countryside needs people like them, but they should be aware how they report on these matters as some comments can cause hurt and upset.

The Rose & Crown, Market Street

(NB: The editor is sorry about the reaction to the Nature Notes article in the December 2003 Chronicle. We understand that an apology has been displayed in the Rose & Crown and that the writers have spoken to Mr & Mrs Page to clear up any misunderstanding. See also p13.)

From Mr Geoffrey Walton

I was appalled to read Christine Elliott's latest Nature Notes in the December issue. Those who regularly visit the Rose and Crown know that Tom, the landlord and owner, would never knowingly harm any wildlife least of all "his" house martins. Ms Elliott implies that she must have been present more or less continuously to be sure of raising her allegations in public. If that is the case why did not she (or Louise Spicer) raise the matter directly with Tom at the time the scaffolding was being erected? Can she be sure that the Street Fair or the removal of bunting did not disturb the birds or indeed that that the birds did not fledge if indeed she was not there continuously? On a brighter note Upton House had its first house martins nests for at least four years. Perhaps a list of all nesting places in Charlbury would be appropriate since it may be that martins are moving elsewhere.

Upton House, Market Street

THE CORNBURY MUSIC FESTIVAL
FRIDAY and SATURDAY JULY 9th & 10th
Hugh Phillimore of SoundAdvice explains what is planned

Having lived on the Cornbury Estate for over 7 years, I have often thought what a perfect venue Cornbury Park is to stage a music festival. After 22 years in the live music business, I have now decided to launch my own event at Cornbury this July 9th and 10th. The festival will have a 10,000 capacity and our confirmed headline artists are Jools Holland (9th) and Blondie (10th). Other artists under consideration range from Fleetwood Mac's legendary guitarist Peter Green to jazz funk pioneers The James Taylor Quartet. The bill will also include up and coming artists and a local bands' stage in association with Fox FM.

I feel it is important to involve and benefit the local community as much as possible. Our headline charity will be the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital Appeal and we are also in discussions with the Blue Cross at Burford and the Charlbury Pre-school Group. Discussions are on-going with the Charlbury Beer Festival that falls on July 10th to see if we can accommodate them onto the Cornbury site and hopefully attract additional visitors to their event, thereby helping to raise extra funds for Charlbury School. If we manage to establish the festival this year (i.e. if I don't totally lose my shirt!) it is my intention to help raise monies towards the Charlbury Community Centre over the long term. I intend to keep any disruption to local residents to an absolute minimum and to create a highly attractive event that people will want to attend, which will put something back into the community.

I envisage the festival being very much a family affair. There will be discounted tickets for local residents and children. We plan to include many activities on the site to create a real festival atmosphere. There will be an extensive fairground including all the traditional and classic rides, children's activities, a shopping village, massage & beauty treatment tents, hot air balloon rides, sideshows, and a sumptuous Food and Drink Fair ranging from pig roasts to champagne bars.

Tickets are available via our website www.cornburymusicfestival.com and will be on sale via local retail outlets.

It is of the utmost importance to us to cause as little disruption as possible and we have further meetings due with Highways and the Police regarding traffic management, and the Environmental Health regarding noise levels. On this issue, we have designed the site so that the stage and sound will be pointing away from Charlbury into the Wychwood Forest. I plan to be available at the Corner House in the next few months to answer any questions and concerns or to sign up any volunteers that wish to help on this project, as well as any local businesses who may wish to become involved.

Meantime, if anyone has any pressing questions, please email me at
hugh@soundadvice.uk.com.

CHARLBURY PRE-SCHOOL TALENT NIGHT

Well, what can I say? What a fantastic night we had on Friday, December 5th! The residents of Charlbury and the surrounding villages pulled all the stops out that night. They let down their guard and showed us all what an amazing amount of talent we have hidden behind closed doors. The acts themselves were terrific but I think the whole night went with such a swing because the audience gave their full support and were so encouraging for each and every act. And the food was amazing.

A lot of hard work and sleepless nights went into producing the whole evening and there are a number of people to thank for that, however, our main thanks go to the extremely hard working fund raising committee of the pre-school – led by Alison Pritchard, Louise Murphy and Lynn Gorton, all supported, of course by a band of very willing helpers. The food, provided by Gary Walsh, the chef at All Souls College, Oxford, was excellent (I can personally vouch for the beef bourguignon – it melted in the mouth!).

The acts ranged from the river prancing Irish dancers (who can forget those smiley faces?) to wonderful singers, a very funny Stanley Holloway 'Battle of Hastings' recital, Egyptian dancers, various comedy sketches, a hilarious 'Irish' Magician, musicians of every ilk (wonderful guitar playing) and a grand finale led by the Fat Lady herself. Not forgetting the impromptu repartee of the audience.

The acts were seamlessly compered by a very funny (and talented) Alan Fraser. I could go on about the success of the

evening, but really you had to be there to understand the atmosphere. It had all the criteria of a perfect night out – excellent food, fantastic entertainment and good company. And didn't we all enjoy ourselves? If you missed it and regret that fact keep your eyes peeled – we have had a lot of encouragement about another one – watch this space!!

Jeannette Wicks

JAZZ PLAYERS SCORE A HIT AT TENNIS CLUB EVENING

Charlbury Tennis Club discovered more than just racquet skills hidden in its ranks, when it gathered for a social evening on Saturday January 24th.

To accompany the delicious food and wine laid on by the committee, members of the club, partners and friends were treated to the debut gig of West Oxfordshire's newest jazz ensemble, in the form of Charlbury violinist Nick Parker, guitarist Nick Hooper and, on keyBoards, Adrian Hunter. The trio were persuaded to put their talent on show by Val Parker (Nick's wife) and, with the help of some subtle lighting, the upstairs room at the Corner House was transformed into a suitably atmospheric venue - Charlbury's answer to Ronnie Scott's.

The three band members all work in the music business, Nick Parker and Adrian as recording producers and engineers, and Royal College of Music trained Nick Hooper as a composer of film and TV music. While most of their professional work involves classical and modern classical music, all three

RAILWAY NEWS from John Stanley

As mentioned in the last issue, the franchise for Thames Trains, which operates Charlbury station and provides most of its services, is to be transferred from the control of the Go-Ahead Group to FirstGroup Plc (already owners of the Great Western franchise) as from April 1st 2004.

It had been hoped that this change would herald a vastly improved hourly interval service which FirstGroup had planned to introduce from Charlbury as from **12th December 2004**. Unfortunately, this is not to be. The Strategic Rail Authority has cut down the number of High Speed Trains which it will allow First Great Western to lease in order to release a similar number of Adelante units for use by Thames Trains on its services. This has caused a drastic rethink in how best to utilise the limited amount of rolling stock, with the result that the Cotswold Line could be losing half of its anticipated Adelante trains. FirstGroup requested a meeting with the Cotswold Line Promotion Group and this was held in Swindon on January 15th. The Group was asked to comment on FirstGroup's timetable plans and did so in a written submission 6 days later. The Group feels that what is being proposed - a combination of a 2 hourly interval Adelante service between Great Malvern and London (with no Thames service beyond Great Malvern to/from Hereford) and some intermediate hours being filled with Turbos only running as far as Oxford - is likely to prove unpopular with passengers, especially when two of the lengthy gaps were immediately after the morning peak service, which would remain much as present. It has suggested various alterations which would at least retain some of the more popular services in the current timetable, although even this compromise will not please everyone.

The CLPG feels that the benefit of the far superior 5-car Adelante trains is slightly outweighed by the disbenefit of the patchwork of Adelantes, Turbos and HSTs, some with extended journey times. Details of any progress made will be given in the next issue. Train services will continue on the present basis until December.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - CHARLBURY BRANCH

The Poppy Appeal for 2003 raised £3,123.96 in Charlbury and the surrounding area. The Poppy Appeal Organiser, Helen Clarke, would like to thank all those who helped to raise this sum - an increase of £206.05 on 2002 - and particularly all those who gave so generously. Anyone interested in helping with the 2004 Poppy Appeal is asked to contact Helen on 810608.

The Charlbury British Legion Darts Cup for the Open Pairs held at the Farmers in November was won by Martin Tompkins and Mark Porter. £86.00 was raised for the Poppy Appeal during the course of the evening. Many thanks.

A Poppy Collector 30-year medal and certificate has been awarded to Cecil Giles and a 5-year badge and certificate to Helen Clarke. A Branch certificate has been awarded to Pam Neville in recognition of her service as Branch Treasurer.

Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in St Mary's Church on Remembrance Sunday by the Charlbury Branch (Alan Hanks), Thames Valley Police (P.C. Bob Gillett) and Charlbury Town Council (Cllr. Carol Jackson).

Coffee Morning: The Branch will be holding a Coffee Morning in the Corner House on Saturday May 8th with cakes, raffle etc. For further details contact Jane Parsons on 810822.

Commemorative Medals: As a result of the Charlbury Branch resolution which was passed at the Royal British Legion Oxfordshire 2003 Conference, the Commemorative Working Group of the National Council have agreed to consider giving clearer guidance on this subject when the Commemorative Handbook is amended later this year.

For further information about the work of the Legion, how to join or how to obtain assistance please contact Nick Potter [Branch President] on 810388 or Derek Fowler [Branch Chairman] on 811706.

THE CAMPBELL COPSE

a report by Christopher Betts

The small plantation of trees and shrubs in the Mill Field known by this name, a memorial to the Charlbury teacher and journalist W.D. Campbell, has undergone a few changes of late. The committee which (under the aegis of the Charlbury Society) manages the Copse resolved that the time had come to remove the fence that has been there since the planting in 1995. The trees had grown enough not to need protection against casual damage - very few have suffered in this way - and the fence was hindering upkeep. It was also generally considered unsightly, at least if the people I talked to about it were typical. The handsome stone inscribed by Alec Peever of Ducklington now has greater prominence. It replaced the wooden board lettered by Moira and Selwyn Wyatt, which had suffered from the weather.

The initial phase of the copse's life may now be considered complete and a routine has begun that will last for some time. The shrubs need little maintenance and will mostly be allowed to grow into each other, providing cover and food for wildlife, not forgetting pleasure to the eye of the beholder. For the trees the situation is more complex. The overall policy, since the copse commemorates a great naturalist, is one of non-interference, but within this the aim has always been to allow some at least of each species to grow to their maximum potential. With the three separate black poplars also planted in 1995 there is no problem, but for the trees in the copse itself this policy means removing some and coppicing others, so that in the fullness of time there will be only a few fully-grown trees, and perhaps, looking far ahead, no more than one or two of each of the larger species. The constraint

is of course space. A large oak, for instance, or lime (the limes there have small leaves but are basically big trees) needs lots of it, and if you want to have a nice big oak or two you have to prevent their growth being stunted by competition from faster-growing species. Hence the alders and ashes are being treated rather brutally by comparison with the oaks, limes and service-trees, and all have to be managed in such a way, putting it abstractly, as to allow those trees which seem to have the best potential to develop it fully. Which means, I'm afraid, that scruffy little trees, even if from a much-loved species, will probably have to go in order to give the better-looking ones a good chance. Gardeners will be acquainted with the kind of choices involved.

On the other hand, you can coppice most broad-leaved trees (unlike most garden plants) - i.e. you can cut them down to ground level, or near, and next year you will get, instead of one thick stem, several thinner ones, which you can then let grow until you decide to repeat the operation. Meanwhile the uncoppiced trees nearby have that better chance they had been hoping for. If the practice of coppicing sounds harsh, there are some grounds for believing that coppiced trees live longer, so they may have the last laugh after all (not something that it is easy to be sure about, since you would need a few hundred years to do the observations.)

Finally many thanks to Alan Spicer, Nigel Walsh, the local Cotswold Wardens generally, and others on the Committee or not, for various kinds of advice and help. More is always welcome, of course. And just in case someone should ask: If coppicing, why not pollarding?, the answer is that cutting trees above the browsing level, while it has picturesque results, is rather more difficult.

CHARLBURY WASTE ACTION GROUP

The AGM of the Charlbury Area Waste Action Group was held in the Friends Meeting House, Market Street, Charlbury on Tuesday, February 17th at 7.30pm and was followed by a talk by Adam Symons of Oxfordshire County Council.

Forthcoming collection dates for the next quarter:

March 6th - plastic bottles (please remove lids/caps)

April 3rd - Green Waste

Venue: Spendlove Car Park 10 am - 1pm

May 1st Household Textiles 10am to 12 noon in the Memorial Hall.

Both Charlbury and Finstock are launching an A-Z guide to recycling in April to coincide with the introduction of the District Council's expanded recycling service.

In April all households in West Oxfordshire will receive a second black box for recycling and the current fortnightly kerbside collection will become weekly.

Charlbury's (and Finstock's) Community and Waste Action Groups have already accomplished excellent results for recycling. 'The Charlbury group has been active for many years, and their results show they send less waste per head to landfill sites than anywhere else in the district' says a recent edition of WODC's *Parish Link*.

More than 11,000 compost bins were sold to residents of West Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Oxford City during 2003 as

a result of the County Council's home composting scheme.

The scheme offers compost bins at discounted prices and a 60-day free home trial. For further information ring the Free Trial Hotline on 0870 844 3006.

Compost bins are also sold at the following garden centres - Hurrans Garden Centre at Banbury, Millets Farm Garden Centre at Frilford and Waterperry Garden Centre near

FROM THE WARDEN OF THE CORNER HOUSE AND WAR MEMORIAL HALL

(a) Please note that there is a lot of lost property waiting to be claimed - brollies, gloves, books, jackets and other small items. Please contact the Warden to claim your property.

(b) In the course of clearing out various areas in the Memorial Hall the Warden has discovered some play equipment thought to have been used by a group called 'Ducklings'. There is a trampoline, easel and various other pieces of play equipment. Does anyone know to whom these items should be returned? If they are not claimed by Easter, the Warden proposes to offer them to other pre-school groups

CONTACTS:

Warden - Moe Scholl 810879
Secretary - Teresa Laughton 811000

LENT LUNCHES TO BENEFIT CHRISTIAN AID

February 27th: Methodist Church
Hall, Fishers Lane

March 5th: The White Hart, Market
Street (Karen Whitehead)

March 12th: Kipkelion, Stonesfield
Lane (Nigel & Sheila Walsh)

March 19th: Baptist Church, Dyers
Hill

March 26th: Quaker Meeting House,
Market Street

April 2nd: Royal Oak Cottage,
Church Street (Janet Dagnall & Mary
Young)

*Lent lunches are served at
the above addresses from
noon to 2 pm*

FRIENDS OF CHARLBURY LIBRARY

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Memorial Hall on 17 March 2004 at 7.30pm. This will be followed by a talk by Cyril Aydon entitled "Writing Biography". He is the author of a biography of Charles Darwin.

There will be a Coffee Morning in the Corner House on Saturday, May 15th and a talk by Prue Leith on May 20th. Also on Saturday 12 June there will be a Table Top Sale in the Memorial Hall. For further details or to book a table, see posters and the Leaflet or ring Amanda Epps on 810573 or Janet Walker on 810681

CHARLBURY BEST-KEPT GARDEN COMPETITION

The 2004 competition will be earlier in the year, allowing different flowers and foliage to be judged at their best. Judging will take place during late spring/early summer and should allow a new selection of Charlbury gardeners to become winners.

All gardens will be judged if they can be seen from the footpath or road.

For further details ring John Moore on 810700

WILDLIFE & CONSERVATION COURSES

WEA course on 'The English Hedgerow'. Discover the value of hedgerows as a landscape and wildlife feature. Find out how to survey hedgerows and record their wildlife. Learn about the available incentive and projects leading to their conservation.

Tutor: Alan Spicer. Venue: Hook Norton Brewery Visitor Centre. Date: Thursday May 13th. Time: 10 am to 4 pm. Includes an afternoon walk to study local hedgerows. Course Fee: £16.50 To book a place ring Paul Warwick on 01608 737107

THE OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM, WOODSTOCK

Friends of the Museum Meeting:

March 3rd; 'Tree Ring Dating and King Arthur's Table' - Ian Gourlay.

Meeting takes place in the Museum, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors always welcome (£1.00).

MAKE SURE YOU USE YOUR VOTE!

Thursday June 10th 2004 is the date for European Parliamentary elections, and the District and Town Council elections.

To be eligible to vote, you must be included in the Register of Electors. Anyone not on the Register can apply to have their name added.

For an application form telephone 01993 861522 or 01993 861525. You can also email on elections@westoxon.gov.uk

Forms must be returned by Tuesday April 13th 2004.

CHARLBURY BAPTIST CHURCH

You may be interested to know that Charlbury Baptist Church has a new minister arriving some time during the summer. We have entered a partnership with the Baptist Church at Chipping Norton and will be sharing a full-time minister. This seems to be a good solution for two small churches, neither of whom could afford a minister. He is Rev Malcolm Cook from Brighton. He will be moving with his wife Barbara to the manse in Chipping Norton; our own manse will be let. We hope to have an induction date in place ready for the next edition of the Chronicle.

Kay Colyer

CANADA MEETS WESTMINSTER IN CHARLBURY

Should cannabis be downgraded from a Class B to a Class C drug? What is the UK law on the ownership of guns? Does the televising of Parliament produce better democracy? Why does Black Rod knock twice? How do you combine conscience with party loyalty? Why do MPs call each other the Honourable Member for? These were some of the questions asked, and answered, during a meeting between our Member of Parliament, David Cameron, and the group of Canadian students currently staying in Charlbury. The meeting was held in the Charlbury Methodist Church Hall on 23 January – it was open to public participation, and over twenty residents of Charlbury took the opportunity to meet and question our MP on “The Westminster Process”.

David Cameron described in a lively way the great variety of work done by MPs, including dealing with constituency problems, influencing and challenging the government of the day, and passing legislation. He explained some of the issues of current importance, such as university fees, the Hutton report, and country sports, and how backbench MPs could influence policy by developing personal expertise in specific areas. Those present were impressed by his honesty and openness in answering questions, particularly his emphasis on conscience as a guide to his personal conclusions. The student group will be visiting the Houses of Parliament later during their visit, and found this discussion a valuable revelation of how it works. Perhaps politics is not so dry after all.

The seventeen students will be in Charlbury until Easter. They are staying at several homes and at Banbury Hill Farm. Classes are held in Oxford and at the Baptist and Methodist churches in Charlbury. We are delighted to have them with us, wish them well in their studies, and thank them for providing open meetings like this one. On March 26th they will be presenting a Shakespeare play – watch for details.

Peter Colyer(810107)

EASTER EGGS WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Beautiful colourful decorative Easter Eggs, gifts of love and friendship. Transrural Trust's annual Decorative Easter Egg sale takes place on March 26th and 27th, and April 2nd and 3rd at 16a Crawley Mill, Crawley Village, near Witney.

For more information tel 01993 771230,
gillian.rose@transrural.org
www.transrural.org

These decorated duck and goose eggs are bought from Romania where painting and selling the eggs provides an income for women in some of the poorest mountain areas, and all proceeds are used to provide more help to those communities.

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS

TWELFTH NIGHT

History is being made in Charlbury by the Charlbury Amateur Dramatic Society as in May, for the first time in since its foundation 28 years ago, it is tackling Shakespeare. The play is *Twelfth Night* – chosen for a variety of reasons: it is one of the most loved and popular of his comedies, it has the smallest number of characters, and, most importantly, it is one that we were able to cast! Auditions, held in December, were so well attended that the Director had some difficult choices to make. She is, however, well pleased with her decisions and her very good cast, some of whom are experienced with the Bard while others are not and are a trifle apprehensive! Supporting the actors the Director has assembled an impressive production team, including two stage managers, set designers, costume, music advisor, properties, fight arranger and so many others - all vital contributors to a successful production. Charlbury is fortunate in having so much available talent, and it is the melding together of all these people that makes the challenge of putting on a play, especially Shakespeare, so exciting. We hope that Charlbury people will come and support their efforts and renew their acquaintance with the likes of Viola, Orsino, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Maria, Malvolio, Feste and others, or perhaps meet them for the first time. The dates of performance are May 13th, 14th, 15th at the Memorial Hall.

Betty Stokes

CHARLBURY TENNIS CLUB

With the longer, and hopefully sunnier, days fast approaching why not dust off your tennis racquet and join Charlbury's

tennis club based at Nine Acres Recreation Ground. We have over 100 members who currently enjoy an extensive programme of both competitive and social tennis that caters for everyone.

In the summer we run 6 teams for all abilities, ranging from the A team in Division 1 of the Banbury Town League to the friendly Wychwood League with matches against neighbouring clubs. We also have regular social sessions throughout the summer (see noticeboard on the courts for details) and friendly club tournaments.

Membership entitles you to:

- Free court use at club sessions
- Reduced court fees outside club times
- Opportunities to compete in tournaments and inter-club league matches
- Free junior tennis evenings

Chance to win tickets to Wimbledon

If you need to brush up your tennis skills Mark Jarman qualified LTA coach may be able to help. For further details about coaching or the tennis club phone 01608 810777 or call into Vincent Pharmacy for an application form.

Diana Jarman

CHIPPING NORTON RUGBY CLUB (CNRUFC)

CNRUFC really is 'the little rugby club with a heart of gold'. Based at Greystones on the Burford Road outside 'Chippy', the club is so easy to get to from Charlbury. We welcome young and old from all over North Oxfordshire to a safe, child-friendly, family environment to learn, play and develop their sporting skills in the only team game in which

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT cont'd

England are the current World Champions! We have a thriving mini/junior section that welcomes all-comers at all age groups from 5-12 (minis) and young lads from 13-17 years (juniors), and we are also developing a Junior Girls squad. The mini/junior section meets every Sunday morning during the season from September to May – games are played home and away, mainly within county at minis level and slightly further a field with the juniors. You do not have to have played the game before to start at any level. Ben Cohen didn't start playing until he was 15 and he now holds a World Cup winners medal! Do come along any Sunday morning for mini/junior rugby and view the facilities, which are second to none in the county. One particular diary date you cannot miss is Sunday 25th April when the club hosts the Oxfordshire County Festival of Mini Rugby – a great occasion when teams from all over the county compete in their age groups for the title 'Best in County'. We are also hoping to have a major name from the Rugby World Cup make an appearance at lunchtime. Our senior squad has First and Second XV's – the Firsts are a young squad who play fast, attractive rugby in the Berks, Bucks and Oxon League 1. Training is on most Tuesday and Thursday evenings during the season.

The Club has a strong but small core of volunteer helpers (we always need more!) who have guided the club through Lottery funding, acquisition and development of new pitches and expansion and operation of modern clubhouse facilities. Interested in knowing more – call Ian Rumble, Club Secretary, 01608-677409

*Please contact Julia Caston
(810240) if you wish to submit
copy for this section*

CHARLBURY SCOUTS AND GUIDES

We regret to announce that due to a lack of leaders we will be unable to hold our annual Mayday Fair but be assured we are already taking steps to reinstate it in 2005.

EXPLORING MUSIC IN THREE DAY CLASSES

Three Day Classes will be held by Kate Eckersley BA DPhil on Wednesdays, April 21st, June 16th and September 22nd from 10.30 am to 3.30 pm at the Corner House. Cost £42 for the 3 sessions, or £15 per class. (i) Round The World in Four Hours; (ii) Music of the Mountains and Fjords; (iii) Composer Study on Schubert
Full details from Peter Fry on 01608 730509 and on the noticeboards.

CHARLBURY ART SOCIETY

March 10: Paul Howard will demonstrate acrylics and speak on fairground history.
April 14: 'The Colours of War'. A talk with slides about war artists by David Hiscock.

May 12: 'Do figures Add Interest?' Eric Rowe will demonstrate and lead a discussion on this subject.

All events 7.30 pm Garden Room.

Visitors most welcome.

PLEASE NOTE: Spring Exhibition will be held on April 3rd in the Morris Room, Corner House, from 10 am to 4.30 pm

INTERESTED IN PLAYING HOCKEY?

We are trying to get a Mixed Hockey Team together in the Chipping Norton area to play Social Hockey on Sundays (home matches to be played at Kingham Hill School). If you haven't played for years that's not a problem. Indoor hockey at the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre - interested in a taster session? For further details ring Clive Briant 01608 677913

TOT BITS

With the arrival of spring it is time to dust off those wellies and get out into the fresh air. One possibility for small friendly animals is the Water Fowl Sanctuary and Children's Farm at Wigginton Heath (Tel 01608 730252).

They have ducks galore, rabbits and guinea pigs that the children can pet, geese, chickens, donkeys, ponies, goats, lambs and even ostrich and emu.

Wigginton Heath is near Hook Norton and they can be found by following the brown duck signs from the A361. The Children's Farm is open from 10.30 to 5.30 (or dusk if sooner) throughout the year and costs £3.50 for adults, £3.00 for OAPs and £2.50 for children. Changing facilities are available.

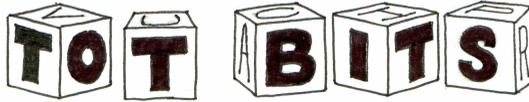
If you have an hour or two to spare in Oxford with inquisitive young children trying visiting the hands-on Science exhibition for children – Curiosity (tel. 01865 247004). This is located on the top floor of the Old Fire Station in George Street, a five minute walk from the station and a similar distance from where the Worth's bus drops passengers in central Oxford. It is nominally aimed at 3-12 year olds which is quite a wide age range. The scientific explanations are over the heads of most pre-schoolers, although they would appeal to older brothers and sisters, however the hands on exhibits are fun for all ages and stimulate curiosity and exploration. When we visited, Hannah (now nearly four) enjoyed mixing coloured lights, operating a hydraulic digger, bouncing an inflatable ball on a jet of air, and building with large foam shapes. Curiosity is quite compact and takes about an hour to visit. It is open 10am until 4pm (last admissions 3pm) weekends, half terms and school

holidays. At £2.20 for children and £2.50 for adults it is not as good value for money as the Natural History Museum in Park Road (free!) but it is comparable to a coffee shop and worth investigating with the older pre-schooler (or primary school age child).

CHARLBURY BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

Charlbury baby and toddler group is a voluntarily run playgroup on Monday mornings from 9.30 till 11.30am. For both parents/carers and children, it's a chance to get out of the house, to have a chat and meet people. For many new parents it's an invaluable way to discuss experiences and concerns, get support or just have a break. All this happens because some parents of children who attend playgroup dedicate some time and effort to ensuring it goes ahead.

However, the majority of the present small committee of parents will shortly be moving on. They urgently need a new treasurer and committee members to prevent the closure of the playgroup. The more people that volunteer, the less responsibility it is for any one person. A healthy and large committee can result in just one rota per term. What's involved? A typical 'being on rota' day consists of setting up toys before playgroup starts, making coffee and juice, clearing away toys again (with help from many parents), and generally leaving the hall in the state it was found. Children usually enjoy their parent being on rota and if you have a baby there are lots of other people on hand to help out. Two people help out every session, so if you need to attend to your child when it's coffee time for example, it's not a problem.



Good things don't always have to come to an end if there are people willing to give a little in order to help a lot.

If you would like to help out and ensure the continuity of the baby and toddler group, speak to someone on the committee.

ABOUT CHARLBURY PRE-SCHOOL

Charlbury Pre-school is a thriving, voluntary-run organisation that seeks to provide education through play for children from two and a half to five years. The Pre-school is open to every family in the community and welcomes people from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups, with or without disabilities.

The Pre-School is run by enthusiastic parents where the elected management committee is responsible for finance, admissions, staff recruitment and development. At the moment, pre-school employs six dedicated staff and sessions take place in the morning from Monday to Friday in The Old Grammar School in Park Street. Through the mammoth efforts of their tireless fundraisers, they have an excellent selection of play and learning materials which, together with the activities of their daily sessions, offer the pre-school child an ideal opportunity to interact with others and learn through play.

To see the building and range of equipment and activities they have on offer, you are welcome to go and visit. Please ring 01608 811200 during session time to arrange an appointment.

FREE PARENTS & CARERS COURSES, TWINS & TRIPLETS, and more at the ACE Centre

The ACE centre in Chipping Norton is hosting a WEA Course "Living and Working with the Under Eights" on Tuesday mornings from 9.30-12.00. This is an informal introductory course for parents and carers who are interested in how their child develops or are considering training for formal qualifications in childcare and is accredited through the OCN. It starts with an information meeting on March 20th and runs for a further 11 weeks from April 20th. The course is free and there is a free crèche available. Contact Linda Ball on 01608 644440 to book.

Do you have Twins? Triplets? or more? The ACE Centre has a monthly group starting on Tuesday 24th February 1.00-2.30 at the Family Centre. Tel Christine Wilcock on 01608 644440 for further details.

In addition, for any childminders and prospective childminders, there are Childminder Meetings at the ACE Centre monthly 11th March, 22nd April 12.00-2.00.

*TotBits is compiled by
Alison Offer and
illustrated by Ann Buckmaster*

If you have any suggestions for future items for this section please get in touch with Alison on 813063



THAMES VALLEY POLICE

In your last issue, I appealed for volunteers to help run the police office in the Spendlove Centre, Enstone Road, Charlbury. I had one reply immediately after the distribution of the *Charlbury Chronicle* began, and a

further eight enquiries followed, resulting in 6 application forms being returned, with hopefully two more to come as I write.

The next step for the successful applicants is to have an informal interview with Sergeant Hyatt from Chipping Norton and myself, and then a short induction course including an opportunity to visit Witney Police station and see at first hand how an enquiry office works. From a survey of other similar offices, visits and phone calls tend to relate to complaints of antisocial behaviour, lost and found property, local event enquiries, abandoned vehicles, traffic offences and requests for directions.

As far as the building is concerned, the lease should be signed by the end of January, and then two weeks of building work need to be completed before we can move in. The office will have a front counter with safety screen in a reception area, plus a meeting and report writing room. The work will hopefully be completed in March. Opening times will be publicised in the *Charlbury Chronicle* and in local notice boards and businesses.

Thank you to the *Charlbury Chronicle* for its support and if you wish to volunteer please contact me:

Rosie White, Volunteers' Co-ordinator
Thames Valley Police
Banbury Police Station
Warwick Road, Banbury, Oxon. OX16 2AE

01295 754524 (office); 07970 145814 (mobile); rosie.white@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

HOW TO IDENTIFY GENUINE VISITORS TO YOUR HOUSE

Watch out for bogus doorstep callers, many of whom pose as council officials. Oxfordshire County Council staff now adopt the National Doorstep Cold Calling protocol, with the following advice for householders:

- (a) make pre-arranged appointments where possible;
- (b) genuine council officials now have identity cards, including large print versions, and householders are encouraged to check a caller's identity;
- (c) staff to explain the purpose of their visit;
- (d) staff will call back later date/time if asked.

CHARLBURY WEATHER

November 2003 was a month in which temperatures (and the weather) fluctuated. A fairly mild start was followed by a cooler spell, after which temperatures rose again. Then the month ended with another cooler period. Overall, the month came out 50.60°, 1.8° above the average for the previous 14 years. Air frosts were recorded on just three nights, the first not being experienced until 24th/25th - *the first frost in November for two years*. However, as in October, none of the frosts was particularly severe, with the lowest being just 2° below freezing point on the night of 26th/27th. The highest temperature was 57° on 18th. It is interesting to note that the two coldest days were 8° below the three warmest nights.

December 2003, overall, was a fairly average month with nothing spectacular to report. It started with a stable period, just above average, before entering a sequence of ups and downs, ending with a rather cold spell. Overall, the month was just about 0.5° above average at 43.90°. On the night of 12th/13th, the temperature did not drop at all from the 52° recorded during the day on 12th, making it a particularly warm night for December. An air frost was recorded on 10 nights. The highest temperature was 54° on 13th. The coldest day was 35° on 22nd. There was no chance of a white Christmas, the day being rather warm at 50°. At midnight on December 31st 2003, the year ended at 38° and it was raining.

January 2004 will not be particularly memorable from a temperature point of view - except for the last few days of it! Overall, the month averaged 45.00° - about 1° above normal. The highs and lows were not exceptional. However, this all changed on Wednesday 28th. At about 4.30pm, with the temperature somewhat higher than the forecasters had predicted at 40°, it started to rain. Within five minutes, there was a blinding blizzard, and the temperature had dropped by 8° to freezing point. Then there was thunder and lightning, before the snow eased. It was all over within an hour and then the skies cleared and the temperature plummeted to 24°. This was the coldest of 8 nights during the month on which an air frost was recorded. This was

followed by a gloriously sunny, but very cold, day during which the temperature only rose to 35°. Two days later, the month ended with the highest temperature so far this year - 53°.

John Stanley

CHARLBURY RAINFALL - A report from Nick Potter

The rainfall between January 1st and December 31st 2003 measured at Lees Rest was 671mm (about 26¾ ins), the driest year since 1996 (538 mm/21½ ins). The wettest month was November (103mm/ about 4 ins) and the driest was September 17 mm/ about two-thirds ins). September and October were the driest since the Lees Rest rain measurements began in 1982.

Lees Rest lies within the Parish Boundary about 455ft above sea level and about 1¼ miles due east of Charlbury - so the rainfall in the town centre may have been completely different!

RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY - Talking Science

The RAL carries out world-leading research ranging from the vastness of space to the invisibly small world of nanotechnology. We have a programme of inspirational science lectures and open days for members of the public. All events are free and many are suitable for families.

Friday March 12 & 7 pm: *Creating Faces with Dr Caroline Wilkinson, facial anthropologist*. This lecture will explain the technique of facial reconstruction and highlight the importance of it in forensic and archaeological investigations.

To reserve a place ring Lisa Faircloth on 01235 445789

Report from your County Councillor Brian Hodgson (tel/fax 01993 891310)

County Council Budget: The Conservative/Liberal Democrat budget has been passed by the County Council, giving an increase in the Council tax of 6.25%. The rise will mean the average Band D Council taxpayer will be paying an extra £1.05p per week. The total bill - County Council only - will be £924.80 for a Band D payer. Labour's budget - voted down on party lines - would have meant a 4% council tax increase. I continue to campaign for a fairer local tax system. The Government is now looking seriously at more council tax bands.

The County Council and the Vale of the White Horse District Council are conducting a pilot survey in the Cumnor area on a possible Land Value Tax. I will report on this soon.

From District Councillors Glena Chadwick (tel: 01608 810555; or email Chadwick@Glena.fasnet.co.uk) and Mike Breakell (tel: 01993 868201)

Mike Breakell reports: Despite the preparation of a detailed Local Plan for West Oxfordshire as well as a Structure Plan for Oxfordshire, we are likely to have more regional guidance for the South East as well as a revised national system of planning which involves Community Strategies and allegedly more involvement at a local level. Just how all this will work out in the coming months is none too clear and in the meantime the Uplands Planning sub committee meetings get lengthier without allowing members of the public to speak at Committee. If the aim is to get more involvement in community decisions then somehow the system will need simplifying, but in the meantime we will endeavour to put forward local views. Often there are differing views within the community too, but these can then be discussed and debated in public in order to seek change where this is considered to be appropriate. Issues like affordable housing, or the need for local employment or an appropriate level of services are always going to be difficult especially as costs continue to rise, but we will always try to find the optimum answers to suit Charlbury.

Glena Chadwick reports: The district council keeps one in touch with the good and the not so good. An example of the good was a presentation recently by a housing group dedicated to providing housing for some of the most vulnerable in our society. Their caring and professional work, in small units in Chipping Norton and Witney among other places, not only provided a home but also the training and aftercare which enabled many to return to independent lives in the community. In contrast, the Street Scene Best Value Group, after dealing with the refurbishment of car parks, is now dealing with litter. The facts presented to us have been truly appalling. Nationwide £342 million is spent annually on street cleaning; £150 million alone on cleaning up discarded chewing gum !! West Oxfordshire is cleaner and tidier than many urban areas and Charlbury is one of the better areas but there is still much room for improvement. Surely we could find other ways to spend our council tax.

CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL REPORT

– No. 30

by Councillor Trevor Jones

Town Council Elections: It has been confirmed that the elections for the European Parliament, Charlbury Town Council (all 12 seats) and West Oxfordshire District Council (1 of the 2 local seats – currently held by Glenda Chadwick) will be held on Thursday June 10th. Some of the present Town Councillors are not seeking re-election so there will be vacancies. This is a good opportunity to help your community. Anyone who wishes to join the Town Council and stand in the coming election can obtain all the necessary details from Roger Clarke, the Town Clerk (810608).

Christmas: The Town Council would like to congratulate everyone who put decorations, lights and Christmas trees outside their houses and businesses in the town to brighten up the Christmas period. Particular thanks are due to Pete Cahill and Charlbury Chamber of Trade and Commerce for co-ordinating arrangements and to Geoff Burroughs who donated the Corner House Christmas tree.

Home Zones: The process for introducing the Home Zone at Sturt Close and Hughes Close has started with an inaugural meeting held on December 16th 2003. A committee has been set up with the following representatives: Charlbury Town Council: Councillor John Harrison (Committee Chairman), Oxfordshire County Council: Councillor Brian Hodgson, West Oxfordshire District Council: Councillor Mike Breakell, 4 residents of Hughes and Sturt Closes and representatives of the consultants/local authority offices. A detailed questionnaire was agreed with the consultants who have distributed it to all the households concerned. They hope to have received and analysed the results by the end of January so that they can present provisional schemes to the committee for approval in late February.

Meetings: The Annual Parish Meeting will be at 8 p.m. on Friday 26 March 2004 in the War Memorial Hall. Please come and find out what your Council has been up to.

Town Council Precept (Budget) 2004/5: The Town Council element of the Council Tax for the next financial year has been set at £72,713 compared with £66,173 for 2003/4, an increase of 9.9% due to an increase in essential costs, Capital Projects and grants. Over half the precept goes on unavoidable items such as cemetery and playground maintenance, insurance, grass cutting, clerk's salary, and contributions to the maintenance of community recreation areas and buildings such as Nine Acres, the Corner House and the War Memorial Hall. The remainder is for grants to the Riverside Festival, Youth Football Club, the Shed Theatre, the 3 o'clock Club, the School Association and for essential tree works on the Playing Close. Projects include the Cemetery extension, repair of the Mill Field overfall, the Nine Acres Pavilion, and the Skateboard park. The full list can be inspected by arrangement with the Town Clerk.

Annual Boundary Walk: The walk will take place on Rogation Sunday, May 16th starting at 10.00 a.m. from the Old Oak Tree on Forest Hill. There will be a break for lunch at Model Farm by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Hobill. The distance is about 11 miles across country, along roads, paths and bridleways often in places where public access is not usually allowed. Arrangements can be made to pick up people at various points on the route where it crosses a road. The Town Council is most grateful to all the landowners who allow the walk to take place and to the Charlbury Society for their assistance with organising the work. Anybody who would like to help with marshalling and generally helping is asked to contact the Clerk.

Notices and Fly Posting: A reminder that fly posting on Telegraph and Light poles etc. is illegal. Remember to take down old notices from the Town notice boards and remove roadside notices when the event has passed.

CHRONICLE SMALL ADS

£5 per small ad

Have you seen the Enchanted Valley? Come and visit HILLTOP GARDEN CENTRE, Witney Road, Ramsden.

FOR SALE: PRIMAX Jewel 4800 scanner - £15 o.n.o. Please ring the editor on 01608 810549

To advertise in this section please ring Jack Potten on 810991

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Please note that **ALL** cheques for advertising, mailing list or donations should be made payable to *The Charlbury Chronicle* and should be sent to the Treasurer, Dawn Colvin (address in panel on right).

Editor: Lynette Murphy
Hundley Cottage, Hundley Way
Charlbury OX7 3QU

tel: 01608 810549

fax: 01608 811952

e-mail: chronicle@huncot.fsnet.co.uk

Assisted by:

Diana Potten (810991)

Julia Caston (810240)

Alison Holthouse (810954)

Alison Offer (813063)

Advertising: Jack Potten (810991)
9 Enstone Road, Charlbury OX7 3QR

Treasurer: Dawn Colvin
3 Enstone Road, Charlbury OX7 3QR
tel: 01608 810545

Artwork:

Ann (Gilbert) Buckmaster (810664)

Distribution:

Brian Murphy (810549)

Robert Caston (810240)

Jack Potten (810991)

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