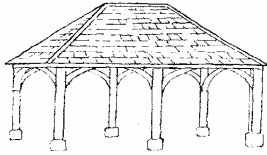


The Charlbury Chronicle



Volume 10 Number 1

March 2006

Having reported on the aftermath of the tsunami disaster for us in the September Chronicle Hugh Goyder has now visited the earthquake-devastated region of Pakistan. After describing the situation he comes to an interesting conclusion. Apart from all the necessary aid people in these remote areas receive, they are much comforted by the realisation that others in far distant lands really do care what happens to them. Read his report on page 4.

The events that led up to the 'Hope Rising' CD which was featured in our December edition have continued to grab attention and Mark Powys-Smith tells of the media interviews that took place and how the Richard & Judy Show has also shown interest in the story of Asja — read about it on page 21.

Ann James has found a most interesting inventory of the shop of Thomas Ham, a Charlbury mercer, in 1632. It makes interesting reading on p 12. If anyone has any further information on this subject perhaps they will contact Ann and she might write another article for us!

Please note that the Editor has changed to Broadband and now has a new email address lm@cchronicle.plus.com

I apologise if anyone has submitted articles for this edition which have not appeared. It is just possible that because of the changeover some interesting articles are still floating around in cyberspace! Do please get in touch so that the articles can be used in the June edition.

Lynette Murphy

Please note the deadline for copy for the next issue of the *Charlbury Chronicle* is May 5th.

Award for Jane Parsons

Jane Parsons was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for her work with the Child Support Agency. She has worked for various Agencies within the Department of Works and Pensions since 1963. Apart from her work Jane has found time to help other organisations voluntarily. She has been a Poppy Collector for 31 years and has served as secretary of the local branch of the Royal British Legion for almost 6 years. As well as this, she has been secretary of the local angling club for 15 years. Jane is looking forward to collecting her award in May.

Well done and congratulations, Jane!

ARTHRITIS RESEARCH CAMPAIGN (ARC) will hold a Bridge Drive at the Memorial Hall at 2 pm on Thursday, March 23rd.
Tickets £6 (to include tea) from Julia Caston on 01608 810240

THAMES VALLEY POLICE REPORT

There continue to be a high number of calls to Thames Valley Police with regard to youths in Charlbury acting in a rowdy anti-social manner. Furthermore, we have had a number of crime complaints, which included damage to plants and trees in people's gardens and damage to vehicles and external lights. This kind of behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. If you see anyone acting in this kind of manner, please contact Thames Valley Police on 08458 505 505. If it is actually happening at the time then dial 999.

Myself and the traffic warden have been called over to Charlbury several times over the past few weeks, to help resolve some of the parking problems. It is a particular issue at the entrance to the Spendlove Centre, where vehicles are parked on and around the junction. There is ample parking within the Spendlove Centre complex, so please bear this in mind when you are there – please park in a designated space and not on the edge of the junction. A little more consideration will make things easier and safer for everyone.

Finally, please also remember that the Police Office in Charlbury is on hand should you need to seek advice or report a Police-related matter. **The office is open 1200-1500 Monday and Wednesday and from 0900-1200 on Fridays.** I can be contacted via the Charlbury office between these times, or alternatively you can leave me a message at the office, which I will pick up.

*Lucy McDonagh, Police Community Support Officer
Non Emergency Number: 0845 8 505 505*

CENTENARY WOOD

Training Session in Formative Pruning
Saturday March 11 2006 at 12 noon

Centenary Wood on Ticknell Piece is a community woodland owned and managed by Oxfordshire County Council. The trees are now old enough to be pruned so that they can grow properly and develop into quality specimens. Formative Pruning is a basic woodland management skill. The Centenary Woodland Management Committee, a mixture of County and Town Councillors and local conservationists, feel that there is now an ideal opportunity for members of the public to become involved in the management of the wood. The idea is to show people how and what to prune so that they can then go out in their own time to work in the wood. The training session will be conducted by Oxfordshire Woodland Project Manager, David Rees, who is a Chartered Forester. Please meet him at Centenary Wood wearing suitably robust clothing and footwear; also please bring with you secateurs or loppers if you have any. If you would like more information please telephone him on 01993 814140 or meet him at the joint Oxfordshire Woodland Project and Wychwood Project stall at the Farmers' Market on the Playing Close prior to the Training Session.

Voices of War An Entertainment In Words and Music

A performance of **Voices of War** will take place in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund (Oxfordshire) at St John Baptist's Church, Burford at 6.30 pm on Sunday, March 26th, with Freddie Jones, the Fijian Choir of 4 Regiment, the Royal Logistics Corps, Pipers of the Scots Guards Association (Berks, Bucks & Oxon) and the Burford Chamber Choir. Tickets are £10 each (or £8 for those under 14 or over 60 years), including refreshments. Tickets can be obtained from Nick Leadbetter (01993 831571).

If sufficient people from Charlbury would like to go it may be possible to lay on a minibus. Anybody who is interested in this idea is asked to telephone Sarah or Nick Potter on 01608 810388 before March 20th.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS WITH FREE ADMISSION

Hosted and sponsored by the ABU Oxford Programme (the Canadian Students)

FRIDAY MARCH 17th at 8 pm

Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'
Performed by the Atlantic Players, directed by Elizabeth Dutton
At Charlbury Baptist Church

FRIDAY MARCH 24th at 3 pm

DAVID CAMERON speaks on 'The Politics of Opposition'
At the Methodist Church Hall

From Charlbury to the Pakistan Earthquake

Hugh Goyder

I have just returned from the earthquake-affected parts of Pakistan where I was reviewing the collective relief efforts being undertaken by the agencies which benefited from the national Disasters Emergency Appeal, which raised over £30 million.

The earthquake on October 8th (7.6 on the Richter scale) left over 3 million people homeless, and the devastated area covers hundreds of square miles, including a small part of Indian Kashmir, most of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, and the eastern end of the troubled Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, which adjoins Afghanistan.

I flew into the Pakistan capital, Islamabad, and was booked to fly by helicopter to Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir two days later. The helicopter was grounded by bad weather so we drove instead, climbing up a high pass through thick mist and snow. As we went up we heard reports that the road ahead was closed by landslides, but it was opened after a few hours and we edged along a narrow ledge, with earth and rocks still falling on the road from above, while the other side of the road was also eroding down the cliff. The army makes great efforts to keep the roads open, but since the earthquake there have been huge landslides all over the place, worsened by deforestation. This means that the roads keep closing and the relief effort gets interrupted.

We finally reached the city of Muzaffarabad, where at least 35000 people died in the earthquake. The city has grown without any apparent town planning up and down the side of steep hills. Come the earthquake, and many houses and shops either slipped down the hills or were themselves overwhelmed by landslides. Now every sports stadium, recreation ground and any other fragments of flat space have been transformed into tented camps, which provide basic shelter for an estimated 73,000 people. We were shown many schools which collapsed when the earthquake struck, killing or entombing an estimated 18,000 children and their teachers.

In Muzaffarabad I stayed in the one surviving hotel - but my Pakistani colleague took one look at all the cracks and refused to go anywhere near it ... I reasoned that a repeat serious earthquake was not likely in the short time we were there ... and I was also very tired!

In the town of Balakot, which was totally flattened by the earthquake, we met the Court Clerk who had been asked by the judge to leave the courtroom to get a document copied at precisely 8.45 on October 8th. While he was out, the earthquake struck and everyone else in the court including the judge were all killed. There are many similar stories, with people surviving or dying by random chance.

The relief effort has been largely successful, in that few people have died of diseases or the extreme cold since the earthquake, and there has been remarkable co-operation between all the different agencies and the Pakistan Army with lots of helicopters taking

supplies up into the high mountains. Sometimes it felt a bit like the Olympics with totally international participation. In a period of no more than an hour one can meet the Qatar Red Cross, a Japanese aid agency, and a group of young Korean volunteers who had raised \$50,000 and come to help.

There have been many media reports of children left in high villages running barefoot through the snow, but these are tough and resilient people who, provided they have food and clothing, are far better at surviving the cold than we would be. People often ask me whether it's worth giving money to all these disaster appeals. On the basis of this visit, I would say definitely 'yes'. It's not just all the food and tents though these are essential; it's also that people living in these remote areas suddenly realized that other people in distant countries actually cared what happened to them.

CHARLBURY STREET FAIR SEPTEMBER 16th 2006

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 16th September, 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.

If you would like to advertise your business in the Street Fair programme, then please contact Jon MacKay at jonboy7473@yahoo.com.

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 Susie Finch on 810861 or at susanna_finch@hotmail.com. Our next meeting will be held on Monday 27th February in the Garden Room, Memorial Hall 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 to grow from strength to strength.

Open Gardens – June 4th – Calling All Gardeners and Artists:

This will be the 8th Open Gardens Day held as part of the Street Fair and it has been an enormous success from the start. Spring is here and like nature we are emerging from hibernation to plan this year's event! We are looking for volunteers to offer to open their gardens - of any type – either large or small, formal or informal, established or new. Would you be willing to show your garden?

Last year we introduced Art in the Garden and this seemed to be a popular addition. Are you artistic? Could you demonstrate your art or craft in someone's garden or display some of your work? We were also grateful to the children from Charlbury Primary School for their lovely scarecrows and garden art last year, and hope they can do something again this year. The atmosphere at Open Gardens has always been friendly and lots of tips and information are given and received. The gardeners put in a tremendous amount of effort but I think they would all say it is rewarding on the Sunday afternoon when so many people wander round genuinely interested in what has been achieved.

The gardens will be open from 2pm to 6pm. Tickets and route map available on the day from outside the Corner House from 1.30pm. Teas and plants will be on sale in the Memorial Hall and Garden Room. If you would like to open your garden, please contact Pat Court on 01608 811031 or Vic Allison on 01608 811262.

Finally, will residents of Church Street please note that we have applied to WODC for road closure permission for the 16th September.

Susie Finch

Write Said Fred

I miss Charlbury's old Primary School building, which used to stand where the Beechcroft housing development is now. I miss the events that used to take place there: the jazz concerts, the children's activities, and the wide variety of adult education classes.

It was at one of those classes - a creative writing course - that I met an odd-job man and gardener from Ascott-under-Wychwood, by name of Fred Russell. What struck me first about Fred was his boyish sense of humour - he was a mine of corny jokes - and so it surprised me when he announced one day that he'd turned to writing 'to exorcise the devil' in him.

I subsequently learnt that Fred was a much more complex character than he liked to let on. The son of an abusive father, whose memory he still feared, Fred nonetheless regarded his father as the yardstick of what a man should be. I also discovered that Fred was a deeply spiritual man, who used humour partly as a weapon against himself, whenever he felt he was becoming too serious.

The stories that Fred wrote about his family astonished me, because they were so far removed from the stereotypical Cotswold tales of hard-working and deferential country folk. He wrote about his father's time in prison, about his 'miserable old sod' of a grandfather (who had once threatened to give the local vicar a thrashing), and about how his great-aunt and uncle 'would fight like cat and dog' when they had 'both been at the home-made wine'.

It was obvious to me that someone ought to publish Fred's work. But it was not until a decade after we first met, when I was trying to think of what I could take to his 65th birthday party, that I hit on the idea of giving him a book contract.

It took me over a year to put Fred's book together, partly because he was so cagey about revealing some of his work. Here I was helped immeasurably by a mutual friend, the internationally renowned biographer Carole Angier, who also agreed to write an introduction to the book.

Fred claimed to be embarrassed about the fuss I was making of his work, but on the day that his book *Tongue Pie* came off the presses in September 2005, I heard him telling a friend that he'd just been 'in the right place, at the right time'.

'The right place,' of course, was the old Primary School: and that's just one of the reasons why I miss it ... and why I look forward to the day when we get a new building to house all the activities that used to take place there. Now, what was that about 'the right time'?

Edward Fenton

CHARLBURY CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE

Charlbury - A Guide for Visitors

A colour leaflet has been printed to encourage visitors to Charlbury. The Guide for Visitors includes a short introduction to Charlbury, a town map keyed to information about historic buildings and monuments, and a list of useful information for visitors to the area. The guide is the joint work of the Charlbury Society and the Charlbury Chamber of Trade and Commerce, and is supported by West Oxfordshire District Council and Charlbury Town Council. The leaflet will be distributed to visitor information centres in Oxfordshire. It is hoped that by raising awareness of Charlbury's unique charms and its amenities, more people will build their walking or cycling tour around the town and be encouraged to stop and sample local hospitality.

Farmers' Market Survey Findings

Customers at the Farmers' Market on December 10th 2005 were surveyed to find out what the people of Charlbury and surrounding areas want from both the Farmers' Market and Charlbury shops. With only 66 questionnaires completed, major decisions cannot be made, but the findings give an indication of areas to be discussed and researched further. Retailers and local service businesses, and the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, are working together to set some clear objectives and priorities from the results.

If you would like to add further comments or help build a healthy shopping heart for Charlbury, please contact Cally Robson, Secretary, Charlbury Chamber of Trade and Commerce callyrobson@ideas-into-action.co.uk

THE CORNBURY MUSIC FESTIVAL COMES TO THE PARK AGAIN

Saturday July 15th & Sunday July 16th

**Make a date in your diary. Full details will be printed in
the next issue**

Letters to the Editor

AWARD WINNING JOURNALIST: Charlbury is well-known for its many famous actors, artists, and film directors (see the December issue of the *Charlbury Chronicle*). What is perhaps less well-known is that we also have an award-winning journalist in our midst. On November 30th 2005, Mark Gregory of Fisher's Lane was awarded the Foreign Press Association Media award for the Financial/Economic story of the year, a radio production entitled "Oil for Food: the United Nations on Trial" (parts 1 and 2), broadcast on BBC World Service. The awards ceremony was compered by Andrew Rawnsley and attended by leading politicians, celebrities and media personalities, including Baroness Boothroyd, author and commentator Amir Taheri, Sir Bob Geldof, human rights campaigner Bianca Jagger, and broadcaster Sue MacGregor. The keynote address, "A Dialogue of Cultures", was given by Rt Hon Jack Straw, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. In his acceptance speech, Mark thanked not just his bosses and partner Saskia, but also George Bush Jr/Sr and Saddam Hussein for providing such excellent material for a radio programme!

Birgit den Outer, Hundley Way

DO YOU REMEMBER THE DLI? : I wonder if the story of soldiers of the 8th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry would be of any interest to the people of Charlbury. The reason is that over 60 years ago a battalion of the DLI were all stationed in Charlbury before leaving for France in 1939 or 1940. How many Charlbury people would remember any of these soldiers and perhaps made friends with them? At that time I was living at home with my parents in Thames Street and through the Wesleyan Chapel we were asked to befriend the soldiers and invite them into our homes. A young soldier named Tom Jackson came to tea one Sunday and it was the start of a wonderful friendship. We both married our sweethearts in January 1942 and the four of us were friends from that time onwards until now there is only Tom's widow and me left. I can remember so well that they all went off to France from Charlbury, and from Chadlington and Spelsbury where others were billeted. They all marched up through Thames Street – can anyone remember that? I would love to hear from anyone who still has any contact with any of these soldiers. They have never been forgotten. A few years ago I made friends with one of the officers of the regiment and he wrote to me mentioning how Charlbury people had taken the battalion into their hearts and homes. The officer told me that there was a sign in the Bell Hotel which read 'The Durham Light Infantry were here' I don't know whether this is still on show.

(Mrs) Marjorie Currie, 25a Queens Road, Shanklin, Isle of Wight (tel: 01983 867754)

Editor's note: In the interest of research (!) the Editor paid a visit to The Bell Hotel and saw a small brass plate on the bar counter saying 'Here the Durhams played 1939-40'

MOVE THE LETTERBOX? : Might it be a good idea to remove the postbox from its present position on the corner at Fiveways and situate it at the Spendlove Car Park, where people are already out of their cars and better able to post letters in safety?

*Dawn Willson
The Playing Close*

Open All Hours? Shopping in Charlbury, 1632

What could you buy in a Charlbury shop between Shakespeare's time and the Civil War? I've been looking again at a copy of the inventory made in 1632 on the death of the Charlbury mercer Thomas Ham. I was given it by the tutor of a W.E.A. local history class which I attended a few years ago.

As well as his personal possessions, which included "one littel nag", Thomas Ham's store was stocked with everything for the household; sewing, and building - everything from shot and gunpowder to pitch and tar - and quicksilver (used for mirror making. For dressmaking and tailoring you could choose between about fifty different types of cloth including "holland cloth", "Sleazy holland" (thin or flimsy fabric), cambric, canvas, linen, fustian, or he had "ten yeardes of russet janes". These were another twilled cotton cloth - presumably the forerunner of our jeans. Thomas Ham also sold buckram, bodices, ribbons, lace, whalebone and stockings at 22d a pair.

For the household you could buy brushes, candles, mousetraps, quills, cork, beer-mugs, "venis glases" (Venice glasses?), earthenware, canes and soap. For the kitchen there was "sweete oyle", treacle, a barrel of currants, raisins, prunes, saffron, pepper, cloves, gum and brimstone. He also sold fenugreek, perhaps for farriers. Tea and coffee had not yet arrived but you could get "brown sugar candy", ginger, and eat red herrings or sprats. To make clothes (there was no ready-to-wear then) you could buy "hookes and iues for briches", Coventry thread sold for embroidery, buttons and pins. You probably sewed by the light of candles at fourpence the pound. The inventory mentions 11 women's thimbles at 16d for a dozen and, surprisingly, men's thimbles at 6d a dozen! They also enjoyed tobacco at 20 pence per lb. Hops were for sale for home-brewing at 56 shillings a hundredweight.

This all presents a picture that life for those who could afford it was rich and varied and not as primitive as you might have thought. A surprisingly large amount of goods found their way here on uncertain roadways. Perhaps for this they had to thank the "littel nag".

I would love to know where this superabundant shop was. Has anyone done any research on Charlbury at this period?

Ann James, High Gables, Crawborough

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADVERTISE IN THE CHRONICLE?

The Charlbury Chronicle has a print run of 1500 copies and is delivered free to every house in Charlbury four times a year

If you are interested please telephone Jack Potten (01608 810991)

WALK FOR WILDLIFE

Calling all walkers! It's time to sign up for a great day out with friends and family.

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust sponsored walk is taking place in Oxfordshire in 2006 and for the first time this year it will be held in partnership with the Friends of Wychwood Forest. Funds raised will go towards the important local conservation work carried out by both charities. The date for your diary is Sunday May 14th.

The start and finish point for the walk will be the stately Blenheim Palace near Woodstock. A variety of routes have been planned to suit all abilities, starting with a short three-mile amble suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs and going up to a major 37-mile hike along the entire Wychwood Way. In between there are routes of around five, eight and 17 miles. So whatever your level there is a walk for you.

All of the routes take in at least some of the grounds of the palace and there is plenty to see along the way. Pretty villages, meadows and woodland are dotted along the route and walkers should be able to enjoy all the sights, smells and signs of spring. To help children and the young at heart get more from their walk there will be special quizzes and activities.

It's a great way to get out and about and enjoy the countryside, and you will be raising money for local charities at the same time.

Contact the Wildlife Trust on 01865 775476 for a registration pack. As an additional bonus, everyone who raises £50 or more in sponsorship monies will receive a free copy of the national 'Wildlife Walks' book, worth £12.99.

The Charlbury School Association (CSA) needs your help

We feel the school grounds need a facelift and we would like to add some new features - benches, flowers, games marked on the tarmac, an outdoor classroom/theatre area, a new pond for curriculum use and a sensory garden - to name but a few!

The CSA plans to fund some of these new ventures but to start we are having a 'Groundforce Day' on Saturday 4th February from 9am to 3pm. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

Tasks on the day include painting fences & huts, weeding, planting bulbs & flowers, digging over & planting the sensory garden and laying slabs. So something for everyone. We need your help, ideas and advice so please come along (with your own tools) and help us. Let's make this a community event!

Liz Donnelly

HILDA JOY-JONES, Nursery Supervisor

My husband wakes me up at 7 o'clock with a cup of coffee. I then do my daily meditation, often taken from the reading for the day in "Bible Alive". I also have a list of people to pray for and it is better to do it in the mornings so that I do not forget anyone. I get up at about 7.30 am and do my exercises- from Monday to Friday I do the Canadian Airforce's keep-fit exercises and on Saturday I do Tai chi. Sunday is a day of rest and also a time to go to church. At 7.50 am I quickly get washed and dressed, have my breakfast, make my sandwich lunch and I am off to work by 8.25. For 2 mornings a week I work as a supervisor at the Charlbury Pre-School on Grammar School Hill. This is a charity, which receives some government money but is reliant largely on fund-raising. We aim to keep the fees as low as possible and we are open to everybody. When I get there we set up for the day; there are 3 staff and two parent helpers. It is my responsibility to plan out the day; this has usually taken up to two hours to prepare and takes about 20 minutes to put in place. At 9 o'clock the children arrive; we usually have between 16 to 23 children. Most have arrived by 9.30am and we do the register. Each child is given a name card and they sit on this card. When their name is called, they stand up and bring over their name card – the older ones also answer "Yes". We start with activity time, playing with water, sand or Duplo, dressing up, playing with cars. Each child has a key worker among the staff and they encourage them to sample a range of activities. At 10.15 the children and staff tidy things away.

Now one of the parents and I do circle time - these are the well-known games like Ring-a-ring o' roses and the Farmer's Wife – and it gives the other helpers chance to clean the tables and prepare the drinks. This again is a learning process- they go to the toilet, wash their hands, come back and ask for their drink - a hot chocolate or milk or water -; they are encouraged to pour their own watched by their key worker. Sometimes the very young ones can't ask but they never go without their drink!

10.45 is the time for outside activities. We have a climbing frame, bikes and cars; there is a house to play in, balls and skipping ropes. If it is raining we have a trampoline and climbing frame they can use inside. These activities usually last until 11.30, when it is time for a quieter activity. The children sit according to age and do things, which require pencil control or co-ordination e.g. puzzles. 12 o'clock is lunch time. We are anxious to make eating a communal experience and so while they eat their packed lunch we talk about what we have done during the morning. After that it is story time. We try to pick a story appropriate to the time of year. Meanwhile other helpers are setting the children's work on the table with their name card, so that their parents can see what they have done. At 1 o'clock they are picked up but our work is not done. We have to clean the premises and make sure the equipment is stored away properly. We fill in a diary for the day so that the supervisor on the next day will know what has happened, what 'phone messages there have been and if anything has been broken. Each child's folder is brought up to date and by 2.30 pm we are ready to go home.

I have been working with children for most of my life. I was brought up in West Hartlepool; I did not enjoy school and left as soon as I could at fifteen. I had 8 jobs in a year but then started work as a classroom assistant and the teacher said that I had a gift for working

with children. I could not train to be a teacher as I had not got a Maths qualification, so I decided to become a nursery nurse and I went to St. Vincent's Nursery Training College, Mill Hill to take a 2 year residential course. I returned to West Hartlepool and worked for a year in a children's home. In 1966 I decided to go to America and was a nanny in Boston for 5 years. I loved America; it is a beautiful country with lots of opportunities and the people are so friendly and open. When my charges grew up, I decided to come home but I was soon off again to be a nanny in Rome. Again I enjoyed living in Italy with its good weather but I really appreciated having the chance to visit all the Art Galleries and museums. In 1974 I returned to England to become a Housemother at a boarding school in Suffolk; it was interesting but very hard work and as my parents were not well I went home for a while to look after them. In 1977 while on holiday in London I got the chance of a nursery job in Finchley. I really enjoyed once more being able to visit museums and galleries and also to be able to go to the theatre. I decided to do classes to brush up my Italian and met Michael, whom I married in 1978. We were living in Highgate and I started work in a family centre, where I trained to work with handicapped children. When David was born in 1983, we were living in a property that we had done up in Wood Green. We decided to move to the country and came to Charlbury. I decided to work as a child minder, because I thought it would be good company for David. I was taking some of the children to the Toddler Group at the Old School and someone knowing of my previous training asked if I could help them look after a child with Down's Syndrome. Arrangements were made to look after David and so my association with the Pre-school began. Recently I was given a figurine by the parents and pre-school committee to mark 20 years service.

As well as my work at the nursery, I am also involved on a Wednesday morning with the Little Fishes, which is an ecumenical church group at St. Mary's for mothers with small children under 5. On Thursday mornings I visit people in the parish; Father Bulbeck trained me to be an Eucharistic Minister, so that I can take Holy Communion to the housebound. I find this very rewarding. I am also involved in visiting detainees at Campsfield House. Sometimes the refugees feel that they have not had a proper hearing and I follow that up. Some of them have no clothes other than what they are wearing so I find second hand clothes they can have. The main thing they need is a friendly face and someone to talk to. When I come home after my morning activities, I am usually ready for a rest. In the summer I am quite keen to get out in the garden or the allotment at the back of our house. I love growing things; I find it therapeutic and it gives me time to think. At 5 o'clock it is time to prepare a cooked tea for my husband; he now works for the Museum Services in Standlake and will be home at about quarter to six. There will be just the two of us — our son David is at university doing a Fine Arts Degree as well as learning to be a blacksmith and he is only home occasionally at weekends and holidays. After tea when possible I go out again to the garden or allotment. In the winter I am often involved with committee work; I am on the committee for Nine Acres, the Horticultural Society, Churches Together in Charlbury, Little Fishes and also the social committee for St. Teresa's. If I am not doing this I like to read. I have catholic tastes and read mysteries, biographies and the lives of saints. If I have other spare time I like to visit the Ashmolean, keeping up my interest in museums. I very occasionally watch television in the evenings but I am in bed by 10.45p.m. I usually lie awake thinking before I drop off to sleep and I always have plenty of things to think about. I am happy with my life.

*Hilda Joy-Jones was interviewed
By Diana Potten*

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE APPEAL

We have been much encouraged by some donations during the last rather quiet quarter. In particular, we are most grateful to St. Mary's PCC who voted to split the proceeds of their Christmas Bazaar with our Appeal and forwarded a cheque for £575 to our Treasurer. There was a donation for £54.32p from the evening to bid farewell to Brian Hodgson, who had generously asked that any proceeds should be shared between the Appeal and the Adopt A Minefield charity. We gratefully acknowledge a donation of £500 from a resident who wishes to remain anonymous. With Gift Aid added, this donation will now be worth another £140. Alan Hanks is to be congratulated for his efforts with the Weekly Draw which has made nearly £2500 for the Appeal since he started it in September 2004.

We are heartened by the recent establishment of the new Trust, which under the guidance of the Charity Commission has at last been set up to stand on its own feet and is no longer attached to the Town Council. This has been a long and tedious process, involving the slow-moving Charity Commission, which has held the Appeal back, but now that the new Trust is in place we earnestly hope that there will be a new impetus from all concerned and that we can look forward to some tangible results which will make our fund-raising easier.

We are grateful to the organisers of last year's successful Cha Cha Cha (Charlbury Charity Challenge) who are holding the event again on Sunday April 30th and are sharing the proceeds between our Appeal and the new Sports Pavilion on Nine Acres. This year we are urging as many competitors as possible to get even more sponsorship than they did last time. See the panel on the opposite page for details.

In 2004 we applied to the Ditchley Foundation for one of their three Charity Days at Ditchley Park. These days are always much sought after and we were delighted to be told that we had been given Friday, June 30th this year to raise funds for the Appeal. A large Social Committee has been recruited and plans are afoot to offer an interesting and exciting programme of events for that day. Full details will be available in the June issue of the *Charlbury Chronicle*, but do note the date in your diary and watch the Appeal noticeboard outside the Museum for information. **STOP PRESS As we go to press we have just heard that Kelly Hoppen, the famous interior designer who has a home in Charlbury, has agreed to give a talk at this event.**

We would urge all those who are interested in the Community Centre project to make a note that the Annual General Meeting of the Thomas Gifford Charity will be held in the Memorial Hall at 8 pm on Friday, April 7th when Chairman Trevor Jones will give an update on the new situation and will be prepared to answer any questions.

We are always delighted when someone comes forward to offer to hold an event to raise money for the Community Centre. Please get in touch to discuss your ideas.

Appeal Coordinator: Lynette Murphy (810549) Deputy Coordinator: Diana Potten (810991) Treasurer: Richard Neville (810594)

ChOC REPORT

The next couple of films being shown at the Bell are going to be 'Casablanca' and 'The Chronicles of Narnia'. The classic '**Casablanca**', starring Bogart and Bergman, will be shown on Sunday March 5th, at 7.45pm. We will be offering tickets for the film, and also a combined film and meal at the Bell. Price will be £3 and £10 respectively. Available from the usual places and The Bell and Londis. The meal will be a main course option from "The Times" menu, either red meat, chicken, fish or veggie option. '**The Chronicles of Narnia**' will be shown on Saturday May 6th. It is intended to have a late afternoon screening for this film to attract a young audience. Price £3 **Big News - 'Don Giovanni' comes to town to celebrate Mozart's 250th anniversary:** On Friday June 2nd CHOc will be presenting, in conjunction with Chipping Norton Theatre, Mozart's opera 'Don Giovanni' at the Memorial Hall. The new production, in English, will be performed by a professional cast and directed by a former director of Glyndebourne. We hope to provide a range of activities during the evening, including pre-event drinks, a raffle, and other options to be announced at a later date. Tickets will be £10, with concessions for the under 16s. Tickets will go on sale in March. More information and details soon, watch notice boards and town web pages. Films showing later in the year will be the Oscar nominated 'Mrs Henderson Presents' and 'The Constant Gardener'. More details in the next edition. *Paul Dawsey: 07974353443; Russell Robson: 07760148745; email choc@charlbury.info*

CHARLBURY MUSEUM NEWS

The Museum will re-open in April. For the year celebrating the 750th Anniversary of the Town's Charter it will be putting on an exhibition linking local events with well-known happenings. The opening times are:

Saturdays, 10 — 12 noon; Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, 2.30 — 4.30 pm

Jennifer Bartlett will be preparing a list of Stewards for these times and would be very pleased to hear from new volunteers. Please ring her on 01608 810312

THE CORNER HOUSE & MEMORIAL HALL COMMITTEE

The Committee apologises for the frustration caused by the gas heaters not working efficiently. We are very aware of the problem and keep trying to improve the system. Meanwhile, please do not attempt to adjust any of the heaters, only use the ON and OFF switches.

We remind you that Societies and Groups, regular users, are welcome to appoint a representative to attend Committee meetings.

The Corner House & Memorial Hall belong to the town for its use and advantage and therefore always needs the support of its residents. A series of Coffee Mornings will be held and offers of help, including items for Raffles & Bric-a-Brac sales, would be appreciated.

Congratulations to Jane Parsons for her award of an MBE.

Ann Gilbert

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARDEN

'We are trying to establish a community organic garden to grow fruit and vegetables for sale, at low prices, to Charlbury people' says Patricia Perry

The impetus behind this is partly due to re-reading John Humphrey's book *The Great Food Gamble* with its worrying account of the effects pesticides are having on society, and to meeting a journalist whose research shows that it is the chemicals in our food that are largely responsible for the increasingly high levels of allergies from which people are suffering. It therefore appears that growing fruit and vegetables without the use of chemicals would be of benefit to our community.

We have a site for this venture, thanks to the Town Council. In addition it appears that there are good possibilities of financial support from a number of public sources and we are in the process of investigating these. The next step will be to set up the financial structure within which we can work—preparing the site for cultivation, including watering arrangements, purchasing the seeds and organising the gardening, composting and eventually sale of the produce.

There is a lot to do. We are therefore now appealing to all organisations that may be able to help with the funding to establish this project; once that is done we shall hope to be self-supporting, making just sufficient profit to keep going. Charlbury School has told us that they would like the children to take part, learning how to garden the organic way. We hope we shall also have the support, both voluntary and paid, of Charlbury people and we hope that many of you will come forward to join us in this enterprise, the prime aim of which is to grow (without the use of chemicals), harvest and then sell fruit and vegetables at prices that everyone, young and old, can afford — food that travels straight from the soil to the table retaining the high levels of vitamins and trace elements every family needs.

If you would like to support this venture in any way please ring me on 01608 810334 or Roger Watts on 811559, or email him on rogerw@bfocus.co.uk *Patricia Perry*

Charlbury Beer Festival 2006 **8th July**

The Memorial Hall
12 Noon to 11pm

A superb range of real ales, cider & wine
Excellent freshly prepared food
Soft drinks & snacks

Live music & children's entertainers

www.charlburybeerfestival.org

THE THOMAS GIFFORD CHARITY

A Report from the Chairman, Trevor Jones

We are hopeful that by the time of the next edition of the *Charlbury Chronicle* the Charity Commission will have completed all the formalities to put in place the new independent trustee body and the revised scheme for the Charity's operation. We have provided comments on the Charity Commission's draft and await a revised document.

The final three trustees for the new trustee body have now been selected – Lisa Hadfield-Law, Alan Hanks and Liz Reason. They bring great additional capability and experience. I know all the new trustees are frustrated by the slow pace of the Charity Commission and eager to start a new wave of consultation and involvement as soon as they possibly can.

We have had some promising initial feedback from the Oxfordshire County Council on a community centre project on the Spendlove site. Hopefully we will be able to update you on their thoughts next time.

The annual public meeting has been arranged for Friday, April 7th at 8pm in the Memorial Hall when we will be able to explain the current position and answer questions.

CHARLBURY CHARITY CHALLENGE

**CHA ... CHA ... CHA For the Community Centre Appeal and for the new Sports Pavilion on Nine Acres
SUNDAY APRIL 30 2006, Nine Acres Field, Charlbury**

**Runners, Bikers, Joggers, Walkers—all the family! Something for everybody!
6 km Run or Walk or Fun Bike; 12 km Run or Walk; 25 km Bike; 50 km Serious Bike**

All routes are off-road—public bridleways and footpaths (with thanks to Ditchley Park Estate). This is a Turn Up And Go event. You arrive, sign in, pay and set off!

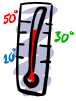
Fees (for all options): Adults £5, Under 16s £2.50

Because this is a LOCAL, COMMUNITY CHARITY EVENT, it is hoped that LOCAL people who take part will be prepared to get some support for their efforts by getting sponsorship.

Sponsorship forms are available from local shops, clubs and pubs.

For more info contact Phil Morgan (Run routes) 811367; Robin Akers (Bike routes) 810012; or Dean Vincent (Pharmacy).

Visit the Charlbury website www.charlbury.info for details and location



WEATHER REPORT

By John Stanley

November 2005 was a month of extreme contrasts. The month started as though summer had not yet ended, with a record temperature of 61° being recorded on 2nd. The first 12 days of the month all recorded temperatures above the November average. After this, the month was rather cool, with the average only being achieved on one day. Overall, the month recorded 47.37°, which is 1.61° below the average for the previous 16 years. The coldest day was 25th November, when the temperature only rose to 36°. The night time temperatures also created a 17 year record. This time it was a low. On three consecutive nights between 20th and 24th November, the temperature dropped to 24°. The first air frost of the winter was on 13th/14th at 30°. The warmest nights were 53° on 2nd/3rd and 5th/6th.

December 2005 was a fairly average month. Daytime temperatures ranged from a high of 50° on 16th, down to 31° on 29th, the latter being the second of two consecutive days when freezing point was not exceeded - the first such days since January 2003. The average daytime maximum temperature for the month was 43.65°, which is a minuscule 0.19° above that for the previous 16 years. Night temperatures ranged from 43° on 15th/16th down to 24° on 17th/18th. For the record, at midnight on 31st December, the temperature in Charlbury was 40° and it was cloudy.

2005 as a whole was just 0.22° above the 16 year average at 57.82°.

January 2006 was a cold month, but it did have its moments. A rather short warm spell just after the middle of the month included a high of 54° on a fairly sunny 18th. However, for most of the month temperatures were in the high 30s and low 40s. The lowest, 36°, was recorded on 5th, 6th, 7th and 24th. Night temperatures ranged from 45° on 10th/11th down to 23° on 24th/25th. Overall, the day maximum temperature was 42.90°, which is 1.22° below the 17 year average.

CHARLBURY RAINFALL

Nick Potter summarises the year's figures

The rainfall measured at Lees Rest between January 1st and December 31st 2005 was 666mm (about 26 ½ inches). The wettest month was October (76mm/3 ins) and the driest was February (19mm), following the same pattern as 2004. January, February and July were the driest since 1997, 1998 and 2000 whilst June and September were the wettest since 1999 and 2000 respectively. 2005 was the driest year since 1996.



UPDATE ON BIRD AID

The Wychwood Project is continuing its winter bird feeding programme in Charlbury at Broadstones Farm. The corn sweepings (kindly provided by the Ditchley Estate) are used by large numbers of yellowhammers which continued to feed last year until well into May, even bringing young fledglings to the feeding area. The scheme has expanded to take in four more sites in West Oxfordshire all of which are supported with funding from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment.

If anyone would like to take part in monitoring birds at any of the feeding sites please contact Louise Spicer on 01608 810745.

HOPE RISING — THE STORY FOLLOWING THE CD

At the launch of my first CD, 'Hope Rising' two months ago I had little idea as to how it would be received by family and friends who had only known me as a singing cherub in the school nativity play. Twenty years later and a few octaves lower my voice had matured enabling me to sing an eclectic repertoire from musical theatre with songs such as 'Bring Him Home' from Les Mis to Chris de Burgh's 80's pop hit, 'Lady in Red'. Reflecting my love of Klezmer music I also recorded the Hebrew folk song, 'Hava Nagilah' which promised to have the more uninhibited listener up on his feet dancing a Zorba type dance around the living room – and customer feedback indicated this indeed was the case.

I was greatly encouraged by the initial sales of CDs to family and friends who saw the CD as an ideal stocking filler in the pre-Christmas scramble for gifts. What however was even more heartening was the media response to Asja's personal story of survival in the war in Bosnia in the 90's. The local media seemed particularly interested in understanding how a local 'Oxfordshire' boy had come to fall in love with a Bosnian girl and also how they could help stimulate support to allow Asja, who had suffered the trauma of war, an opportunity of a university education in Oxford. Asja, who through turbulent life experiences had learnt the art of adaptability to any circumstance, was totally unfazed by media interviews. In a week we were both interviewed by the Oxford Mail, Witney Gazette and Central ITV News.

Churches too were very interested in Asja's story as not only had she and her family miraculously survived the war but in the subsequent years after attending a camp for reconciliation in Croatia Asja decided to turn from Islam and in August 2003 she was baptised. Following a talk at Wycliffe College in Oxford in December Asja was invited to share her life story and testimony of faith with all the British Forces stationed overseas via the British Forces Radio! Her interview was broadcast 'live' worldwide to many of the servicemen and women currently in Iraq who had previously served in Bosnia and Kosovo.

About a week later Asja was approached by the producer of Radio Four's 'Home Truths' who wanted to record an interview with her. They particularly wanted to find out how she had coped with a four year separation from her family when she was a refugee in Croatia. After the recording the producer told Asja how much she had been touched by Asja's lack of bitterness towards those who had invaded her country and forced her into a refugee camp. Her story was broadcast to 1.5m people nationwide on 19th December! Asja had never imagined people would be so interested in her story – after all it was only 'her' story.

Immediately before Christmas and following our media coverage, a Chipping Norton based company, Rollright Facilities Management Ltd, gave a generous donation to Asja's fund, opening up the possibility of a sponsorship deal for Asja in return for some good PR!

Whilst the campaign was successful in raising funds for Asja's next semester at Oxford Brookes the quest continues to raise the funds to cover the costs of the following two years of study. A call early in the New Year from the Richard and Judy show is a sign of promise that the campaign will continue to raise interest and support from a widespread constituency of people. Thank you to all of you in Charlbury for your support to date.

All proceeds from the sale of 'Hope Rising' will go directly to an educational fund for Asja within the Penny Trust (registered charity number: 265887). CDs are on sale in Evenlode Books and 'News and Things' or alternatively order a CD by emailing markpowys_smith@hotmail.com You can visit www.markps.com for more details.

Mark Powys-Smith

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS

ART & FLOWER CELEBRATION: During 2006 the five churches in Charlbury will be combining efforts to raise substantial funds for sinking wells in Mali, Africa's poorest country. The provision of water will be organised through Christian Aid which already works for human relief in Mali. Christian Aid has successfully rehydrated barren areas which are now re-inhabited and providing opportunity for local folk to grow their own crops. The work of the Charlbury Churches, in collaboration with other groups and organisations, will culminate in a 'Celebration' to be held at St Mary's Church during the weekend May 20-21 2006. The displays will include paintings, textiles, flower arrangements, and many other activities, brought together by the children and adults in the town's vicinity. The event promises a display which will be both enjoyable and interesting. It will also feature aspects of Christian Aid's undertakings in Mali. More details will be published in due course. Posters will also be displayed in Charlbury and surrounding villages.

Joan Marsh, Coordinator

CHARLBURY SOCIETY: A successful season of monthly talks comes to a close on March 10th when Nigel Hammond visits the Society to talk about **Enclosures and Agricultural Change**. **May 8th is the date for the AGM and, as our constitution requires committee members to step down after five years, there will be a vacancy this year.** A day visit is being arranged, probably for early July and members will be advised when arrangements have been finalised.. Please do consider joining the committee and if you interested and wish to learn more about what is involved please contact Brian Murray on 819091. *Brian Murray*

CHARLBURY BOWLS CLUB: At present we are enjoying our winter sessions Indoor Short-Mat Season which continues until early April 2006, when the finals of our competition are planned to be played on April 8th. Events coming soon are a Club Dance to 1960's music to be held on March 18th and an Easter Bingo Night on April 10th — both events will be held in our clubhouse. The Open Day, prior to the beginning of the outdoor summer season, will take place on Saturday April 22nd and an invitation is extended to anyone who might be interested in attending, as we are always looking for new members. Do come along and see for yourselves what it's all about. You will be made very welcome. The outdoor summer season, to which we are all looking forward, commences on Saturday April 29th. *Jack Fox, Hon. Secretary, Charlbury Bowls Club*

WEA CHARLBURY & ENSTONE BRANCH announce their courses for spring and early summer: Starting on May 4, Julie Elliott will run a seven week course at Enstone Parish Hall on Thursday 10am to noon entitled 'The Low Maintenance Garden' Fee £38.50 Starting on May 10, Tim Porter will run a three week course on Wednesdays from 2-4 pm at Chadlington Memorial Hall entitled 'Mediaeval Churches and their Music' Fee £25 On Saturday May 13, Peter Johnstone will be the tutor at 'A Day of Wine & Jazz', which will be held at Enstone Parish Hall between 10 am and 4 pm. Fee £25 including lunch. For further details of Enstone courses ring Moira Low (01608 677443); for Chadlington course ring Dawn Colvin on 01608 810545

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS

CHARLBURY ARTS SOCIETY

A busy year, with visits to Kelmscott, Nature in Art and the Tate. Last term we had a series of Life Classes, followed this term by Portraits, with local personalities sitting for us. Monthly talks have included Chinese Brush Painting, The Art of the Magic Lantern, and Capturing Light and Colour in India. Still to come are Journeys with my Sketchbook on March 8th, a talk about the work of the National Art Collections Fund in April, and a visit to a sculptor's studio in May. We also hope to do more painting sessions together and plan some more outings.

The Spring Exhibition, on Saturday March 25th held in conjunction with the Horticultural Society's Spring Show which opens at 2pm - is from 10am to 5pm in the Garden Room of the Memorial Hall. Younger artists are encouraged to bring entries for the Horticultural Society's Easter card, Collage using pasta, beans or seeds, and Painted Egg classes on Saturday between 9.30 and 11am. Entry is free and open to any child between the ages of 3 and 14.

On May 20th and 21st there will be an Arts and Flower Celebration for Christian Aid in St Mary's Church which promises to be a delightful event, well worth a visit.

Yearly membership of the Art Society runs from the September 1st to the August 31st and at £10 gives access to all our talks, the opportunity to exhibit in both our Spring and September shows, as well as useful discounts on artists' materials and framing. If you just want to come along to one or two of our talks, visitors are always welcome - entrance is £3. For further information ring Marion or Roy Coates on 810116. Full details of each of our events appear in 'The Leaflet' and on the Charlbury Web site.

Marion Coates

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW

The Society's Spring Show will take place on Saturday March 25 NOT ON April 1st (as stated in the Society's schedule!). The Show will be open to the public in the Memorial Hall from 2-4 on the 25th and will run alongside the Arts Society's Spring Exhibition. The two Societies are jointly sponsoring the Childrens' art competition which will be on the theme of an Easter card.

The Spring Show is a real celebration of that season. The dominant flower is, of course, the daffodil but I never cease to be amazed at the subtle variations in colour and shape noticeable when they are displayed together. Other categories of spring flowers such as tulips and polyanthus are also represented and EVERYONE (not just members) is encouraged to enter. You will find copies of the relevant part of the schedule in the library or local shops a week or two before the Show or they can be obtained from Nick Johnson (810507). If you would like to join the Society, please contact Sue Smith on 811007."

Nick Johnson

If you have items which you would like to submit to the Clubs/Drama/Sports/Group section please contact Julia Caston on 01608 810240

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CHARLBURY BRANCH

The Poppy Appeal for 2005 raised £3,716.62 in Charlbury and the surrounding area. The Poppy Appeal Organiser, Helen Clarke, would like to thank all those who helped to raise this sum and particularly those who gave so generously. Anyone who would like to help with the 2006 Poppy Appeal is asked to contact Helen on 810608.

The Charlbury British Legion Darts Cup for the Open Pairs was held at Ye Olde Three Horseshoes and won by Matt Pearce and Olly King.

A Poppy Collector 30 year Medal and Certificate has been awarded to Joan Madeley of Taston.

Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in St Mary's Church on Remembrance Sunday by the Charlbury Branch [Lady Gillian Clark], Thames Valley Police [P.C. Simon Towers] and Charlbury Town Council [Cllr. Ron Prew].

Veterans Badge: Once M.O.D. is satisfied that those who served in World Wars I and II have received their Veterans Badges then applications from other veterans will be considered in chronological order starting with the period 1918 – 1939 and then 1945 – 2005. The next issue of badges will be for service between the World Wars and from the end of the Second World War to 31 December 1954. For Service leavers after 1 February 2005 there are strictly defined qualifications. For further information please contact Jane Parsons on 810822 or Nick Potter on 810388.

Anniversary The Charlbury Branch was 80 years old on 13 January. The Branch Committee is still considering how to celebrate this later in the year. Suggestions please to Jane Parsons on 810822.

Assistance : 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



WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK: Five sure-fire ways to keep the kids busy (without resorting to the telly). As a home-schooling mum with young children, I'm often asked how I can get any jobs done with kids always around. I won't lie and say it's easy (I'm definitely no super-mum), but with these five sure-fire tips, you, too, can kick off your spring-cleaning to a reasonable start:

- 1. If they can't beat you, let them join you:** Pre-schoolers are incurable mimics. They are also desperate to be "big", so when they see you hoovering, they want to help. Instead of evicting them, try involving them.
- 2. Share the load:** On the subject of responsibility, don't be afraid to assign a simple task to them. Children are a lot more skilful than we often give them credit for. Sorting socks, folding towels, emptying dishwashers, and tidying away toys are all within the abilities of quite young children. Just don't expect perfection.
- 3. Discover audio books:** Audio books are tapes or CDs where actors read stories aloud, usually with sound effects and music as well. Children as young as eighteen months find them entrancing. Ladybird Books offer a whole range of fairy tales with accompanying tapes -- ask Jon at the bookstore about these and other titles that are available.
- 4. Turn on the sink:** Sometimes, you need five or ten minutes for a concentrated effort: that's where the sink can become your ally. Using a sturdy stepping stool, park your child in front of the basin with a toothbrush in one hand and a small beaker in the other, turn on the cold tap to its lowest trickle, and then dash to your desperate duty. It may be the case that you spend thirty seconds wiping up the puddles when you return, but on balance, you will have come out ahead.
- 5. Send them to the garden.:** Fresh air and active play are invaluable, and when you can get some work done while they're outside, all the better. Of course, you won't want to leave your young children unattended, but should your kitchen sink look out over the garden (as mine does), then you will find that you can do quite a lot of chores while keeping one eye on the kids. If it's your lounge or bedroom window, think about doing the ironing or folding clothes.

LITTLE FISHES: Little Fishes is a group for Under-5s and their carers which meets every Wednesday during term time, 10:30-11:45 a.m. at St. Mary's Parish Church. The bold decision to move from fortnightly to weekly has paid off, as now there are regularly fifteen or more children who enjoy music, stories, crafts, and play. The show-and-tell session at the end is also proving extremely popular!! If you are a mum, dad, grandma, or any other carer for young children, then you are most welcome to come along for the lively sessions and friendly conversation. For details, ring Kat (811660).

PRE-SCHOOL: Did you know that Charlbury Pre-School, located in the Old Grammar School on Park Street, can be hired for children's parties? The Pre-School is available from 2 p.m. onwards on Saturdays, and at any time on Sundays or during school holidays.

For only a £15 fee, you have the use of two rooms (one vinyl floor and one carpeted), child-friendly tables and chairs, a kitchen, and space even for a 10x10 foot bouncy castle! The heating of rooms can be arranged, if required, for a small extra cost. Pre-school premises are also available for hire in the afternoons during the week, either on a temporary or regular basis. Why not arrange a visit to see the venue and find out if it's for you? Telephone: 81 1200

CHILDREN'S YOGA: Does your child never seem to sit still? Well, children's yoga can teach him or her the benefit of lying quietly as well as moving meditatively, stretching, and strengthening those young bones. Classes run at the Pre-School on Tuesday afternoons, the fees for which go to the Pre-School. The Yoga Club meets at Charlbury School for Years 2-6 on Mondays and Tuesdays after school. Phone Nirosha on 810676 for further details.

BABY AND TODDLER GROUP: Though this is generally known as "the toddler group" around town, it's nevertheless open to mums-to-be and very young babies as well as pre-school children. The group meets every Monday during term time, from 9:30-11:30 at the Memorial Hall. Children especially love the chance to run, jump, and ride on toys when the weather is wet and grey – and you'll love the hot cuppa and conversation. £1.50 per family.

SPANISH FOR CHILDREN: Children from as young as 3 years old are welcome to Saturday sessions run by Elizabeth Vergara, a native Spanish speaker. There are games, songs, tapes, videos, drama, and story-telling, all of which the children love. For more information and to arrange a visit to a session, ring Eli on 811128 or e-mail her at elivergaravera@hotmail.com.

REMEMBER: If you run a group that targets the Under-5s, then please drop me a note, send me an e-mail, or ring me with details so you can be included in next issue's Tot Bits.

*TotBits is compiled by Kat Patrick
Telephone her on 811660 or email
Kat.patrick@alumni.southwestern.edu*

STOP PRESS TotBits is offering space for you to advertise BABY/TODDLER ITEMS you'd like to SWAP or GIVE AWAY to a good home. Also, if you're LOOKING FOR a particular item, maybe someone will see your plea and COME UP TRUMPS! Drop a note to me via my e-mail address above, call me, or even contact Lynette through the Chronicle's box at the Corner House. Hopefully, we can hook up lots of people with USEFUL ITEMS, while helping to CLEAR OUT OUR LOFTS at the same time! Remember, the deadline is 6th May for the next issue. **STOP PRESS**

WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR "ABU OXFORD" CANADIAN STUDENT PROGRAMME

The Maple Leaf flag flies again at the top of Dyers Hill! Thirteen students from Canada have arrived and are now busy with their studies in Drama and Shakespeare both in Oxford and Charlbury. You may have seen them down at the station or walking through the town on their way to lectures at the Methodist or Baptist Church. They are a very enthusiastic and friendly group from various provinces in Canada (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia) and even two from the US, and they have already settled in very well. They will be with us until April 10th.

A great deal of this success is due to the generous response of long term benefactors, the Church communities of Charlbury as well as to the *Charlbury Chronicle* article last December. Thank you to all those who responded to the latter with phone calls and emails offering accommodation. This year, for the first time, we are fortunate indeed to have all of the students residing in private homestays in the town itself.

In previous years, we relied on housing a number of them in holiday cottages up at Banbury Hill Farm but this has not been necessary this year. During the cold of January and February, the road out to the farm at night is dark and dangerous for pedestrians, and we have always had concerns about the students' safety. I know that in previous years, many people gave these students lifts out to the Farm, and I would like to extend to you our warmest thanks for your kindness.

An added advantage to homestay accommodation in the town is that the students get to know a Charlbury family, share conversations and anecdotes, and become immersed in the way of life in Britain. This makes a huge difference to their ability to handle culture shock. Of course, at first, students will notice differences which may amaze or amuse them, but soon these become "normal" and they move their attention onto other facets of their experience. They stretch their own abilities to tolerate uncertainty and novelty and very soon engage in the adventure of being here.

Another bonus of the *Chronicle* article has been that a wider net of people in Charlbury have been aware that they can offer other forms of support as well. For example, we organise a rota of Sunday Lunches, where once a month on a given day, various hosts in the community invite two or three students to Sunday lunch. These hosts are not necessarily homestay hosts but other kind supporters who wish to extend a hand of friendship to these young travellers. They are only asked to provide one Sunday Lunch during the whole three month visit. This gives the students a chance to meet yet more people from the town and hear their points of view.

On behalf of the whole Atlantic Baptist Community Oxford Study Programme may we thank the *Charlbury Chronicle* and the community at large for their support and generous welcome to our annual visitors.

Madeleine Wheare, Coordinator 01608 810 092
Peter Colyer, Executive Director 01608 810 107
Atlantic Baptist University Oxford Study Programme 2006

CHARLBURY WASTE ACTION GROUP

The Waste Action Group announces the following dates for **GREEN WASTE** collection at the Spendlove Car Park from noon to 1 pm on the following Saturdays:

March 4th, May 6th, July 1st, September 2nd, November 4th, January 6th

WODC NEW GREEN WASTE SCHEME: from April 2006 to March 2007 green waste materials can be collected regularly from outside your property for £30 (includes hire of 240 litre wheelie bin for duration of the scheme). For further information telephone 01993 861112 or email green.waste@westoxon.gov.uk

Easter Church Services

BAPTIST CHAPEL, DYERS HILL:

Minister: Rev Malcolm Cook, 4 Churchill Road, Chipping Norton (tel: 646637)
Rev Claudette Oddy (tel: 01993 200548)

Services : Sunday at 10.30am Easter Sunday: Rev. M Cook (Communion)

ST MARY'S C of E CHURCH

Full details of all services in Church porch or see The Leaflet

Rev Judy French, The Vicarage, Church Lane, tel: 01608 810286

www.stmaryscharlbury.co.uk

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Meeting for worship at the Friends Meeting House at 10.30 am

For further details contact: Joan Rough (810704)

METHODIST CHAPEL, FISHERS LANE

Morning Service normally each Sunday at 10.30 am — includes Holy Communion on March 19th & April 23rd. May date to be notified

Further information from Dr Donald Craig (819168)

ST TERESA'S R.C. CHURCH, FISHERS LANE

Palm Sunday: Mass at St Kenelm, Church Enstone 9 am; St Teresa's 11 am

Maundy Thursday: Mass of Our Lord's Supper: 7.30 pm

Good Friday: Liturgy of the Passion, 3 pm; Stations of the Cross, 7 pm

Holy Saturday: Confessions 11-12 noon; First Mass of Easter 8 pm

Easter Sunday: St Kenelm's at 9 am and St Teresa's at 11 am

Rt Rev Monsignor V F J Morgan, CBE, 5 Enstone Road, Charlbury OX7 3QR

Telephone: 01608 810576

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CHARLBURY have several shared activities, such as the Bible Study Fellowship, Good News Group and Luncheon Club. Further details from Pat Owens (676541)

THE FRIENDS OF SHORTHAMPTON CHURCH

An illustrated (slides) Lecture:
The Roman Cotswolds 'to hunt, to bathe, to play, that is to LIVE!'

By TV Historian Mark Corby
Saturday March 18th 2006 7.30 pm at
St Mary's Church, Charlbury
Tickets on the door £8 to include light refreshments

MEALS-ON-WHEELS

PLEASE GIVE A THOUGHT TO HELPING WITH THIS VITAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

Meals-on-Wheels provides a vital service to the elderly, sick and housebound members of our community. Some of our helpers who have been doing this work for many years are now retiring from the rota. We are a rare group, in that Charlbury Meals-on-Wheels still manages to provide a freshly-cooked two-course **hot** meal for our clients.

Can you spare just **one hour a month** to help out? We would particularly like to recruit some **younger members** to the rota. Do please give this some thought and see if you can offer to help to keep Meals-on-Wheels alive by offering to do **just one hour a month**.

If you are interested, please ring Margie Glasgow on 810161

Lent Lunches for Christian Aid From 12—2pm Contributions to Christian Aid

March 3rd: White Hart, Mr & Mrs Whitehead:
March 10: 14 Sandford Park, Mr & Mrs Belshaw
March 17: Methodist Church Hall, Fishers Lane
March 24: Quaker Meeting House, Market Street
March 31: The Vicarage, Church Lane
April 7: Bridge House, Thames Street, Dr and Mrs Tait



CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL REPORT 38

By Councillor Trevor Jones

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS: 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 & Commerce for coordinating arrangements and to Geoff Burroughs who donated the Corner House Christmas tree. NB At the time of writing there are still several trees that have not been removed from brackets on buildings. I am told it is 'bad luck' to leave a Christmas tree up after Twelfth Night!

MEETINGS: All the meeting dates for 2006 can be seen on the Town Council notice boards at the Corner House and opposite Five Ways Stores, or obtained from the Town Clerk (810608). All the meetings are open to the public. Copies of minutes of Town Council meetings are available in Charlbury Library. At the request of the Thomas Gifford Charity the Council will hold a Public Meeting in the War Memorial Hall on Friday April 7th at 8 pm to provide an update on the Spendlove site and other matters concerning the Charity and to answer questions. The Annual Parish Meeting will be at 8 pm on Friday April 21st 2006 in the War Memorial Hall. Please come and find out what your Council has been up to for the past year. The Annual Meeting of the Town Council will be at 7.30 pm on Wednesday May 24th in the Corner House. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Committees and representatives to other local organisations are appointed for the next 12 months.

TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT (BUDGET) 2006: The Town Council element of the Council Tax for the next financial year has been set at £69,047 compared with £69,143 for 2005/2006, a slight reduction. Over half the precept goes on unavoidable items such as Cemetery and Play Area 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 for the new Cemetery extension, the new Pavilion on Nine Acres, maintenance of the Playing Close, Town Centre improvements (Church) Street), a second speed indicator sign on the Slade, repair of St Mary's Church clock, a Charlbury promotional leaflet, the Shed Theatre, the School Association, Pre-School and After-School. The full list can be inspected by arrangement with the Town Clerk.

ANNUAL BOUNDARY WALK: The walk will take place on Rogation Sunday, May 21st starting at 10 am 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 walk. Anybody who would like to help with marshalling and generally helping is asked to contact the Clerk.

PERMISSIVE FOOTPATHS: Those at Wigwell Nature Reserve and Nine Acres Recreation Area were closed to public use on January 4th. The Town Council apologises for omitting this notice from the last Town Council Report. Permissive footpaths have to be closed to the public once a year by law.

ELECTIONS: There are no scheduled local government elections in Charlbury in 2006

COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES: Councillor Nick Potter represented the Council at the Induction Service for the Rev. Caludette Oddy at Charlbury Baptist Church and he was the Council's appointed Lesson Reader at St Mary's Church Carol Service.

Report from County Councillor Sue Haffenden ; email Sue.Haffenden@Oxfordshire.gov.uk or tel: 01608 676642

Next week there is a meeting of the full Council to determine the Council's Budget for 2006/7. There have, in fact, been meetings since October on this subject in each one of the Directorates, with officers being asked to scrutinise every item of expenditure with a view to balancing the books in each case.

Due to some increases in central government funding eg: for Education and some cuts from central government eg: in the Supporting People Grant (helps keep vulnerable people in their own homes and falls within the Social and Community Services Directorate) we have to decide, as an administration, how to prioritise services, whilst still keeping the Conservative's manifesto pledge for "a year on year reduction in Council Tax increases". It is an extremely complicated business and I have learnt a great deal these last few months about the importance of prioritisation in services to people. As Chairman of the Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee it is part of my brief to argue the case for my Directorate's services, with Cabinet members, officers and in Council. We work with older people, mental health, learning disability, adult education, and all things cultural. This means libraries , museums, archives, record offices and heritage.

I have always been interested in helping people and in the policies of local and national government but now, eight months into being your representative, I appreciate far more fully the supreme importance of the annual budget discussions.

I am happy to say that the manifesto pledge on Council Tax has been kept.

Report from District Councillor Glena Chadwick (tel: 810555 or email chadwick@glena.fsnet.co.uk)

The Environment Committee has been concerned with recycling green waste. Some of us compost our garden waste but much goes to the tip. If this could be recycled it would lessen the amount going into landfill sites and increase our recycling levels, which are getting better but are still far too low. One scheme was tried last year; some households paid £17 for a green waste bin which was emptied fortnightly. The committee proposes to enlarge this scheme so that about 4000 households throughout the district will pay £30 each for a longer period, for their green waste collection. There was a proposal to have alternate collections, ordinary non-recyclable rubbish one week and green waste the next; this would be for free. This will probably happen in the future but the majority wanted to continue to try the other scheme first.

To continue the recycling theme, there have been many problems with the site at the Spendlove car park. The bins are often full and the result is horrible; heaps of soggy cardboard and piles of bottles. I have complained regularly to WODC and they respond quickly but the problem reappears. If anyone finds it in a bad state please do ring WODC and complain.

Report from District Councillor Mike Breakell (tel: 01993 868201; email Mjbreakell@aol.com)

Planning issues are so controversial as they frequently involve both personal and public viewpoints and often become highly charged in a community like Charlbury. The concept of a new Home Zone here is one example, whilst the important and much needed redevelopment of the Cricket Pavillion on such a sensitive site by the Evenlode is another. The provision of new housing within the town, near Wychwood Close for example, is also difficult especially when the District planners have to meet national planning guidelines on residential development . Sometimes a new design is widely applauded as for example at Ticknell Piece, Phase Two, but more frequently the concern is whether developers will appeal to the Minister whose Inspector can then introduce conditions which take the decision beyond the control of the local authority. Recently more people have chosen to extend their homes rather than move house and that too can cause difficulties for neighbors,. On balance many good decisions have been made recently. There are many other issues around like the possibility of a major chalet development in Cornbury Park or the opportunity to significantly revise bus routes in Charlbury whilst major roadworks take place in Park Street that will require more attention in the future.

**The Charlbury Police Office at the Spendlove Centre will now be open
at the following times :-**

Mondays 12 noon - 3:00pm: Wednesdays 12 noon - 3:00pm: Fridays 9am - 12 noon

New volunteers are needed, please call into the office for details.

MARCH FARMERS' MARKET

Don't miss the Farmers' Market on the Playing Close on
Saturday, March 11th from 9am to 1 pm.

The Farmers' Market has proved successful in bringing shoppers into Charlbury as well as being a popular local event with residents who appreciate meeting the producers with fresh local produce.

We have a mailing list for people wishing to receive *The Charlbury Chronicle* who no longer live in the town. £2.50 per four issues; £4 per four issues for overseas subscribers. Large-print £2.50 for **each** copy. 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 below).

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