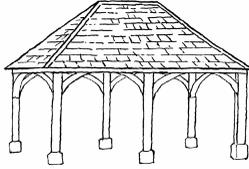


The Charlbury Chronicle



Volume 8 Number 4 December 2004

As we come to the end of our eighth year of publication it's time to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Thank you to all those who let us know how much they appreciate their quarterly *Chronicle*. We would especially like to thank our splendid distributors, a loyal band, many of whom have been with us from the start.

Thank you to Jack Potten who deals with our advertisers - make no mistake about it, the reason your *Charlbury Chronicle* is free is because Jack sells advertising space for us. Thank you to Dawn Colvin (who is the Chronicle Treasurer), Diana Potten, Julia Caston, Alison Offer, Ann Gilbert, Brian Murphy and Robert Caston for their various contributions to each issue.

The centre pages contain a section on Frequently Asked Questions about the Community Centre Appeal. Do please take the time to read it and we hope that it will dispel some of the myths and legends that abound about this project.

If anyone wishes to join the Chronicle Team, or indeed if there is anyone who would like to take over as Editor, do please get in touch - you would be very welcome! We would also be glad to accept contributions from readers for inclusion in future issues.

Lynette Murphy, Editor

Please note the deadline for copy for the March 2005 issue is February 4th 2005

NEWSBYTES

ABSOLUTELY A-MAZE-ING!

Oxfordshire schoolchildren were given the chance to build their own maze at Blenheim Palace to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Blenheim, which took place in 1704. The children mapped out their mazes in the beautiful Pleasure Gardens, and visitors solved the puzzles. Many schools from towns and villages around the Palace took part and Charlbury Primary School won first place beating Combe School into second place and Hanborough Manor School into third.

CHARLBURY FIRE STATION ACHIEVEMENT

At a recent Fire Brigade Annual Award Ceremony Charlbury Fire Station was named as the most successful Retained Station in the Brigade last year.

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Don't forget to attend the Christmas Farmers' Market on the Playing Close from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturday, December 11th.

REMEMBER THE PROFESSOR

Edward Fenton has edited a selection of the Newsletters which Robert Leslie used to produce over several years in Charlbury. Read about this delightful little book on page 5.

SITUATION VACANT AGAIN

Moe Scholl has decided to leave her job as Warden at the Corner House, so there's a job and a flat available to a new applicant. See the ad on page 13.

CHARLBURY SCHOOLGIRL SAVED BY SECOND SIGHT

Charlbury schoolgirl, 8 year old Imogen Holthouse, had an exciting day out on a film set during the Autumn half-term break. She had the opportunity to play a small part in a forthcoming episode of 'Midsomer Murders' entitled 'Second Sight', in which she and a class of schoolchildren are dramatically rescued from disaster by a local man with second sight - but you'll have to watch the programme, due to transmit in Spring next year, to find out what happens!

WINDOW BACK IN PLACE

Residents will be glad to know that the Weavers Window in the Corner House (which was the subject of an article in a recent *Chronicle*) has now been returned to its original position after repair. It is above the kitchen window and can be seen from the Corner House garden.

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

REPORT ON CHARLBURY STREET FAIR 2004

We would like to give a big thank you to all of you who so generously gave of your time, money etc to make this year's Street Fair such a success. There are too many people to thank – but you know who you are, so a big thank you from all the Street Fair Committee. It looks as if the total figure made should be £7892 which is amazing considering the weather we had. Below are a list of all the prize winners, for your information:

GRAND DRAW PRIZES:

| | DONATED BY: | Winner |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 £100 | Fairfax | G Brookes |
| 2 £50 | The Geoffrey Walton Practice | Joyce Hunt |
| 3 £25 | Charlbury Post Office | Ms Fredricks |
| Pottery | Ken Mills, Potter | Charles Tyzack |
| Sunday Lunch for 2 | Ye Olde Three Horseshoes | Swales |
| Dinner for 2 | The Bull | Judy Hollins |
| Book | Evenlode Books | Hilda Pipe |
| £25 Voucher | Waitrose | Greenfields |
| £10 Voucher | Sainsburys | Geeson-Brown |
| MOT test certificate | Charlbury Garage | Peggy |
| Voucher | Rachel Cooper, Hairdresser | Gin Billcliff |
| House of Commons | David Cameron MP | Barry (3 Horseshoes) |
| Scotch | | Jenny Jones |
| Hamper | Daylesford Organic Farm Shop | Borton |
| Pet microchip | Charlbury Veterinary Surgery | |
| Letter-headed stationery | Business Focus | Brice |
| Travel Bag | Five Ways Store | Skirrow |
| Bottle of wine | Five Ways Store | Kenrick |
| Battery operated | | |
| Toothbrush | Charlbury Dentist | Ann Boyd |
| Paddington Bear | Kiddywinks | Judy Geary |
| Meal for 2 at either | Martin Lyall | R Farrow |
| The Bell Charlbury or | | |
| The Golden Pheasant Burford | | |
| Voucher | Scrap Book House, CN | Barry Cooper |

CHILDREN'S FANCY DRESS: 5 AND UNDER: 1st Aric Klukawski - The Phoenix; 2nd Ian Price - Wizzard; 3rd Hannah Leach - Puff the Magic Dragon; **OVER 5:** 1st George Dix - The Curse of the Mummy; 2nd Charlotte Fenton - Old Mother Shipton; 3rd Rosie Owen - Medusa; **GROUP:** Peter Pan (Kate, Anna & Jake De Buriate, Esme & Cameron Newton-Grain)

EVENING PARADE WINNERS: FLOAT PRIZE was won by Centre Stage/SHED – Beatles.

WALKING PRIZES: 1st Slaters & Friends as George & The Dragon; 2nd Eva, Becky, Nina, Flo, Rosie & Milena as The Medusa; 3rd Tristan & Nick Stepney, Sam Smit as Elvis The Rock Legend

Just so that you all know, next year's Street Fair will be on Saturday September 17th – so don't you dare be away! The first meeting to organise next year's fair will be on January 31st at The Bell. We do need lots of help in organising the fair; it's not too much work if we have lots of people to help – and its good fun too! Please contact Sue Cooper if you are interested in helping – even if it's only on the day. Her phone number is 01608 819139.

Susie Finch, Street Fair Committee



THAMES VALLEY POLICE

CANADIAN STUDENTS RETURN TO CHARLBURY

By the time you read this, hopefully the office at Unit 5, Spendlove Centre, Enstone Road will be up and running.

The opening was scheduled for Saturday 20th November 2004, with doors open to the Town Council, representatives from local organisations and, of course, Charlbury residents to come in and have a look around and meet the three local Rural Beat officers who will use the office as a base.

Times of opening will be displayed on the door (there will also be a direct phone outside for emergency use if the office is closed) but provisionally they are:-

Monday: 9am – 3pm
Wednesday: 3pm – 6pm
Thursday: 12 noon – 3pm
Friday: 9am – 12pm
Saturday: 9am – 12pm

Thank you to all the volunteers who have come forward so far; more would mean longer opening hours so, if you would like to help, please contact:

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

01295 754524

rosie.white@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

The next group of sixteen Canadian students from Atlantic Baptist University, New Brunswick, and Redeemer College, Ontario, will be resident in Charlbury from 22 January to 18 April 2005. This visit is part of a continuing programme of studies between these Canadian universities and Regents' Park College, Oxford.

The students will be staying in homes in Charlbury and some in the holiday accommodation at Banbury Hill Farm. We still require:

- Home-based accommodation on a bed-and-breakfast basis (for which the costs are modestly reimbursed) especially for the final three weeks, 28 March to 18 April 2005.
- Offers for occasional Sunday lunches for groups of two or three students.

A number of free public lectures and a play will also be arranged during the programme - watch for details.

This will be the fourth year of the current programme. Charlbury has always given a warm welcome to these visiting groups, and we are confident this will happen again. Many of the students have found their time in Charlbury, Oxford and England to be a life-changing experience. One said at the end of last year's programme, 'I left my heart in the Cotswolds and my brain in the Bodleian'.

Offers and further details: Madeleine Wheare (810092) or Peter Colyer (810107).

PUTTING GOSSIP ON A SCIENTIFIC BASIS

Do you remember the long-running saga of the search for a Charlbury limerick – something which, it was hoped, would ‘bring notoriety’ upon our town for ever? And what about the battle to ensure that the housing development east of the Slade was called Ticknell Piece rather than Nut Close, in order to prevent ‘wits of the town’ from suggesting that it was ‘an area for the mentally retarded’?

If you remember these things you were probably an avid reader of *Charlbury News*, which flourished for just six years under the highly individual editorship of the late Professor Robert Leslie.

Professor Leslie launched the first issue of his newsletters on Street Fair Day 1990, and it immediately established a distinctive voice: by turns jocular and bombastic, school-masterly and apologetic. Robert Leslie loved to impart his knowledge of the town, and he filled its pages with bits of innocent gossip, diatribes against littering, and more serious items of historical interest (sometimes coloured by tall tales which fellow pub-goers had spun in a deliberate attempt to mislead him). *Charlbury News* had the capacity to infuriate – local publisher Judith Scott remembers coming back from holiday one summer, to discover that the entire town had been given notice of her house being left unattended – but for most people its quarterly appearance was greeted with interest, mirth and affection in roughly equal measures.

Some months ago I was putting together a book about some of Charlbury’s more colourful characters through the ages, and believing that I might find some material in *Charlbury News*, I started to re-read the back issues that I had carefully saved. I quickly realised that they contained enough material for a book in its own right. I was struck not just by the humour, but also by the fact that Professor Leslie had managed to build up a picture of a place which seems almost mythical. It is identifiably our town, yet I feel that many readers from outside would find it hard to believe that such a place could really exist.

Professor Leslie didn’t just report on what he heard and saw in his adopted town: he also helped to build up its sense of community, and its understanding of a shared history – and *Charlbury News* is now itself a part of the town’s folklore. For those of you who miss seeing Professor Leslie patrolling Church Street, informing visitors to the town about how many pubs existed here in Victorian times, it is hoped that this new collection of his writings will bring back fond memories. For those who never knew him, you are in for an unexpected treat.

Edward Fenton

‘Six Years in a Country Town: Pages from R.F. Leslie’s Charlbury News’ (120 pages, paperback) is published by the Charlbury Press at £3.99.

It has an introduction written by Robert Leslie’s daughter Fran, and all proceeds will go directly to the Charlbury Community Centre Appeal. Copies are available from Evenlode Books (01608 819117) and selected outlets.

Charlbury Primary School News

The new year has started at Charlbury Primary School. In common with all Oxfordshire schools, the school is now operating a new six-term year pattern. Essentially this does not make a huge difference - the summer holiday will be slightly shorter and the October holiday slightly longer. The most noticeable change is that the spring holiday will no longer necessarily coincide with Easter (although the school will, of course, still be closed for the national holidays on Good Friday and Easter Monday.) The decision to move to six terms was taken at County level and though school and governors were consulted the pattern chosen was not in line with their preferred choice.

On a more positive note – the school year has got off to a busy and energetic start, buoyed up at academic level by pleasing results in the national standard attainment tests (SATs). The school takes pride, however, in providing a broad and varied curriculum and not one that simply prepares children for examinations. Teachers and volunteers contribute valuable time and energies to providing extra-curricular activities and clubs both within and after school hours. Sport is becoming particularly strong in the school. Teams participate (and often triumph) in numerous sporting events organised through the Chipping Norton Partnership - kwik cricket, 'ultra Olympics', basketball, netball and football to name but a few.

The school also resounds to the sound of music. The junior choir re-starts this term, gearing up for the Christmas carol season. Instrumental lessons take place. Children are offered opportunities to learn violin, 'cello, flute or clarinet with

peripatetic teachers from the Oxfordshire Music Service. These lessons then open up opportunities for those children to participate in County orchestras and music schools. A number of pupils (and the headteacher!) have piano lessons in school.

The school aims to make learning a fun and enjoyable experience. Sport and music – subjects which are necessarily squeezed by the demands of the national curriculum – are a vital part of a rich and rounded education. Thanks must go to those staff and helpers who go the extra mile to ensure that these opportunities are still open to our children.

Tessa Barras, School Governor

CHARLBURY WHEELED SPORTS FACILITY

The wheeled sports facility which is being provided by the Town Council with the help of funding from West Oxfordshire District Council and WREN is now in the final stages of construction. The inclement weather has delayed progress, but final completion is expected by the end of November or early December. The landscaping will follow as soon as possible thereafter.

When completed the skatepark will be made available to users followed by a formal opening in the Spring.

The Town Council would like to thank Charlbury Freestyle and all who helped bring this project to a conclusion.

*Roger Clark, Town Clerk
Charlbury Town Council*

NEW BOOK OF WALKS

A new walks book, 'The Evenlode - an exploration of a Cotswold river' by Gordon Ottewell, describes fifteen walks along the valleys of the Evenlode and Glyme rivers. Each walk is accompanied by a well-illustrated description of the countryside and its historical and literary associations, as well as a detailed itinerary and map. Gordon Ottewell is a well-known writer of books on the countryside, and in his time was head of primary schools in both Burford and Kingham. 'The Evenlode' is available from Evenlode Books in Market Street, or from the publishers, Green Branch Press, on 01367 860588, at £7.50 post free.'

Christopher Yapp

CAWAG NEWS

The Charlbury Area Waste Action group had a great success with their latest Bring & Take event on November 6th. Many people came in to donate unwanted items and even more went away with unexpected gifts and useful items for the house and garden. The idea is just to avoid filling up the landfills with unwanted things but instead to pass them on for free to other people: a bit like e-bay but without any cost! Everything from wallpaper strippers to piano accordions, bikes, tables and even brand new CD players were passed across to new homes, and we also made some money for the Poppy appeal, with charitable donations.

Please take a look at our new website, which is accessible from the Charlbury site, for information and news.

Next event is the Green Waste and Christmas Tree shredding on Saturday 8th January 2005; mark it on your new calendars and Happy Christmas from all at CAWAG!

Anne Miller, Chair CAWAG

A LIFE'S DAY
Kate Smith
Architect

Interviewed
by

I usually get up at 7.30 am; Arthur has been up since 6.45 am. to get the boys, who are 13 and 12 years old ready to catch the 7.45 am Burford bus. The first thing I do is to have a hot shower, followed by a cold one

and then I am awake and go down to have breakfast with my daughter, Beth, who is 9. I have a small bowl of Special K, black coffee and an aloe vera fruit drink. I take Beth to school - we either walk or bicycle, except on Friday when we catch the bus as she has her cello to carry. The only day that I don't do this is Thursday when I go at 7.30 a.m with a friend to Chipping Norton pool and I try to swim 30 to 40 lengths. When I return home I do some jobs around the house but I am usually at work by 9 o'clock. My day as an architect is very varied. I can be involved in detailed drawings, talking to clients, consulting a Planning Department or making a site visit. Because of this I never regret having taken up architecture. I was brought up in Glasgow and in accordance with the Scottish educational system left school at 17. I wanted to study Art but my parents were worried about this. They had some friends in Glasgow, who were both architects and they had given me a placement in the holidays and that really persuaded us that was the route I should follow. I went to the Bristol School of Architecture. I studied for three years and then had to do a year's practical, which I did with a big architectural firm in the city. I particularly remember working night shifts on computers in those days, which took up nearly half a room. I also learnt at that time that I was in the real world. Up until then I had managed to conceal my fear of heights but while on my practical, I visited a site where they were building a 15 storey high hospital. The architects I was with proposed going up the scaffolding to the top. I said I would wait below but they said if going to the top was a problem, I could hand in my notice.

Going up was terrifying but it cured me and later I would shin up ladders even when 8 months pregnant. In the early 1980s Bristol closed its school of architecture and I transferred to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I had to do a further two years training - my weak point was the mathematical side of the course but I was greatly helped in that at Newcastle and after 7 years and passing my exams I had qualified as an architect. I have not found it difficult being a woman studying for this profession. In Bristol a third of the course had been women and in Newcastle there were 3 out of 22. In fact I found that builders were often more courteous and helpful to the women. Also I think it is easier for women to admit they did not know something and to ask the builders for help. I then spent three years in London working for a firm of architects that specialised in conservation. I was working at the John Soane Museum; this had been Sir John's home in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He had filled it with architectural artefacts, Egyptian sarcophagi, etc. We were concerned with alterations to the building, which always had to be in keeping - plaster had to be matched exactly, tiling had to be the same, paint finishes had to be exact. I spent three months on the mosaic details of the tiling in the downstairs cloakroom. It was great fun as plenty of funding was available.

In 1989 I married Arthur, who was also an architect. He was working in Wales so when we married I moved there. The recession of the late 1980s inevitably affected architecture very badly and we decided to move to the West Indies and went to live in Kingston, Jamaica. It was a wonderful place to be with a young family because there was plenty of help. I was seven months pregnant with Sam when we went out there but I was able to work in a local practice. We had an incredible house, which was at the back of a colonial great house. It was tumbledown and half of it was a cottage and half of it was a warehouse. It had a tin roof and our

bedroom was huge. We were there for 5 years but we realised that we could not stay partly because of the violence and also family ties. During this time because of Arthur's connections with Oxford and because my brother and sister had been there also, we had made a visit to Charlbury - it was here I saw my first kingfisher. We realised that it was a place which would be the perfect compromise between my Scottish connections and Arthur's Welsh ones. We started looking for a building plot. Papers were sent out to Jamaica, the Hixet Wood plot came up, Arthur's uncle photographed it in the snow and we bought it by fax. We were not disappointed. At first we lived in a flat above 'News and Things' from the April till December. Arthur did much of the building work, bought materials and sub-contracted out other work. I continued to work at home. I enjoyed meeting clients, talking about what they wanted and whether I could make a contribution, particularly if it involved conservation matters. Being at home means too that when I stop for a light sandwich lunch I can indulge in watching "Frazier" repeats! Sometimes when I'm busy it is a working lunch.

In the afternoons I may do site visits ,and I enjoy seeing how projects are progressing. Sometimes in the afternoons I manage to do some gardening. We have now moved to Bridge House - as we outgrew our house and had to leave. There is a lot of structural work to do on our new garden and I look forward to the time when I will have wonderful herbaceous borders. At 3.30 pm the boys come home; there is a quick chat. They do their homework and music practice, spend time on sport and the computer. However organised we try to be, we don't always seem to get it right and there will be a cry at 8 o'clock from one of the boys, 'I have to make a model of a trebuchet for tomorrow'. Beth has lots of activities at school, football, hockey and choir. On Fridays I take her to the library and it is also the penny

sweet night at 'News and Things' -an excellent lesson in budgeting, how far can you make 5p go? I like to stop work when the family come home unless there is something really pressing. I try and help Beth with her homework and music practice and she and I are enjoying having five kittens to look after. Now that Arthur is working at home he will sometimes do the children's tea and I can carry on with projects. He and I have dinner at 7.30 pm. - my ideal is a light supper, some red wine and an Inspector Morse.

Often our evenings are spent working. Now Arthur and I are working together as McCormick Smith Architects, we find this an excellent time of day to get things done because the 'phone is not always ringing. It is a very exciting time for us: we are looking to broaden our horizons and work farther afield. A good start was that we were shortlisted for the RIBA Ibstock Dowland award for an extension in Stonesfield and there are already spin-offs coming from this. There is so much one can be doing in Charlbury and the children can enjoy far more freedom here than they would elsewhere. They can go to other people's houses and we know where they are, they can catch the train to Oxford, they can go out into the countryside. We too have a wide range of activities and a rich circle of good friends; we often go with them on walking or cycling trips: we play bridge, we may watch a film with friends.I really enjoy painting, and I do keep fit. Sometimes we go to 'The Bull' on a Thursday evening to listen to the pianist. Some evenings I attend governors' meeting at the Primary School - our children have had such a good start there that I like to put something back. Bedtime is usually at 11 o'clock. I have a mug of hot water and then settle down for a read in bed. At the moment I am reading John Cowper Powys' book on Owain Glyndwr and the 14th century border wars in Wales, which has been published by Rob Stepney. At 12 o'clock I put out the light and sleep like a log.

THANK YOU

'Thank you very much for the Aintree Iron,

Thank you very, very, very much'

I've no idea what the Aintree Iron is, but I love this song, way past its sell-by date, but still very meaningful. It reminds me of the day we took our eight year old twins to the theatre for the first time. We'd chosen a space-play performed at the delightful Mermaid Theatre in London. The front row of the stalls is very near the stage, so our small boys felt part of the action, and loved every minute. It was only at the end that one of them (I can't recall which) embarrassed us, and taught us a lesson we've not forgotten. The applause was deservedly loud and long, but one son stood on his seat as the clapping died away and shouted 'Thank you very much, that was ace!'. Laughter all around and the actors looked delighted but I hauled him down, furious that he had drawn attention to us. It was only on the long journey home that I realised he'd done something very special. He had expressed gratitude in a sincere way.

At this time of the year, most of us go to some trouble to buy or make cards and gifts for others. Sadly, some are received with little comment or the meanest of thanks. These days even wedding gifts are only acknowledged with a printed card. A former member of our family told us that she never said thank you, nor taught her children to do so - 'I never ask for gifts and will never say thanks for them'.

Christmas began as a celebration of thankfulness for the gift of a Child. Now many people with no religious thoughts still use it to express their thanks to those who have made their lives special. I have asked folk who work in shops, surgeries, libraries, if they are thanked for the service they provide, and have been told that people more often find fault than express gratitude. I wouldn't mind guessing this is also true of the team that puts this invaluable magazine together !

So maybe, this year, we'll have a Christmas when children are encouraged to write or draw their thanks for all the gifts they receive. Perhaps this will be the year when we do more than leave a tip for the paper-boy, the milkman, the postie, but say or write our appreciation for all they do for us. ...and to anyone who explains in the next Chronicle the meaning of Aintree Iron, my thanks!

Dee Moss

CHARLBURY MUSEUM

The Museum will mark the end of World War 2 with an exhibition. The Museum would appreciate the loan of items dating from 1939-1945 which people may have kept.

A taped record of experiences is planned, and as there was a great variety of contributions to the War Effort, it is hoped that many people will have memories which deserve to be recorded.

The Museum is closed for the winter months, but visits can be arranged by telephoning Ron Prew, the Museum Curator, 01608 810060

SITUATION VACANT IN CHARLBURY

Live-in Warden required to look after two community buildings in Charlbury.

Duties include administering bookings, opening and securing the premises, and cleaning. All occupancy and costs associated with a large single bedroom flat are covered plus a monthly remuneration and a percentage of booking fees.

Application forms and job description from: The Secretary, Management Committee, The Corner House, Market Street Charlbury OX7 3QW, or visit www.charlbury.info

Corner House & War Memorial Hall

The Committee is pleased to report that the front railings of the Corner House, missing during essential restoration work, will be returned before too long.

Please note that representatives from all groups who use the Corner House and Memorial Hall would be welcome to the Committee's monthly meetings which are held at on the first Monday of the month at 7.30 pm in the Ann Downer room in the Corner House. We hope that all users can understand the terms 'leave the room as you found it' and 'clearing up after classes'. The 2005 Diary for bookings is now available.

Ann Gilbert

WEATHER REPORT

by John Stanley

August 2004 was a month of gradually decreasing temperatures, feeling rather autumnal towards the end. In fact, temperatures were above average on all except two days in the first half of the month and below average on all except two in the second half. The highest temperature was 84° on 8th August. Overall, August 2004 came out at 72.71°, which is just 0.42° above the average for the previous 15 years. Nevertheless, it was the warmest month of the year and exceeded July, the normal warmest on average, by 1.61°. This the 8th time in 16 years that August has been warmer than July, and this has now happened in each of the last 3 years.

September followed the pattern of August, with gradually decreasing temperatures, although it did become rather up and down towards the end of the month. Overall, September 2004 came out at 66.00°, which is 1.34° above the average for the previous 15 years. The highest temperature was 77° on 5th September and the coldest 58° on 21st. Although it did feel rather cold on a few nights, the lowest temperature was 40° and no air frosts were recorded.

October was a month during which the maximum daytime temperatures remained within a relatively close range of just 10° between 51° and 61°. There were no particularly warm, or cold days, with the result that, overall, it came out at 56.16°, which is a mere 0.23° below the average for the previous 15 years. One remarkable statistic is that for eight consecutive nights (from 9th/10th to 16th/17th) the temperature dropped to the same level (44°). No air frosts were recorded, the lowest temperature being 39°.

WYCHWOOD PROJECT GOES TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS

On the October 27th 2004 Lord Rotherwick, one of the Project's patrons, kindly held a reception for 60 guests at the House of Lords. These included Conservation Minister Ben Bradshaw MP, David Cameron MP, Lord Hurd and the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff for Oxfordshire. In his opening address Lord Rotherwick stressed the need to create more forestry as Oxfordshire was the least wooded county in south eastern England.

Representatives of the Project, including Trustees of the Friends of Wychwood, explained the experiences and achievements of the Project to date and its aims for the future. These achievements include the establishment of seven community woodlands, thirty-five community based landscape and habitat enhancement projects, creation of the Wychwood Way walking trail and the revival of the annual Wychwood Forest Fair.

Many guests, including representatives from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, expressed interest in the breadth of community-based initiatives within the Project area. DEFRA is currently reorganising the delivery of rural funding with a shift of production subsidy towards more targeted grants for environmental work. The Project is well placed to take a lead locally in these proposed changes. Project Manager Nick Mottram explained that the Project works at the landscape scale and uses the ancient hunting Forest of Wychwood as a focus for its activities. Several guests were from the Woodland Trust, with whom the Project is exploring the possibility of creating a 'Big Wood', with public access, within the Project area. Other guests included the

Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Chief Executive of BBOWT, as well as members of both Houses of Parliament.

This most successful event was made possible by the generous support of Abercrombie & Kent Europe, the Burford Society, CPRE Charlbury, Chipping Norton & Woodstock Group, Peter Cook International and the Friends of Wychwood.

For more information about the Wychwood Project contact the Project Manager at Fletchers House, Woodstock tel: 01993 814143.

Alan Spicer

Letter to the Editor

From Mary Wakefield

In the Sept edition of the *Charlbury Chronicle* there is a lovely article by Eve Morris on Volunteer Reading Help on page 15. However, the phone number given has lost its last number. It should be 0845 4500329. In case you have any queries, perhaps you could pass this on or make a correction next time. Many thanks. *VRH Oxfordshire Oxford Community School Glanville Road, Oxford OX4 2AU Tel & Fax: 0845 4500329 Website: www.vrh.org.uk*

TRANSPORT NEWS

The End of Worth's Reign as provider of Charlbury's bus link with Oxford

Changes in the contractual arrangements with Oxfordshire County Council mean that as from 13th December 2004, Stagecoach takes over the running of the Charlbury to Oxford bus service. This is being achieved by extending those journeys on its existing Oxford-Chipping Norton route which previously terminated at Woodstock, to run through to Combe, Stonesfield and Charlbury (as route 20A). Buses will still be timed to meet at half past the hour in Charlbury. It is believed that Worths Motor Services has operated the Charlbury to Oxford route continuously since it started in 1928.

Also changing is the Rail Link Bus, which will be operated by RH Transport instead of Worths Motors. It will be on a somewhat different basis, being a demand-responsive service during the afternoon and running to a time-table during the morning and afternoon peak hours. The town circuit service will no longer operate but the bus will travel through the town centre on its way to and from the villages to the station. It will be the same vehicle but with a new livery. RH Transport is based in Witney and its proprietor lives in Finstock. The new contracts run for 4 years. Worths will continue to run the route 69 Witney - Finstock - Charlbury - Chipping Norton & Banbury service.

Major Changes to the Railway Timetable

As from 12th December 2004, it is all change on the trains at Charlbury. Most of the services will be provided by First

Great Western's modern 125 mph air conditioned 'Adelante' trains, instead of the slower and more cramped Turbo units. Many of the trains will run at similar times to now, but others will be considerably changed and some will terminate at, or start from, Oxford instead of London Paddington.

It is recommended that train users should either obtain a copy of the new timetable from the railway station or check with National Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50 or www.nationalrail.co.uk

John Stanley/Amanda Epps

STREET FAIR FUN RUN AND 10K RACE

The annual run in aid of Street Fair was held on Sunday September 19th and saw a good turn out. Almost 100 runners gathered on the Playing Close for a prompt start at 10.30 am. The runners were cheered on their way down Church Street by the red-shirted Street Fair committee whose support was much appreciated. It is a beautiful course through the grounds of Cornbury Park. The 10K was won by a Woodstock Harrier in 35 minutes 40 seconds. First Charlbury man home was Mark Pritchard in 4th place at 38min.7sec, and first Charlbury lady was Kath Lowe. All the results were posted on the Charlbury website with the help of Neil Macalpine, who handled this year's entries, booked all the runners in on the day, and even did the timekeeping (he'll probably choose the easier option of running the 10K next year).

It was good fun, hard graft and made a healthy profit of about £350 for the Street Fair. Thanks go to all the marshalls and helpers on the day, and to all the runners who keep coming back for more. See you next year!

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE APPEAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW HALL WHEN WE ALREADY HAVE THE MEMORIAL HALL AND THE CORNER HOUSE? When the old Primary School and the Spendlove Centre were demolished Charlbury lost two venues which had been used for community education, performing arts and other activities. The existing facilities are inadequate; the Sports & Social Club has problems meeting legislative and licensing requirements; the Library is too small for the size of our community; and the Corner House, being an old, listed building, has problems complying with changes to the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in October 2004. A new building would address all these problems and meet the needs of Charlbury in the 21st century.

WHERE DID ALL THE MONEY GO? The Thomas Gifford Charity's share of the proceeds from the sale of the old Primary School were expended between 1997 and 2000 on the purchase of the Spendlove site. There was a large penalty due under a purchase agreement as a building contract was not entered into by December 1999. Much money had been spent on plans to develop the new Centre, and this was lost when the project was abandoned.

ARE THERE ANY MORE PENALTIES TO BE PAID? If there is a building on the Spendlove before July 2007 greater than a certain size, an additional amount could be payable to Hartwells (who sold the site to the Charity). However, there is reason to believe that this would not be required under certain conditions, and the TGT is seeking to clarify this.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSION? The Charity Commission has recently written to say that it does not propose to seek reimbursement of losses from the Town Council or former Trustees. The Commission has decided that it would make sense for there to be a change in the trustee body and they will be considering proposals to bring this about.

WHO AND WHAT ARE DRIVING THE DESIGN AND ARE WE USING LOCAL EXPERTISE? The main concerns are harmony with the surrounding area and cost. Local expertise is being used where possible, and a group are looking at ways in which an energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly building for the 21st century can be designed at the same cost. Charlbury architects and business people are being consulted.

WHEN WILL WE SEE SOME PLANS? In line with the prudent management of the resources of the Trust it has been decided not to proceed with the next stage of detailed plans until some outside funding has been

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE APPEAL

definitely secured. When this happens the plans will be available for public viewing and consultation. Outline diagrammatic plans have been available for some time and can be seen on request to the Chairman of the Trustees, Trevor Jones (810644), or email trevor.jones@ophiopogon.com

WHAT DETERMINES THE SIZE OF THE HALL? The cost of the proposed building increases with size and would have to be justified. There is a demand for a larger number of small-scale events in Charlbury, and the proposed performing arts space will meet this. The Memorial Hall will still cater for larger events. There would need to be very good reasons to increase the size of the building.

CAN THE HALL BE FURTHER EXTENDED AT A LATER DATE? Yes, it will be positioned on the site so as to allow future extension if further funds were to become available.

IS THE SHED GOING TO BE SOLD? The SHED (which currently houses Centre Stage and SHED Theatre) site is owned and leased out by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the future of the site is for them to decide. If the Community Centre is NOT to be built then OCC may wish to dispose of the SHED site at an early opportunity to raise money in order to provide a new building with disabled access (to comply with changes to the Disability Discrimination Act 2004) to house its services. However, if the Community Centre remains on track, we understand that the SHED site would not be sold prior to its opening and we would ask OCC to give a firm commitment to this. The fund-raising committee are fully aware of the importance of the SHED to the cultural life of the town, and would support all efforts to keep this valuable facility open one way or another. We should all be pulling together to achieve our joint aims.

WILL THE THREE BUILDINGS COME UNDER A SINGLE MANAGEMENT GROUP? The Thomas Gifford Charity (which owns the Spendlove site and the Playing Close), Nine Acres, and the Corner House (which owns both the Corner House and the Memorial Hall) are three separate charities. Charlbury Town Council is the trustee for each of them and they have similar aims. It may therefore be a good idea to bring them together and co-ordinate them. However, this is not likely to happen in the short term and would be a matter for the Charity Commission.

WHAT ABOUT UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE OF THE NEW CENTRE? The business plan of the proposed Centre includes sufficient cover for appropriate upkeep and maintenance. OCC would be responsible for the share of costs relating to the services they provide, and charges on users would have an element to ensure an appropriate level of repair.

WHEN WILL BUILDING ACTUALLY START? The building would start as

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE APPEAL

soon as funding is put in place. This will not be before summer 2005 at the earliest and the maximum time between start and opening should be 18 months.

WILL THE EXISTING SITE BE LEVELLED AND COULD IT BE USED FOR CAR PARKING UNTIL THE NEW CENTRE IS BUILT? The site has largely been levelled apart from the Sports & Social Club and adjacent land. However, the site could not be used for public parking without considerable expense, due to health and safety and insurance considerations.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE MONEY RAISED SO FAR IF THE SCHEME FALLS THROUGH? The Appeal's constitution has been carefully drawn up so as to cover this eventuality - and was published in full in the June 2004 *Charlbury Chronicle*. All monies that can be returned to donors would be repaid, and any amount left over would be transferred under Charity Commission guidelines to local charities based on local wishes.

WHY HAVEN'T WE HEARD MORE ABOUT THIS APPEAL? This is a particularly difficult question to understand since there has been a steady flow of information for some months which clearly has not been read by all. A blue leaflet was delivered to every house in Charlbury in March which gave details of the proposals; the *Charlbury Chronicle* has given regular reports of progress; the Chairman of the Thomas Gifford Trust has given quarterly reports in the *Charlbury Chronicle* and at the Trust's Annual General Meeting in the early spring. Since April 2004 the Community Centre Appeal has been organising a series of fund-raising events which have been advertised through out the town on all the noticeboards and in the *Charlbury Chronicle*; for some events the *Oxford Mail* and the *Witney Gazette* have carried notices; events have been advertised in *The Leaflet*; there have been leaflet drops in some areas; an Appeal Thermometer in the garden of Charlbury Museum indicates the progress of the fund-raising; a special Appeal notice-board is being attached to the thermometer to exclusively advertise Appeal events; a new website is being designed, with a link from the existing Charlbury website. There is an Appeal logo. If anyone would like to suggest other ways of getting our message across please ring the Appeal Coordinator (810549) with your suggestions.

CHARLBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE APPEAL

A CHALLENGING QUIZ devised by the Beechcroft Playing Close residents will be going on sale at the beginning of December. The price will be £2.50 for the quiz book and there will be three prizes of £25, £15, and £10. All quiz books are numbered and all those returned, regardless of the number of questions answered, will be entered in a lucky number draw for an additional prize. Visitors to the Farmers Market on December 11th will be able to obtain the quiz from a special stall. If you cannot make that date, please ring 811699, 810116, or 811189 to arrange to get your copy.

In October there was a very successful Auction of Promises in the Memorial Hall and a delightful evening 'A Little Light Relief' at St Mary's. By the time you read this there will have been a visit by TV personality Phil Harding organised by the Charlbury Society, a Christmas Sale of Work organised by the Day Centre, and a Ceilidh at the Memorial Hall, all of which are in aid of the Appeal. Our thanks go to all those people involved and who helped in any way to make these events successful.

The Appeal Treasurer, Richard Neville, has continued to receive donations from many of Charlbury's clubs and societies. We were delighted to receive a donation from the Chamber of Trade & Commerce to show their support. Apart from the advertised events, pyramid lunches and teas have continued to produce a steady income, and the Weekly Fundraiser is working well, although we could do with more subscribers. Please get in touch with Alan Hanks if you would like to take part - only £1 a week! A suggestion is in circulation that Co-op customers might like to donate their dividends from their Co-op cards to the Community Centre Appeal - sounds like a very good idea!

Christmas seems a good time to say thank you to all those who have helped, supported and encouraged the Appeal for this last six months or so. We are almost up to £30,000 and have a long way to go, but it's a good start and we hope that in 2005 we shall get strong signals of support from outside funds and that will be the sign for us all to have a huge push to realise our target.

*Lynette Murphy, Appeal Coordinator
Diana Potten, Deputy Coordinator; Richard Neville, Treasurer*

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS

THE CHARLBURY SOCIETY

The Charlbury Society has arranged three meetings for the early part of 2005. On January 14th Mervyn Penny will give a talk about the English Farm Wagon. This should be of particular interest to those volunteers who have been working to restore the Charlbury Museum's own wagon. (Work continues on this and it will be returning to the Museum in due course!) Mr Penny will describe the varieties of farm wagons to be found and the various methods of construction used. On February 11th Nick Millea, a one-time Charlbury resident and Curator of the Bodleian Map Collection, will give us a 'Cartographic History of the Charlbury Area', showing how this area has been represented on maps down the centuries.

Please note that this talk will take place in the Morris Room at the Corner House, and not in the Memorial Hall.

Finally, on March 11th, Chris Day will give his long-awaited description (postponed from last year) of Town & Gown relations in Oxford, entitled 'Riot and Revel'. A good note on which to end the year's proceedings. The January and March talks will be in the Memorial Hall; all will begin at 7.30, and are free to members (£1.50 for visitors).

STOP PRESS: Meeting on December 10th - sadly, Di Gold will not be able to talk about stained glass. Instead, there will be an informal presentation of old photographs of Charlbury, as well as the usual wine and mince-pies.

Charles Tyzack

CHARLBURY ART SOCIETY

How fortunate we are in Charlbury to have so much talent on our doorsteps. In September Willem Hackmann gave us a

talk on the early use of perspective in painting that still has our heads reeling. Glenna Chadwick followed this in October by a masterly talk about Kelmscott, which we shall visit next spring with enlightened eyes. November and January meetings will feature demonstrations by outside artists, and February brings a visit by the creator of the Yellow Hat Tribe, artist Irene George, who lives on a nearby Gloucestershire ostrich farm and has a fascinating tale of the doodle which led to her international success.

New members are very welcome - each month The Leaflet and the Charlbury website give details, or for more information ring 810116.

Marion Coates

CHARLBURY ANGLING CLUB

The Club will be holding their Christmas Bingo on Friday December 17th in the War Memorial Hall. Doors open at 7.30 pm, eyes down at 7.45 pm. Members and non-members welcome.

CHARLBURY CHESS CLUB

Charlbury Chess Club has been in existence for more than seventy years. Over such a long period it has had times of success and popularity and ones when it has had a low profile and few members. For example, in the 1980s an international chess tournament was held in Charlbury in conjunction with the Street Fair, and for many years an annual Cup was played for. In fact, the Chess Club thrived until quite recently, and today is far from moribund. But over the last couple of years two long-standing members have sadly died, and we have lost three further members due to

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS

changed personal circumstances.

To offset this we have very successfully opened the club to children. Our current normal attendance is three adults and four children.

We meet each Thursday between 6.30 and 8.30 in the Methodist Church Hall during Autumn, Winter and Spring. The Autumn term ends with a final meeting on 9 December and the Spring term starts on 6 January 2005. Adult or child, if you enjoy a game of chess - your standard of play doesn't matter - do come along on a Thursday evening and join in. You can contact me, the Secretary, on 811083.

Bob Douglas

SCOUT GROUP'S FUTURE IN JEOPARDY

That may sound ominous but, sadly, it is true. Scouting has existed in Charlbury for over 70 years. Ten years ago it was one of the strongest Groups in the County; today it struggles. Why is this? To put it simply: lack of Leaders.

Scouting will be 100 years old in three years' time and yet our programme is still relevant today. We provide opportunities for young people to take part in fun activities in a safe and controlled environment. We give them the chance to develop their skills; skills they do not always know they have. This instils confidence and makes them better employees, better future citizens.

We do this through a balanced training programme. Who provides the programme? Leaders. Without Leaders the young people cannot meet and cannot learn. Charlbury is blessed with Scouting facilities that other towns and villages would "die" for. What we need are people to utilise these facilities and who are willing to deliver the

programme.

Surely there are people in Charlbury who were Scouts, or Guides? People who have been touched by Scouting, who would like to help? Maybe you enjoy working with young people but have never been in the Movement? Think you don't have the skills? We train all our Leaders and provide them with ongoing support. Too busy? If you want a job done always ask a busy person! Think you are too old? If you are over 18 then we have a place for you. There is no upper age limit – just young at heart!

If you think you could look after young people between the ages of 6 and 14, or could help manage the Group, please call me on 01932 562735 for a chat.

*Cliff Shears
District Commissioner,
Wychwood Scout District*

CHARLBURY CRICKET CLUB

Charlbury Cricket Club has now signed a five year lease with Cornbury Park, during which time we will seek to fundraise successfully for, and to construct, a new pavilion. If we are successful, there will be an automatic extension of the lease for a further 25 years. Cornbury Park have been very positive in their approach to the whole project and we are very grateful to them for this practical support.

We have now submitted a planning application to West Oxfordshire District Council. As we developed our plans, we held two meetings with local residents whose houses overlook the cricket field and with town councillors in order to share our thinking with them and to hear their views. Nobody opposed the cricket club and its expansion - not least in the youth sector -

CLUBS, DRAMA, SPORT, GROUPS cont'd

but some queries were raised in respect of the size, height et cetera of the proposed pavilion which we have tried to take into account in finalizing the design. Cornbury Park also fed in some helpful comments. If/when planning permission is granted to us, we shall need to start fundraising in a major way; so watch this space for more news! On Saturday evening 6th November we held our annual Guy Fawkes bonfire and fireworks party. Over 1,000 people passed through the gates and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves very much, despite the weather not behaving as kindly as we would have hoped. This is the Club's major annual fundraising activity for its own cricketing and other budgets and we are deeply grateful to everyone who supported the evening in whatever way. Warm congratulations to Durand Hotham and all his helpers for such a successful occasion.

*Malcolm Harper
Pavilion Project Co-ordinator*

PROBUS CLUB OF CHARLBURY The Probus (PROfessional and BUSInessmen in retirement) Club of Charlbury has celebrated its 21st Anniversary during the year, and has continued to lunch well on the first Wednesday of each month at the Witney Lakes Resort. Each luncheon is followed by a talk, usually given by a guest speaker, and a wide variety of interesting subjects has been covered over the last year. There have been two outings during 2004 - the first in May to the Black Country Living Museum, where historic buildings and features have been arranged to recreate a past way of life; and the second in November to the

Hexagon Theatre in Reading, where we witnessed the very first performance of a novel drama with music, entitled 'Mendelssohn in Scotland', based on the composer's 1829 journey through Scotland, and introduced through the eyes of Queen Victoria. The City of London Sinfonia performed the luscious music - culminating in a complete performance of the *Scottish Symphony* - whilst actors portrayed Queen Victoria, Mendelssohn and other characters in the story. The Annual Dinner, with partners and friends, will be held on Thursday, January 20th 2005 at the Witney Lakes Resort. If you are perhaps new to the area, retired, and would like to know more about the Probus Club of Charlbury, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Graham Keighley, on 01608 811616.

Graham Keighley, Hon Sec

CHARLBURY JUDO CLUB

The Club runs on Monday evenings in the evenings and is taught by Simon Goddard, BJC 3rd Dan. The younger group run from 5.30-6.15 pm, and older and more experienced students from 6.15 - 7 pm. Fees £20 per term. Any boy or girl is welcome from age 5 - 15. Judo is very good for fitness, confidence building, discipline, self-defence and making friends. Come along and have a free trial lesson.

We have just held our local championships in the Henry Box Sports Hall, Witney and there was a good turnout from the Charlbury Judo Club. Some of those who competed were: Edward McInroy, Millie McInroy, Joe Taylor, Jonathon Potts, Nathaniel Potts, Joseph Lee. Joe Taylor won a Bronze Medal.

Simon Goddard

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

NEW BUSINESS OPENS IN MARKET STREET

Britain's largest dust monitoring service, DustScan Limited, has been established at Griffin House in Market Street. It opened its doors to visitors on September 10th and the newly refurbished three storey house was on view to invited guests.

Professor Geoffrey Walton has developed the concept of dust monitoring, offering a variety of techniques to deal with varying circumstances which can require the use of different equipment. Specialist apparatus has been developed for directional dust monitoring, deposit monitoring and weather monitoring. DustScan is based on an established methodology, backed by extensive research, and can produce improvements up to 80% in certain circumstances. (For those interested in the techniques employed go to the DustScan website on www.DustScan.co.uk)

Member of staff Hugh Datson was recently awarded a 2004 Industrial Research Fellowship by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 for his work on developing a highly accurate particle monitoring system.

The offices at Griffin House have been well restored with splendid furniture in both oak and elm made by local craftsman Martin Dodds. We wish Professor Walton and his colleagues success with their new venture in Charlbury.

MORE NEW BUSINESSES

Florist Sandra Moss has started a new business with her colleague Valma Benfield at The Flower House, Spelsbury Road Workshops (see advertisement on page 7).

The Beauty Salon in Sheep Street, which has been closed for some months, has now reopened under a new name, '**Karizma**', where Margaret offers an amazing range of treatments to pamper, beautify and relax her clients. Call in and see her, or ring 01608 819222.

Len Pratley of Pound Hill has started a private hire taxi service. He has a vehicle that can take up to 8 people and their luggage. He does local and long distance trips, airports/ports etc. Ring him on 810035 (mobile 07860 924786) for more details.

CHARLBURY CHRISTMAS TREES

Come and choose your own
Christmas tree growing in the field
Thousands to choose from
- Norway Spruce & Blues

Open every weekend in December
from 9.30 am to 4 pm at

Halcyon Honey Farm,
Woodstock Road, Charlbury
tel: 01608 810260

*Turn off the A44 onto the B4437 to
Charlbury - look out for the banners*

TOTBITS

Christmas is coming and the excitement levels in our house are rising already so we will be looking for Advent and Christmas activities over the next month. A couple of years ago we went to the Advent weekend at Cogges Manor Farm Museum in Witney where Hannah, then nearly three, was very proud of the sugar mouse she made in the Victorian kitchen. Cogges is closed for the winter now but will be open on the 4th and 5th December for their Advent weekend with traditional preparations for a Victorian Christmas. They are promising sugar mouse making, traditional carol singing, evergreen decorations and a performance by the Abingdon Mummers (noisy and colourful but possibly a bit scary for some children). The entrance fee for Cogges is £4.40 for adults, £2.30 for Children (3-16) and under-threes are free. There is usually a discount for people who live in West Oxfordshire.

SPANISH FOR CHILDREN

Over the last couple of years there has been an opportunity for both preschool children (3-5) and primary school children to learn some Spanish in Charlbury.

Elizabeth writes:

"About a year ago a friend asked me whether I could teach Spanish to her children. At this point I must say that I come from Chile where I worked as a primary teacher, so that was how I started. After a while more people asked whether it was possible to run a little class. By now it was clear that in Charlbury there was an interest for learning this language.

At the moment I work mostly with children from Charlbury. The youngest is three-and-a-half, and the oldest is 13. I

use a very interactive system with a wide range of motivational activities, including games, songs, tapes and videos, drama and story-telling. At the moment we are working on plays based on Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Ruben's Rainbow. The children love it and all have their own favourite games and songs. Normally before I introduce a new game or rhyme I try them at home with my own children, Isabel, Alicia and Nicholas. They are very critical and excellent judges.

If you are interested in coming along to see my classes, you can arrange a visit on any Saturday morning at Charlbury Pre-school. Alternatively, you can contact me at elivergaravera@hotmail.com, or on 01608 811 128."

SINGING AND DANCING

Now that it is getting cold outside how about music and dance to keep the children entertained in the depths of the winter. 'The Mulberry Bush' is a new music group for pre-schoolers, toddlers and babies based in Spelsbury Village Hall. The group began this term and has had a successful start. "The Mulberry Bush" was started by a local opera singer who felt there was a lack of music groups for infants and toddlers in the area. The classes are about 1¼ hours long with songs, nursery rhymes, action songs, stories, listening and movement followed by refreshments and a play time. The classes take place on Tuesdays throughout the year at 10.30am and 3.30pm and are for all ages up to five years. There is a one-off enrolment fee of £10 then the costs are £3 for an adult and child per week, £1.50 for additional children. For further details ring Clare Ogden on 01608 676125.

T O T B I T S

A little further afield, Chipping Norton theatre hosts a sing and sign music group for babies seven to eighteen months and their carer. This is a music group with a difference using nursery rhymes and action songs to combine the benefits of both music and baby signing, introducing basic sign language to babies to help them communicate before they learn to speak. It is a little more expensive – around £45 for a ten week term. Contact Karen Bisp, 01993 774781, for details.

CHARLBURY PRESCHOOL

Charlbury preschool are planning a Christmas coffee morning on the 11th December in the Corner House. Please come and support them.

Charlbury Pre-School is a thriving, voluntary-run organisation that provides education through play for children from 2½ to 5. The pre-school is open to every family in the community. It is run by enthusiastic parents and employs six dedicated and experienced staff.

Sessions take place in the morning from Monday to Friday in The Old Grammar School in Park Street.

There is an excellent selection of play and learning materials which, together with the activities of the daily sessions, offer the pre-school child an ideal opportunity to interact with others and learn through play. Please ring 01608 811200 during session time to arrange a visit.

CHARLBURY TODDLERS GROUP

The Toddlers group will be holding their annual Christmas party on the Monday 13th December in the memorial hall with a bouncy castle and a visit from Father Christmas planned. All babies and toddlers and their carers are welcome. The group meets on Monday mornings during term time from 9.30-11.30am in the Memorial Hall and still costs £1.50 per family.

TotBits is compiled by

Alison Offer

Contributions always welcome

NORTH COTSWOLD CHAMBER CHOIR

Christmas Carol Concert, St Mary the Virgin, Adderbury. Saturday, December 11th 2004 at 7.45 pm. Tickets are £8 /£6 concessions and £1 for under 14s.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE WEST OXON VETKA ASSOCIATION

(which supports projects in Belarus severely affected by Chernobyl contamination) there are two events:

Wednesday December 8th - 'Ruddigore' a comic opera by Gilbert & Sullivan, at Witney Congregational Church, 7.30 pm Entrance free, collection for VETKA.

Saturday December 11th - Yarnton Silver Band Concert, Long Hanborough Methodist Church 7.30pm Ring Ann Applegate (01993 881782) to book. £5 per programme

REPORT ON CHARLBURY CEMETERY 2004

The Cemetery which is managed by the Town Council has progressed well in improving its limestone flora over the past three years. The flowers are monitored from January onwards on a fortnightly basis and all flowers of interest have canes put around them to prevent mowing taking place (this can happen as early as late February). Spring flowers such as primroses, snowdrops, crocuses and goldilocks buttercups are increasing in numbers annually. The meadow saxifrage have increased from 17 flowering stems in 2000 to over 600 stems this year. This is probably due to positive management. Despite regular contact with the contractor regarding management, the curbed graves which support a good variety of limestone flora, were unfortunately mown by mistake in mid-May, just when they were about to flower so were not as spectacular as usual. However an area marked up in the grassland which includes ox-eye daisies and ladies bedstraw was very successful. Surprisingly there was no sign of any cuckoo flowers this year - the reason for this is not known. An exciting new addition to the flora was a good clump of orange hawkweed, possibly brought in by a gravedigger. This was allowed to flower and produced over 200 flowering stems. Seeds were transferred to another part of the cemetery where flowering would be more suitable. Birds using the cemetery include swallows, house martins, warblers, blackbirds, thrushes, tits and various finches. Badgers are in evidence digging in areas of moss cover and probably devoured most of the introduced crocuses as very few were seen here. However the areas with crocuses near the north end of the old cemetery are showing a good increase. Butterflies are not terribly obvious possibly due to the north facing aspect of the site. The Cemetery was entered for the

Diocese of Oxford Living Churchyard & Cemetery Award for 2004 (a 3 yearly event) and was granted a new award with praise being extended for the increase in flora and hard work involved.

Louise Spicer
Sept. 2004

FRIENDS OF SHORTHAMPTON CHURCH SATURDAY Feb 5th 2005 at 7.30 pm

Richard Lethbridge will be giving a talk with slides 'The Historic Churches of Oxfordshire' in St Mary's Church in aid of the Shorthampton Church Restoration Fund. Starts 7.30 pm. Tickets will be sold on the door (£6.50) and will include a glass of wine and light refreshments. Richard is the author of *Oxfordshire Churches* which is now out of print. If anyone would like to become a Friend of Shorthampton Church please contact Sarah Potter (810388)

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Report from County Councillor Brian Hodgson - tel/fax 01993 891310 or e-mail: brian.hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

1 HOME ZONE: I am pleased to report that, following extensive local consultation, the County Council's Transport Committee has agreed to go ahead with the plans for the Home Zone in Hughes Close & Sturt Close.

2 THE SLADE: Louise Spicer's local group continues to campaign for further traffic calming measures on the Slade. The first phase has now been completed, but it is universally agreed that more effective steps need to be taken.

3 COTSWOLD LINE: I have been attending several meetings in an attempt to press for an hourly train service (and an extended car park) at Charlbury station. I am reasonably optimistic that we will succeed, but I'm afraid it's a long, slow process.

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

The debate over planning and the environment in our District, our County, and our region of S E England is coming to the fore again. In November there was considerable debate over the growth of Oxford and its impact on the Green Belt at the Structure Plan Examination in public, whilst the Enquiry into the Local Plan for West Oxfordshire has been rumbling on for months in Witney. We need more affordable housing throughout the South East, but we also need better transport services, and improved water, drainage, sewerage, recycling and waste disposal facilities, and health, education, and other services like police, fire, and ambulance support. In Charlbury the skateboard facility is progressing well, and a new cricket pavillion is proposed. The new Co-op has been with us for several weeks and the increased space and range of goods are obviously welcome. There are still problems concerning the rather blazing appearance at night, the length of the opening hours, the litter and the build up of traffic at the entrance to the Spendlove car park. The Co-op has been helpful (or should we say co-operative) about some of these matters and their staff clear the area immediately in front of the shop. The litter which spreads onto the Playing Close and the area outside the surgery is beyond their control and, like any other litter, is a matter for the person who dropped it. It is also up to us to make sure that the other shops do not suffer even if there is an overlap with the goods sold in the Co-op. We all need to keep our town centre alive. Further to comments in the last *Chronicle* about roadside poster boards for local charitable events, Glena is now on a WODC committee which first met in early November. It is called an Enforcement Committee and will also deal with various less controversial matters such as fly-tipping and graffiti. It is hoped that it will be able to put in place some sensible guidelines about poster boards as this problem has been rumbling on for a long time and has been a nuisance for many people.

THE THOMAS GIFFORD CHARITY REPORT

At the time of writing we are waiting for early feedback to our lottery application for the Community Centre Project although it is January before a decision is due. We are also waiting to hear whether our application to Futurebuilders will reach the second stage. Futurebuilders is a government grant-aided programme for voluntary and statutory sectors working together. If successful these bids alone would not be sufficient to meet the balance of funds required for the project, but would be a strong catalyst for other organisations who have expressed interest and for the Charlbury Community Centre Appeal. On the other hand, if we do not receive positive responses to these applications, we may need to have a total re-think of the strategy for the Spendlove site. The trustees will be discussing possible alternatives at their next meeting. We will continue to keep you informed of any news in the next edition of the *Charlbury Chronicle*. As soon as we have a clear indication of support from a large third party funding organisation we would start a new comprehensive round of consultation with prospective users including the Shed and the Sports & Social Club. We express our thanks again to Lynette Murphy, Diana Potten, and Richard Neville for their work on the Appeal and to all those who have organised and helped with the events this autumn.

In addition to the grant applications, we are also looking, with the help of Liz Reason, at the opportunity for an environmentally friendly, energy efficient Community Centre - one which would still be in harmony with the conservation area and one which could benefit from the grants for environmental projects to provide a lower cost building, particularly in reducing utility bills and maintenance costs. We are talking to specialists in this field.

The Charity Commission have written to the trustees to say that, although there appear to have been failings in the period 1997-1999, they will not be seeking to recover the losses suffered by the Charity from the trustees. The Commission has asked the Charlbury Town Council (as formally the Trustee) to recommend how the trustee body for the Charity should be reconstituted. The Town Council had previously proposed that the trustee body should be changed, as the Charity Commission prefers not to have local statutory bodies as trustees due to the potential for conflict of interest. This change had been deferred pending a resolution to the issue about loss recovery. Now this appears to have been sorted out there will be a dialogue with the Commission as to how best to make a change in the trustee body. We will report on progress in the next *Charlbury Chronicle*.

Anyone who wishes to offer their help or find out more about the position on the Community Centre project can get in touch with Willem Hackmann (811110) or myself (810644 or e-mail trevor.jones@ophiopogon.com)

CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL REPORT – No. 33

by Councillor Trevor Jones



Charlbury Station Car Park: Town Councillors together with District and County Councillors met with the Managing Director and staff of First Great Western Link Ltd., who are now responsible for Charlbury's train service and station facilities, on 20 August. The Company recognise the need for improvement to and enlargement of the station car park and offered to set up a feasibility study. The offer was accepted and we await the report. The meeting was positive and by far the most encouraging held with any of the railway operators in recent years.

Traffic: An extra Town Council Meeting was held on 14 October to consider traffic issues. Topics included the Spendlove Car Park, car parking including control and enforcement, and speed and traffic calming. The Town Council has no direct responsibility for traffic management but can report residents' concerns to the relevant authorities, so the Council has written to Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department (car parking, traffic calming), West Oxfordshire District Council Environmental Department (Car Park), Thames Valley Police (Enforcement) and others. Replies are awaited.

Home Zones: Plans for the Hughes and Sturt Close Home Zone have now been agreed and the County Council's contractors should start work in spring/early summer 2005.

Charlbury Fire Station: In August, Oxfordshire County Council announced that Charlbury Fire 'Brigade' and Station had won the award for the best Retained (part-time) Service in the County and that it had met all its targets. The Town Council would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our firefighters. Well done!

Sturt Close Play Area: At the Council Meeting on 13 August it was resolved to terminate the Council's lease with West

Oxfordshire Housing Ltd. for the Play Area. The Council has been unable to contain the level of vandalism inflicted on the Play Area throughout the summer. After many years of such problems, the Council no longer considers further expenditure to be the correct use of council taxpayers' money. The landlord's response is awaited.

Centenary Wood: The wood is owned and managed by Oxfordshire County Council. The Management Committee has representatives from the County, District and Town Councils together with conservationists and others. During the summer there were complaints of damage to the trees and 'chainsaw vandalism'. For once there was no substance to these complaints. Woodlands have to be managed and the County Forester had arranged for the Oxfordshire Woodland Project Manager to lay on a demonstration of formative pruning and selective thinning of some of the cherry trees for interested local residents. The idea is that having been shown the techniques, members of the Community can then contribute to the management of Centenary Wood. The cut branches were left for the benefit of wildlife. For more information about Centenary Wood please contact the County Forester, Eric Dougliss, on 01993 814141.

Wheeled Sports Area: Work on installation started on 18 October. By the time you read this it should be available for use. The Council is considering an official opening ceremony.

Oxpens Allotments: Extra water taps are to be installed on the allotments soon.

Thomas Gifford Charity: The Charity Commission has decided that Charlbury Town Council should no longer be the Trustee of the Charity. Please see separate article.

**Charlbury Town Council would like to wish all residents
a Very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year**

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