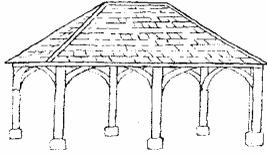


The Charlbury Chronicle



Volume 12 Number 1

March 2008

Lots of articles have been submitted to the *Charlbury Chronicle* for this edition. Our forty pages soon fill up and anyone who wants to put something in is advised to do so well in advance of the deadline.

We have articles on Oxfordshire buildings, poetry, a report on the First Great Western meeting, the tradition of Beating the Bounds is back again, and Meals-on-Wheels is to recommence its valuable services. There is a request from the USA for information about a Charlbury ancestor; and a report of a recently published book which describes the life of a young woman, born here in 1899, whose life was completely changed by the First World War.

Help is urgently requested by the Street Fair people, so do please sign up to help with this year's Street Fair - we mustn't let this great tradition die out for lack of support. The many thousands of pounds raised every year by Street Fair ensure that the Corner House and Memorial Hall can continue to function to the benefit of the whole community.

Perhaps the most important event facing Charlbury in May is the Town Council election. We do urge everyone to think the matter over very carefully and see if they can give some of their free time to their town. The Town Council is badly in need of some new blood and our community surely deserves a thriving Council, representing a whole cross-section of Charlbury life. This is not just a Charlbury problem; it is difficult getting people to stand for Councils in many places around the country - but it is OUR problem here, and we are the only ones who can address it. Applications and nominations have to be in by the end of March, so do not delay and let us hope we can get enough people coming forward to hold a democratic election. Election day is on Thursday May 1st 2008.

We wish all our readers a very Happy Easter.

Lynette Murphy

Please Note: The deadline for the June edition is May 1st.

Charlbury Business Community

Times change. We've changed. Many of you might remember the Charlbury Chamber of Trade and Commerce of former times. Well, we've renamed and refocused ourselves in keeping with what's happening in our community.

Charlbury Business Community is for ANYONE doing or simply just interested in business locally. As a group, we're here to support and represent local businesses, whether local retail or businesses run from home or other.

"Networking" might put too fine a name on it, but we all benefit from meeting and exchanging with other like-minded people locally. And we like to MAKE A PRACTICAL DIFFERENCE to local life, not just talk.

So if you have an eBay sideline, or you're a freelancer or consultant, a therapist, or you just believe that working locally is good for the community and the environment, do think about joining us. Especially if you are new to the area and want to find out what's what.

The sub is only £25 annually. And there's an honorarium available to anyone filling the post of Secretary(s) - we're recruiting right now. For a membership application form, or to note your interest or ask questions about the position as Secretary, do drop me a line.

Cally Robson

callyrobson@ideas-into-action.co.uk 01608 811227

Committee Member, Charlbury Business Community

CHARLBURY FARMERS' MARKET

Charlbury Farmers' Market will be held on the Playing Close on Saturday March 8th between 9am and 1 pm. The 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.

Charlbury Farmers' Market is administered by Thames Valley Farmers' Market Cooperative Ltd and is organised by Nick Potter, Roger Watts and Geoff Burroughs. The contact address is Studio One, Sheep Street, Charlbury OX7 3RR. Telephone 01608 811559. The market is held quarterly and future dates are Saturdays June 14, September 13 and December 13.

Charlbury and District Garden Society Children's Challenges - a reminder!

Sat. March 8th. am collect your kit at the Farmer's Market for **The Great Potato Challenge**.

Sat. 29th March. pm - collect your seeds from the Spring Show for **The Tallest Sunflower Challenge**

Entry fee 50p for each challenge. All kits and information provided. Further information from Wendy Clifford - 811006

STREET FAIR 2008

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 20th 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.

HELP !! : Street Fair cannot be run without the full commitment of the whole community of Charlbury. Over the last ten to twelve years it has been the same few who have helped organise this event but they are not getting any younger and it is time for a run of fresh blood to be injected. If you are concerned that this event should continue and if you would like to help in any capacity please contact Susie Finch at susanna_finch@hotmail.com. Our next meeting is to be held on Monday 10th March at 8pm in the Garden Room. Please do say you will come and help.

Open Gardens – June 8th – Calling All Gardeners:

This will be the 10th 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? 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 Vic Allison on 01608 811262.

Finally, will residents of Church Street and Park Street please note that we have applied to WODC for road closure permission for the 20th September.

Susie Finch

CHARLBURY AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

CADS next production is a Terry Pratchett novel, adapted for the stage by Stephen Briggs - **Guards! Guards!** on the 13-15th March in Charlbury at the Memorial Hall 8pm. The story follows a plot by a secret brotherhood, the Unique and Supreme Lodge of the Elucidated Brethren of the Ebon Night, to overthrow the [Patrician](#) of Ankh-Morpork and install a puppet king. Defending the city against this threat is the entire, underpaid, undervalued City Night Watch. Under the control of the Supreme Grand Master, the brotherhood summon a [dragon](#) to strike fear into the people of [Ankh-Morpork](#).

Performances are at 8pm at the Memorial Hall in Charlbury. Tickets £7 & £5 concessions. Contact Box Office for tickets on (01608) 810896

Hetty Shepherd

Former Charlbury resident, Amy Gomm, "Singled Out" in Radio 4 Book of the Week

Amy was one of those known as 'The Surplus Women', whose story is told by Virginia Nicholson in *Singled Out - how two million women survived without men after the First World War*. Born in Charlbury in 1899, Amy left school at the age of fourteen to work in her mother's home-based laundry business. Her mother died in 1916, and the laundry ceased to operate, leaving Amy, her two elder sisters, Dorothy and Laurie, and their father, to struggle during the years of the War. Her father would not allow her to accept a job as a junior clerk and cashier at a branch of Sainsbury's but she worked at the haberdashery counter of the local Co-Op until 1920 when on opening her wages bag she found herself 'with only one week to go'. Offered a waitressing job for half a crown a week with the opportunity to supplement this from "demobbed soldiers looking for pleasure" but anxious for work, she turned it down.

Dorothy and Laurie decided to use what were four years' savings to send Amy to Secretarial School for a term. Between September and November she learned shorthand and typing and her two sisters helped during the evenings in drilling her with dictation. This paid off and at Christmas she obtained a job with a tailoring shop in Ealing. She regarded this achievement as having 'got a foot on the ladder' and, aged nearly ninety, she wrote a book of her memories for her nieces, *Water under the Bridge*, telling them about their grandparents and the Cotswold countryside of her youth.

Do any readers have memories of Amy and her family, knowledge of where the Sainsbury and Co-Op shops were, and any information about the autobiographical memoir *Water under the Bridge*?

Rachael Farr

OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD & THE BUILDINGS OF CHARLBURY:

Many villages and small towns do not generally attract the attention of professional historians, unless they have particular features of note, but they all have reasons for existing and undoubtedly have a story to tell, and many of the residents are very interested in that story. Oxfordshire Buildings Record (OBR) has been studying and recording buildings in Oxfordshire for seven years and has created a significant database of information about the buildings found throughout the county. The members of OBR cover a wide range of skills but the majority of the members simply have a strong interest in the history of the buildings and are able to expand and develop their personal experience and knowledge through the activities of OBR.

Charlbury has been proposed as a suitable place to develop a process for recording groups of buildings within the smaller towns and villages that might then be used in other areas. The purpose of the study is to make people more aware of the history and background to their community, and to create an understanding of the roles that people and buildings play in the development of the community.

Several people have expressed an interest in this following the 'conversation' between older Charlburians about life in Charlbury in the 20th century at The Charlbury Society on 14 December 2007. If you would like to become a 'house detective' and find out more about your house, or would like to help with the study, please contact Vic Allison on 01608 811262 or email vic.allison@btinternet.com.

Anybody can contribute to this project and no special skills are needed – only a shared interest in the history of your community.

Vic Allison

Beating the Bounds and the Annual Boundary Walk

The origin of 'Beating the Bounds' is unknown – pre-Christian communities probably had some form of ritual to define the limits of their territory. The idea was certainly taken up by the Christian Church to bless crops and ask for a good harvest and took place on one of the 'Rogation Days' just before Ascension. The ceremony also showed parishoners where their boundaries were and included reminders in the form of rituals at set points - frequently involving choirboys being bumped or beaten with sticks. Today, when beating Choirboys or turning them upside down would probably invite a visit from Social Services, the tradition has become a largely secular one - an opportunity for a good walk.

Here in Charlbury the practice ceased after the tragic drownings of Ascension Day 1924 (see March 1999 Chronicle) until revived in the 1970's. I recently came across a report of one Oxford parish where the route starts at Boots, and includes trips through Littlewoods and Marks and Spencers so we are fortunate that our boundary lies completely in rural surroundings, along fields and through woods where we are not normally allowed. The route also offers a number of chances to return into town for anyone not wanting to walk the whole 11 miles

In the last two years, we have been unfortunate with the weather - in 2006 five dripping participants abandoned the walk and made our way back into town via Stonesfield Lane and last year I sheltered beside the Oak tree waiting in vain for others to turn up.

This year Rogation Sunday falls on the 27th April. Why not come along either to the start from the Oak tree on Forest Road at 10.00am or at one of the other convenient points along the way. Whatever the weather I can assure you of an enjoyable day out.

Tony Graeme

CHIPPING NORTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 2008 Chipping Norton Music Festival is packed with variety and offers something for everyone. The **Charleston Chasers** opens The Festival on 29th February in The Theatre with music of the 20's and 30's. Chastleton House provides an atmospheric venue for The **Phoenix Recorder Orchestra**, a rare opportunity to hear the whole range of instruments.

Orchalcum (World of Brass) A Concert for all the family, Sunday 9th March 4.00pm Chipping Norton Town Hall. James Stretton, virtuoso brass instrumentalist, achieves the apparently impossible by presenting 16 different brass instruments. The concert includes, Mozart's Horn Concerto and works for Trombone, Multi, Euphonium, Trumpet and Cornet as well as piano solos from accompanist Iain Jackson. James has also allowed time for both a little basic science chat on the inner workings of the brasses and also a question and answer session. This concert is a must for anyone who plays (or has ever wanted to play) a brass instrument! Tickets: £7.50 (under 16s £3.50) from Jaffé and Neale, 01608 641033 (the bookshop in Chipping Norton) or telephone the Festival Secretary on 01993 831810

Festival Concert

Saturday 15th March 7.30pm

Chipping Norton Town Hall (Tickets £4.00 concessions £3.00) from Jaffé and Neale, 01608 641033 (the bookshop in Chipping Norton) or telephone the Festival Secretary on 01993 831810

Throughout the festival period individuals have the opportunity to perform in front of experienced artists and are given feedback. Audiences are welcome, the classes are held in Chipping Norton Town Hall and usually start at about 4:00pm. If you would like to be part of the audience, leaflets in Chipping Norton Library and Jaffé & Neal or the website www.cnmf.org.uk give a full schedule.

Rosemary Wilson, Festival Secretary

SUSTAINABLE CHARLBURY: The 24th of January saw the launch of our local Carbon Rationing Action Group. The meeting was attended by 25 people, all of whom committed to finding out the size of their carbon footprint, and to using a rationing system to reduce it. This is a big step forward in combating emissions and I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who came along. The SusCha website is now up and running, so for CRAG meeting updates and progress reports visit www.sustainablecharlbury.org

If anyone else is interested in finding out their own carbon footprint and monitoring how it changes over time, visit the new, simple and accurate online carbon calculator, the Carbon Account, at beta.thecarbonaccount.com

EVENTS:

- On Thursday 6th March, we will be holding the first in a series of environmental film screenings. We will kick off with 'The Power of Community', a beautiful and inspiring documentary about how Cuba survived life without oil. Come along to the Cornbury Room at The Bell at 7.30pm, entrance £2, bring a cushion!

- Keep an eye out in the library in March for SusCha's new eco-bookshelf. We have a temporary installation of interesting, witty and informative books on climate change so there is something for everyone. The books will be available for a limited period so borrow them while you can!

Finally, we are looking to complete trial energy surveys on several homes in Charlbury. We will do an energy report on your home, identifying problem areas and potential solutions. The survey can then be used as a tool for others looking for practical advice about eco-renovation. If anyone is interested in participating in the trial, call Liz on 811212 or Dorrie on 07866 663810.

Dorrie Johnson, SusCha Coordinator

THOMAS GIFFORD'S CHARITY

A brief report from the Chairman

The trustees are to sign a cooperation agreement with Oxfordshire County Council relating to the development of the Spendlove site for residential property, a new library and community centre. West Oxfordshire District Council have provided a Letter of Comfort to the trustees giving their support for the concept, and we have started a dialogue with the planning department on the key planning issues to be resolved. An architect has been selected from a short-list of five interviewed, initially to provide a feasibility study/ outline site design, based on community consultation and sustainability. This will provide the basis for a brief to developers on which they can make proposals for the site. We will report in the June edition of the *Charlbury Chronicle* on the progress of the developer selection.

Trevor Jones

REPORT ON CHARLBURY CEMETERY 2007

Overall another excellent year for general displays of wild flowers in the cemetery. It started promisingly with the first snowdrops flowering before the end of December. Also there were already signs of the saxifrage leaves before the start of the New Year. By mid January there was a good show of snowdrops and crocuses and many primroses were starting to show leaf growth. Throughout February and March the primroses added to the general profusion of flowers.

However the drought and heat wave that set in during March and April had a disastrous impact on the saxifrage plants which were exposed to full sun due to lack of leaf cover on the trees and consequently caused the death of the largest clump of plants. Despite being watered twice weekly during late April and May, only 250 flowering stems were recorded, down from a record 600 over the last two years.

The dry Spring was followed by record rainfall for the rest of the summer, which meant that flowers in the grassland generally were somewhat, overwhelmed by grass. But flowers on the graves fared well and put on excellent displays. It was pleasing to see a small colony of the orange hawkweed has established on a curbed grave, so hopefully will spread over the years.

The strip of grassland on the southern boundary that has been left unmown for two years is now starting to form good tussocky clumps, which will be an excellent area for insects and small mammals to hibernate in.

Bird life was quite abundant in and over the cemetery with swallows and house martins feeding among the trees, and a spotted flycatcher was seen calling from a tree in the spring.

I would like to thank the Town Council for their support for this project, Roger Clarke for help in resolving any problems that arise and Daren Clarke for his excellent and selective management of the grass cutting.

Louise Spicer

MEALS ON WHEELS MAKES A WELCOME RETURN

I am very pleased to report that Meals on Wheels will resume service on Tuesday, March 4th (I do like the sound of that date, march forth!). We will begin delivering a hot cooked meal and pudding one day per week – Tuesdays – and hope to add a second day by the autumn. The price per meal will be £2.50 delivered.

Please will you mention in the Chronicle that if anyone would like a meal delivered in Charlbury, Stonesfield, or Chaddlington, please contact Margie Glasgow on 01608 810161? Also, any new or previous delivery or kitchen volunteers that would like to help may contact Margie Glasgow or Jan Griffiths on 810440.

Margie Glasgow

LIFE AT CHARLBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Young Voices 2007

Mrs Ellis, teacher in Year 3 and Choir director writes: "In September 2007, Charlbury Primary School Choir began rehearsing the music for the 'Young Voices' Concert at the Birmingham National Indoor Arena. These are advertised as the "largest school concerts in the world" – little did we know! This was our first time, and the amount of music to learn seemed HUGE! However, by December 5th we had learnt hundreds of words off by heart, plus a mix of familiar and new tunes, together with some "dance" moves. We had our 'Young Voices' t-shirts, and many parents had booked tickets so that they could support us. 38 excited pupils and two staff were ready and on our way to Birmingham by coach.

We were bowled over by the sheer size of the event – the vast arena, the celebrity entertainers, and the young choir of up to 8000 voices. The atmosphere built up through the afternoon rehearsals and into the evening performance. By the time the parents arrived, it was electric! We sang a repertoire of seasonal and popular songs, top favourites with our pupils being the Pop Medley and Cartoon Medley; we enjoyed watching the Urban Strides Dance Group, and hearing Lee Ryan from the group Blue. What a great way for children to be introduced to performing in front of a large audience, with the buzz of being real stars".

After School Clubs

The choir rehearses on Thursdays after school but this is not the only regular extra-curricular activity that goes on. There are a wide variety of after-school clubs that stimulate the interests of children outside the standard school subjects. Children can learn how to cook (and not just scrumptious chocolate cake!), speak Spanish or French with native-speaker teachers, join Gym Club or Centre Stage or play basket ball with Year 5's Mr Lester. Clubs change regularly so there is always something new to try out.

Charlbury School Association

The CSA would like to thank the wider community for their continued support. 2007 was our most successful fund-raising year to date, ending with the long-awaited opening of the Outdoor Performance Area by Charlburian Richard Holthouse, director of the popular 'Midsommer Murders'. We look forward to seeing many fantastic performances by the children. This was just one of many things funded by the amazing £19,000 we raised. Money was also spent on the training of Year 1 teacher, Mrs. Senior, as a Forest School Leader, which means that younger children will continue with regular trips to the 'Forest School Classroom' in Cornbury Park where they can incorporate outdoor learning experiences into their normal school curriculum. We also made a large contribution towards the cost of 20 new computers for the school. We hope to make 2008 equally successful, kicking off the year with a Valentine's Disco for the children on 13th February and an ever-popular Quiz night on 28th March, open to all.

Future parents, for a copy of our school prospectus, contact Mrs Steele at the school office, tel. 810354.

Birgit den Outer

What the Future Holds for us in West Oxfordshire

On January 24 this year I went to a significant meeting attended by more than 60 community groups and businesses from all over West Oxfordshire, plus Council officials. Although I went as a representative of Charlbury Business Community, my summary of the meeting might be of interest to anyone planning to stay in the area and wondering what the future holds. The meeting was towards creating a Sustainable Community Strategy for West Oxon, which will feed into the Local Development Framework (LDF) for 2012 to 2026. Out of the LDF come all the policies and action plans for things such as planning, transport, community services, business support etc. In other words, the process that is happening NOW will really affect our quality of life and choices into the future. Much of the feedback from the community groups echoed consultation work the WODC have already carried out. There are clear themes...

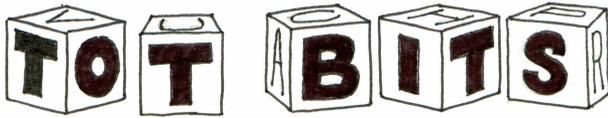
- 1 We want a clear VISION in place for what we want our market towns and villages to be in the future. It was felt that up until now, policies didn't hang together well and don't recognise the challenges faced in rural communities since the existing LDF was brought in.
- 2 We're headed for an aging population, but with poor spread of facilities and transport links to look after us. We want more put in place for the ELDERLY (ie US in the future).
- 3 Poor public TRANSPORT links and the explosion in car use have created a transport nightmare that needs priority attention. If the A40 isn't sorted out, we'll all scream.
- 4 Local flooding has heightened awareness of ENVIRONMENTAL issues. People want more done to protect our environment at all levels.
- 5 People feel threatened at the possibility of young people causing increasing SOCIAL NUISANCE, but at the same time fear the "DRAIN" of young people and young families away from rural communities.
- 6 There is great appreciation of and desire to make more of the beautiful LANDSCAPE and peaceful setting we have, especially with the low crime levels we enjoy.
- 7 People are generally satisfied with the levels of ECONOMIC prosperity we enjoy. We're mindful that more business might erode the quality of life we enjoy in West Oxon.

I went really with a mission to help grow businesses as part of our market town communities, particularly given the trend for Internet broadband to make running businesses from home or locally an increasingly appealing possibility, but one thing did worry me...

[Edited for length. To read the full version go to <http://charlburybusiness.blogspot.com/>]

Cally Robson, Committee Member, Charlbury Business Community
callyrobson@ideas-into-action.co.uk

The Oxfordshire Befriending Network who support people living with life-threatening and terminal illness, is currently seeking more volunteers to befriend in West Oxfordshire. Volunteer Befrienders offer 2-3 hours a week to visit someone in their locality who is isolated by illness to offer social and emotional support. Full training and excellent on-going support is given as well as expenses paid. Our next induction training will take place in Witney on Wednesday afternoons starting on March 12th. Interested? Would you like to find out more? Please contact Linda Ridgway on 01865 791781 ext 23



Pleading for Reading

I was crawling around in my loft the other day, looking for a video that a friend wanted to borrow, when I came across a book I had read a few years ago called The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease. Just seeing it reminded me how important it is for children to have someone read to them, and then, thumbing through it, I found a few gems. For example, did you know that a child's book contains almost 31 rare words per thousand, whereas listening to adults' conversation or even prime time television contains, at best, only about 20? This means that children will be exposed to a poorer vocabulary if they're never read to.

Reading to your children is important for two further reasons: first, you give them access to books that they can't read either because they're not readers yet or because the books are too hard for their abilities; second, you get them to relate the act of reading with the enjoyable experience of spending focused time with you. Apparently, just fifteen minutes a day of reading to your child will have enormous benefits in the future: improved attention span, wider background knowledge, more life experience, greater sensitivity to issues of character and other people's differences – all of which can be found in just the first forty pages of Trelease's book. If you're interested in reading about all the other advantages of reading aloud to your child, then you can try to dig up "The Read-Aloud Handbook" from the county library's HQ store (Class 028.5), or you can go on-line at Amazon.co.uk and buy one of the used copies for £2.76 (that's 1p for the book and £2.75 for the postage!). It's a large ol' volume, but very interesting – chapters about the stages of reading aloud, how to use the library, what to do about telly, and about 100 pages of book descriptions to help you choose the best titles for reading to your children.

One last thought about reading to toddlers especially: you needn't feel obliged to own, borrow, or keep a huge number of books. Toddlers like repetition, and so a couple of choice books should see you through for at least a few weeks. Trelease observes that "Goodnight Moon" by Margaret Wise Brown and "Make Way for Ducklings" by Robert McCloskey have almost all the forty-four sounds of the English language in them, so they make a great pair to start with. The library doesn't stock them, but you can get them from Amazon, again, for less than £3. Barring that, just pick something and start reading. It's one of the few things in this world with no bad side effects!

Kat Patrick, 811660

kat.patrick@alumni.southwestern.edu

SPANISH FOR CHILDREN

The Spanish Club takes place every Saturday at the Old Grammar School in Charlbury (the Pre-School). There are several sessions grouped by age and ability where the aim is to provide an enjoyable environment in which the children can learn basic Spanish. For more information and to arrange a visit to a session, ring Elizabeth on 811128 or e-mail her at elivergaravera@hotmail.com.

LITTLE FISHES

NEW STARTING TIME!!! This great group for toddlers is now starting at 10:15 a.m. on Wednesday mornings to allow mums and carers to pick up children from pre-school more easily. Children love to sing the songs and hear the stories, plus exercise their artistic abilities at craft time. You don't have to be someone's mum to bring a child along – child-minders, grannies, nannies ... all are encouraged to come down to St Mary's church to enjoy the company, the coffee, and the friendly atmosphere. Best of all, it's free!!! Babies are welcome, too. Contact Kate on 811579 for more information.

PRE-SCHOOL

The Pre-School, located in the Old Grammar School on Park Street, is open from 9am every morning (during term-time) but enrolment can be as little as one morning a week to the full five days depending on your requirements. The premises can be hired for birthday parties 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: 811200.

BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

The Baby and Toddler Group meets every Monday during term time from 9:30 to 11:30 am at the Memorial Hall and welcomes mums-to-be and babies as well as pre-school children. There is a variety of fun activities and children especially enjoy having lots of space to use tricycles and ride on toys. Most groups include a craft, story time with juice and a biscuit, singing and now, thanks to funding from the Charlbury Beer Festival, a session of Parachute play provides a perfect end to the morning. A friendly environment, a hot cuppa and conversation also awaits! (Cost per family is £2).

Charlbury Baby and Toddler Group would like to thank the Charlbury Beer Festival for funding the Play Parachute and Two Pop-up Combo Play Tents.

Handel's Messiah

Saturday February 9 at St Mary's was devoted to this great work and proved to be a resounding success. Director Shauni McGregor spent the day rehearsing the various singers & musicians who came from far and wide to partake of this exhilarating experience, and the Church was packed for the evening performance.

Over 150 singers and orchestra members performed for an audience of about 100, and everyone agreed it was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

We are delighted to say that this event raised over £2500 for the Charlbury Community Centre Appeal, and our total is now standing at about £127,500.

DOCTOR, DOCTOR

Two Charlbury residents have proved that it's never too late to learn a new thing or two. Michael Marsh of Hixet Wood, and Peter Colyer of Marlborough Place, have both recently completed doctoral research in the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University. They received their DPhil degrees at the same ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre, on November 24, 2007.



Michael was a consultant gastroenterologist in Manchester with a specialist interest in coeliac disease. He produced the internationally recognised "Marsh" classification. Following retirement he read Theology at Oxford, and returned to Magdalen College to investigate the neurophysiology and theology of out-of-body and near-death experiences. His view is that these phenomena are brain artefacts and not credible trips into the hereafter. Commenting on his latest achievements, Michael says "it keeps you young in heart, fit and active."

Peter was previously a research scientist at Hydraulics Research in Wallingford, and then a negotiator and manager of international scientific activities. He undertook his doctoral studies at Regent's Park College in Oxford, where he examined the relationship between scientifically explained causality and belief in God. He concluded that a similar kind of independence exists in the non-human world as exists in human behaviour. Peter says, "Oxford is a fantastic place to conduct research. The libraries are so well provided, and the people so stimulating." Both Michael and Peter plan to continue their respective interests and to bring their observations to wider audiences.

YUM! YUM! at the GFS

On a recent visit to the Good Food Shop there were some delicious-looking trays of sandwiches on the counter, waiting to be collected by people working in offices in and around Charlbury. Did you know that the GFS also caters for weddings, parties and functions of all sorts? Call and discuss your requirements with manageress Lynne Stubbs

THE GOOD FOOD SHOP, SHEEP STREET
tel: 01608 811157

More Poems From A Little Town Of Stone

Judging by the dozens of people who contributed to the book, the hundreds who bought it, and the sell-out evening of readings in the Memorial Hall, there is a healthy appetite in Charlbury for the writing and performing of poetry. Jon Carpenter and I are now inviting submissions for *Does nothing rhyme with Charlbury? The sequel*. It was the great variety of subject and style that made the first book a success, so all ideas are welcome. We intend to publish the second volume towards the end of this year.

Sales of the first book, together with proceeds from the Memorial Hall event, raised £670 for the Shorthampton Church maintenance fund. Soon after last summer's flood damage, Jon and I decided that the Charlbury Cricket Club appeal should benefit from the new compilation.

Please take your poems to Evenlode Books, or e-mail them to jon@joncarpenter.co.uk. The invitation is of course open to those who contributed last time but we hope also to have material from people who did not. Contributors must have a clear connection with Charlbury. Feel free to submit up to six poems for consideration.

Rob Stepney

POEMS IN A PUB

Another evening of poetry at the Rose & Crown, Charlbury filled its Deep Well Suite on 12 November. The formula of a long poem – this time by WH Auden – plus readings from classic poems and new works by local poets worked its usual magic on the forty-strong audience. A competition for the best poetic translation of a poem by Paul Eluard was won by Charlbury's Malcolm Gibb, closely followed by Peter Hughes from Stonesfield.

The evening raised £140 for Cecily's Fund, the Stonesfield charity working for AIDS orphans in Zambia. The unique formula of the evenings belongs to Cecily's Fund but essential to it is the offer of the finest beers and wines to these lovers of English and French literature. Landlord Tom Page's eight draught ales included Lodden's Boozy Floozy and Young's PA. There were twelve entries for the competitions, and the winners were decided by the votes of the audience. June Osborne of Stonesfield led with her poem 'Caliban' and Hilda Joy-Jones was second. Charlbury poet Moira Wyatt was a front-runner in both competitions. Ian Cox's performance of a punk-poet masterpiece was a highlight of readings of published poems.

The star of a second evening of poetry and ale on 21 January was Caroline Friend, who edited and read the long and mesmerising *The Shearwaters* by Peter Levi. An especially green ode, it tells of the ringing of these long-lived aquatic birds on a remote island in midsummer. There was a special plus through the presence of Brigid Allen, the biographer of Peter Levi, who was able to locate the island as Rum in the Hebrides and pinpoint the year exactly. Caroline Friend is well known as a member of the Stonesfield Players, and lives in the house once owned by Peter Levi.

The evening raised £100 for Cecily's Fund. There were the usual competitions for the best new poems and most elegant translation of a sonnet from Verlaine, won by June Osborne, Moira Wyatt and Peter Hughes. The poets recited Flann O'Brien's *A Pint of Plain is Your Only Man* in honour of the Rose & Crown landlord, Tom Page, and his superb local ales.

You can get on the email circulation list for Poems in a Pub evenings at peter@romewalk.co.uk.

Peter Clifton

ChOC: CHARLBURY'S OWN CINEMA

ChOC's winter season of films was given a very warm reception, with *Miss Potter*, *Atonement* and *The Painted Veil* attracting a large and encouraging mixture of regular cinema-goers and many new faces.

For the spring we have another selection of films carefully chosen to intrigue and entertain Charlbury audiences.

Our March film, on Sunday 2nd, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* is an adaptation of the prize-winning biography of the same name by the Yorkshire poet and journalist Blake Morrison. Starring Colin Firth, Juliet Stevenson and Jim Broadbent the film is an open and moving account of the life and death of Blake Morrison's father.

In April we hope to bring you an Argentine / Spanish film set in Patagonia! Are you intrigued? The film, *Bombón El Perro*, or *Bombón The Dog*, is described by the critic Peter Bradshaw as, 'a film of miraculous gentleness and sweet-natured comedy' and is sure to bring a smile to your face as well as giving you plenty to take away and think about. Several ChOC filmgoers have asked if we could show *The Kite Runner*, particularly as the book by Khaled Hosseini has been a popular sales item at Evenlode Bookshop during past months. We will be showing this on 11th May as part of our collaboration with Chipping Norton Theatre and some of our neighbouring villages.

ChOC films are shown in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 on the dates shown and tickets can be bought on the door, or in advance, from News & Things, Cotswold Frames and Evenlode Books. For further information about ChOC or about any of the films ring Ed on 01608 811196, take a look at the ChOC website <http://www.day-books.com/chocweb.htm> or keep an eye open each month for posters around the town.

Every month a newsletter is emailed to a growing number of filmgoers. If you would like to receive this please contact me on 01608 810423.

Hilda Reed

THE EASTER GOOD TURN

Every year on Good Friday morning, the Brownies and Rainbows deliver plants to some of the older people that live in Charlbury. This tradition was started many years ago by the Guides. They used to collect primroses that were growing around Charlbury and give them out on Good Friday. After a few years, the primroses were swapped for eggs and fruit. I remember delivering them when I was a Guide. I remember when we celebrated 25 years of the Easter Good Turn...and that was probably 20 years ago! In recent years, it has changed to pot plants. As there are no Guides in Charlbury, the Brownies have taken on the role and the Rainbows help them too. We hold a Coffee Morning at the Corner House in the weeks leading up to Good Friday, and the money that is raised goes towards buying plants. Any shortfall is made up by Brownie funds. The type of flowers depend upon what is available at the time of year, and are supplied by Hilltop Garden Centre. The lists are compiled and routes are worked out before hand. The flowers are delivered and we gather with willing parents in the Scout Hut on Good Friday morning, so that parents and Guiders can escort the girls to deliver the plants. The girls love to deliver the gifts, and we get so many lovely thank you notes afterwards.

Cathryn Taylor, Brown Owl (01993 771 321)

P.S. Our next Coffee Morning is on 8th March in the Corner House

THE CHARLBURY MUSEUM

The Charlbury Museum will open again for the first time after the winter break on Easter Saturday, March 22nd. Thereafter it will open every Saturday from 10 to 12, and on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 2.30 to 4.30.

This year's special exhibition will be on the theme of gardens and gardening. If you have any relevant paraphernalia or ephemera, for example, old gardening tools, seed catalogues, photographs, which you would be prepared to lend to the Museum for the exhibition, please contact the Curator, Ron Prew, on 810060.

The Museum cannot function without its loyal band of volunteer stewards, to whom we are immensely grateful. If you think you might like to join them, do ring Jennifer Bartlett on 810312

COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS A REMINDER :

A First Responder can only respond after a member of the public has made a 999 call.

Ambulance Control send a text message to the team, alerting them of any **RED** Calls, which are chest pains, breathing difficulties or any life-threatening conditions.

A Responder can **ONLY** attend when Ambulance Control gives them permission to do so. We cannot attend independently.

Thank you for your support
Carol Hughes (tel: 01993 868710)
Community First Responders
(Finstock, Ramsden & Wilcote & surrounding areas)

JOHN CROCKFORD & FAMILY wish to thank the many people who sent kind letters and cards on the occasion of Margaret's death. They would like everyone who contributed to know that a cheque in Margaret's memory for £1080 was sent to the Lawrence Home Nursing Team.

Shoe Box Challenge Report

A big thank you to all who filled boxes for Christmas. 122 were taken to the depot in Evesham, and over 200 knitted items were brought to the Baptist Church.

If anyone has any spare balls of wool they no longer have a use for there are knitters wanting to keep busy all year! Please bring them to the Baptist Church any Sunday morning between 10.00 and noon and put them in the white carrier bag at the back. Thank you.

Barbara Cook

BirdAid in Charlbury

Winter feeding of farmland birds is now into its fifth year in Charlbury and surrounding parishes. This is a project supported by the Friends of Wychwood and the RSPB and funded by TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment). Supplementary feed in the form of cereals (kindly supplied by the Ditchley Estate) is scattered daily at a site off the Ditchley Road. Large numbers of farmland birds, particularly yellowhammers, take advantage of the food which is particularly helpful in the latter part of the winter when very little naturally occurring food is available. If anyone would like to help by feeding the birds or observing numbers and species, or simply just view the birds at any time, please contact Louise Spicer on 810745.

Report from County Councillor Sue Haffenden

sue.haffenden@oxfordshire.gov.uk

This time of year at County Hall is almost entirely taken up with setting the Budget for 2008/9 and up-dating the Medium Term Financial Plan which carries us up to 2012 in some detail. The process is long and complicated, starting in September with the five Directorates looking at their individual pressures and priorities and coming up with a balanced budget.

These budgets are then submitted to the Star Chamber process: a group of Cabinet members and financial officers who later submit them to the Scrutiny (Select) Committees throughout December. This is when members of the public can petition or attend Scrutiny to influence budget making policy. OCC also carry out an annual public consultation on the budget, through IPSOS Mori polling, so that the Council can see on what residents would like to spend money.

Last year, both Scrutiny and the poll revealed that more money should be spent on helping older people, with help for care at home and access to services like hospitals, surgeries and Day Centres. Respite care for carers was high-lighted and I am pleased to see that more money has gone towards this again this year. Preventative care, eg: the Falls Programme, has also received high priority this year and an extra £1.2m has gone into Adult Social Care to help the increasing number of elderly and people with learning disabilities who will require Council Services.

Cultural Services have a small budget of just over £10m with which to run our first class library and museum services, the archives and subsidise the Arts in the County. This year there was general alarm over the finances of Cogges Museum, a much loved and valued Victorian manor house and working farm and garden near Witney. The Council subsidised each visitor to the tune of £9 per visit last season and the Cabinet members have stated this cannot continue in the long term. I received many letters about Cogges and as I was on the Scrutiny Committee was able to recommend another year's funding and a three year business plan to be drawn up by Officers and Trustees within the next six months. I am glad to report that the Cabinet has stated they have no desire to close or sell off Cogges and they have set up a Project Committee headed by local Councillors to work on the business plan and encourage some private/commercial partners to share the cost of running this unique museum.

Subject to the Full Council's approval in February, the Cabinet is proposing a 3.875 per cent rise in council tax-lower than the four percent originally promised and the third successive reduction in the rate of rise since this administration took over in 2005.

Report from District Councillor Glenda Chadwick

tel: 01608 810555 email Chadwick@glena.fsnet.co.uk

A very full interim report on the flooding last July which severely affected our area, has just been brought out and discussed by WODC, ironically in the week the floods returned, albeit less gravely. One of the lessons learnt was to establish various places where sand and sandbags could be obtained rather than this facility all being concentrated in Witney, where the depot itself flooded. The sandbag centre nearest to us is at Chipping Norton. Work is underway clearing ditches and watercourses and the survey plotting the ownership of these watercourses is being drawn up. It will not, as originally understood, be available to the public (because of the data protection act) but if concerned residents contact WODC the officials will have the information and be able to act.

Farmers' Markets posters have now changed colour from yellow to green and white but, after being under threat, they have all obtained planning permission so everyone who

supports Farmers' Markets and the excellent local produce they supply can be thankful. A seminar was held to present the findings of the environmental survey sent out last summer. Predictably people's chief concerns are litter, anti-social behaviour, dog fouling and the state of public toilets. They are pleased (in general) with refuse collections, recycling services and landscape maintenance. More affordable housing is wanted but over development is deplored. One may feel that one could have known beforehand what the results would be but these surveys are required by the government. All too often, as with housing, the aspirations are, inevitably, contradictory

Report by District Councillor Mike Breakell

tel:01993 868201 michael.breakell@westoxon.gov.uk or mjbreakell@aol.com

The big issue is again flooding. Once the survey work referred to by Glenna is complete, it will be crucial for those involved to work together. The Environment Agency, County and District Councils, and landowners in particular, especially in key locations like the road bridge near Fawler Mill.

The public transport debate continues with two recent public meetings in Charlbury, one ably chaired by David Cameron and attended by First Great Western passengers and staff including the responsible management team who bravely admitted to many recent failures. Once again there are promises of better things to come and already we can see improvements to the Charlbury station environment. Stagecoach held the other meeting to hear their passengers views on forthcoming service improvements. Again there are promises to improve services to Oxford.

And even planning matters which cause so much concern have been explained by District Council officers to members of Charlbury Town Council and the Conservation Committee recently. Commercial changes and additional housing in Charlbury are always difficult matters to get right, but the revised plan for the Cricket Club looks particularly good and will hopefully be located beyond the flood line.

What to do with used batteries?

Don't put them into landfill or the black boxes but drop them into one of our special collection boxes

Available at the Corner House, the Post Office and the School

Charlbury Area Waste Action Group



www.cwag.org.uk

Do you have good quality unwanted items in your home?

Bring & Take

Memorial Hall
Saturday
1st March

Items can be brought in between 9.30am-11am and taken from 10am-12 noon

This is a cashless event where anyone can take items they want at NO cost

Charlbury Area Waste Action Group



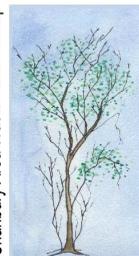
www.cwag.org.uk

Green Waste Collections

First Saturday every month
10am-12noon
Spendlove Car Park

Bring Tetra Paks along too for separate collection

Charlbury Area Waste Action Group



1st March
5th April
3rd May
7th June
5th July
7th August
6th September
4th October
1st November
6th December

www.cwag.org.uk

CLUBS, GROUPS, SOCIETIES

THE CHARLBURY SOCIETY

The Society's forthcoming meetings offer some interesting and unusual subjects:

March 14th features the Banbury brothers with recollections of their family's gentleman's outfitters shop in Woodstock.

April 11th has Charlbury resident Barbara Allison presenting *Petticoats and Partlets* - a talk on women's clothes in the early 17th century and following the AGM, on **May 9th**, there will be a showing of *Charlbury Memories*, The Charlbury Museum's new DVD recording of Charlbury people and places.

N.B. March 14th at the Corner House. April & May in the Memorial Hall. All start at 7.30 pm.

Please consider becoming actively involved in the Society by joining the committee and if you would like to know about what is involved, please ring Brian Murray, Chairman, on 819091.

CHARLBURY ART SOCIETY

The Art Society welcomes anyone with an interest in art, for an annual subscription of £10. We hold **monthly meetings** on the second Wednesday, from September to November, and January to June, in the evening, 7.30pm, usually in the Quaker Meeting House in Market Street. These **meetings are free to members**; visitors are welcome for £3 each time. Members are also entitled to **discounts** on Framing and Materials at several establishments, and to exhibit work at the Spring and Street Fair exhibitions.

Future events include proposed **coach trips to the Henry Moore exhibition at Kew on 6th March** (in conjunction with the Garden Society and the U3A Garden Group), and to the Royal Academy in April to see the "From Russia" exhibition; a demonstration of portrait painting in acrylic, and talks on subjects as varied as "Painting the Waterperry Frescoes", "The Spirit of Syria" and "The Work of the Mouth and Foot Artists".

Each term we have a series of **practical group activities**, for those who are interested. In January, for example, a group of members enjoyed a day learning to do Chinese Brush painting. In February Life Drawing & Portrait Painting are scheduled, and after the Spring Show at the end of March we will start outdoor sketching and painting days, which any member is welcome to join.

Membership runs from 1st September to 31st August. If you would like to join, please ring **Roy Coates 01608 810116** and ask for an application form. (NB At the Spring Exhibition the subscription reduces to £5 for the remaining months.)

Marion Coates – Honorary Secretary

ARTWEEKS OPEN STUDIO 10-18 May, 12-6 pm daily, Maureen Sparling, 1 Church Lane. A selection of botanical watercolours. Finely detailed illustrations of flowers, vegetables, as well as some birds. [Wwww.botanicalartists.co.uk](http://www.botanicalartists.co.uk)

CHARLBURY BOWLS CLUB Members are enjoying the indoor season, with friendly games against local clubs, and matches in the West Oxfordshire Indoor League, where we have two teams competing successfully.

CLUBS, GROUPS, SOCIETIES

The annual Dinner Dance and prize giving was held in November, a good night was enjoyed by over 70 members and their guests. A Bingo night was held at the Club in December which was enjoyed by many, with good prizes for Xmas. The Club's Open Day is on Saturday 19th April at 2pm - come and join us and have a try at bowling on a superb green (acknowledged as one of the best in the County) in delightful surroundings, or just watch. You are assured of a warm and friendly welcome. We are looking forward to good weather, and a enjoyable Summer's bowling. New members of all ages are most welcome; men, women and youngsters. You are never too young or old to play this skilful game!

David Homewood ,Secretary, 01608 811321

CHARLBURY CRICKET CLUB

Some very good news to begin with: we have now been granted planning permission to build a new pavilion and a small team of Club members, led by the indefatigable Mike Shayler, is proceeding rapidly with the logistics of the construction process. There are still many challenges ahead of us but we are hopeful that the new building will be in use by the middle of the summer. A full programme of fundraising activities for 2008 is currently being finalized in order to generate the remainder of the money we need to pay for the pavilion. It is appreciated that the people of Charlbury have already contributed very generously towards the cost of resurrecting the Club after last year's floods (and we are profoundly grateful to you all). Please continue to support us as we embark on the final push to build our new home. We promise that some of the fundraising events that are being planned will be enjoyable in themselves and not just another excuse for you to dip your hands into your pockets!

News from the Youth Section: Following on from last year's dismal summer, the Youth Section continued to train indoors at Burford School up until Christmas. Older youth members, along with their senior counterparts, will return there in March for preseason training. For safety reasons, the Club is seriously considering changing the summer youth training night from Monday to Friday. As soon as a decision is reached, details will be posted on www.charlburycricketclub.com and circulated to members via email.

Derek Collett

CHARLBURY TENNIS CLUB is gearing up for a busy summer season of tennis and would welcome new members. The well-established club, which is affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association, offers tennis facilities for everybody living in Charlbury and surrounding areas, providing a friendly and enjoyable environment for players of all ages and abilities. Members benefit from free use of the Nine Acres courts during club sessions; opportunities to compete in inter-club matches, as well as internal club tournaments and championships; several social events a year; a popular tennis programme for juniors including free Friday night sessions; a draw for Wimbledon tickets.

Club sessions for players of any standard are held throughout the year, with summer sessions taking place on Thursday nights (7.00-9.00 pm) and Sunday afternoons (2.00-5.00 pm). A committee member is present to ensure that everyone gets a game. Courts are also booked for play by club members from 1.30-3.00 pm on Mondays.

Due to demand from members, in order to provide even more opportunities for competi-

tive play against other clubs, the club will be fielding extra teams this year. It will run 3 midweek evening teams in the Banbury League, 2 men's 2-pair and 2 ladies' 2-pair teams in the Wilson League (matches played at weekends) and 1 team in the Wychwood League (also weekends). There will also be opportunities for junior team players to compete against other clubs in the summer. If you are interested in joining the club, do come along to one of our club sessions (just bring a racket and suitable footwear), pop along to the Club's AGM at the Corner House on Friday 7th March at 8.00 pm, or pick up a membership application form from the Good Food Shop, Sheep Street, Charlbury. If you need more information, you can contact Deirdre Lunney on 01608 810864.

Charlbury Canoe Club The River Evenlode upstream from Charlbury is ideal for canoeing. As it meanders amongst woods and fields its flow changes from deep and slow to shallow and fast and back again over relatively short distances. Charlbury is fortunate in having a canoe club to enable you to enjoy this wonderful river to the full. We have all the necessary equipment and can turn beginners into competent paddlers after only a few sessions. Age is no barrier, as long as you can swim 50 metres and handle a double-bladed paddle. The club had two timber huts in Watery Lane (at the bottom of Pound Hill) but last year an arsonist completely destroyed one of them. Our stock of kayaks is now sadly depleted, but we still have enough boats for a dozen or so people to take to the water together. Shortly after the fire, the July flood lifted the remaining hut off its base, but fortunately set it down again only one foot away from its starting point. Regular club outings on Sunday afternoons (at 2.30 pm) will recommence at Easter (or as soon after as the weather allows). Why not come along and give it a try? Families are particularly welcome. If you are interested please give me a ring on 810130. *Hugh Belshaw*

ADULT LEARNING COURSES FOR 2008

New spring courses will start from Monday 25 February, 2008. You will be able to enrol from Tuesday, 15 January. Look out for details of courses in libraries, adult learning centres, The ACE Centre, The Leisure Centre and the Co-op. In response to your comments, we have produced localised brochures to help you see exactly what is going on in your part of the county. Brochures are available for the following areas: North West – Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Eynsham; North East – Banbury, Bicester, Eynsham, Kidlington and Woodstock; Oxford City – Oxford City and Kidlington; South East – Abingdon, Berinsfield, Chinnor, Didcot, Sonning Common, Thame, Wallingford, Watlington and Wheatley; South West – Abingdon, Grove, Faringdon, Oxford (Cumnor) and Wantage. Weekend Workshops – details available of all one-day workshops across the county.

For further information or to enrol on a course please call our enrolment line on **0845 351 0646**.

Course details are also available on our website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adultlearning.

*If you would like to submit information for this section,
please contact Julia Caston (810240)*

Cotswold Line Meeting Friday January 8th 2008, Corner House, Charlbury

A packed meeting of rail users (many standing but we are used to that!) was held in the Corner House on Friday January 8th to discuss the continuing problems of train punctuality and reliability on First Great Western (FGW) trains from Charlbury. The meeting was convened by David Cameron MP in response to the 'deluge of letters and emails' he has received from constituents about the problems on the Cotswold Line (Oxford – Hereford). Mike Carroll and Richard Rowland were present as senior representatives from First Great Western. The meeting was chaired by David Cameron, who gave as many people as possible the opportunity to ask a question or make a comment. Members of the travelling public, many from outside Charlbury, asked questions about timetabling, ticket machines, the conveyance of bicycles; information boards, late and cancelled trains, overcrowding and future investment etc, in a concerted effort to get answers and commitment from FGW. FGW staffs were sympathetic and admitted that failures on the Cotswold Line urgently needed to be rectified, promising to make progress in the following areas:

Charlbury Station:

- Improvements to train information at Charlbury Station, and in particular eradicate conflicting information
- Clearly visible contact list for FGW's chain of command
- Look into lengthening of opening hours for waiting room at the station
- Canopy to be fixed to new ticket machine at the station (it doesn't work in the rain)

Infrastructure:

- FGW to provide update on Network Rail plans currently being considered for redoubling along the Cotswold Line

High Speed Trains (HSTs):

- FGW promised to revert to *standard class* selective door opening by the end of February

Cycling:

- Improve cycle access and storage on HSTs

Timetable:

- Improvements to fleet reliability; increase in driver availability; better cooperation with Network Rail in order to improve the infrastructure; decision to be taken over possible timetable change on the Oxford to Worcester route in order to ensure greater reliability for the 08.33 service from Charlbury to London Paddington

Fares:

- FGW admitted that they could not justify the recent fare increases, and agreed to consider further passenger benefits in wake of poor performance

A future meeting will be held later in the year to review progress. As much notice as possible will be given but watch the Charlbury Website and the CLPG notice board at the station for dates and times.

Happy travelling!

*Geoffrey Griffiths, Charlbury Representative
Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG)
63 The Green, Charlbury.*

Letters to the Editor

From Mr Marty Moon

I am trying to contact you for some help and I hope that you may assist me. My name is Marty Moon. I live in Parker, Colorado, a small town on the outer edge of Denver, Colorado, USA. I have been working on my family genealogy for the last thirty years. My grandmother's maiden name was Grace Winter and her father's name was Edgar Theodore Winter. Edgar came to the United States in 1881 with twelve brothers and his mother and father from England. They settled and started a farm in Iowa.

Edgar's father and my great-great grandfather Charles Winter was born in Charlbury, Oxfordshire, England on May 1st, 1839 and died in Mason City, Iowa in 1901. I believe his father was Samuel Winter and his father was William Winter. Both of these men were born in Charlbury and probably died in Charlbury. I am hoping that you could get me in touch with someone who works on genealogy in the village or area. I would like to see if these two men are related to me and if they are buried in the area. Any assistance would help. Thank you for your time.

17070 Foxton Drive

Parker, Colorado, USA 80134

marty.moon@comcast.net

Telephone number: 303-805-4432

From Mr Derek Collett

I find myself in full agreement with Mark Gregory and your other correspondents in the December 2007 edition of the *Charlbury Chronicle* regarding the fate of Charlbury's shops. For some reason many residents of Charlbury do not support the shops on their doorstep and this imperils the livelihoods of all the shopkeepers in the town. In your editorial you suggest (admirably) that we should all try

to shop locally as much as we can and you devote a full page of the magazine to News and Things. I was therefore rather surprised when I turned to page 31 of the same issue and was confronted by a prominent advertisement for Slatters of Chadlington. By encouraging residents of Charlbury to go to Chadlington to do their shopping you are likely to take custom away from News and Things, The Good Food Shop and the other stores in Charlbury. If Slatters wish to advertise their wares then surely they can do so in the *Chadlington Chronicle* (or its equivalent)? I know that you claim that the magazine tries to be impartial but I think your impartiality should be waived in this one respect if we wish to preserve Charlbury the way it is at present!

15 Tanners Court

(The Charlbury Chronicle relies on its advertising to ensure that every resident receives their quarterly issue free. We give a great deal of free publicity to all our local shops whenever we can. - Editor.)

From Mr Roy Coates

It has been long the tradition amongst the men in my family to leave present buying to the very last shopping days before Christmas. This year having got to that time I found myself incapacitated due to an injury, unable to drive, very short of time, and certainly too late to order items on the web.

So what to do? Well I then remembered of course we do have shops in Charlbury. In particular 'Cotswold Frames' in Sheep Street turned out to be a small treasure trove of gifts for all ages. Attracted in by the imaginative window display, I found a sufficient range of decorative candles, jewellery, paintings, ornaments and good

Letters to the Editor (cont'd)

quality wooden toys to satisfy most of my needs. With other items from Evenlode Books, News and Things, the Good Food Shop and The Pharmacy, I was saved the embarrassment of being scoffed at by the family womenfolk. They always seem to get their present buying organised, in what seems to me to be only late summer, and show little sympathy for 'last minute' shoppers. It was a close call this year, but Charlbury came up trumps.

*18 The Playing Close
Charlbury*

From Mr Jack Hill

A Love Letter to Charlbury

Betty and I have visited Charlbury for five weeks each summer for the past four years. We have enjoyed every minute of it. It all started when our daughter Christine called us at our home in Duxbury, Massachusetts to ask if we would be interested in staying in Kieran and Gene Cooke's house for the month of August while they travelled to Ireland. The Cookes and Christine are old friends from the time she and Kieran were journalists in Asia. We had met Kieran briefly in 2001 when he and his brother visited Boston, their starting point for the Great Continental Auto Rally. It didn't take much deliberation for both of us to say yes. All our roots are in the United Kingdom. Betty is an avid genealogist who has found several cousins with whom she corresponds. My father was born in Yorkshire and although he came to this country as a young boy, his father and mother were very English - homemade tea cakes, pies and cooked breakfast were part of my childhood as were the love of gardens and living in the country.

I had always wanted to spend time in a small English village; I think I had a sort

of Agatha Christie view of what it would be like. The first thing that struck Betty and me was how friendly and polite people were both in the shops, library and on the streets. We love the way people smile and say 'morning as we walk down the hill to do our daily errands. The small shops are something we miss at home. Most of them have been replaced by big box stores that sit on the far edge of town; one must have a car to shop at these stores. They are impersonal and frankly not much fun. There was no one like John Brain, who made those wonderful tomato and lamb sausages, and who would take the time to cut exactly what I wanted for meat while explaining the differences between American and English cuts. We missed him and his sons this past summer. Another store we like is the Good Food Shop which my wife calls 'The Ladies' because she likes the women who work there. There was hardly a day when we were in Charlbury that one of us didn't stop in at The Ladies for bresh bread and a dessert to share for dinner. My wife is particularly fond of their sandwich fillings, and I like the many cheeses they offer. It would be a real loss to the town if the newsagent shop were to close. Every morning I saw people in there enjoying a good cup of coffee and a chat. Your public transportation system is far superior to ours. Being on the rail line is a blessing - it is so easy to pop up to Oxford, and London, with all its wonders, is only just over an hour away. We have found our way to most of the neighbouring towns either by train, bus or foot. We do not miss our cars.

Charlbury is a town designed for walking with its compact size, sidewalks and footpaths. Your garden space is not as large as our - we tend to spread out more, but your outdoor areas are more private and your gardens are beautifully kept and

Letters to the Editor (cont'd)

imaginative. Although you are a good deal further north than we are in New England, your winter temperatures must be milder because you have plants, such as rosemary, that winter over which we must treat as annuals.

We like the fact that when we walk out of the town we are immediately in the country with its mosaic of fields and their hedgerow borders. I love those sweet blackberries I find there; I must have eaten hundreds. We climb to where we can see the lovely shades of green, gold and brown of the fields in the distance; it is breathtaking. After four years we have found most of the footpaths and use them regularly. One last thing that we have particularly appreciated is your understanding of democracy both in the ways you solve your problems and your understanding of our government. While we have yet to meet anyone here who is a fan of George Bush, people seem to be able to separate him from the United States and know that this will pass.

If everything goes well we will see Charlbury again next August, but if not it has been a wonderful experience. A special hi to our neighbours Jack, Diana and Keith, who are ever helpful no matter how small our question or concern may be.

*PO Box 57
Duxbury, MA
02331, USA*

From Mrs Sarah Sulik

Further to the letter from Mrs Nicolette Lethbridge (*Charlbury Chronicle, December 2007*) I am writing to add my plea for the dog owners to pick up their dog mess in the town centre. Speaking on behalf of many other pre-school parents, it is not pleasant to negotiate the narrow pavements with buggies, prams and young children walking. It is particularly notice-

able in Park Street on the journey to Charlbury Pre-School, and through the town to the Primary School. Also, Nine Acres playing fields and down by the river-side are two other areas mentioned to me by parents. In the darker, winter months with leaf debris etc it is more difficult to see the pavements clearly, and this is an issue for all residents both young and old. Please could we have a 'New Year Resolution' to clean up the footpaths and do Charlbury justice as the pretty Cotswold town that it is. The level of dog-fouling is frequently remarked upon by visitors, and it has been a long-standing problem.

*Lawn Cottage,
Dyers Hill*

BOOK A SPRING IN YOUR STEP THIS EASTER!

David Whittaker will have a fine selection of second-hand books for sale at the back of The Bell on **EASTER SATURDAY – MARCH 22ND** (between 10am and 4pm). He will also have an impressive display of his photographs, maybe just the thing to enliven a jaded wall of your abode after the tedium of spring cleaning. Just relax this Easter and allow David to apply his legendary Irish charm to enchant, serenade and beguile you to part with your life savings. (There will also, hopefully, be some lunch time entertainment from a travelling troupe of Moldavian albino one legged tap dancers, providing they don't get too legless at the bar.)

David Whittaker

THE CHARLBURY AND DISTRICT MOTOR FIRE BRIGADE TRUST: 'THE OLD FIRE STATION'

The Old Fire Station was given to Charlbury in 1927 by Mr Oliver Watney, to house the new fire engine. The property had been the coach house to 'The Corner House'. This remained the fire station until the new station was built in the early 1970's. In 1940 it was taken over by the National Fire Service, and after the war, by the OCC. Finally in 1975, a new scheme was drawn up by the Charity Commission, creating the above Trust. The Trustees remit was to manage the property, on behalf of the Commission, so as to produce an income to be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of Charlbury and District. 'The Old Fire Station' is vested in the Charity Commission.

Since the beginning, the Trustees have either had trouble finding tenants, or when found, problems with some of them reneging on paying the rent. When the last tenants left, 4 years ago, we had a plan to convert the premises into 2 units for commercial occupancy. However, when it was costed out, we realized our funds were nowhere near enough to carry out the alterations. Since then, we have not managed to let the property. On two occasions, one potential tenant, the O.C.C., who had always been interested in acquiring the building for library services, expressed an interest again, through their agent W.S. Atkins. This was in November 2004. The Trustees, were required to accept their terms, which included taking the property off the market and strict confidentiality. The negotiations went on until July 2005. When it came to signing the 'Heads of Agreement', costing us solicitor's fees of £2000, the OCC pulled out, saying that they had promised money to the Gifford Trust towards a new library. This came as a great disappointment to the Trustees, as they felt this would have been an ideal use for the building.

After the OCC pulled out, the Trustees decided to go for full marketing of the property for letting, using our estate agents, Cluttons. This was in September 2005. The Trustees then spent £5,000 on renovating the building inside and out. There were newspaper advertisements, with photographs of the building and a very conspicuous 'Cluttons' advertising 'TO LET' sign on the building. There were 28 enquiries in all, but only one serious applicant. This person wanted to turn it into a bakery, and went as far as producing a business plan. Yet again, we reached draft Heads of Agreement. This time, when it came for him to sign his copy, he had to all intents vanished, and was completely out of contact with Cluttons. This had taken another 5 months, from November 2005 to March 2006, however during this time the property remained on the market. Cluttons had no other serious offers from September 2005 to May 2006 and no interest expressed from Charlbury businesses or residents. As Cluttons said: "*The property is an unusual one, and in all likelihood, because of the size and nature of it, will attract a higher proportion of time wasters and weaker covenants than say a business park location*". This, we may add, has been our experience ever since acquiring the property.

As a result of our failure to let the property, the Trustees decided that they would have to sell, which they are entitled to do, as allowed in 'The Scheme' drawn up by The Charity Commission in 1975. The Trustees then applied to the WODC planning department for change of use, as this would maximise the sale value. After over 12 months delay, regrettably, the Uplands planning committee refused the application. The Trustees now intend to sell the building as it stands. It is owned by the Charity Commission, and as such we either let it at commercial rent, or sell it. The proceeds of the sale have to be invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF) and the interest only, has to be distributed for the benefit of the inhabitants of Charlbury and surrounding district. This regrettably, we have not been able to do for the last 4 years.

*Robert Wilkins, Chairman,
Charlbury and District Motor Fire Brigade Trust
December 31st 2007*

A DAY'S LIFE

**JOHN
MERRIMAN**

**MAN FOR
ALL SEASONS**

I am usually up by 8 o'clock and I take Ina a cup of tea in bed and occasionally make some porridge for her – the Co-op variety that only takes 3 minutes to cook. I then check the headlines in the paper and thoroughly depress myself by looking at what is going on in the stock market. If it is a Monday, it is my day for clearing the litter on Nine Acres, only snow and high winds stop me. I cover the whole playing field area and then go via the public footpath to Enstone Road and check around the fountain and the seats in the Playing Close. I take the cans and bottles to the Bottle Bank and bins in the Spendlove. If I and my helpers did not do this some 2000 bottles and cans would accumulate on Nine

Acres in a year. I also look out for vandalism and if things need repairing: we are suffering from graffiti at the moment and will have to get a graffiti remover. Nine Acres is such an asset to Charlbury and matters to me very much. I have been Chairman of the Nine Acres Committee for the last seven years and have recently stepped down. We are still looking for a new chairman. The committee meets every other month and deals with the maintenance of the ground. We have just installed new swings in the play area; the lighting on the hard surface is going to be made more environmentally friendly with baffles being fitted to direct the light where it is needed instead of polluting the surrounding neighbourhood. We are very involved with the initiative to build a new pavilion and are looking for grants towards the work. Robert Caston has done excellent work on the costing and negotiating with the Football Foundation. When I have finished my clean-up in the morning, I go down to News and Things to pay the paper bill and have a cheerful chat. Then it is home for breakfast between about 10 o'clock and 10.30.p.m. I eat a hearty breakfast with grapefruit, cereal and a banana followed by a boiled egg and bacon. Another morning activity I enjoy is looking after the garden. I am a bit hampered at the moment because of a frozen shoulder.

Of course my mornings were very different when I was working. I came to Charlbury very early in my career. I had been brought up in the north near Macclesfield. I was an only child and my parents rented a big house with seven acres of land. They sent me to King's School in Macclesfield but when I was sixteen my father died. Things were very difficult as my mother was almost a permanent invalid looked after by an ancient retainer. I was able to finish my schooling but university was not in the frame, so I did National Service in The Royal Army Service Corps and spent time in Singapore. By this time my mother had gone to live with her sister in Newcastle on Tyne and I returned there after the army. I decided to do a trainee scheme in the City library. I worked in all departments of the library and eventually became a Chartered Librarian after a year at Library school. I worked my way up to number two in a branch but realised I did not like working for a republic (councillors on a committee), but would prefer working for a monarchy – one person telling me what to do. My mother and the ancient retainer had now moved into a flat, so I felt I could advertise for a job, which I did in "The Bookseller". I got two replies, one of which was from Blackwell's in Oxford. There was a vacancy as an order clerk in the Periodicals Department, which supplied libraries with learned scientific and technical journals. In those days it was a department with manual record cards and old-fashioned typewriters. I was there for thirty four and a half years and worked my way up to director. The department used to be above Blackwell's shop but it outgrew this and moved to other sites in Oxford. It developed internationally and eventually was a fifty million pound business. It involved travel and in 1968 I went with Blackwell's finance director to America to

study the use of computers. We flew out but had an enjoyable trip back on the Queen Elizabeth. I was encouraged by Richard Blackwell to make contacts outside the firm and because there was such a rapid growth in the serial business, I was able in 1975 to set up the UK Serials' Group bringing together publishers, distributors and librarians. Our first conference at Christchurch attracted 69 university periodical librarians. Robert Maxwell was our speaker. I edited a magazine for this group, which recently had its thirtieth birthday. At the last annual conference there were over 500 delegates. The Americans formed a similar group and I was able to help them with this. I was often asked to give papers in America and Britain on the business and I ended up spending at least 6 weeks of the year in America. I got to know many of their big cities and even became chairman of an associated company in Long Island. The business continued to expand supplying not only university libraries but industrial, government and special libraries. It could be run with a small staff particularly when computers were used. We were paid in advance, the publishers delivered the periodicals and we had a very high turnover. I decided to retire at 60 (62 was the usual age) but did part-time for a year, eventually finishing in 1991.

My job with Blackwell's brought me to Charlbury. Walking was something I very much enjoyed and I met my first wife through a rambling club. We were married in 1959 and househunted around Oxford. Charlbury then had a population of 1,300; there were two banks, lots of shops but importantly for us – the railway. We bought my present house, which was formerly three condemned cottages in February 1960. Two had been renovated by a local builder. We had a long term plan of development. Sadly my wife died in Easter 1969 aged 34. We now had three children and people in Charlbury were wonderful in helping me cope. For sometime the Universal Aunts Agency provided me with helpers. I then found Ina and we have now been married for nearly 38 years. She brought me a stepdaughter and then she and I had another daughter.

Retiring did not stop me working. As I have already said I have always loved walking and I started leading walks for H.F holidays. They have 19 houses throughout Great Britain and they provide three types of walk graded according to difficulty. I led these walks for 9 weeks out of a year for six years. I went to some wonderful places but the Isle of Arran was my favourite. Not only did you have to lead walks but you had to organise evening entertainment such as quizzes and calling for the dancing. You were always worried about people injuring themselves and we had a major rescue in Arran, when someone with a multiple fracture had to be lifted out by helicopter. I had had a pretty charmed existence with my time with H.F and when I got Achilles tendonitis I decided to call it a day. I am still involved with walking and am a member of the Oxford and District H.F. Rambling Club of which I was Chairman for 7 years. I lead walks at weekends: sometimes we have special weekends in places like the Brecon Beacons.

When we are both at home Ina and I usually have a light lunch, which she prepares. She is very involved these days with teaching and playing bridge. She also organises bridge drives for charity. The afternoon might be spent working for one of my other real interests CAMRA (The Campaign For Real Ale). I feel very strongly that a pub is a very important feature in the life of the community. If a village loses a pub, it is bad news. CAMRA promotes good breweries and pubs. I was Chairman of the North Oxfordshire branch; it covers a big area going right up to the Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire borders. There are around 400 pubs; we have clusters of about 20 looked after by a cluster master. I look after 40 in this area. We survey the pubs for quality – 5 marks is out-

standing, 0 is terrible. The marks go into the computer and provide the basis for the 28 entries allowed in "The Good Beer Guide". The top 6 are entered in "The Pub of the Year Competition". Members of CAMRA visit the pubs and then vote. "The Rose and Crown" in Charlbury has won 3 times. I am also involved with the CAMRA magazine for North Oxfordshire "Beer on Tap". We produce 8000 copies. I also have to deliver 1500 of these to pubs, holiday centres like Banbury Hill Farm and caravan sites. I am an enthusiastic supporter of beer festivals, particularly our local one and I help out at the Banbury festival in May. Then there is the Great British Beer Festival in August, which I go to for a day. My interest in pubs allows me to enjoy another hobby – music. I very much like Trad Jazz and Rhythm and Blues – the latter I can now listen to in "The Rose and Crown".

Ina prepares supper for us between 6 and 7 o'clock according to what we will be doing later on. It is in the evening that I become more involved in Charlbury activities. I feel it is important to put something back into the community. I stood for Town Council and was on it for 12 years and was Chairman for some of the time. Charlbury was much smaller then but there were still problems to be dealt with. I was never a member of a political party because I feel politics are out of place in parish councils. I was also Chairman of the Corner House and Memorial Hall and it was during that time that we reroofed the Corner House. We ran a local lottery and raised £4,000. Inevitably this has also involved me in the Street Fair. I was Chairman 5 times and I must say it is the most exhausting thing I have done in my life. In my time there were no commercial stalls and the parade was a real feature but that has largely been killed off by the insurance situation. In 1970 we ran an Exemption Dog Show on the Playing Close. This was hugely popular and we did it twice. Another activity I have had in the evenings is CADS. My first part was in 1963 as the no-good son in "The Paragon". This was with the Charlbury Players, which eventually folded and was replaced by CADS. My most challenging part was Deputy Governor Danforth in "The Crucible" produced by Betty Stokes. Now I just like to do small parts, put out the chairs and help in the front of house. I am Chairman of the Charlbury Exhibition Foundation, which helps students buy books. The local Probus club has been another of my interests. Films are important to me. I am a friend of Chipping Norton Theatre and a keen supporter of the Phoenix cinema in Oxford where I saw 27 films last year.

Now I am retired, Ina and I have time for travel often visiting our family. Our youngest daughter is in the States and has lived in San Francisco, Boston and Seattle. We liked Seattle very much but she is now back in San Francisco and that gives us an opportunity to visit the vineyards and explore the coast. Another daughter and grandchildren are in Devon. We also visit favourites in this country – the Lake District, Suffolk and Norfolk, where there is another granddaughter. When at home, if I do not go out to meetings or the local pubs in the evenings, I will read the paper and magazines. I particularly like "Private Eye", which tells you what is really going on in the country. "The Oldie" is excellent. The only television I like watching is "University Challenge". I think I have been privileged to have been able to spend so much of my life in Charlbury. Now I am 78 I think it is time for me to step back a little and let younger people take over. I am sure however that I will be picking litter up in Nine Acres until the day I die!

John Merriman was interviewed by Diana Potten

N.B. John Merriman was recently presented with a painting by local artist Sue Woolley to mark Charlbury's appreciation for all he has done for the town over many years

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – CHARLBURY BRANCH

The Poppy Appeal for 2007 raised £4,538.15 in Charlbury and the surrounding area, a new record. We would like to thank all those who helped to raise this sum and particularly those who gave so generously. Thanks also to the ad hoc committee who organised the 2007 Appeal, pending the formal appointment of a new Poppy Appeal Organiser. Please contact Jane Parsons, Branch Secretary on 810822, if you would like to help with the 2008 Poppy Appeal.

The Charlbury British Legion Darts Cup for the Open Pairs was held at Ye Olde Three Horseshoes and won by Gary Hornsby and Alan Bone.

The Band Concert was attended by Oxfordshire RBL President, David Mason D.L. from Eynsham, formerly a Welsh Guards officer and High Sheriff of the County. Mr Mason presented the following awards;

Royal British Legion Gold Badge to Mr Cecil Giles.

Poppy Appeal Collector awards to Mr. Derek. and Mrs. Leah Fowler for 15 years

Poppy Appeal Collector Five year certificates to Mrs Elizabeth Lebb, Lady Grant and Mr Vic Merry.

Charlbury Branch Certificates were presented to: Valerie Marshall and Fred Harriss for their many years of help at Branch events, Canon Graham Canning on his retirement as Charlbury Branch Padre, and Derek Fowler for his first 13 years as Branch Chairman. Awards made to those unable to attend the Band Concert were; 5 year Poppy Collector certificates to Ann Firkin from Chilson and Jane Fitzmaurice, and a Branch certificate to Mrs Helen Clarke on her retirement as Poppy Appeal Organiser for Charlbury Branch after 10 years in post.

Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in St Mary's Church on Remembrance Sunday by the Charlbury Branch (Mrs Nan Warren, daughter of the late Bert Howse a founder member of the Branch), Thames Valley Police (P.C.S.O. Wesley Smith) and Charlbury Town Council (Cllr Nicolette Lethbridge).

The wreaths remain at the Memorial until Candlemas when they are removed and the Branch wreath is relocated to the War Memorial Hall.

The new format for the service for Remembrance Sunday was used for the first time. If anybody has any comments or suggestions please contact the Branch Secretary on 810822 or St Mary's parish office on 810286.

The Branch would also like to thank Andrew Wilson for taking on the task of Parade Piper at very short notice as Steve Duffy had been required, also at short notice, to play at Remembrance Day in Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. Steve took part in the 1982 Operations in the Falkland Islands as a member of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and was awarded a Mention in Dispatches for his part in the Battle of Mount Tumbledown.

Camp Alamo: In November 2007 the Branch sent 14 boxes of "goodies" to British Forces at Camp Alamo, Afghanistan.

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.

NEWS FROM BURFORD SCHOOL

After 13 years as Headteacher, Patrick Sanders retired from the school and the governors, staff and students welcomed Mrs Kathy Haig as his replacement on the first day of the January term. "We are delighted to welcome Kathy Haig to Burford School", said Burford's Chairperson of Governors, Malcolm Harper. "The Governors decided unanimously to offer the Headship to Kathryn and we are much looking forward to working with her. We shall all be striving to move Burford from being a "good" to an "outstanding" school by the time of our next OFSTED report." Kathy Haig says, "I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you and tell you something about my history. Some of you may already know that I am a past pupil, I studied my 'O' and 'A' levels at the school from 1978 until 1982. I thoroughly enjoyed my time here and was involved in many trips and activities including a production of *Patience!* I qualified as a Home Economics teacher and have taught in a variety of schools in different parts of the Country, including Hull, Keighley, Preston before ending up at Ellesmere Port where I was first deputy. I am extremely proud and grateful to be able to return to Burford School as Headteacher. I promise you that I will work unceasingly for the good of the students who attend, continuing to build on the excellent reputation Burford School so rightly enjoys."

CHARLBURY STUDENTS: Over sixty students from the Charlbury area travel to Burford School on mini buses and midi coach organised by M & W Grantham. There are several pick-up and drop-off points through Charlbury, starting at 7.45am and arriving home at 3.30pm approximately. There are students that travel to Charlbury from Taston and Fullwell and two students are picked up from Cornbury Park en route. The Charlbury to Burford School route was started by a parent scheme several years ago and it is now in its seventh year with M & W Grantham. Ed McInroy, a Year 12 student at Burford School, says, "I enjoy travelling to and from school on the minibus, there is a friendly atmosphere; the drivers are always chatty and interested in our work and progress at school."

WOBA: Burford School along with five other schools in West Oxfordshire: has come up with an exciting challenge for 2008; to set up and run a Book Award! Students from Years 7-11 are taking part. The West Oxfordshire Book Award (WOBA) was launched in December. Reading Groups are being organised to allow students to review, recommend, discuss and finally vote for books they would like to see on the shortlist of four books. This will be voted for by students at the six participating schools and will be announced on World Book Day (Thursday 6th March). The overall prize winning book will be decided by the students themselves from the shortlist and could be either fiction or non-fiction but must have been published in 2007. The name of the prize winning book will be announced at the end of April. A glittering prize-giving ceremony is planned for September 2008 where it is hoped that the author will be able to attend.

SPECIALIST STATUS: During the Autumn Term the school was successful in its re-designation as a Technology College. In addition the school was invited to apply for a second specialism of Science. This bid has been successful so from April Burford School will be a combined Technology and Science College. This is fantastic news and will increase the opportunities the school can offer its students.

BUILDING UPDATE PHASE 3: Approval has been given for the next building phase for a purpose built Drama Studio and eight new classrooms. Building work will begin in September 2008.

Diary Note - Friday 28th March 7.00 for 7.30 pm start, Burford School. If you would like to come to the BSA Music Quiz and Curry Night with bar – an evening of great fun, very light hearted and somewhat worrying if you can't remember the names of tunes that you've sung along to for years. (Top Tip - bring a teenager, they know everything!). Tel 01993 823303 for further details. Money raised will go to replacing the school mini-bus.



CHARLBURY WEATHER: From One Extreme to the Other

John Stanley's quarterly report

Early in January, the BBC proclaimed that 2007 was the second warmest year on record. This must be on a day mean average, taking into account night temperatures as well. The statistics kept over the last 19 years for Charlbury relate to day maximum temperatures and, on this basis, 2007 was just above the average of 57.66°, at 57.76° and 10 of these years were warmer than 2007. *Night temperature records do not cover the whole period and have not been computerised.* 8 of the 12 months in 2007 were below average - May to December inclusive. It was a remarkably warm April which just took the year into the above average category.

In **November 2007**, daytime maximum temperatures ranged from 58° on 1st and 2nd to 38° on 18th. The average was 48.77°, compared with the 18 year figure of 48.98°. At night, temperatures ranged from 47° down to 26°.

Autumn 2007 (September to November) was just below average at 56.62° - average 56.95°.

December 2007 followed a similar pattern to November, averaging 43.39°, compared with the 18 year figure of 43.65°. The warmest day was 55° on 6th and the coldest 34° on 20th. Night temperatures were in the range 52° down to 23°.

At last, we had a warmer than average month in **January 2008**. The warmest days were on 19th and 20th, when temperatures rose to 54°. The coldest day was 3rd, when the temperature only struggled up to 35°. The average was 46.87°, the 19 year average being 44.25°. Night temperatures were comparatively warm also, the lowest being only 31° and the highest 51°.



CHARLBURY RAINFALL

*Nick Potter's annual review as measured at Lees Rest
(about 1½ miles due east of the town and about 500 ft above
sea level)*

The rainfall between January 1st and December 31st 2007 was 1012mm (about 40½ ins), the wettest year since 2000 (1029mm/41 in).

The wettest month was July (167mm/six and three-quarters of an inch) and the driest was April (3mm/one tenth of an inch) being the wettest July and driest April since these records began in 1983. May (132mm/5¼ in) was also the wettest in these records. As at January 2008, 159 mm about 6½ ins) of rain has been measured, setting us on the way to the wettest January for over 20 years!



CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL REPORT

– No. 46

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 John Carpenter and Charlbury Business in the Community for coordinating arrangements and to Geoff Burroughs who donated the Corner House Christmas tree. Please could everyone remember to take their trees down, there are several still up.

Presentation: A presentation was made to John Merriman to mark his retirement as Chairman of the Nineacres Recreation Ground Management Committee at the annual Town Council Reception on 13th February.

Local Government Elections: On Thursday 1st May there will be elections for the whole Town Council (12 seats) and for the WODC seat currently held by Cllr. Glenna Chadwick (Lib Dem). It is nearly 8 years now since there was a proper election for the Town Council. There were not enough candidates in 2004. Let us hope that this situation never arises again. There are many issues currently facing the Town and it is known that some of the present councillors wish to retire so “new blood” is needed. For more information about the Council and how to stand as a candidate in the election please contact the Town Clerk. The polling station is in the War Memorial Hall.

Annual Boundary Walk: The walk will take place on Rogation Sunday, 27 April starting at 10am from the Old Oak Tree on Forest Hill. There will be a break for lunch at Model Farm by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Hobill. The distance is about 11 miles across country, along roads, paths and bridleways often in places where public access is not usually allowed. Arrangements can be made to pick up people at various points on the route where it crosses a road. The Town Council is most grateful to all the landowners who allow the walk to take place and to the Charlbury Society for their assistance with organising the work. Anybody who would like to help with marshalling and generally helping is asked to contact the Clerk.

Meetings: All the meeting dates for 2008 can be seen on the Town Council Notice Boards at the Corner House, opposite Five Ways Stores and next to the Enstone Road bus stop, or obtained from the Town Clerk, Roger Clarke, on 810608. All the meetings are open to the public, copies of the minutes of Town Council meetings are available in Charlbury Library.

Annual Parish Meeting: at 8pm on Friday 11th April 2008 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: at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14th May in the Corner House. The new councillors will elect the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Committees and representatives to other local organisations for the next 12 months.

The Town Council Precept 2008: The Town Council element of the Council Tax for the next financial year has been set at £73,257, compared with £80,442 for 2007/8 – a reduction of 9%. Full details can be inspected by arrangement with the Clerk.

Street Fair 2008: Volunteers are urgently needed for the Street Fair without which it cannot function. This event is vital for the funding of the Corner House and Memorial Hall. Please call Susie Finch on 01608810861 or susanna_finch@hotmail.com.

Trains/Station: A well attended public meeting was held at the Corner House on 18th January led by David Cameron in order to raise concerns with First Great Western staff about the poor train service. A list of points to address was agreed with them and they promised to return shortly to report on progress. On the same day improvement works on the station access and car parking started. These include installation of footpath on the approach road, lighting for this path, widening of approach road, some resurfacing, installation of new security and safety fencing.

Councillor Trevor Jones



Hello, my name is Wesley Smith and I am your Police Community Support Officer. I am stationed at Chipping Norton however my beat areas are Charlbury, Finstock and Spelsbury which I patrol regularly.

Before becoming a PCSO I worked as a welder and had little experience in dealing with the public but that didn't deter me from taking on the challenge. Part of my job involves tackling anti social behavior, deterring crime and helping to solve problems in these areas. The main issues I am dealing with at the moment in Charlbury are speeding and the parking problems.

I have a positive outlook and enjoy communicating with the public, understanding what issues are important to them and how I can help them in working towards achieving safer communities.

Feel free to stop me for a chat anytime or if you need to contact me you can reach me at the Charlbury Police Office at the Spendlove Centre or call 0845 8 505 505 and leave a message for me. I will be having a surgery in Charlbury and it will be well advertised nearer the time.

Charlbury Police Office is open Monday and Wednesdays 12pm-3pm and Fridays 9am-12pm

*Wesley Smith,
PCSO c9837.*

ARTWEEKS RETURNS TO CHARLBURY, 10th to 18th May

Over 30 artists and craftmakers in the Charlbury area (12 of whom are situated in Charlbury itself) will be welcoming the public to their homes, studios, or shared venues when Artweeks returns in May. Oxfordshire Artweeks was the first "open Studio" event in the country and has gone from strength to strength, now involving hundreds of artists at nearly 400 sites exhibiting over three weeks. It opens in the south of the county from 3-11 May, moves to the north from 10-16 May, and finishes in the City, from the 17th to the 26th.

There are no admission charges. All you need is a free copy of the Artweeks' Guide which gives full information on every exhibiting artist together with maps, opening times and contact details. This 'Artweeks Bible' is available from all Oxfordshire libraries, Tourist Information Centres, museums, galleries, shops and many other public venues. Or you can visit www.artweeks.org to download the Guide or search for artists by name, location or genre.

So, put the dates in your diary and plan a walk around Charlbury during Artweeks. There's no better way to enjoy the wonderful work being done in your neighbourhood.

CHARLBURY'S POLICE OFFICERS

We now have two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) **Stephanie Blake** and **Wes Smith** who are working out of the Charlbury Police Office at the Spendlove Centre. Opening times are: Mondays and Wednesdays 12 noon to 3pm; Fridays 9am to 12 noon.

To contact your PCSOs
call 0845 8 505 505

New volunteers to staff the Police Office are always needed

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO READ THE CHARLBURY CHRONICLE?

Please ring the Editor
on 810549
to request a large-print copy
A large-print copy is always
available in the library

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 in panel on right).

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