

The Oxhill News



December 2003

It happened in December

Christmas Day (25th December) is the last quarter day in England in the calendar year. It has deeper significances than that, though.

The Arpanet, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, started as a four-node network in December 1969. It is bigger now.

The Dekabrists, or Decembrists, were members of an unsuccessful anti-Tsarist revolt in December 1825, following the death of Alexander I.

Edward VIII abdicated on 11th December 1936, in order to marry Mrs Simpson.

The Mayflower, the ship that carried the Pilgrim Fathers to America, reached Plymouth (Massachusetts) in December 1620. There, the Pilgrims drew up the Mayflower Compact, which based their government on the will of the colonists, not the English Crown.

On 7 December 1941, the Japanese launched an air attack on US military installations in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, bringing the USA into World War II. The Americans decided to call it Pearl Harbor because they didn't like the way the English spelt Harbour.

"The winter solstice, usually on 22nd December, is when daylight hours are minimal". On the other hand, later in the same article in the OUP Science Dictionary, we read, "The winter solstice occurs on December 21st in the northern hemisphere". Always better at Arts subjects, Oxford.

Orville Wright was a US aviator who, with his brother Wilbur, made the first powered and controlled flights, on 17th December 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The aircraft covered 250 metres.

Editorial

We offer our very best wishes for the festive season to all our readers.

We also wish to thank all the people who have so kindly delivered the News throughout the year, and to extend these grateful thanks to those who have delivered the post and milk round the village whatever the weather threw at them. They do make our lives that bit easier by their efforts.

January issue

Because of the holiday period, let's have an early deadline for the January issue. Tuesday, 23rd December will let everyone relax - except me, of course. If you normally prepare your material using a computer, it would make my life easier if you could submit your offering in electronic form, though paper is, of course, fine.

My 'official' e-mail address is news-editor@oxhill.org.uk if you wish to send me stuff that way.

George Adams, 680286

It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it.
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done", and you'll do it.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)

(I thought it would be nice to get the moralising over early - Editor)

Church Services in December

Oxhill, Tysoe and Whatcote

Sunday, December 7 th	9.30	Holy Communion	Oxhill
Sunday, December 14 th	9.30	Holy Communion	Oxhill
Wednesday, December 17 th	7.30	Candlelit Service of Nine Lessons and Carols	Oxhill
Sunday, December 21 st	10.30	Christingle Service	Oxhill
	4.00	Carol Service	Whatcote
	7.00	Armonico Consort with Emma Kirkby. Ticket only	Tysoe
Wednesday, December 24 th	4.00	Children's Service	Tysoe
	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Mass	Tysoe
		Presiding: Revd. Alec Roberts	
		Preacher: Revd. David Knight	
Thursday, December 25 th	9.00	Holy Communion	Whatcote
	10.00	Holy Communion	Oxhill
	11.00	Holy Communion	Tysoe
Sunday, December 28 th	10.30	United Benefice, Holy Communion	Whatcote

Oxhill Festival Choir

Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 17th December

7.30 p.m., St. Lawrence Church

Rehearsals for the above service will occur on Friday 5th December and Friday 12th December.

All rehearsals, except possibly the last one, will be at The Old House at 7.30 p.m.

As ever, anyone is very welcome to join us.

Immediately following the service there will, of course, be a choir party back at The Old House.

Jill Tucker, 680663

Cover Picture

Our thanks go to Pat Crowther for the excellent shot of the Hunt meeting at Oxhill Manor early in November.

Notes of the Oxhill Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday, 11th November 2003

Attended by David Hill – Chairman, Tom Heritage, Gwyneth Adams, Stephen Hackett and Brian Emmerson - Councillors

MATTERS DISCUSSED

Defibrillator

Mike Shepard and Barbara Peach, qualified users of this piece of medical equipment, gave details to the meeting of how they are prepared to give a service to the community (controlled through the Ambulance Service) in cases of heart attack. This would not be a 24 hours service but as and when more people volunteer and become qualified the scheme could be extended. The Parish Council gave their support to this and thanked both for their voluntary work in this field of medical cover and would look at covering the running costs of such equipment.

Recreational Facilities

Mrs. Rodwell of Oxhill Manor has very kindly agreed to make a piece of land available for football etc. This will be looked at with all safety aspects considered.

Village Hall

The Parish Council agreed to support the general wear and tear of the Village Hall to ensure its continued viability. The amount of money will be determined at the January meeting when detailed costing will be available.

Planning

Application for replacement dwelling at Willow Ley returned with objection to size of garage, building on flood plane and exit onto Kineton Road.

No objections raised to application for open hearth at Beach Road,

Permission refused for 2-storey side extension at the Conifers, Whatcote Road.

Finance

Thank you letter received from the Air Ambulance Service for donation.

The removal of the dead tree at the lay-by would be dealt with.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th January 2004 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Angela Kean, Clerk

Broadband Access for Tysoe Exchange

BT announced last month that the “trigger point” for upgrading the Tysoe telephone exchange to offer broadband access is to be 200. This means that if 200 BT telephone line subscribers connected to the Tysoe exchange register an interest in Broadband the appropriate equipment will be installed at the exchange and all Internet users will be able to benefit from the improved service.

Lack of Broadband connectivity is a problem for rural communities – especially businesses where the present very slow access speeds inhibit transfer of data and discourage the establishment of any business needing to use present-day information technology tools like computer aided design, let alone encouraging the development of higher technology enterprises.

For home Internet users Broadband offers a vastly improved downloading speed as well as allowing a single telephone line to be used simultaneously for both telephone calls and Internet access. Broadband is no longer particularly expensive – Tiscali are offering always-on Broadband connection for under £16 a month, which is only one pound more than Clara currently charge me for the slow and flaky connection I currently have.

To date (end of November 2003) there are 113 expressions of interest registered with BT – so we are slightly over halfway to the trigger point. At that we are ahead of Kinton (158 registered, trigger point 500), and are the eighth most likely rural exchange in the West Midlands to get to our trigger point.

It is 3.5 km from the Tysoe telephone exchange to The Peacock in Oxhill, and 5.0 km from the Tysoe exchange to The Royal Oak in Whatcote. BT now have a range of 6 km from the exchange for effective Broadband connection, so all houses in both villages should easily be within range

If you already use the Internet please take the time to register an interest in getting Broadband into the village. Most Internet Service Providers are promoting Broadband connections and normally all you need to do to register your interest is to log onto the appropriate link and type in your telephone number. Otherwise go to the BT site www.bt.com and follow the links there.

Another way of registering would be to complete the sheets available in the shops in Tysoe, or to let me have your name, address (including post-code) and telephone number.

It is particularly important if you are running your own business – I’m told that there are nearly 70 businesses connected to the Tysoe exchange. If all of these register only about one fifth of the approximately 600 domestic subscribers need to respond before the trigger point is passed and the whole community gains this increasingly essential facility.

Please help by registering your own interest and encourage any Internet users known to you to do the same.

George Adams

Oxhill Parish Council

The Council exists to deal with environmental, infrastructural, financial and community matters on behalf of the Parish. It may be that, whether new to the village or not, some families may be unaware of the current membership of the Council. In alphabetical order:

Gwyneth Adams. Teacher. Lived in the village for over 30 years. Lives at 'Karibu', Main Street. Served on Parochial Church Council for many years, and on Church cleaning rota for the last 28 years. Tel. 680286.

Brian Emmerson. Teacher. Lived in the village for 30 years. Lives at Blackford House, Main Street. Tel. 680565.

Stephen Hackett. Mortgage Councillor. Lived in the village for 13 years. Lives at The Malt House, Back Lane. Tel. 680268. ^

Tom Heritage. Vice-Chairman. Farmer. Lived in Oxhill all his life. Lives at Church Farm. Tel. 680216.

David Hill. Chairman. Full-Time Student. Lived in Oxhill for 29 years. Lives at Meadow Cottage, Gilkes Lane. Tel. 680519.

Angela Kean. Parish Clerk. Lived in Oxhill for 32 years. Lives at Brookside, Back Lane. Tel. 680441.

The Council, amongst other things, allocates taxpayers money to such things as the Oxhill News, the Village Hall, Churchyard mowing etc., and obtains its budget via a precept on the Council Tax. The precept bid is determined following representation by interested parties or by statutory requirements. Councillors are unpaid, and are apolitical as far as Parish matters are concerned.

The Council is closely involved with Planning matters, and has successfully represented the views of residents by influencing the decisions of the District Council planning system on many occasions over many decades. Your Parish Council should be your first point of reference; if you refer to County or District Councils as a first action, it can, and on certain occasions has, resulted in delay or in an otherwise unsatisfactory outcome.

In the national structures of local government, the Parish Council is not a subordinated organisation; indeed it is the closest government organisation to you and thereby the most immediately relevant. It differs from other organisations inasmuch as it exists primarily to serve rather than to govern.

David Hill, Chairman, Oxhill Parish Council

Welcome to Oxhill

We welcome the Cronin family, Diana and Martin, with James, William and Daniel to Oxhill House and hope they will be very happy here.

Antony East

A True Countryman

My brother Les was!

He will be greatly missed, riding round the countryside on his old blue tractor.

He sadly died on 22nd October, suddenly, up in the bluebell woods at Whatcote, where he was so happy.

He had lived all his 75 years at Whatcote, and was well known all round here.

R & J Costa

25 Years Ago

Issue number 68 announced a meeting of the Parish Council, and thanked Eileen and Bert at the Peacock for November's Bonfire Party. The Youth Club announced the party they intended to hold for the old age pensioners (no PC nonsense about senior citizens there, then), and Mr. Acock pleaded for someone to deliver the Banbury Cake.

Potatoes were offered at £1.25 per half hundredweight (children, ask Grandpa), and the arrival of the Village Seat was announced, Robin Teall to affix it in position as soon as he was able.

Gwyn Adams informed the village that, since few people were interested in a Fete, there would not be one. She also invited people to purchase tickets for the New Year's Supper (price £1.00). For some strange reason the village was to celebrate New Year on January 13th.

Editor

Carol Singing in and around the Village

As in previous years all and sundry are invited to sing carols whilst walking around the village on Friday 19th. We shall set off at 6.30 p.m. from 'Porthkerry', Beech Road, to where we shall return (if you can squeeze in!) to partake of traditional mulled wine and mince pies for some well-earned refreshment.

This year the Charity we are supporting is "Shelter" which provides much-needed temporary accommodation for genuinely homeless folk; to help their plight is particularly appropriate at Christmastide - remember, there was no room for the Holy Family, even at the Inn!

Russen Thomas

Oxhill Garden Club

'Antique Cottage Plants' was our talk this month. Mrs. Jean Andrews came from Shrewley to tell us of her years researching the comparatively few plants available to our forbears. These included violas, pinks, hardy geraniums, foxgloves, Jacob's ladder, delphiniums, aquilegia, astrantia and campanulas, to name a few that Mrs. Andrews illustrated with splendid slides.

There is still time to ring Lilian to book your place and join us at our Christmas Party:

The Date: Thursday 11th December

The Place: The New Inn, Clifford Chambers

The Food: Their renowned carvery

The Entertainment: **YOU** playing skittles

The latter is entirely optional, though last year even those most determined to abstain didn't when they saw what fun the rest of us were having!

Lilian's 'phone number is 680468 (not as reported in the November News).

Myrtle Knight

W. I. Report

Very appropriately, while fireworks could be heard all around us, our November talk was entitled 'Gunpowder plot and others'. Guy Sutherland was the most interesting of speakers, giving us new insights into the 1605 plot.

Did anyone notice a seemingly driverless car, full of 'Operation Christmas Child' shoeboxes, making its way to Leamington? Looking closer you might have seen Myrtle Knight taking this record number of boxes to headquarters. Thank you to all those, not just W.I. members, who gave, for being so generous.

Philippa Robinson

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Brian Badger and Judy Kingston would like to wish all their friends in the Village a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We will not be sending Christmas cards this year to our friends in Oxhill but have decided instead to make a donation to Shipston Home Nursing.

Judy Kingston (and Brian Badger)

Pâté and Puds

A big thank you to Posy and Graham for letting us take over their home, a lovely venue for the Pâté and Puds. Over 50 people enjoyed an evening of good food and company.

£500 was made for Church funds.

Thanks also to the committee for all their work, to John for running the bar and to all the Pâté and puds makers.

Than you again, Posy and Graham, for your hospitality.

Lilian Welsby

A Letter to the Editor

Dear George,

Here's an *amuse bouche* for the December issue:

The Dating Game

The ambiguity of the dates of the Brumaire ('season of mists') of Louis Napoleon stems from the Revolutionary Calendar which was adopted in 1793 to mark the abolition of the French Monarchy but calculated to start from 1792. Consequently, later dates could be related to more than one point on the calendar.

The year was divided into twelve thirty-day periods (conveniently allocating the five leftovers to Public Holidays) each named after Nature.

Opposition from workers (who had lost out on rest days as a result) and the Catholic Church's fear of losing Christian significance from the calendar led Napoleon Bonaparte to abolish it 13 years later. It enjoyed a brief revival during the Commune of 1871 but never found a satisfactory way of dealing with leap years!

Its legacy is the summer period which gave us Lobster Thermidor...

Tony Eastaugh, Charity House

So now we all know. In my case, quite a bit more than I did before.

Thank you, Tony.

Editor

For Sale

Two space-saving Z-beds. Very good condition.

Ideal for those extra Christmas guests.

Offers to:

Ruth Gibson, 680420

Calling all flower arrangers

(And anyone else willing to help)

The Christmas tree will go into Church the weekend before the Candlelit Carol Service, which is on Wednesday 17th December. I would like to ask for the assistance of anyone who has time to spare on the Monday afternoon, 15th December, to come along and help decorate the tree.

Any contributions of Christmas arrangements would be most gratefully received. I look forward to your help to make the Church look beautiful for Christmas.

If you wish to contact me, my number is 01295 680223. Thank you

Carol Fox

Holly Wreaths

Door and grave wreaths made to order.

Please let me know as early as possible.

Thank you.

Lilian Welsby, 01295 680468

Whatcote Christmas Puddings

If you want one of the Christmas Puddings that are being sold to raise funds for the Restoration & Alterations to St Peter's Church you had better get your skates on.

Positively no orders can be accepted after Friday, December 5th.

Contact June Wreford, 01295 680294

TARTS & TARTAN PARTY

Saturday 24th January 2004

**Come and join us at the Village Hall for
a 'Burns Night' Party.**

**So look in your cupboard for all that
tartan gear and as the theme would sug-
gest, dress accordingly!**

8 p.m. until late

Live music & food

Haggis, neeps and tatties

Vegetarian option

Ticket Price announced next month

**Contact Keith 01295 680654 or Ray on 01295
680850**

**(If you are willing to cook a dish or decorate the hall
please contact Ray or Keith)**

SENIOR CITIZEN CHRISTMAS LUNCH

AT THE VILLAGE HALL

ON

Monday 15th December 2003

12.30 p.m. pre lunch drinks

1 p.m. lunch to be served

**If you are willing to help out at this
event please contact**

**Keith 01295 680654 or Ray on 01295
680850**

Nature Notes for December

The tenth month of the Roman calendar and the month of Christmas.

I am sure everyone in the village has at some time seen our resident Grey heron and if you have a pond in your garden you will most definitely have had a visit. Herons usually roost in colonies, or heronries, building nests in large trees that they refurbish year after year and which can measure several feet across. Country folk believed that a heron's nest had two holes in the bottom through which the sitting bird could dangle its long legs! The Oxhill heron however does not roost in a large tree but more often than not in the middle of a large field or on a fence. Besides fish, herons readily take small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and even the occasional bird. I have seen our heron take a small creature in the middle of a ploughed field, probably a vole or such like. The sexes are alike, so it is impossible to tell if this is a male or a female, but spring comes and goes and it remains single, although last year it was joined by another single bird for a short while, and then a pair for about a week. Severe winters are disastrous for herons and the long freeze of 1963 halved the population, and in addition they have been persecuted by anglers and fish farmers, but numbers are currently high. They are now a protected species, so don't be too hard on our heron when he comes looking for a snack from your pond. However, if you wish to protect pond life from herons, stretch two strands of wire 8 inches and 14 inches above the ground about one foot back from the pond edge. Herons do not land in water but alight nearby and walk into it.

Don't forget now the cold weather is here that once you start feeding the wild birds, please continue because the birds in your vicinity will come to rely on you. It is also important to put water out.

On a festive note, did you know a favourite decoration originating in medieval England was the "kissing bough", which was a garland of greenery shaped roughly like a crown and adorned with fruit, coloured paper rosettes, candles, and most importantly, a bunch of mistletoe hanging from the centre. We still mimic this when we hang a wreath on our front door and hang a piece of mistletoe in the entrance.

On 23rd December "observe the day on which Christmas falls; if Thursday the winter mild and summer very good and abundant – many great men shall perish". From *The Knowledge of Things Unknown, 1729*.

Grenville Moore

CHRISTMAS WISHES

Season's greetings and best wishes for 2004 to everyone from Carol, Joanie and James Clark.

Carol Clark

Two Takes on a Common Thought

(Or "What a difference half a century makes")

She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Jacob

He dwelt among "apartments let,"
About five stories high;
A man I thought that none would get,
And very few would try.

A boulder, by a larger stone
Half hidden in the mud,
Fair as a man when only one
Is in the neighbourhood.

He lived unknown, and few could tell
When Jacob was not free;
But he has got a wife, -- and O!
The difference to me!

Phoebe Cary (1824-1871)

What's On in Oxhill

December

Friday 5 th	7.30	The Old House - Choir Rehearsal Deadline for ordering Whatcote Christmas Puddings
Thursday 11 th		New Inn, Clifford Chambers - Garden Club Party
Friday 12 th	7.30	The Old House - Choir Rehearsal
Monday 15 th	12.30	Village Hall - Senior Citizens' Lunch
	2.00	St. Lawrence Church - Tree and Church Decoration
Wednesday 17 th	7.30	St. Lawrence's Church – Carol Service
Friday 19 th	6.30	Porthkerry, Beech Row - Carol Singing
Tuesday 23 rd		Deadline for material for The News

January

Tuesday 13 th	8.00	Village Hall - Parish Council Meeting
Saturday 24 th	8.00	Village Hall - Burns Night Party