

# The Oxhill News



February 2004

## February

February is febrero in Spanish, febbraio in Italian, fevereiro in Portuguese, février in French, Feber in Austrian German and Februar in normal German,

Decimalization was introduced in the UK on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1971, following the recommendations of the Halesbury Committee of 1961. Why does it take British politicians so long to get anything wrong? Or right?

The February birthstone is an amethyst.

John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1962.

A new register of electors comes into force on 16<sup>th</sup> February each year and governs elections held during the following 12 months.

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June, and November;  
All the rest have thirty-one,  
Excepting February alone,  
And that has twenty-eight days clear  
And twenty-nine in each leap year.

Stevens MS. (c.1555)

The equation of time, the length of time that must be added to the mean solar time, as shown on a clock, to give the apparent solar time, as shown by a sundial reaches a minimum of -14.2 minutes in February. You really wanted to know that, didn't you?

Editor

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## March issue

Please could I have all copy for the March issue by Noon on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February? 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. If you do use electronic form, the best would be a Word file with the page size set to A5 and margins of 1.5 cm all round. The font size should in general be 10 point.

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

George Adams, 680286

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## Cover Picture

St. Lawrence Church from the South-East, on January 28th just after the morning snow. Not a lot of snow, of course. The photo was taken from the drive to Church House. I would like to offer my apologies to Mark and Kari Gummer for the brief trespass on their driveway.

George Adams

## **Notes of the Oxhill Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th January at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall**

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

### **MATTERS DISCUSSED**

**Defibrillator** - Finalisation of funding required to support this service is awaited.

**Recreational Facilities** - The facilities offered by Mrs. Rodwell, Oxhill Manor, are being pursued by the interested parties.

**Finance** - The external audit for the Year 2002/2003 had been completed and the required notice posted.

**Precept 2004/2005 period** - No new specific requests had been received therefore it was agreed to allow monies for mowing the churchyard, publishing the Oxhill News, defibrillator, basic provision for the Village Hall and traffic calming measures. Expenses, Audits (internal and external), and Insurance were also taken into account. A precept of £2200 would be requested for the above financial year.

**Public Footpaths** - New metal “kissing gates” were being put up on public footpaths in the County. This type of style is thought to be better for the less able persons to access and are also less costly on maintenance.

**Temporary Closure of C53 Oxhill Road to Kinton** - The first section of this road from the Pig Farm to the rise of Herd Hill is being closed for repair and resurfacing from 16th February to 19th March. Access to Kinton will be via the C54 Tysoe Road. A plan is posted on the Parish Council Notice Board.

**Equine Issues** – A note was received from The Rt. Hon. Alun Michael MP who deals with equine issues in Government. There is a website available with information on all Government policies which affect horses – [www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses) - included on this website is information for horse owners regarding passport requirement for all horses by 30th June this year.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday 9th March 2004 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Angela Kean, Clerk

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### **Mobile Phone Scheme**

The scheme for recycling mobile phones has now ended.

Many thanks to everyone who has supported WaterAid through this scheme.

David Knight

## **Church Services in February**

### **Church of St. Lawrence, Oxhill**

#### **Sunday Services**

Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Epiphany IV	9.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Septuagesima	9.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Sexagesima	6.30	Evensong
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Quinquagesima	9.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Lent I	10.30	United Benefice Service, Holy Communion in Tysoe

#### **Midweek Services**

Short (less than 30 minutes) informal services

Thursday 5th	7.30	Celtic Worship
Thursday 12th	7.30	Compline
Thursday 19th	7.30	Meditation
Thursday 26th	7.30	Holy Communion

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#### **Oxhill Festival Choir**

Advance warning that the next time we are singing is on Palm Sunday, which is Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April. The service is at 9.30 a.m. in Oxhill Church.

Rehearsals will begin on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March and continue on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March and 2<sup>nd</sup> April. They will be held at the Old House at 7.30 p.m.

Anyone who would like to sing is very welcome to join us.

An even more advanced notice is for Whitsunday, which is Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May. Bishop Colin will be here in Oxhill for a United Benefice Service at 10.30 a.m. For this special event the Oxhill and Tysoe Choirs will be joining forces. More details will be available nearer the time.

Jill Tucker, 680663

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#### **Lost Property**

An earring was left in the Church after the Christmas service.

It takes the form of a bronze coloured heart-shaped locket, and will be found on the table at the back of the Church near the door for anyone wishing to reclaim it.

Jill Tucker

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### **Marathon sponsorship**

I have managed to get a place in the London Marathon running for Children with Leukaemia. This is going to be a challenge for me, not only to complete the event but also to raise the £2000 I have promised to raise for the charity.

I chose Children with Leukaemia because an ex-pupil and family friend, Emma, has been suffering from leukaemia for the past three years. She and her parents have spent a lot of time in Birmingham Children's hospital and family life for them has been turned upside down.

If you would like to sponsor me or make a donation please contact me by phone 01295 680451, e-mail (ali@sayer44.freemove.co.uk) or knock on the door! Thanks.

Alison Sayer

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### **Christmas Puddings for Whatcote Church**

A big thank you to all who supported our second Christmas Pudding Sale. Through sales and donations our final figure raised towards the Church Restoration and Reordering project is £774.43p, a significant increase on last year's figure.

A Happy New Year to you all.

June Wreford, Secretary to St. Peter's Church P.C.C.

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### **Late-breaking News**

The noble band of carol singers who toured Oxhill just before Christmas raised the splendid sum of £212, which has been donated to Shelter.

Russen Thomas

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### **For Sale**

1 upright straight strung Piano in Good Condition.

Open to offers, as we need the room!

Please call 01295 688238 for more details.

Neil, Angela, Lucy and Alexander Chick

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## Nature Notes for February

The month of Purification – named from Februa, the great Roman feast of purification. In Gaelic Faoilleach – the month of ravaging wolves!!

As I write these notes, I have been taking part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, which is spending an hour watching the birds in your garden and making a total count of each type of bird at any one time, thus ensuring that you do not count a bird twice. I am struck by the relatively high numbers of House sparrows. Sparrows were for many years among the commonest British birds and the most frequent visitors to garden bird tables. However in reality House sparrow populations have plummeted in recent years, for reasons not yet understood, possibly loss of food sources, nesting sites and changes in habitat, and numbers are down around 40%, so they are no longer everyday birds. Perhaps the reason we have a good count of them in our garden is the bird “Hilton”, a fallen damson tree covered with honeysuckle and a rambling rose, now a thicket 12 to 15 feet high and a bird heaven. We also have four or five pairs of House sparrows nesting under the eaves (probably due to lack of pointing!). We also have the so-called “hedge sparrow”, in fact the Dunnock, unrelated to the sparrows. “Spearwa” was the Old English name for sparrows and the two true sparrows were not recognised in Britain until the early eighteenth century when the Tree sparrow, first called the Mountain sparrow, was acknowledged as a distinct species. The Tree sparrow is a bird of open woodland and areas of scattered trees and is slightly smaller than the House sparrow. The main distinguishing feature is the white neck with a bold black patch on the cheek/ear area. This species has declined even more dramatically than the House sparrow, by over 60%. I did not see one around Oxhill last year. By the way, for those of you puzzled by “Scalloped rust cola” in last month’s nature notes, I am afraid the phantom spellchecker had been at work and this should of course have been *Scolopax rusticola*.

To those of you owning a dog or thinking of purchasing one – a cautionary tale. Most dogs are bred for a specific purpose, for example guarding and utility (doberman), going to ground (all types of terrier), sight-hunting (greyhound, deerhounds), scent-hunting and retrieving (labradors, spaniels), companions (dalmations, pugs etc) and herding (collies). This means that for hundreds of years they have been bred to do specific tasks and their instincts can easily be awakened: gundogs will hunt cover, sight hounds will chase, terriers will go to ground, and herding dogs will herd.

Our dog Alice is a longdog (a cross between a greyhound and another sight-hound, probably a borzoi). She came from Birmingham Dog’s Home, so we do not know her breeding, but all sight-hounds or gaze-hounds have incredibly long sight and can easily define a hare 300 yards away. If they lose sight of their quarry (i.e. it goes through a hedge) they stop coursing. This week Alice put up a muntjac and proceeded to chase it down the village street. Fortunately the muntjac made good its escape, but we will be on guard in future.

February is the month of snow:

Walk fast in snow  
In frost walk slow  
When frost and snow are together  
Sit by the fire and save shoe leather

Grenville Moore

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### **Oxhill Garden Club**

The Christmas Party at the New Inn, Clifford Chambers was much enjoyed by twenty-four members who, after an excellent turkey or pork dinner, managed to double themselves up enough to play skittles with (we hope) little adverse effect.

We came back to earth again in January when Les Tooty delighted us with a talk, and with his own excellent slides of rare British wild flowers. These included no less than fifteen orchids, photographed from John O'Groats to Lands End. A treat for the twenty members who turned out on a particularly rotten evening.

The next meeting will be on Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup>, when Mr. J. Clews of the R.S.P.B. will be at the Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. to speak on "Action for Birds". If birds (of the feathered variety) are your particular interest do please come and join us.

Myrtle Knight.

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### **Stratford Operatic Society**

The Society will be performing in Oxhill Church on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. For those who have enjoyed their concerts before, this is a new programme. Tickets will be available nearer the time.

Jill Tucker

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### **Mindless Vandalism**

Do you know where your youngsters were on Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup> between 6.00 pm and 7.00 pm?

Some youngster was seen and heard to smash both doors to the Village Hall Notice Board.

This was no accident as 2 sheets of toughened Perspex were smashed. To date we have had one report. CAN YOU HELP?

Please contact any of the Village Hall Committee.

Keith Seabridge.

## **Metal Kissing Gates**

The erection of the metal kissing gates replacing stiles along the footpath running in an easterly direction from the Churchyard has resulted in an excess of mud, occasioned not by inclement weather, but by the constant movement of boots when passing through the gates. Furthermore, the condition of the footpath either side of these gates has deteriorated. Again, they are quite out of keeping with both the immediate and the more distant landscape, especially in this conservation area.

I wrote to the relevant department of the County Council to question the provision of metal kissing gates and received a typical bureaucratic reply that the footpath had been inspected following a complaint (a rambler?) and had been found to be in poor condition (it is far worse now!). The reply also stated that the primary concern was for adequate stock control (there is no livestock where the gates have been installed), ease of access for walkers (they are not easy and present burn risks when the locking mechanism is frozen), and cost effectiveness (cheap, and they look it!). The reply also stated that “structures across a public right of way are not subject to planning control, thus planning permission is not required”. I would question this statement as Oxhill is in a conservation area.

My response, which dealt with the points here mentioned, drew particular attention to the stupidity of claiming ease of access for people with mobility problems when there is a ‘barrier’ at the far end of the bridge. I also pointed out that if the stiles had to be replaced, the provision of timber wicket gates would be more preferable than the ‘out of keeping’ metal kissing gates.

It is hoped that the Parish Council will take this matter up so as to safeguard the standards of sound rural husbandry in a conservation area.

Russen Thcomas

(I am informed that the Parish Council have asked the Clerk to contact the County Council about this matter. Any response will be published. Editor)

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## **Village Hall News**

The committee would like to say a huge ‘thank-you’ to all the help we received to make the ‘Tarts & Tartan’ night so enjoyable. Particular thanks to Una Hill, Posy Macdonald and Andy Buchanan. It was a great success and was nice to see the hall being used by so many. Once again – many thanks.

It is disappointing to see that the notice board has been vandalised resulting in the Perspex being broken. We are endeavouring to put this right as soon as we can.

Events

Back by popular demand... Bingo Night.... Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004 @ 8pm –

Entry: £2 to include 1<sup>st</sup> book, extra books @ £1 each

Linda Dagg



## **W.I. Report**

There was a very good gathering of Members at W.I. this month, and we were entertained to a talk on the history of Lace Making by Mrs. Sally Herd. She explained how lace making started abroad and was imported into England by immigrants, who then went to different areas of the country and used their skills. Mrs. Herd had brought along examples of various laces, many of which she had made herself, and was more than happy to answer our questions. She has been working on lace for over thirty years but still finds new laces to make.

After the interval, June Wreford gave us a brief history of the W.I. from its national foundation until now. She also brought along the Tysoe W.I. scrapbook from 1955, which had some intriguing photographs, not just of W.I. but also of other aspects of Tysoe village life.

For February's meeting there will be a talk on "A Stick of Charcoal, a Piece of Paper and Guess Who?" Any newcomers or lapsed members will be warmly welcomed. We are always pleased to see new faces.

Do not forget that the W.I. sponsors the Keep Fit classes held in the Tysoe Village Hall of Thursdays at 10.30 a.m. Marilyn, our Coach, is pleased to help anyone, no matter how young or old, to become more mobile, and we have fun, too. Honestly!

Philippa Robinson

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## **25 Years Ago**

Julia Leeson and Ann Hale started issue number 70 by thanking Betty Smith for editing the News for such a long time and by promising to try to keep up the high standard Betty had set.

Mary Badger reported on the work nearing completion in the Village Hall to bring it up to the standard required by the local health authority. She also thanked Una Hill for making the new curtains (which still grace the windows today).

The Church's Open Weekend at the end of May was announced together with the postponement of both the New Year Supper and the Attic Auction. A sponsored bike ride in aid of repairs to the Church tower was proposed, and the Sunday School sent out a plea for blank paper on which they could draw. When I went to Sunday School we had to read the Bible.

The W.I. reported on their January meeting, a slide show on local history. Una Hill was looking for old photographs of the village and Tom Heritage wanted a typist. The Children's Party Committee regretted having given the Children balloon making kits that were later withdrawn from the market on health ground. Whoops.

Finally, Nancy Parker-Smith was plugging the services of a window cleaner who proposed starting a round in the village. By the way, has anyone recently seen the window cleaner who did do a round in the village last year?

George Adams

## Poetry Corner

### The Shades of Night

#### Take One

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed  
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device, Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,  
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,  
And like a silver clarion rung  
The accents of that unknown tongue, Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light  
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;  
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,  
And from his lips escaped a groan, Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;  
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,  
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"  
And loud that clarion voice replied, Excelsior!

"Oh stay," the maiden said, "and rest  
Thy weary head upon this breast! "  
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,  
But still he answered, with a sigh, Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!  
Beware the awful avalanche!"  
This was the peasant's last Good-night,  
A voice replied, far up the height, Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward  
The pious monks of Saint Bernard  
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,  
A voice cried through the startled air, Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful bound,  
Half-buried in the snow was found,  
Still grasping in his hand of ice  
That banner with the strange device, Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,  
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,  
And from the sky, serene and far,  
A voice fell like a falling star, Excelsior!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### **Take Two**

The shades of night were falling fast  
And the rain was falling faster,  
When through an Alpine village passed  
An Alpine village pastor;  
A youth who bore mid snow and ice  
A bird that wouldn't chirrup,  
And a banner, with the strange device —  
'Mrs. Winslow's soothing syrup.

"Beware the pass," the old man said,  
'My bold and desperate fellah;  
Dark lowers the tempest overhead,  
And you'll want your umbrella;  
And the roaring torrent is deep and wide —  
You may hear how it washes.'  
But still that clarion voice replied:  
'I've got my old goloshes.'

'Oh stay,' the maiden said, 'and rest  
(For the wind blows from the nor'ward)  
Thy weary head upon my breast —  
And please don't think me forward.'  
A tear stood in his bright blue eye  
And gladly he would have tarried;  
But still he answered with a sigh:  
'Unhappily I'm married.'

A. E. Housman

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### **Parochial Church Council Meeting**

There will be a meeting of the PCC on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February at Church House at 8.00 p.m., immediately following the informal worship.

Jill Tucker

## What's On in Oxhill

### February

Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	7.30	Tysoe Village Hall - W.I. - A Stick of Charcoal, a Piece of Paper and Guess Who?
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Tysoe Village Hall - Keep Fit
	8.00	Church House - Parochial Church Council
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	7.30	Village Hall - Garden Club
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	12.00	Deadline for copy for the News

### March

Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7.30	Tysoe Village Hall - W.I. - Flower Arranging (Kineton Flower Shop)
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	8.00	Village Hall - Parish Council Meeting
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	8.00	Village Hall - Bingo

### April

Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup>		Oxhill Church - Stratford Operatic Society
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	7.30	Tysoe Village Hall - W.I. - Keeping Active



The kissing gate referred to by Russen.  
It might look better painted black.